Piecing together the history of an
18th century printed Armenian Prayer Scroll

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Introduction:
The use of prayer scrolls along with other religious art and literature have played a significant role in Armenian culture since the 5th century. The scope of this study is to investigate the history and materials used on a printed, 18th century Armenian Prayer Scroll. Armenian travelers and pious people carried scrolls such as this one, which contains prayers, magical formulas, stories of healing, miracles from Gospels, and prayers against sickness. The study attempts to identify and characterize pigments, colorants, ink, and the paper used to construct the prayer scroll. The analysis involves an examination of the scroll using non-destructive analytical photography, fiber optic ultraviolet-visible and near infrared reflectance spectroscopy (UV-Vis-NIR), x-ray fluorescence (XRF) and Raman spectromicroscopy.

Preliminary Results: XRF and UV-Vis-NIR

- XRF Spectra of four different pigments used on the 18th century printed Armenian Prayer Scroll
- UV-Vis-NIR spectra of: 1) red pigment used on the 18th century printed Armenian Prayer Scroll (blue spectrum) and 2) cinnabar (HgS) reference sample (red spectrum) showing the characteristic band gap of cinnabar in the visible range

Printing Techniques and Cultural Context:
With the collaboration of scholars from the Fowler Museum at UCLA, and the UCLA Armenian Studies Department, the text and illustrations have been translated and studied. This research also aims to provide an overall understanding of the scroll, printing techniques, religious significance, use, as well as the traditional practices in the Armenian culture in the 18th century.

Northern European Influence?

- "Tree of Life" Dutch woodcut print dated 1664 by Christoffel van Sichem. Note: Monogram "CVS" in lower left corner
- "Tree of Life" adapted from original Dutch version, found on 18th century printed Armenian Prayer Scroll. Note: Monogram "CVS" in lower left corner of the Armenian artist

Pigment Analysis Using XRF and UV-Vis-NIR

- Brown
- Green
- Red
- Yellow

XRF was used to identify elements present in the Armenian Prayer Scroll pigments and UV-Vis-NIR spectra further aided in pigment identification

Colophon With Date Of Print

A colophon provides a brief statement containing information about the production of a book or manuscript. Information can include the place of production, the name of the publisher or scribe, and even the date of its production. The sum of the Armenian numerals added to the conversion of the Julian calendar (551) shows that this scroll was printed in May 1727.

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