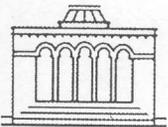
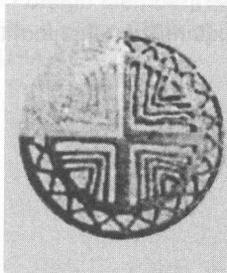


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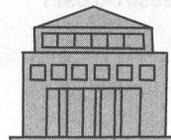
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ARMENIAN STUDIES TODAY
AND DEVELOPMENT
PERSPECTIVES

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Երևան, 15-20 սեպտեմբերի, 2003 թ.
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Տպագրվում է հայագիտական համաժողովի խորհրդի որոշմամբ

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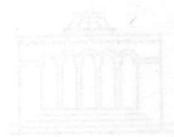
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AN ARMENIAN PILGRIM IN MEDIEVAL ITALY: CULT AND ICONOGRAPHY OF ST DAVINUS OF LUCCA

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(University of Siena)

In the last few decades a great deal of research activity has been devoted to the history of the Armenian communities of Medieval Italy, or Armenians «*citra mare*» as they were sometimes called. Scholars have emphasized their role in the economic life of the 13th through 15th century Communes, and have provided us with a valuable bulk of historical evidence about their civil and religious organization, as well as about the material vicissitudes of their ecclesiastic foundations¹. Less investigated is the impact of Armenian cultural and devotional traditions upon the West and the ways and reasons of the Westerners' fascination with them.

In this respect, the telling of Armenian saints' lives is a case in point. We lacked a general outline of Italy's Armenian hagiology until the organizers of the exhibition *Roma-Armenia*, held in the Vatican Library in 1999, devoted an entire section to the topic². There, even an inattentive beholder should have been able to see that each saint could be classified according to his historical value. Those holy men being actually venerated by the Armenian Gregorian church should have been placed in the first category; the only one to deserve such a classification was St. Gregory the Illuminator, whose cult in Naples, where he is known as 'San Gregorio Armeno', dates back to the Early Middle Ages: already the marble calendar of the late 8th or 9th century registers his name on September 30 and December 2 and 3, as well as those of Hripsime and Gayane on September 28³.

All other saints (all of them being male) are completely unknown to Armenian hagiology and seem to have had no direct connection with Italy's Armenian communities, or, at least, there is no evidence about Armenians «*citra mare*» taking part in the shaping, promulgation or diffusion of such cults. These ones can be distinguished into two categories. The first one includes those men whose legendary pedigree sounds absolutely fictitious, their Armenian origins being nothing more than a rhetorical pretext to provide them with an exotic appeal. That is definitely the case of St. Minias, a paleochristian martyr who was arbitrarily described from the 13th century onwards as a prince or king of Armenia, as we distinctly see in the apsis mosaic of his titular church in Florence (San Miniato al Monte), where he is represented as a young aristocrat, offering his royal crown to the King of Heaven⁴.

The second category is composed of three Armenian holy men: St. Liberius of Ancona, Saint Symeon of Mantua, and St. Davinus of Lucca, all sharing a common status of pilgrims. Liberius is, by far, the most fabulous one. According to the local sources, dating back only to the 13th century, he had come to the Adriatic shores in



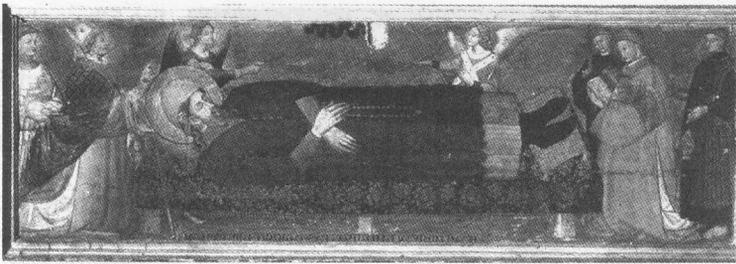
1. Armenian inscription, late 13th century. Lucca, San Martino.

the 5th century, in order to visit the churches of Rome; later, he had decided to spend the rest of his life in the neighbourhoods of Ancona, where he had taken residence in a grotto next to the church of St. Silvester. As far as we know, his public worship was not yet extant before the 11th century, and there is little doubt that nothing can be said of him on historical grounds.

This legend, however, bears witness to the fascination of local believers by Armenian and Oriental pilgrims visiting the Holy Places of Italy in the Late Middle Ages⁵.

