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RESEARCH ON ARMENIAN ARCHITECTURE

VARDZK

№ 10

2013

*800th anniversary
Tegher Monastery*



Samvel Karapetian
TEGHER MONASTERY



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**BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE FIRST
 10 ISSUES OF THE JOURNAL VARDZK**



p. 34



N 10

2013

ԳԼԽԱՎՈՐ ԽՄԲԱԳԻՐ
 ՍԱՄՎԵԼ ԿԱՐԱՊԵՏՅԱՆ

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RESEARCH ON ARMENIAN
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ՎԿԱՅԱԿԱՆ N 03Ա089223

ՏՐՎԱԾ 13.10.2010

Certificate No. 03Ա089223
 Given 13.10.2010

ՀԱՄԱՐԻ ԹՈՂԱՐԿԱՄԱՆ
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Dedicated to the 800th anniversary of the foundation of Tegher Monastery

TEGHER MONASTERY

by Samvel Karapetian

A Few Words. The year 2013 marks special anniversaries for a number of historical Armenian monuments. Thus, exactly 1,050 years ago, the Armenian Chalcedonian monastery of Oshk (963 to 973), Tayk Province, and Ashot's Ramparts (963 to 964) of the medieval Armenian capital of Ani were founded. Gagkashen Church of Ani, St. Grigor Church of Kecharis Monastery and Sourb Amenaprkich (*Holy Saviour*) Church of Havuts Tar Monastery (both in Kotayk Region*) celebrate the 1,000th anniversary of their construction, while the manuscript repository (1063) of Sanahin Monastery, Lori Region, entered the 950th year of its existence.

Exactly 900 years ago, in 1113, Sourb Nshan (*Holy Sign*) Church of Haghpat Monastery, Lori Region, underwent renovation.

The year 2013 marks the 800th anniversary of the construction (1213) of Sourb Nshan (*Holy Sign*) Church of Kecharis Monastery; Sourb Karapet (*Holy Forerunner*) Chapel of Havuts Tar Monastery, and the sepulchre of Mkhitar Gosh. Similarly, the caravanserai of Aragyugh, Kotayk Region, the monasteries of Tegher's Sourb Astvatzatzin (*Holy Virgin*), Aragatzotn Region; Morodzoro of Tzerviz, Tavush Region, and Khendzorex in the valley of the river Banush, Lori Region, were built 800 years ago. In 2013 the free-standing cross of Shorzha, Gegharkunik Region, became 800 years old.

The church of Lernanist (formerly: Upper Akhta) Village, Kotayk Region, St. Sargis Church of Feodosia, Crimea, and Sourb Astvatzatzin (*Holy Virgin*) of Lviv, Ukraine, celebrate their 650th anniversaries (1353) in 2013.

The Great Cloister of Tatev and Harants Cloister of Halidzor, both in Siunik Region, as well as Sourb Astvatzatzin (*Holy Virgin*) Church in the Great Square of New Jugha, Iran, met their 400th anniversaries (1613) in 2013. The year 1613 also marks an act of overhaul carried out in Sourb Nshan (*Holy Sign*) Church of Shorot, Nakhichevan.

The following monuments met the 350th anniversary of their construction (1663): Sourb Astvatzatzin (*Holy Virgin*) Church of Tatev's Great Cloister; St. Hripsime of Khendzoresk (both in Siunik Region); St.

Hovhannes Mkrtych (*John the Baptist*) of Khetzadzor Quarter in Agulis (at present annihilated), Nakhichevan; the three-tier church of the Great Monastery of Bnidzor (in the historical Armenian district of Tzobopor); St. Minas of New Jugha, Iran, and the three-arch hall of St. Gayane Church in Echmiatzin, Armavir Region.

The dome of the monastic church of Ktuts Island in Lake Van and Zrkinians Church in Tiflis (at present annihilated) boast a history of 300 years (1713).

The belfry of Aghtamar's Sourb Khach (*Holy Cross*) Monastery and the bridge of Taghaser Village in Artsakh met the 250th anniversary of their construction (1763) in 2013.

Exactly 200 years ago, in 1813, the church of Hodar Village, Salmast District, was built.

