

SYRIAC MANUSCRIPT PROJECT

Stuart Creason

Because of the generous support of the Rathmann Family Foundation, as well as several individuals within the Assyrian-American community in the United States during the past year, the Syriac Manuscript Project was able to make slow but steady progress on four important tasks connected with the Vööbus Collection of Syriac Manuscripts on Film: the physical inventory of the film, the scanning of the film, the cataloging of the manuscripts pictured in the film, and the development of the project database.

Physical Inventory

At the beginning of this year, the physical inventory of the film had been completed for all but six of the twenty-three locations represented in the Vööbus Collection, and over the past year, all the frames of film from four of these six locations were counted: Damascus, Sharfeh, Mosul, and Baghdad. With the completion of the inventory of the film from these four locations, the total number of images in the collection is now estimated to be 60,000, a revision downward from the estimate of 70,000 made in June 2007.

Scanning

As of June 30, 2008, a total of 4,800 images on 233 segments of film depicting portions of 62 manuscripts from 14 different locations had been successfully scanned. These figures represent an increase over the total from the previous year of 2,804 images, 148 segments of film, 35 manuscripts, and 4 locations. These totals are broken down by location in the following table.

<i>Location</i>	<i>Number of Manuscripts</i>	<i>Number of Film Segments</i>	<i>Number of Images</i>
Bartelli	1	1	10
Qaraqosh	1	4	104
Bote	2	5	153
Mar Behnam	3	7	143
Hah	1	8	278
Kerkuk	3	12	240
Tel Keph	2	8	259
Anhel	4	15	315
Atshaneh	9	17	371
Pampakuda	2	16	544
Istanbul	6	51	695
Mar Mattai	17	47	919
Mar Gabriel	7	21	378
Mardin	4	21	391
TOTAL	62	233	4,800

All the film from the first twelve of these fourteen locations has now been scanned (i.e., every location except Mar Gabriel and Mardin), and so these figures represent the total number of images in the Vööbus Collection for these twelve locations.

Cataloging

Of all the tasks that will be performed on the Vööbus Collection, cataloging is the most labor-intensive, and therefore, the most expensive, and work in this area has gone particularly slowly over the past year. Of the 4,800 scanned images, only 1,000 have been adequately cataloged, including all the scanned images from Bartelli, Qaraqosh, Kerkuk, and Mardin, along with a portion of the scanned images from Atshaneh, Mar Behnam, Tell Keph, and Pampakuda. During the coming year, this area will receive particular attention in order to bring the tasks of scanning and cataloging into better balance.

Project Database

The development of the database for the project involves three distinct steps. The first is the creation of the logical model for the database, that is, a schematic representation of the way in which the various kinds of information will be related to one another within the database, along with definitions for each of these kinds of information. As of June 30, 2008, this work was nearing completion and preparations were being made to move onto the next step: the implementation of the logical model in a particular version of database software. Once that is complete, then the data that has already been generated in the scanning and the cataloging process, and that is currently being stored in a provisional form, can be migrated into the database. After the completion of this third step at some time during the coming year, the project will have a fully functional database in which all the data from the project can be stored and accessed, thereby increasing the pace at which some of the work of the project, most notably the cataloging, can be performed.