We know that pilgrimage from the Eastern Christian countries to Rome and the most holy sites of both Italy and other lands of Western Europe was not infrequent in the Early Middle Ages, when we find substantial testimonies about Greek visitors. The same phenomenon also involved many Armenians, at least from the 10th and 11th centuries, and their number remarkably increased as new commercial and cultural contacts were established with the newly founded Mediterranean Kingdom of Cilicia. Their primary destinations were Rome, with its many basilicas and martyria – the most important being St. Paul's and St. Peter's – then the Galician town of Santiago de Compostela, which housed the corpse of the Apostle James the Elder; prior to Italy, the pilgrims had usually visited Jerusalem, from where they sailed to the Italian shores. Such an itinerary was followed by many Armenian travellers such as Davit Bjnetsi, the priest Vardan, the monk Sargis, living in the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries⁶; moreover, the franciscan friar Guillaume de Rubruk, in the account of his expedition to Mongolia in 1254, writes that an Armenian monk he had met in Möngke Khan's camp in the Gobi Desert once confessed to him his will to visit the Papal See and the sepulchre of St. James⁷.

Such had been the very route of St. Symeon, whose historical existence is confirmed by the *Vita* written shortly after his death, in 1016, in the monastery of San Benedetto al Polirone, near Mantua, where he had spent his last years. We know that his first stop had been Jerusalem, where he had obtained a letter of recommendation from the Patriarch, and then he had travelled from Rome to Santiago de Compostela: along his itinerary, he had also visited many other sites, such as Pisa, Lucca, Pavia, Turin, the Abbey of Novalesa, and Tours (where he had venerated St. Martin's relics). Finally, he had decided to stop near the Polirone monastery,



2. 'San Davino Master', *The Rediscovery of Saint Davinus' Corpse*, about 1425. Florence, Acton Collection (formerly in Lucca, Church of San Michele in Foro).

urged by his devotion to visit the holy places of the West. His mysterious origins, the aura of sanctity indistinctly attributed to the Eastern Christian countries, and his pious behaviour probably had an extraordinary appeal on local believers and fashioned his later reputation as an excellent thaumaturge.

Strikingly enough, St. Davinus of Lucca (*BHL* 2114), the third on our list, seems to have acquired his fame as a miracle-worker only because of his Armenian origin⁸. His *Vita*, first published by the Bollandists in the 17th century on the basis of a late 12th century manuscript in the Vatican library and of a later, now missing codex, does not point out any peculiar virtue or spiritual merit of his, apart from his being a nobleman and also a noble-minded person who had decided to go on a pilgrimage when he was already getting on in years⁹. After his departure from Armenia, he went, as usual, to Jerusalem and then to Rome, where he desired to go to Santiago. Along his route, he stopped at Lucca, just as St. Symeon had done, but unlike him he did not perform any miracles during his stay there. He simply kept on with his usual behaviour, i.e. with his frequent fasting and praying, as many devotees and pilgrims used to do. Nevertheless, while he was in the house of his host, a noblewoman named Atha, he happened to get ill and foretell his near death, which occurred, according to tradition, on June 3, 1050.

The banal and undistinguished deeds of this odd saint were redeemed by a great deal of spectacular miracles that Davinus was able to perform *after his death*, around his tomb in the cemetery of the church of San Michele in Foro, where he had been buried. From the ground where his corpse was laid grew a vine, whose fruits proved to be able to cure the sick of their illnesses. Moreover, some angels descended at night from Heaven to honour the tomb by lighting and incensing it. The people living near the cemetery and, among them, the Regular canons of San Michele in Foro were astonished at seeing such celestial apparitions, and concluded that God was indicating to them the holiness of the man being buried there. Soon the bishop Anselmus, who later became Pope Alexander II, one of the most important figures of the Gregorian Reformation of the Latin church, heard of the miracles involving Davinus' corpse and gave orders to exhume and venerate it as a relic inside the church, near the altar entitled to St. Luke (which was located next to main entrance).