The church of Akner Village, Lori Region, the Armenian Catholic church of Alastan, Akhalkalak, and Sourb Nshan (*Holy Sign*) of Akhaltskha celebrate the 150th anniversary of their existence in 2013. In 1863 Astafian (present-day Abovian) Street of Yerevan opened.

The new house of Oshakan's St. Mesropian School, Aragatzotn Region, and the Armenian Catholic church of Sarchapet Village, Lori Region, entered the 100th year of their existence.

Indeed, it would be great to commemorate each of these anniversaries in a separate study,¹ but this issue of *Vardzk* is dedicated to only Tegher's Sourb Astvatzatzin (*Holy Virgin*) Monastery.

Location. The monastery of Tegher is situated in the area between Aghtsk and Orgov Villages, 4 km north of the former in a straight line, and 1.2 km west of the latter, at an altitude of 1,691 metres above sea level (N 40°20.42.40''; E 44°14.23.40'').

It overlooks the valley of Ararat, the scene opening up before it being truly impressive:

The name *Tegher*, which is used by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, is also found in the inscriptions of other monasteries. It [the monastery] is located on an elevation on the western edge of a small gorge which merges into the great ravine of Anberd a little below, within an hour's distance up

* All the administrative units called *region* are within the present-day Republic of Armenia.

¹ The special anniversaries of historical monuments are good opportunities for local bodies of government, and private individuals concerned with heritage preservation to hold different educational and cultural events aimed at raising and promoting awareness of the given monument.



Tegher Monastery from the south-west (photo by T. Toramanian, 1924)

the mountain, north of the aforementioned village of Aghtsk... This superb church, which rises in a very cool... place, offers a view of the spacious valley of Ararat.²

Origin of the Name. The available historical sources do not offer any scientific interpretation regarding the origin of the toponym *Tegher*. According to a legend recorded in the 18th century, while building the sacred churches of Vagharshapat, St. Gregory proved unable to bear the stiflingly hot weather of the place and moved to Tegher, where it was cool. He took up living there, spending his days in incessant prayers. One day the Holy Enlightener and the local inhabitants had a vision of St. Mary, dressed in purple and accompanied by numerous angels emitting boundless light. They rushed to Her, but She vanished. In utter amazement, some of them kept saying, “The Holy Virgin was here!,” and others, “She was there”; hence the monastery was called Tegher’s^{2a} Sourb Astvatzatzin (*Holy Virgin of Tegher*).³

This name can be found in a spate of 13th-century lapidary inscriptions preserved on the walls of the monastic buildings. It is interesting to note that in the

late Middle Ages, it was also called *Lrjakapuyt Sourb Nshan*, the name first occurring in the colophon of a geographical work of 1656.⁴ It is also mentioned in a record of 1691,⁵ and in another dating from the 2nd half of the 18th century:

Miracle-working Sourb Nshan, which is also called Lrjakapuyt Sourb Nshan: if you visit it in strong faith, firm hope and fervent love, it will remedy your aches and pains, curing you and saving you from possession by demons.⁶

It should be noted that the primary name of the monastery, *Sourb Astvatzatzin of Tegher*, did not sink into total oblivion, being again used in the 17th to 18th centuries.⁷

Late medieval records frequently mention Tegher Monastery and the village of the same name where it is located as *Degher* or *Dgher*,⁸ these names being especially widespread among Muslims who were unable to pronounce the Armenian name *Tegher*.⁹

From the History of Tegher Village. Tegher has been inhabited by Armenians since at least the Early Middle Ages. At the beginning of the 19th century, when thousands of Armenians were deported to Geor-

² **Շահխատունյանց Յ.**, Ստորագրութիւն Կարթուղիկէ Էջմիածնի և հինգ զաւառացն Արարատայ [H. Shakhhatunians, A Description of Echmiatzin Cathedral and Five Districts of Ararat], vol. 2 (Holy Echmiatzin, 1842), 68-69.

^{2a} The Armenian equivalents for *here* and *there* contain the root ‘tegh,’ which forms part of the name *Tegher*.

³ Դիւան հայոց պատմութեան [Documents Relating to Armenian History], vol. 3 (Tiflis, 1894), 831-832.

⁴ **Թօփճեան Յ.**, Յուցակ ձեռագրաց Դարձեան Խաչիկ վարդապետի [H. Topjian, A List of Manuscripts Compiled by Archimandrite Khachik Dadian], part 1 (Vagharshapat, 1898), 77.

