VATICAN CITY STATE

by

Anton Heinen

1990
INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIONS

VATICAN CITY

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

00120 Roma
Tel.: 698-33-02, Fax: 698-4795
Date of establishment: 1450
Status: Public within the Vatican State; any person with an attested academic status is admitted for the purpose of personal research inside the library. On request copies, microfilms, etc. are made of the MSS needed for intensive investigation and editions. Modern facilities of telecommunication, computers, etc. are being introduced.
Total number of Islamic MSS: ca. 4,395 (Arabic 2,605; a few Malay; Persian 1,267; Turkish 521).
Description of collection: The manuscripts of the Vatican Library mirror the numerous and rich cultures of the Middle East, and no clear dividing line is drawn along the uncertain frontiers of these cultures. Originally the manuscripts were classified only on the basis of the languages chiefly used in them. In modern catalogues (especially by G. Levi della Vida) divisions by religious affiliation were introduced, but with quite unsatisfactory results.

The collection of Islamic MSS was begun under Pope Leo X (1513–1521) with MSS captured in the wars against the Turks (oldest MS. known: Vat. Turci 12 (11)). The most relevant study on the historical development of the oriental collection of MSS is:


Although this monograph does not describe MSS, it is an indispensable source of information on the historical growth of the oriental collections in the Vatican Library. A more recent and more complete study is:

1973. La Bibliothèque vaticane de Sixte IV à Pie XI. Recherches sur l’histoire des collections des manuscrits. By Jeanne Bignami Odier with José
The subjects covered are: Qur'an, tasfir, Hadith, fiqh, kalâm, Sufism, adab, poetry, grammar, lexicography, history, geography, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, alchemy. The earliest dated MS. is the K. al-Bawal by Iṣṣaqq b. Sulaymān al-Isrāʾīlī, dated 346 AH [957 CE] (Vat. Arab. 310). All later centuries are represented, but most of the MSS belong to the 18th and 19th centuries.

Many MSS also contain artistic decorations, specimens of calligraphy, and valuable bindings. Of special importance, in my estimation, is the MS. Vat. Arab. 761: Al-ṣif al-ṣanāfī, by Al-Khażini (written before 529 AH/1135 CE). But literary works of great value are also present, such as Shāh 275: the Māqāmāt al-Ḥārīrī, dated as early as 583 AH [1187 CE].

Published catalogues:

I. De scriptoribus Syriis Orthodoxis; 649pp. (pp. 573 sqq.: Arabic MSS of A. Echhelense [Ibrahîm al-Ḥaqillâni]); pp. 587 sqq.: Persian & Turkish MSS); II. De scriptoribus Monophysitis; 548pp.; III. De scriptoribus Syriis Nestorianis; 709pp.; IV. De Syriis Nestorianis.

In Latin, but the titles of the MSS listed are given in the original languages. All codicological details are included, but not in systematic order. Superfluous doctrinal remarks often mar the descriptions. Many quotations from MSS in original languages; indexes included. Because of the early date of publication the Bibliotheca Orientalis has only historical value today: a verification of the number of MSS included is, therefore, impossible. But an important addendum for the modern user by Joseph-Marie Sauget, in French, is included as an appendix to the 1975 reprint. This is especially important and useful because it contains concordances, not available elsewhere, for the numbers used in the various collections of oriental MSS.

In Italian. Identification of the MSS, with author, title, dates, and brief descriptions; but no indexes. Some 213 MSS are mentioned, but today this list is of historical value only, since the collections have changed.


In Latin. All the codicological details are given in modern systematic order. Concise information: thus omission of superfluous quotes. Vol. V contains a few items stated to be in Malay (Cod. Indici p. 112; Arabic MSS are also to be found in Codices Syriaci (pp. 1–111) and Codices Coptici (pp. 114–170). Because of much subsequent restructuring the numbers often do not now correspond with the MSS of the various collections. This catalogue, too, has been superseded by the later ones, and has only historical value today.


Full descriptions of 46 volumes of Syriac MSS which include 6 Arabic MSS amongst them: K. VI, 14; K. VII, 6; K. VIII, 2, 3, 8 and 9.


In German. After some information on the history of the oriental collections, descriptions of the individual MSS, with indexes. Codicological details in exemplary form, including the titles (in original languages and with German translations), incipits in the original languages, names of authors and scribes, styles of script, dates, numbers of folios and lines per page, measurements, bindings, references to catalogues. Listed are 78 MSS in Persian and 74 in Turkish.