What can we really say about this personage's historical reality and the first stages of his worship in Lucca? The manuscript containing his *Vita*, now in the Vatican library, probably pertained to the Canons of St. Pantaleon, who lived in a coenobium on the Pisan Mount, to the south of Lucca. According to one hypothesis, the archetypal text may have been written by one of the priests of San Michele in Foro by the end of

whose abbot decided to build a special cell in the neighbouring countryside, where Symeon was allowed to live as an anchorite. As in the case of Liberius of Ancona, Symeon was described as an itinerant monk or hermit, being

the 11th or the first half of the 12th century¹⁰. Some details of his life point to the Reformed clergy of that age as the intellectual background which fashioned the legend. Regular canons, i.e. secular priests living under a common rule in the style of traditional monks, became promoters of many new cult phenomena in order to increase the prestige of the institutions they represented. As the canons of San Martino – the town cathedral – supported the cult of the *Volto Santo*, a miraculous statue which was said to be the work of St. Nicodemus, so those of San Frediano promoted the public veneration of their titular saint and those of San Michele in Foro made the same with our Armenian pilgrim¹¹. By the 13th century, St. Davinus' feast on July 3 was solemnly venerated by all the churches of the Regular canons¹².

Undoubtedly, the name *Davinus* does not sound genuinely Armenian, the most similar being *Dawit* or, maybe, *Zaven*. The 19th century Mekhitarist scholar Mesrop Ughurlian, in a work devoted to Armenian colonies in Tuscany, was convinced that *Davinus* was a corrupted form for *Dawit*, and that had been the opinion of some Armenian travellers who had visited Lucca in the 17th century¹³. It is true that the transformation of *Dawit* into *Davinus* sounds relatively odd, and one may suspect that such an etymology has been worked out *a posteriori*. Much more interesting is to interpret *Davinus* as a Latinized form for 'dvenatsi' or 'dvinatsi', a word connected to the town of Dvin, the ancient capital of Armenia, which could be used to make allusion to an aristocratic status; we have seen, in fact, that the legend states that the saint was of noble birth¹⁴.

However, it is also possible that *Davinus* is short for *Davidino* (i.e. 'little David' in Italian). We should point out that the older manuscript containing his *Vita*, i.e. that preserved in the Vatican library, describes him as a man coming from the East but does not mention that he was born in Armenia; this information was integrated by the Bollandists on the basis of another manuscript, maybe dating back to the 13th century. This may mean that, at the beginning of his cult in Lucca, Davinus was not yet regarded as an outsider, and that only at a later time his ethnic identity had been shaped.

If this was the case, we should wonder why the Lucchese of the 13th or 14th century had decided to make him an Armenian. First of all, we should take into account that an Oriental pedigree was a traditional device to enhance a holy man's prestige. Despite what had occurred in the past, Italians of the Duecento and Trecento were perfectly able to distinguish the different peoples inhabiting the Eastern countries, since, on the one hand, their merchants and missionaries were well established in the lands of Outremer, and, on the other hand, numerous colonies of Orientals had dwelled on Italian soil. Pisa had a very close relationship with the Kingdom of Cilicia and was inhabited by a big Armenian colony since the 1250s¹⁵; analogous communities had settled by that time in other towns of Tuscany. Regarding Lucca, we have some evidence from the early 14th century onwards, but it is most probable that Armenians had been living there since the previous century¹⁶.

An inscription, now walled up into the façade of the town cathedral, possibly dates back to the late 13th century (as suggested by palaeographic features); it is part of a tombstone and we can easily conclude that its original location had been the church or cemetery of a local *diaspora* community¹⁷. In the 14th century, the Basilian or «Bartholomite» friars (as they are sometimes labelled in Modern sources¹⁸) had their see in the area of the cathedral, just to the apsis of the baptismal church of Santa Reparata. They probably had been awarded a little church or chapel that, by 1363, was being extended; they also possessed a small plot to be used for the burial of the dead, and in 1416 they were allocated another one on condition that they reserved it

for the plague-stricken. As far as we know, this little building was still extant by the year 1535, when it was destroyed to make room for the palace of the noble family Bernardi; by that period, local Armenians had probably disappeared, but in the previous centuries their influence had been of considerable importance, since we know that, from ca. 1408 through 1462 they had also managed to come into possession of a second convent, that of Santa Maria del Corso near the San Donato Gate.

We also know that they had played a role in the town life and had taken advantage of the support of the people of Lucca¹⁹. This is evident from the testamentary bequests in favour of them, the most significant being that of a young lady who, right in the middle of the Black Plague in 1348, left a legacy of both one florin and her own silken handbag on condition that they transformed it into a cushion to be used as a liturgical item²⁰. Such a gift was the most precious object owned by that girl, and it is quite significant that she decided to give it, for her soul's sake, to the priests of a foreign community; she probably would have never done this, had she not believed in the special efficaciousness of their prayers. We know that Bartholomite liturgy was modelled on that of the Dominicans, but it was performed in Armenian and probably had preserved almost some chants of the Eastern rite: a proverbial expression witnessed by contemporary writers described them, in general, as the *solfa degli Ermini*, i.e. the Armenians' singsong, which sounded boring but was also invested with a mysterious and magical aura²¹.