⁵ **G. Uluhogian**, Un’ antica mappa dell’ Armenia [An Ancient Map of Armenia] (Ravenna, 2000), 76.

⁶ Documents Relating to Armenian History, vol. 3, 832.

⁷ Ibid., 804.

⁸ Ibid., 831.

⁹ Shakhhatunians, 68.



Tegher Monastery from the south-west (photo by S. Karapetian, 2009)

gia in the aftermath of the Georgian raids against the khanate of Yerevan, the village was re-populated by foreigners for the first time in its history. As of the 1830s, Tegher already had Turkish inhabitants constituting 6 houses.¹⁰

The incessant incursions made the foreign inhabitants of Tegher, about fifty souls huddled together in the local church, enclose the village within simple ramparts of undressed stone and earth. As of the 1830s, these walls were in a state of decrepitude, only some of their parts being still preserved standing.¹¹

It remains obscure exactly when Armenians returned to Tegher, but presumably, this happened in the 2nd half of the 19th century. As of 1909, the village already had 464 Armenian inhabitants (255 males, 209 females),¹² whose number, however, had shrunk to 255 (146 males, 109 females) in 42 houses by 1911.

Below follows a list of the Armenians of Tegher compiled by Senior Archimandrite Khachik Dadian on 12 July 1911:

1. Priest Garegin Ter-Davtian Ter-Avetissians, aged 44; his wife Sopia Martirosian, 40; their chil-

dren: Parandzem, 15; Paranuys, 13; Hmayak, 10; David, 5 (3 males, 3 females);

2. Abel Ter-Davtian Ter-Avetissian, aged 40; his wife Hripsime Alexanian, 35; their children: Mariam, 14; Arusyak, 12; Ashot, 8; Nerses, 4 (3 males, 3 females);

3. Khachatur Ter-Davtian Ter-Avetissians, aged 55; his wife Iskuhi Baghdasariants, 55; their sons: Anakhas Khachatrian, aged 14; Sirakan, 30, with his wife Shamam Ohanian, 28; their children: Bagrat, 7; Arpenik, 4; Nahapet, aged 2 (4 males, 4 females);

4. Grigor Ter-Davtian Ter-Avetissians, aged 35; his wife Susanbar Sahakian, 30; their children: Vahan, 12; Vahagn, 5; Zebet, 6; Vasak, 3; Voskehat, 1 (5 males, 2 females);

5. The Village Head's elder brother Alexan Astvatzatrian Avetissians, 70; his wife Mariam Hakobian, 60; their children: Yenok Alexanian, 30; his wife Anush Sahakian, 25; their children: Arpenik, 3; Andranik, 1; Avetis Astvatzatrian Avetissians, 50;¹³ his wife Tamam Karapetian, 45; their son Tumas, aged 15 (5 males, 4 females);

6. David Astvatzatrian Avetissians, aged 38; his wife Gyulizar Ikhtarian, 35; their children: Armenak, 12; Asatur, 4; Varsenik, 8; Astghik, aged 1 (3 males, 3 females);

7. Churchwarden Sahak Muradian, aged 70; his wife Heriknaz Poghossian, 60; their son Abel Sahakian,

¹⁰ Ibid., 69.

¹¹ Ibid. As early as the 1830s, the toponym *Tegher* was considered to mark not a village—but merely a monastery with its brethren. Probably, they lived there before the construction of the church, but at the time specified, there were no vestiges of their abodes: they had already been destroyed by the Muslims who lived there from time to time (ibid.).

¹² National Archives of Armenia, fund 48, list 1, file 299, p. 11.

¹³ Avetis Astvatzatrian was the assistant village head (National Archives of Armenia, fund 319, list 1, file 181, p. 31).