In Italian. The inventory of A. CIASCA (see Unpublished catalogues below) in printed form, containing only brief descriptions of the MSS Vat. Arabi, nos. 788–929. Completely superseded by the later catalogues, it has only historical value, and hardly any practical use.


In Italian. Careful descriptions of the MSS are included. This inventory demonstrates the historical growth of the Vatican collections, but these texts are exclusively concerned with Christian cult and doctrine.


Full descriptions of further Syriac MSS in the Borgia collection, which include 3 Arabic and 1 Coptic/Arabic MSS.


In French. Brief descriptions of the MSS, identifications of the titles, authors, scribes, subjects, dates, languages, styles of script, measurements, folios. Only a first selection from the growing collection of P. SAATH (BASILIS SABAT).

In French. As in the preceding articles, the descriptions are brief. Only 39 MSS are described; the articles were not continued in the same journal.


In French. This inventory only identifies titles, names of authors, subjects, dates and scribes. All names and quotations are only in French transliteration. Since the Sbath collection was incorporated into the Vatican Library only up to no. 776, this inventory covers all MSS kept there now. The extracts were bound together and serve as a preliminary catalogue in the Sala Consultazione of the Vatican Library.


In French. Brief identifications of titles (in transliteration and with French translation), names of authors and scribes, dates, subjects, styles of script, numbers of folios. Indexes and tables of concordance. 275 MSS are briefly described.


In Arabic. Brief description of the MS collection of Paul Shath. Some 44 MSS are mentioned.


In French. More details than in the first inventory: titles and names of authors and scribes in Arabic and French transliteration and translation, subjects, dates, styles of script, languages. Vol. I covers MSS nos 1–532; Vol. II, MSS nos 533–1125; Vol. III, MSS nos 1126–1325. Only numbers 1–338 and 340–776 are kept in the Vatican Library. Since the author claims to have acquired some 1,600 MSS (introduction), the remaining 825 MSS must be in a different location, unless the author exaggerated. But a new and careful investigation in the depots of the Vatican Library has revealed that in any case these MSS never reached there. Considering the exemplary care that awaits them there, the scholar can only hope that eventually they will be reunited with the others and thus made accessible to the researcher.


In Italian. All details are given: names of authors (if known), titles in transliteration and paraphrased in Italian, subjects, languages, brief remarks on contents, scribes, dates, measurements, numbers of folios, cross-references to other catalogues, bibliography. Some 2,000 MSS are examined (“... oltre 2000 scritti”): 1,291 “Vaticani Arabi” (nos 195–1486); 150 “Barberiziani Orientali” (nos. 5–153); 273 “Borgiani Arabi” (nos. 1–257); 30 “Rossiiani Arabi” (nos. 867–1033). But these numbers are problematic, because the identification of many MSS as “Arabic Islamic” and their distinction from the other MSS in the oriental collection could not, and probably cannot, be achieved consistently. The author often wavers and finally includes 12 MSS which he judges “predominantly
Christian". In spite of the title of the catalogue, 12 Persian MSS and 13 Turkish MSS are also included.


In Latin. Includes many bilingual Arabic/Coptic MSS. Full descriptions with extensive quotations in original script and Latin translations.


In Italian. A comprehensive examination of the MSS "Vat. arabi" 1605 and 1606, which is primarily concerned with calligraphy and aspects of art history. The texts are carefully identified; measurements, numbers of lines, some information on the historical origins of the codices. Only 2 MSS are really described, others only mentioned.


In Italian. Complete details: titles in transliteration and with Italian translation, names of authors and scribes, subjects and brief remarks on contents, incipits, languages, styles of script, dates, origins, measurements, numbers of lines, material, bindings, references to other catalogues and publications. Indexes. 189 MSS in 4 fondi: (i) Fondo Vaticano persiano: 158 MSS (nos 1–165, i.e. without 7 MSS now in F. turco); (ii) Fondo Barberiniano: 6 MSS (nos 58, 89, 97, 102, 104, 105); (iii) Fondo Borgiano persiano: 23 MSS (nos 1–25), but with nos 1, 22 now in F. Borgiano turco); (iv) Fondo Rossiano: 2 MSS (nos 875, 877). All Persian MSS at that time included in the Vatican Library were covered. But in the years 1953–1955 the CERULLI Collection of Persian MSS was incorporated, and with the SNAITH collection also 13 Persian MSS were added (see 1961 & 1978 below).


In Italian. An examination of some North African MSS by an art historian.