The religious attractiveness of the Armenians on Italian laity is a matter of fact. We should bear in mind that, almost everywhere in the peninsula, lay testators supported, by means of generous bequests, the needs of the Basilian monks and contributed to the embellishment of their churches and monasteries. Moreover, the Armenians probably succeeded in diffusing forms of worship associated with their motherland; we know, for example, that in 1360s a merchant from Pistoia made a disposition concerning a considerable amount of money to be paid to anyone agreeing to go on pilgrimage to the tomb of Saint Basil "in Armenia", i.e. to Caesarea of Anatolia, the present-day Kaiseri, which was located just beyond the range of Antitaurus, not far from the boundaries of the Kingdom of Cilicia. Unfortunately, that bequest was never executed, since nobody had the heart to begin such an adventurous journey²².

Although the Armenian monks "citra mare" were usually under the Dominicans' aegis, the community of Lucca seems to have had a close relationship with the regular canons, and above all with those of San Martino, whose churches were in the same neighbourhoods as their own. It is tempting to interpret Saint Davinus' metamorphosis and success from the 13th through the 15th centuries as an effect of the prestige and aura of holiness enjoyed by the local Armeno-Basilian friars. Surely, during that period both the laity and clergy of San Michele in Foro sponsored the worship of that saintly pilgrim. The original, simple earthen sarcophagus containing his corpse was included inside a marble one, which displayed a solemn gothic inscription celebrating him as Davinus, that man "who came to Lucca from the country of Armenia" to perform such magnificent miracles in favour of the sick²³. The sepulchre was associated to an altar entitled to him, which was frequently ornamented with embroideries and liturgical items by pious testators.

In 1424 the saint's left arm was separated from the body and included in a 'speaking' reliquary which was exhibited to believers on the saint's feast day²⁴. In those same years the altar-tomb was provided with a painted antependium visualizing a *gisant*-like image of the holy man²⁵. There an inscription reads: *Hic iacet corpus s(an)c(t)i*

Davini de Arminea (i.e. 'Here lays the body of St. Davinus of Armenia'). He is represented in the middle of the scene, laying over the catafalque and holding a *circulum praecatorium*, in the very moment of his relocation from the cemetery to the church. Censing angels revealing his sanctity are located just over him; on both sides of the catafalque, the bishop Anselmus and the regular canons of San Michele in Foro are represented in a diminutive scale, solemnly performing the ceremony in honour of him. The bishop is shown kneeling and blessing next to Davinus' head, while a deacon is holding the edge of his cape; on the side of the saint's feet the prior of the chapter-house is reading the office, and two black-dressed canons are attending to him. It is clear that the image aims at emphasizing the institutional affiliation of the public worship to the clergy of that church. But what about Davinus' dress and appearance?

The *Vita* contained no details about the holy man's lay or religious status; we only learn that he had been a pilgrim, but in this case he's not represented in the traditional habit of a traveller to Santiago (usually wearing a large hat with a shell and a rude tunic and holding a stick). Saint Symeon the Armenian was usually represented as a priest or a Benedictine monk, because of his affiliation to the abbey of San Benedetto al Polirone²⁶. Davinus' identity was much more difficult to outline. Although the fur might have been an item of the pilgrim's wardrobe, such details as its V-neck and wavy edge seem quite unusual and recall the shape of a priestly dress, like the *pelliceum* worn in winter. Much more astonishing is his orange tunic and cowl, whose color possibly echoed that of the canons of San Michele in Foro.

That sort of *koukoulion* covering his head, as well as the saint's long beard, may be regarded as the most exotic feature within the image, aiming at suggesting his being an Armenian monk, although in quite generic and fanciful terms. We should emphasize that, by the 14th and 15th century, Latin clergymen (apart from missionaries to the Near East) were not allowed to grow a beard, since this one was regarded as a specific device of Oriental monks and priests; because of this matter of fact, the saint's look in the painting proves to be even more meaningful, since we know from 17th century sources that the corpse showed a clean-shaven chin²⁷. It is unlikely, however, that Davinus' features had been inspired by the Basilian friars' attire, since, as far as we know, by the early 15th century they were dressed in the white tunic with black scapular of the Dominican *conversi* whose constitutions they had been obliged to follow in 1356²⁸; before that date, they had worn a bluish habit and had used to cover their head with a cap and cowl of the same colour, as we see in a fresco, dating back to 1348, in the church of San Matteo degli Armeni in Perugia²⁹.