25; his wife Salatin Khachatryan, 20, and their children: Vartush, 5; Shamam, 2 (2 males, 4 females);

8. Sardar Martirosian Muradian, 40; his wife Hripsime Avetissian, 35; their children: Mekhak, 12; Melik, 8; Misak, 7; Knyaz, 5; Shushan, 3 (5 males, 2 females);

9. The late Gabriel Martirosians' widow Tamam Harutiunians, aged 35; her children: Virab, 12; Gingham, 6; Astghik, 4 (2 males, 2 females);

10. Martiros Muradian, aged 80; his wife Yeliso Nazarian, 70; their son Aghasi Martirosian, 35; his wife Hnazand Grigorian, 30; their children: Javahir, 5; Khatun, 3 (2 males, 4 females);

11. Galust Ohanian, aged 66; his wife Zartar Parsamian, 60; their sons: Pilipos Galstian, 6; Anghalut, 12; Manuk, 22, with his wife Siranuys Karapetian, 20 (3 males, 3 females);

12. Widower Grigor Ohanian, aged 70; his sons: Rostom Grigorian, 30, with his wife Yester Hakobian, 25; their children: Mamikon, 7; Hovakim, 4; Harutiun, 1; Tadevos Grigorian, 25; his wife Ashkhen Yepremian, 20, with their son Vagharshak, 1; Teos Grigorian, 23, and his wife Marinos Karapetian, 20 (8 males, 3 females);

13. Gaspar Grigoriants, aged 40; his wife Hino Gharibian, 35; their children: Behbud, 16; Ohanes, 12; Hayrik, 10; Khachatur, 3; Azniv, 4 (5 males, 2 females);

14. Mkrtich Grigorian, aged 36; his wife Hnazand Hovelian, 30; their children: Khachatur, 8; Shavarsh, 3 (3 males, 1 females);

15. Petros Avetissian Harutiunians, 46; his wife Tzovinar Sayadian, 40; their children: Samson, 10; Margarit, 12; Nakhshun, 5; Ghazar Avetissian, 25, with his wife Anna Mkrtchian, 20 (3 males, 4 females);

16. Widower Tadevos Avetissian Harutiunian, aged 42; his children: Markos, 12; Arusyak, 10; Araxia, 6; Parandzem, 4 (2 males, 3 females);

17. Tumas Avetissian Harutiunian, 40; his wife Katarine Nazarian, 35; his children: Zardar, 10; Piruze, 4; Noraghjik, 1 (2 males, 3 females);

18. Harutiun Simonian Avetissians, 25; his wife (name unmentioned), 20; Ghukas Simon Avetissians, 20; his sister Mariam, 14 (2 males, 2 females);

19. Ayvaz Gevorgian Harutiunian, aged 35, and his wife Shoghakat Galstian, 18 (1 male, 1 female);

20. Hakob Martiros Khlatians, 80; his wife Zartar Sargissian, 70; his godchildren: Hovhannes Hakobian, 20, with his wife Satenik Alexanian, 18, and their son Petros, 2; Hovhannes' mother Mariam Gyulnazariants, 50; Vergine Khachatryan's daughter, 12 (3 males, 4 females);

21. Rapael Gevorgian Davtians, 37; his wife Yester Asaturian, 34; their children: Sophia, 14; Hambardzum, 10; Lusik, 4 (2 males, 3 females);

22. Hakob Matevossian Davtians, aged 18; his mother Mariam Movsessian Davtians, 40; his brothers: Mamikon Matevossian, 15; Grigor Matevossian, 12; Teodoros Matevossian, 10 (4 males, 1 female);

23. Widower Hovsep Simeonian Hovsepians, 60; his children: Ruben Hovsepians, 16; Yervand Hovsepians, 14; Serovb Hovsepians, 12; Harutiun Hovsepians, 10; Mamikon Hovsepians, 24; his wife Yeghisabet Khachatryan, 20; Margarit, 3; Grigor Hovsepians, 22; his wife Ustiane Sahakian, 20 (7 males, 3 females);

24. Knyaz Hovsepian Harutiunians, 40; his wife Matan Minassian, 35; their children: Khumar, 14; Anush, 9; Benjamin, 8 (2 males, 3 females);

25. Karapet Mkrtchian Harutiunians, 40; his wife Ustiane Avetissian, 35; their children: Shavarsh, 12; Aregnazan, 9; Andranik, 7; Senekerim, 5; Levon, 2 (5 males, 2 females);

26. Andreas Baghdasarian Khalatians, aged 41; his wife Sandukht Vardanian, 35; their children: Narinbek, 13; Hamazasp, 6; Srбуhi, 4 (3 males, 2 females);

