Avedis K. Sanjian papers, ca. 1945-1995

Finding aid prepared by Kelly Besser with assistance from Rebecca Bucher, 2013; machine-readable finding aid created by Caroline Cubé.

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Title: Avedis K. Sanjian papers
Collection number: 2187
Contributing Institution: UCLA Library Special Collections
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 25.8 linear ft. (24 record cartons, 4 document boxes, and 1 shoebox.)
Date: ca. 1945-1995
Abstract: Avedis Krikor Sanjian, Professor emeritus of UCLA's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, was a world-renowned scholar of Armenian studies who wrote ten books and authored more than 40 articles in English and Armenian. The collection consists of personal and professional correspondence, Armenian studies lectures and notes, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures faculty meeting minutes, UCLA Armenian studies minutes, brochures and student publications, his research files, publications, slides, microfilm, photos, audio and video tapes, curriculum vitae and biographies.
Language of Materials: Materials are in English and Armenian.
Physical Location: Stored off-site at SRLF. Advance notice is required for access to the collection. Please contact the UCLA Library Special Collections Reference Desk for paging information.
Restrictions on Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Avedis K. Sanjian papers (Collection 2187). Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA.
Provenance/Source of Acquisition
Processing Information
Kelly Besser with assistance from Rebecca Bucher, 2013.
Biography/History
Avedis K. Sanjian was born on February 24, 1921 in Marash, Turkey. After spending years in Armenian refugee camps in Syria and Lebanon, the Sanjians moved to Palestine in 1926, and three years later settled in the Armenian Quarter of Jerusalem, where he grew up. Sanjian earned two degrees in English: a bachelor's degree from the American University of Beirut in 1949 and a master's degree from the University of Michigan in 1950. He married Helen Karaghuzian in 1950 and they had their son Gregory in 1952. Four years later he became the first graduate student at Michigan to receive a doctorate in Near Eastern Studies.
Sanjian's academic career began in 1957 with an appointment at Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies as a postdoctoral research fellow in Armenian studies. He was appointed assistant professor of Armenian studies at Harvard University in 1961, the first time full-time Armenian studies appointment in the United States. At Harvard, Sanjian developed the first curriculum of Armenological courses in the U.S. and compiled A Grammar of Classical Armenian to enable others to learn this language.
Sanjian left Harvard when the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) invited him to join its faculty in 1965 as associate professor of Armenian studies. Three years later he was promoted to the rank of full professor, and in 1969 he was appointed to the first ever endowed chair at UCLA, the Chair for Armenian Studies. At his suggestion in 1979, the Chair was named after medieval Armenian mystic poet Grigor Narekatsi. Also in 1969, he inaugurated UCLA's graduate program in Armenian studies.
From 1970 to 1974, Sanjian served as Chairman of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, which had four undergraduate and seven graduate degree programs. During this time he was also working on his opus, A Catalogue of Medieval Armenian Manuscripts in the United States, a descriptive and analytical study of all Armenian manuscripts housed in the United States with the exception of the UCLA collection for which he prepared a separate catalogue, Medieval Armenian Manuscripts at the University of California, Los Angeles (Z6621.U65963 A76 1999). Sanjian finalized negotiations for UCLA's acquisition of this collection with Dr. Caro Minasian and hand-delivered its most valuable item, the manuscript of...
the Four Gospels executed at the Armenian monastery of Glajor.
Sanjian wrote ten books and authored more than 40 articles in English and Armenian. He is a founding member of the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS), served as its chairman on three occasions and as editor-in-chief of its publication, the *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* (JSAS). He also served as a board member for the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR) and provided testimony on the Armenian genocide before the United States Congress Subcommittee on Future Foreign Policy Research and Development on May 11, 1976.
Sanjian, UCLA Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, Emeritus, died at the age of 74 on July 22, 1995.

**Scope and Content**
The collection consists of personal and professional correspondence, Armenian studies lectures and notes, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures faculty meeting minutes, UCLA Armenian studies minutes, brochures and student publications, his research files, publications, slides, microfilm, photos, audio and video tapes, curriculum vitae and biographies.

**Organization and Arrangement**
The collection has been arranged into the following series:

**UCLA Catalog Record ID**
UCLA Catalog Record ID: 7322502

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**Correspondence.**

**Scope and Content**

Box 1-4: Personal correspondence files are organized alphabetically by correspondent's last name. Materials include letters from UCLA Librarian for Armenian and Greek, Gia Aivazian, Parisian literary critic and poet, Krikor Beledian, Director of Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Sir Hamilton A. R. Gibb, Director of the Armenian Film Foundation, Dr. Michael Hagopian, and Austrian Turcologist of the University of Vienna, Andreas Tietze.

Box 4-9: Scholarly and professional correspondence files are organized alphabetically by organization, project, publication, event or subject. Materials include letters from Sanjian during his service as Editor of the *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* (JSAS), as a founding member and chairman of the Society for Armenian Studies (SAS) and as a board member for the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR).

Box 8-9: The NAASR files include letters from Chairman Manoog S. Young and Helen Sanjian as well as minutes, rules, by-laws, mailing lists, reports and constitution.