Probably the regular canons only aimed at suggesting some vague assonance of that holy man from the East with their priestly status. Undoubtedly, their strategies of cult sponsorship proved efficacious; St. Davinus' public worship became more and more popular during the 15th and 16th centuries, and it was still alive in the first half of the 20th century. In 1592 the corpse was located on the main altar and became the main devotional focus in the church. Each year on July 3rd his feast drew a great crowd to San Michele in Foro, and the old earthen sarcophagus was filled with water which was then given to the sick as a miraculous drink; moreover, those suffering from head-ache were allowed to wear for some minutes St. Davinus' cowl, which had been found inside his tomb³⁰. The room where it was said that the saint had spent his last days was also an important destination of local devotees; it was located on the first floor of via Calderia, just next to San Michele in Foro, and housed a hospice for pilgrims and mendicants and also a little chapel whose altar was embellished by a sculpted group of the Crucifixion, allegedly the one being specially worshipped by the

holy Armenian himself. There was also a frescoed image of the Virgin and Child with the Archangel Michael and Davinus, probably dating back to Medieval times. This one, being the only other extant iconographic witness of the saint, was destroyed no later than the 1930s; according to a 17th century historian, a replica of the three figures was painted on the external wall of the building, where we can still see a street tabernacle housing a much repainted fresco of the Virgin Mary³¹.

We cannot but conclude that the vicissitudes of Saint Davinus' worship in Lucca testify that the prestige of Armenians – those Eastern Christians who, unlike the Greeks, had more fully recognized the spiritual authority of the Roman Catholic church – was quite slow to vanish. Although the Basilian monks had completely disappeared in Lucca as early as the early 16th century, important Armenian communities were still alive in the nearby towns of Pisa and Livorno. Some of these Armenians, such as the bishop Ar'ak'el of Yerevan in 1669, participated in the yearly feast of Saint Davinus on June 3rd and were probably pleased to learn that a fellow countryman was so widely worshipped by the people of Lucca.

Appendix. Evidence about the Armenian Friars in Late Mediaeval Lucca

Sources:

B. Baroni, *Delle chiese dello Stato di Lucca, notizie estratte dagli Archivi di Lucca* [18th century], Lucca, Biblioteca Governativa, ms. 915.

A.N. Cianelli, *Collected notes* [18th century], Lucca, Biblioteca Governativa, ms. 1771.

- A. Lettieri, *Zibaldone 2*, Lucca, Archivio di Stato, *Dono Lettieri*, vol. IX. ca. 1290 An Armenian inscription, probably walled up in the Cathedral façade in the 16th century and coming from the church of San Paolo degli Armeni, may date back to the 13th century. It reads: *z-Yakob Karc'i-n yisec'êk'* [«Remember Yakob of Kars»].

1320A document dated December 8, 1363, records that in 1320 the Prior and the Chapter of the church of Santi Giovanni e Reparata had allocated a plot to the Armenian Giovanni di Martino [Hovhannes Mardinyan?], friar of Saint Basil, Prior and administrator «of the oratory or place of Saint Paul in Lucca, owned by the aforesaid friars of Armenia and located next to the wall of the church of Santa Reparata». Since the oratory was already extant by 1310, they probably had taken up residence in Lucca already in the previous decades, perhaps in the second half of the 13th century.

1348 On April 7, Cilla di Puccio Massavitelli de' Mansi, widow of the nobleman Nicolao Arnolfi, makes a bequest of ten *lire* to the Armenian church.

1348 On July 8, a young girl named Tora, daughter of the merchant Biancuccio Bianchi, makes a testamentary bequest in favour of the Armenian friars living next to the church of Santi Giovanni e Reparata; she grants them a florin and her major silken handbag, which should be converted into a liturgical cushion for their main altar.

1356 The bishop of Lucca, Berengarius, appoints brother Jacopo di Giovanni [Hakob Hovhannisyan?] *de Urbe* as the new prior of San Paolo *degli Ermini*.