In Italian. Complete details: titles in transliteration and with Italian translation, names of authors and scribes, subjects and brief remarks on contents, incipits, languages, styles of script, dates, origins, measurements, numbers of lines, writing materials, bindings, references to other catalogues and publications. Indexes included. The catalogue covers 477 MSS in 5 fondi: (i) F. Vaticano Turco: 359 MSS (nos 1–376, i.e. without 17 MSS now changed to the F. persiano); (ii) F. Barberiniano: 32 MSS; (iii) F. Borgiano: 82 MSS (nos 1–84; i.e. again without 2 MSS changed to the F. persiano); (iv) F. Rossiano: 3 MSS; (v) F. Chigiano: 1 MS. (one was changed). All Turkish MSS of the Vatican Library, with the exception of some 30 MSS with Turkish materials in the SNAITH collection and the mixed texts already described by G. LEVI DELLA VIDA (see in the respective sections), were covered by this catalogue.


Describes 25 Arabic MSS belonging to GEORGE STRACHAN which are now in the Vatican (on pp. 73–106).


In Italian. Complete details: titles in transliteration and with Italian translation, names of authors and scribes, subjects and brief remarks on contents, incipits, dates, origins, languages, measurements, numbers of lines, references to other catalogues and publications. Indexes included. 1,055 MSS, 4 of them in Arabic.

In Italian. This is a special historical study of the accession of Vat. Arabi 210, 211, 212 & 281. The article discusses these MSS, with remarks on 28 others.


In Italian. All details given on the model of the first catalogue by the same author, but the layout is much better in this second one. Out of 312 new MSS, 36 MSS are left aside as “Christian”; thus 276 MSS “Islamici” are described. Of these, 2 are in Persian, and 1 is in Turkish.


In Italian. Careful identification of titles, names of authors and scribes, subjects, dates, languages (the MSS with mixed languages are also considered), references in other publications. 13 MSS are examined (including 1 in Arabic, Turkish and Persian, 5 in Turkish and Persian, and 1 in Arabic and Persian).


Descriptions of 6 Malay MSS in the Vatican Library.


Incl. 31 MSS in the Biblioteca Vaticana.


Unpublished catalogues:
Supplementum ad Catalogum Codicum Orientalium Bibliothecae Vaticane. By AGOSTINO CIASCIA. Covers Vat. Arabi nos 788–929 (pp. 1–108); Vat. Siriaci (pp. 109–126); Vat. Copti (pp. 127–136). In Latin. A handwritten inventory, but very clear and orderly. All codicological details as in A. Mar’s 1831 Catalogus (see above). No indexes. This Supplementum, too, has been superseded by the later catalogues, and has only historical value today. It was the basis for CRISPUS MONCADA’s catalogue published in 1900.

Inventor. By OSKAR RESCHER.

In German. Brief details of his own collection of MSS which he sold to the Vatican Library in 1934. It covers 366 MSS: 99 in Arabic; 43 in Persian; 224 in Turkish. This inventory has been integrated into the later catalogues and is itself only of historical significance.

1984. Catalogue des MSS SIBAT qui se trouvent à la Bibliothèque vaticane. By J. MALAK. (Index by H. MALAK.) Manuscript, judged unfit for publication, since the scholarly standards of the Vatican Library were not reached. It may be used for a revision and future publication. For the time being it can be consulted with special permission of the authorities.

In French. All details are given: names of authors and scribes, titles in transliteration and translated into French, subjects, languages, brief remarks on contents, dates, measurements, numbers of folios, styles of script, cross-references to other catalogues, bibliographies, recent publications. Extensive indexes. All the 776 MSS of the Sibat collection which were incorporated into the Vatican Library are covered. Of these some 650 MSS (607 Arabic, 13 Persian, 30 Turkish) are of interest for Islamic studies; the rest deal exclusively with Christian rites and doctrines.
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL APPENDIX


Vatican catalogues: pp. 23–25, nos. 66, 74 & 80.


Mentions the Vatican collection and Rossi’s catalogue on p. 310.


Lists all the recent studies done on, or only mentioning, MSS kept in the Vatican Library. Arabic MSS of the various collections are mentioned in Vol. I, pp. 191, 231–232, 267, 273 & 697–702; Vol. II, pp. 769–779, 1317 & 1343.


Vatican, p. 60.


Biblioteca Vaticana, pp. 50–52.


Museums, libraries, archives, collections, exhibitions including specimens of Arabic illuminated manuscripts (catalogues, handlists, descriptions, guides), pp. 170–175. Includes Vatican collections.


Al-Fāṭikān, pp. 45–46.


Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, pp. 258–260.

A historical discussion of the printed manuscript catalogues of the Vatican Library since the 17th century.


YEMEN

by

ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ʿAlī al-Muʿayyad

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