27. Alexan Mkrtchian Panossians,¹⁴ 60; his wife Margarit Martirosian, 60; their children: Arshak Alexanian, 30; Ruben Alexanian, 21; Kerovbe Alexanian, 18; Mamikon Alexanian, 35, with his wife Papar Mesropian, 25, and their children: Mkrtich, 6, and Aramayis, 2; Alexan's brother's daughter Haykanush Sedrakian, 12 (7 males, 3 females);

28. Hambardzum Margarian Ohaniants, 50; his wife Varo Nuroyan, 40; their children: Yeremia, 14; Astvatzatur, 5; David, 1; Mariam, 10; Hambardzum's sister Heghnar Margarian, 40 (4 males, 3 females);

29. Movses Vardanian Ohaniants, 60; his wife Shushanik Muradian, 50; their children: Sabet Movsessian, 14; Ignatios Movsessian, 30, with his wife Shushanik Grigorian, 25, and their children: Stepanos, 10; Sirakan, 5; Patvakan, 1 (5 males, 3 females);

30. Israel Hakobian Muradiants, 50; his wife Etar Gharibians, 40; their children: Petros Israelian, 22; Harutiun Israelian, 20; Gevorg Israelian, 24, with his wife Shushan Militonian, 15 (4 males, 2 females);

31. Samson Hambardzumian Gevorgians, 30; his wife Nazlu Hakobian, 25; their children: Karasim, 8; Ashkhen, 2 (2 males, 2 females);

32. Grigor Hambardzumian Gevorgians, 28; his wife Shogher Hakobian, 25; their son Hambardzum, 1; Grigor's brother Galust Hambardzumian Gevorgians, 22 (3 males, 1 female);

33. Baghdasar Gyulnazarian Baghdasariants, 50; his wife Mariam Hovhaniants, 30; their children:

¹⁴ In 1916 Alexan Mkrtchian Panossians was the churchwarden of Tegher (*ibid.*, p. 30).

Sahak Baghdasarian, 10; Khatun Baghdasarian, 2; Khachatur Baghdasarian, 25; his wife Susanbar Nersessian, 20; Baghdasar's father Gyulnazar Baghdasariants, aged 100 (4 males, 3 females);

34. Alexan Gyulnazarian Baghdasariants, 30; his wife Sali Krpeyan, 20; their sons: Karapet, 10; Anushavan, 1 (3 males, 1 female);

35. Grigor Gyulnazarian Baghdasariants, 25; his wife Shushan Grigorian, 20; their daughter Vardush, 2 (1 male, 2 females);

36. Matevos Babayan Karapetiants, 35; his wife Senakhas Karapetian, 30; their children: Arevshat, 12; Babgen, 3; Hripsime, 15; Maniak, 8; Lusik, 5 (2 males, 5 females);

37. Markos Babayan Karapetiants, 30; his wife Antaram Sahakian, 25; their son Ghumash, 1; widower Grigor Hakobian Muradiants, 80 (2 males, 2 females);

38. Stepan Grigorian Hakobiants, aged 30; his wife Mary Sahakian, 25; their children: Zartar, 10; Gegham, 7; Mesrop, 5; Hovhannes, 2 (4 males, 2 females);

39. Hayrapet Hakobian Muradiants, 40; his wife Soper Abgarian, 35; their children: Hakob Hayrapetian, 10; Katarine Hayrapetian, 12; Mnatsakan Hayrapetian, 20; his wife Gyulvard Margarian, 18; their children: Torgom, 3; Vartush, 1 (4 males, 4 females);

40. Yeghiazar Gharibian Hakobiants, 35; his wife Sonia Davtian, 30; their children: Harutiun, 10; Grish, 8; Gorgi, 3; Yeghiazar's brother Khachatur Gharibian Hakobiants, 30; his wife Javahir Mnatsakaniants, 25 (no children); Yeghiazar's nephew Matevos Karapetian Gharibiants, 15 (6 males, 2 females);

41. Poghos Gharibian Hakobiants, 40; his wife Ovsanna Nersessian, 35; their children: Garnik, 12; Gevorg, 8; Hovhan, 3; Araxia, 4 (4 males, 2 females);

42. Widower Sahak Ohanian Gyulnazariants; his daughter Hripsime Sahakian, 14; his brother Tigran Ohanian Gyulnazariants, 24 (2 males, 1 female).¹⁵