1363 The prior of San Paolo *degli Ermini* asks the Lucca Government for permission to expand the church of the Armenian friars. They are allowed to enlarge the front walls of the building as far

as the public way.

1408 The General Minister of the Order of the *Cruciferi* writes to the Lord of Lucca, Paolo Guinigi, and asks him to remove the Armenian friars from the church of Santa Maria del Corso near the San Donato Gate.

1410 Act of conversion of Colomba from Monte Catinello, by which she offers herself to the General Minister of Armenian Friars as an oblate to the convent of Santa Maria del Corso near the San Donato Gate, by virtue of her special devotion to Saint Basil and the Armenian Friars.

1416 On June 10, the Chapter of Santi Giovanni e Reparata allocates to brother Andrea di Giovanni [Andres Hovhannisyan?], then Prior of the church of San Paolo Apostolo, the plot located after and next to the wall of the sacristy of Santi Giovanni e Reparata, as well as to the lane bordering the wall of the Antelminelli mansion. It can only be used by the Armenian friars for the burial of the plague-stricken.

1418 The churches and convents of San Paolo degli Armeni and Santa Maria del Corso near the San Donato Gate are mentioned as depending on the same prior.

1438 The churches and convents of San Paolo degli Armeni and Santa Maria del Corso near the San Donato Gate are mentioned as depending on the same prior

1440 The churches and convents of San Paolo degli Armeni and Santa Maria del Corso near the San Donato Gate are mentioned as depending on the same prior

1462 The Prior of San Paolo degli Armeni in Lucca, Brother Crescimbene from Milan, renounces the ownership of the church and convent of Santa Maria del Corso near the San Donato Gate and recognizes the rights of the Carmelites of San Pier Cigoli over them.

1538 The nobleman Cristoforo Bernardi is granted patronage over the church of San Bartolomeo del Gallo, which changes its titulation, after some years, to *San Paolo al Gallo*. One may suppose that the title of the Armenian church was transferred to this one after it was destroyed by Bernardi in order to build his private palace.

1547 The Opera di Santa Reparata pleads with the Bernardi family for repairs to be made on the dome of the baptistry. In exchange for this, the Bernardi will be granted a plot located between the garden and the church, next to the lane bordering the former oratory of San Paolo degli Armeni.

Literature

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- international congress (Livorno, 11 novembre 1997), Pisa-Roma 1998.
- 2 **C. Mutafian** (ed.), *Roma-Armenia*, exhibition catalogue (Vatican City 1999), Rome 1999, pp. 235-248.
- 3 *Ibidem*, p. 238.
- 4 **C. Gaignebet**, *San Miniato*, *ibidem*, p. 245. Cf. C. Leonardi, *San Miniato: il martire e il suo culto sul Monte di Firenze*, in *La Basilica di San Miniato al Monte di Firenze*, Firenze 1988, pp. 279-285; G. Dameron, *The Cult of St. Minias and the Struggle for Power in the Diocese of Florence, 1011-1018*, in «Journal of Medieval History» 13 (1987), pp. 125-141.
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- 6 **P. Chobanian**, *Roma e l'Italia nei racconti dei viaggiatori armeni*, in Mutafian, *Roma-Armenia*, cit., pp. 252-254. Cf. also G. Dédéyan, *Les Arméniens en Occident (fin Xe-début Xle siècle)*, in *Occident et Orient au Xe siècle*, Proceedings of a congress (Dijon 1978), Paris 1979, pp. 123-143.
- 7 **Guillelmus de Rubruk**, *Itinerarium*, chap. XXXVII (ed. A. t'Serstevens, *I precursori di Marco Polo*, Milano 1982, p. 306).
- 8 About **St. Davinus**, cf. A. Saminati, *Riflessioni sopra la vita di s. Davino armeno*, Lucca 1700; S. Akelian, *Davino*, in *Enciclopedia cattolica*, Vatican City 1950, vol. IV, coll. 1248-1249; P. Lazzarini, *Davino, santo*, in *Bibliotheca sanctorum*, Rome 1964, vol. IV, col. 520; **R. Grégoire**, *L'agiografia lucchese antica e medievale*, Proceedings of a symposium (Lucca 1982), Lucca 1984, pp. 45-70 (56); **M. Bacci**, *Immagini e devozione nel tardo Medioevo lucchese. Alcune riflessioni in margine alla mostra*, in **M.T. Filieri**, *Sumptuosa tabula picta. Pittori a Lucca tra gotico e rinascimento*, exhibition catalogue (Lucca 1998), Livorno 1998, pp. 76-97 (93-94); **D. Dinelli**, *San Davino – Lucca*, in *Roma-Armenia*, cit., p. 238-240.
- 9 *Acta sanctorum Iunii, Antverpiae 1695*, vol. I, pp. 329-221. Later versions of the legend were published by S. Razzi, *Vite de' santi e beati toscani*, Firenze 1593, pp. 164-167, and **C. Franciotti**, *Historia delle miracolose immagini e delle vite de' Santi, i corpi de' quali sono nella città di Lucca*, Lucca 1613, pp. 329-353. Cf. also *Vita di s. Davino armeno. Cenni di un sacerdote lucchese*, Lucca 1899.
- 10 **D. Dinelli**, *Un Passionario lucchese del XII secolo: i manoscritti A. 79/81 dell'Archivio del Capitolo di S. Giovanni in Laterano*, in «Rara volumina» (1996), 2, pp. 5-16.
- 11 **S. Savigni**, *Episcopato e società cittadina a Lucca*, Lucca 1996, p. 339.
- 12 **E.B. Garrison**, *Studies in the History of Mediaeval Italian Painting*, Florence 1953-1962, vol. I, pp. 131 note 6, 137 note 2.
- 13 **M. Owl'owrlean [Ughurlian]**, *Storia della colonia armena di Livorno e della costruzione della sua chiesa*, ed. by A. Orenco, Livorno 1990, pp. 193-195 (Italian annotated edition of Owl'owrlean's book *Patmowt'iwn Hayoc' gal't'akanowt'ean ew s'inowt'ean ekel'ec'woy noc'a i Livor^noy k'al'ak'i. Handerj yawelowacovk'*, Venice 1891).
- 14 This hypothesis was suggested to me by Prof. Hamlet Petrossian during the conference in Yerevan in September 2003.