Box 10: Armenian Assembly correspondence from Sanjian's service on its Board of Directors. Materials also include its newsletters, conference reports, congressional statements commemorating April 24 as Armenian Martyrs Day and Sanjian's paper, "The Armenian Genocide: It's Causes and Effects."
UCLA files.

Scope and Content

Box 9: Research grant applications, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures faculty meeting minutes, annotated typescript of Sanjian’s “Armenian Genocide’s Seventieth Anniversary Address,” UCLA Armenian Studies press releases and informational brochure.

Box 11: Faculty Advisory Committee for the Gustave E. Von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies and Faculty Advisory Committee for the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies Annual Reports, minutes and correspondence, copies of the Armenian Students Association publication Roots, correspondence concerning the inception of the UCLA Narekatsi Chair of Armenian Studies, typescript of interview with Sanjian concerning UCLA’s Armenian Studies program, press releases, photos and programs regarding the exhibition, “A Millennium of Armenian Culture,” and Sanjian’s lecture notes, outlines and reading lists for Armenian history courses.

Box 12: Handwritten and typed Armenian studies lectures and notes on topics such as language, alphabet, historians and historiography, medieval tales, poetry and folk songs, the cultural renaissance, Shakespeare’s sonnets, the millets, the Armenian Question and monk and poet, Krikor Naregatzi.

Research files.

Scope and Content

Box 12: Files include material on the following topics concerning Armenian history: Medieval manuscripts in the United States, education and pedagogy, translation of literature, the alphabet, gospel iconography, Glajor’s curriculum and scholastic pursuits, Magistros’ Epic and Christianity.

Box 13: Files on the following topics concerning Armenian history: Grammar, poetry and literature, Gregory Magistros and the Tondrakians, Plato, Michael Psellos, medicine, architecture, painting, sculpture and the Four Gospels at the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery.

Box 14-15: Sanjian’s notes on Medieval Armenian manuscripts organized by country, state and institution. Materials also include photocopies of specific manuscripts such as The Jewish Bride from the Spencer Collection of the New York Public Library and a box of photos of manuscripts from various institutions.

Box 16: Sanjian’s notes on each manuscript in the UCLA Collection of Armenian Manuscripts (Collection 2089). Manuscript files are organized numerically by manuscript number and name. Materials also include detailed summary description and correspondence concerning the Glajor Gospel and binding descriptions by Sylvie L. Merian of Columbia University for each manuscript in the collection.

Box 17: Materials concerning the history of the Glajor Gospel including files on the History of the UCLA Gospel, Esayi’s literary works, the school of Glajor, the manuscripts executed at Glajor, the iconography of the Glajor Gospel and a box of slides and photos.

Box 18-19, 23: Notes, papers, correspondence, articles, clippings and publications concerning Western-Armenian classical poet Vahan Tekeyan.


Box 22: Sanjian’s notes on Medieval Armenian manuscripts handwritten in Armenian with photocopies of manuscripts.

Box 29: Sanjian’s handwritten notes in Armenian on index cards.
### Publications

**Scope and Content**

Sanjian's publications are organized according to his bibliography as follows: Books, articles in English, articles in Armenian and book reviews.

- **Box 24:** Bibliography, books and articles in English.
- **Box 25:** Articles in Armenian, book reviews, UCLA Armenian Manuscript Collection 2089 Catalogue, Sanjian's congressional testimony concerning the Armenian genocide, unpublished work and typescript of *Armenian Gospel Iconography: The Tradition of the UCLA Gospel* by Sanjian and Thomas F. Mathews.
- **Box 26:** Typescripts of *The Armenian Communities in Syria Under Ottoman Dominion*.

### Audiovisual materials

**Scope and Content**

- **Box 19:** 2x2 Anscochrome slides of Armenia. Folder 26 contains an outline with description of the slides. Slides include images of archaeological excavations, ruins, cathedrals, churches, shrines, educational institutions, museums, public buildings and scenes.
- **Box 21:** Black and white photos and postcards of buildings in Armenia. Captions cite names of structures and architects.
- **Box 27:** Thirteen audiocassettes and sixteen VHS videotapes. Videotapes include the following titles: *Cilicia...Rebirth, The Armenian Woman in Literature and History, The Armenian Genocide and Mandate for Armenia: American Military Mission to Turkey and Armenia, 1919*. Eight audiocassettes are Modern Western Armenian language lessons produced by the Harvard University Modern Language Center. Five audiocassettes are contained within a small box entitled, *Self Teaching Armenian Language Method Practical Textbook of Western Armenian* by Haroutiun Kurkjian.
- **Box 28:** Slides, microfilm, negatives and photos. Images include UCLA Glajor Gospel, Armenia, St. Mark's Gospel, Oregon Gospel and Jerusalem holy sites.

### Curriculum vitae and biographies

**Scope and Content**

Materials include multiple versions of Sanjian's curriculum vitae, a tribute booklet published on the occasion of his 30th anniversary in Armenian Studies, a memorial resolution by Willie L. Brown Jr., Speaker Emeritus of the California Assembly and a memorial program from Forest Lawn Mortuary.