Earlier Monuments in Tegher Village. Neither the available written records nor the vestiges of material culture preserved in Tegher substantiate the presumption that an older religious monument existed in the site of Sourb Astvatzatzin Church before its construction in 1213. On the other hand, some surviving cross-stone fragments show that at least a cemetery of khachkars used to extend there before the foundation of the present-day monastery. Among these broken pieces, special mention should be made of a free-standing cross fragment (17.5 x 19.5 cm), part of one of its upper or horizontal arms, now lying inside a semi-



Tegher. Fragment of a free-standing cross, 5th to 7th centuries (photo by S. Karapetian, 2009)

ruined church south-west of the monastery. Judging from it, the cross was made of red tuff and dates from the 5th to 7th centuries.

The monastic narthex retains another fragment from the lower right part of a cross-stone of 1180 which is engraved with the following inscription:

ՈՒԹ (1180), ... (Կաևնգն) և ցաւ նշ (աւնս ի բարեւ) յաւսու...:

629 (1180), ...this holy sign was erected for the salvation of...

Published for the first time.



The narthex also preserves another fragment from an inscribed cross-stone of 1206 formerly lying in the vicinity of the monastery. The inscription on this fragment reads:

(Ո)՛ԾԵ (1206), ... (մն... (մ) յարմի ...:

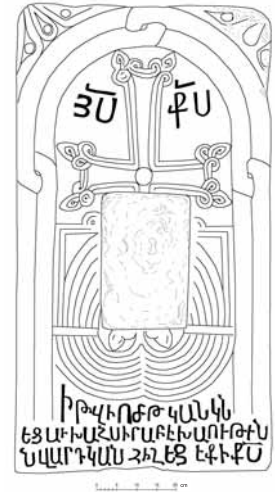
655 (1206), ...have mercy...

Published for the first time.

Note: The stylistic, artistic and writing peculiarities of the inscription allow us to restore the hundred in the year: Ո (600).

Another cross-stone preserved in the narthex is 3 years older than Sourb Astvatzatzin Church. Its damaged state shows that it used to serve as an altar-stone:

¹⁵ National Archives of Armenia, fund 319, list 1, file 181, pp. 23-30. This list also contains information regarding the livestock and plots of land belonging to every family.



Tegher. A khachkar (1210)



Tegher. A khachkar fragment (1206)

it has a rectangular hollow in its central part, and the projection on its lower part was broken to have it evened. This khachkar has the following inscription:

*Յ(իսուս) Զ(րիստոս)ս, | ի քվի(ն) ՈՇԹ (1210)
կանկն|եցաւ խաչս քարէխաւսութ(ի)ւն | Նվարդկան,
յիշեցէք ի Զ(րիստոս)ս:*

Jesus Christ. In the year 659 (1210), this cross-stone was erected for Nvardik's salvation.

Published for the first time.

Foundation of Tegher Monastery. The available historical sources do not report any information regarding the foundation of the monastery and the subsequent construction activities unfolded there. With this respect, of immense value and importance are the inscriptions preserved on the walls of the monastic buildings.¹⁶ It goes without saying that the flawless

decipherment of these records, and especially, of the dates found in them is very important, as otherwise, we may have a lot of misunderstanding and facts contradicting history. Regretful as it is, the monastery of Tegher has not been very lucky with this regard: thus, the years have been erroneously read in some inscriptions; in others, they have been considered as already beyond decipherment, whereas in fact, they can be at least half deciphered even nowadays (indeed, in 1922, for instance, they were easier to decipher than at present). These errors have resulted in wrong or incomprehensive statements and conclusions in various works: thus, in the 1830s the foundation of the monastery was traced back to 1232 on the basis of its construction inscription carved on the western entrance of its narthex:

It was built by pious lady Mamakhatur, Prince Vache's spouse, its construction being commemorated in an inscription engraved on the western door of the monastic narthex.¹⁷

Archimandrite Mkhitar Ter-Mkrtchian regards the year 1232 as indisputably marking the foundation of the monastery:

mentions it among other monasteries built in Shirak and Aragatzotn Districts of Armenia Maior under the auspices of the prince Zakarian (**Չարարեայ սարկաւազի** պատմագրութիւն [Historiography by **Deacon Zakaria**], vol. 3 (Vagharshapat, 1870), 12). In the 18th century, mention is made of a superb church called *Asivatatzin (Holy Virgin)*, which was built by Spasalar Zakaria's sister Mamakhatur (Documents Relating to Armenian History, vol. 3, 831). According to another record, Spasalar Zakaria's sister, lady Mamakhatur, who was a pious and God-loving woman, built a domed church with heavy expenses and dedicated it to the Holy Virgin. She made it a renowned monastery and gave it numerous dioceses that extended up to Assyrian Mesopotamia (ibid., 832).