- 15 **F. Luzzati Laganà**, *Fondazione e prime vicende del monastero armeno di S. Antonio di Spazzavento in Pisa (XIV secolo)*, in Zekiyan, *Ad limina Italiae*, cit., pp. 129-148; eadem, *Aspetti dell'insediamento armeno in Pisa nel Trecento*, in *Gli Armeni lungo le strade d'Italia*, cit., pp. 13-22.
- 16 Archival evidence about the Armenian friars is collected in some unpublished notes collected by the local historian Anselmo Lettieri in the 1940s: cf. Lucca, *Archivio di Stato*, *Dono Lettieri*, vol. IX (Zibaldone 2). Cf. also Zekiyan, *Le colonie armene*, cit., pp. 897-898.
- 17 **V.R. Giustiniani**, *L'iscrizione armena nella cattedrale di San Martino di Lucca*, in «*Rivista di archeologia storia costume*» 12/2 (1984), pp. 23-28.
- 18 On the subject of Armeno-Basilian or Bartholomite friars in Italy cf. **G. Bitio**, *Relazione del principio e stato della sagra religione dei Frati di S. Basilio degli Armeni in Italia, Pavia 1640*; **M.A. Van Oudenrijn**, *Les constitutions des Frères arméniens en Italie*, Rome 1940; Idem, *Notulae de domibus Bartholomitarum seu fratrum Armenorum citra mare consistentium*, in «*Archivum fratrum Praedicatorum*» 22 (1952), pp. 247-267; **C. Delacroix-Besnier**, *I monaci basiliani in Italia (secoli XIII-XV)*, in *Roma-Armenia*, cit., pp. 208-211.
- 19 Some documentary evidence about St. Paul's of the Armenians is collected in G. Concioni-C. Ferri-G. Ghilarducci, *Arte e pittura nel Medioevo lucchese*, Lucca 1994, p. 224. On April 7, 1348, Cilla di Puccio Massavitelli de' Mansi, widow of the nobleman Nicolao Arnolfi, made a bequest of ten lire to the Armenian church (Lucca, *Archivio di Stato*, *Testamenti*, n° 3, c. 20v). On June 10, 1416, the rector of the baptismal church of Santa Reparata rented to the prior of the Armenian friars (brother Andrew of the late John from Pisa) a burial site located next to the sacristy of Santa Reparata (Lucca, *Archivio arcivescovile*, *Libri antichi di cancelleria*, n° 51, c. 23v). Further archival evidence, being unaccessible today, was collected in the 18th century by the local historians B. Baroni and A.N. Cianelli (cf. Lucca, *Biblioteca Governativa*, mss. 915 and 1771) and transcribed after them by **A. Lettieri** in his *Zibaldone 2* (Lucca, *Archivio di Stato*, *Dono Lettieri*, vol. IX). See our Appendix A.
- 20 Lucca, *Archivio di Stato*, *Pergamene S. Maria Forisportam*, 1348, June 8: «Item iudicavit et reliquit de bonis suis fratribus de Armenia habitantibus iuxta ecclesiam Sanctorum Iohannis et Reparate de Luca pro remedio anime sue testatrix florenum unum et unam bursam de seta videlicet suam maiorem pro conficiendo unum guanciale tenendum ad altare dictorum fratrum». Cf. M. Bacci, «*Pro remedio animae*». *Immagini sacre e pratiche devozionali in Italia centrale (secoli XIII e XIV)*, Pisa 2000, p. 292 and note 201.
- 21 Cf. entries nn° VII, 60 and 61, in *Roma-Armenia*, cit., pp. 233-234.
- 22 **A. Chiappelli**, Pistoia, Firenze 1923, p. 176.
- 23 The inscription reads: «† ut confessor(um) sit p(er)pes vita tuor(um)/ effcis: ex meritis o bone pie xp(ist)e piis:/ in quib(us) emerit(us) h(i)c pi(us) ecce Davinus/ adveniens Lucam partibus Armenie/ hic studuit vite mirac(u)la condere mille/ na(m) claudis gressu(m) lumina restituit./ Sic huiuscem(o)di curatos red(d)idit egros/ dimittensq(ue) sol(um) transiit inde polum/ post mundi fluctus abiit nullos ubi luctus/ invenit ad req(ui)em gaude habere diem/ femina mas or(et) qu(o) morboq(ue) q(ui)que labore/ flectitur hic s(an)c(tu)s fit data cuiq(ue) salus». Cf. Bacci, *Immagini e devozione*, cit., p. 95 note 20.
- 24 **A. Capitano**, entry n° 96, in C. Baracchini (ed.), *Oreficeria sacra a Lucca dal XIII al XV secolo*, exhibition catalogue (Lucca 1991), Florence 1993, p. 466. The reliquary was

- worked out by the goldsmith Bartolomeo Stefani; cf. the documentary witness in E. Lazzareschi, *Gli orafi Cola Spinelli e Bartolomeo Stefani*, in «Rivista d'arte» 11/2 (1929), pp. 254-261.
- 25 The author of the image is known under the conventional nickname of "San Davino Master"; cf. A. Labriola, entry n. 26, in Filieri, *Sumptuosa tabula picta*, cit., pp. 242-243. Cf. also G. Kaftal, *The Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting*, Florence 1952, p. 306 and fig. 351.
- 26 *Entries nn° VIII*, 8 through 10, in *Roma-Armenia*, cit., p. 243.
- 27 Cf. the remarks of Fiorentini and Papebroch in *Acta sanctorum Iunii*, vol. I, pp. 335-336.
- 28 *Van Oudenrijn*, *Les constitutions*, cit., p. 136; Delacroix-Besnier, *I monaci basiliani*, cit., p. 209. According to Bitio, *Relatione*, cit., pp. 31, 33-34, their habit had been that of Dominican conversi already before 1356, but Owl'owrlean, *Storia della colonia armena di Livorno*, cit., p. 199, writes that before that date they had worn an Oriental habit, i.e. a deep blue tunic with a stole-like scapular, and a black cape and cowl.
- 29 *G. Traina*, *Materiali sulla presenza armena nella Perugia medievale*, in *Ad limina Italiae*, cit., pp. 97-113.
- 30 *G. Barsotti*, *Lucca sacra. Guida storico-artistico-religiosa di Lucca*, Lucca 1923, p. 273.
- 31 *Saminiati*, *Riflessioni*, cit., p. 89.
- 32 The names of some Armenian visitors were recorded in some manuscripts preserved in the archive of San Michele in Foro; some of them (such as a bishop Yov'annes in 1596 and the bishop Ar'ak'el of Yerevan in 1669) signed a declaration supporting Davinus' Armenian nationality. Cf. Owl'owr'ean, *Storia della colonia armena di Livorno*, cit., p. 195.