¹⁶ It should be noted, however, that there are some written records bearing reference to Tegher Monastery. Thus, Zakaria Kanakertsy

¹⁷ **Shakhhatunians**, 68.

We hold that both the large and small churches as well as the *zhamatun* were built by Mamakhatun in the year 681 of the Armenian calendar. As for the stones bearing inscriptions with earlier dates, they were brought here from other places during renovation activities, probably, from the ruins of the nearby church of St. Hovhan [John], or from the monastery of Sourb Khach [*Holy Cross*].¹⁸

According to meritorious scholar, Senior Archimandrite Khachik Dadian, Tegher Monastery was built in 1231, as a mausoleum, under the auspices of lady Mamakhatun from the Vachutians' family.¹⁹

Almost the same information is found in another record by Kh. Dadian:

As I have already said in my topographical research on Saghmosavank [Monastery], Tegher Monastery was built in 1231 under the patronage of lady Mamakhatun from the Vachutians' family to serve them as a sepulchre. Lady Mamakhatun herself is buried there.²⁰

Another scholar distinguished for commendable research activities, Catholicos Garegin Hovsepian, writes:

The monastery of Tegher in Aragatzotn District must have been built in 662 (1213), according to an inscription above its entrance. In 1221 Archimandrite Aghbayrik, its architect, stated that he had built the church and narthex. Finally, Prince Vache's spouse Mamakhatun, who initiated the foundation of the monastery, mentions the year 681 (1232). All these records show that the church and *zhamatun* were built immediately one after another.²¹

According to a present-day researcher, T. Petrossiants, the church and narthex of Tegher had a common construction project.²² As for the inscription commemorating the construction of the narthex in 1232, he thinks that it marks some changes made in its composition: to be more exact, two small churches were added to its western corners (allegedly, the original composition of the narthex, built in 1221, did not envisage such additions). Petrossiants particularly writes:

The entire facade of the narthex and the roof covering it were pulled down and re-laid in a new composition: a section and several masonry rows separated the central pediment

between two high-rising church-belfries, making it more elevated.²³

Our research into the available records, combined with a check-up of the existing decipherments of the lapidary inscriptions of Tegher Monastery, and our own reading of those waiting for decipherment, have led us to the following conclusions:

a. It is beyond any dispute that Sourb Astvatzatzin Church of the monastery was completed in 1213: this is substantiated by three inscriptions carved next to the southern window of the church tambour (no. 4), on the decorative arch edging the tympanum of its western entrance (no. 5), and on the same tympanum (no. 6).²⁴

b. The church and narthex did not have a common construction project; moreover, the construction of the latter was not primarily envisaged at all. Besides, the building of the narthex could not have immediately followed that of the church for the simple reason that the pilasters of the narthex, which abuts on the church, have totally hidden half of a donation inscription left by architect Aghbayrik on the western facade of the church earlier: this shows that the narthex was a later addition.

c. The year 1221 refers not only to the inscription of architect Aghbayrik, carved on the north-looking face of the capital of the south-eastern pillar of the narthex, but also to one of the brief donation inscriptions (left out of scientific circulation due to its erroneous decipherment) engraved on the western pediment of the narthex. Most presumably, 6 other commemorative records, engraved close to some cross reliefs around this inscription, trace back to the same time. This confirms that this part of the narthex was built not in 1232, but exactly in 1221; therefore, the churches standing at the western corners of the narthex are not later additions, but form part of a single composition. As for the year 1232, it simply marks the completion of the monument, which might have proceeded at intervals due to the political situation of the country, and particularly, the Mongol incursions.

Architectural Description. The first researcher to touch on the composition and architectural features of Tegher Monastery was Mesrop Taghiadians, who visited it in September 1816:

We arrived at Tegher, which has a magnificent monastery built on the verge of an elevated gorge. The form of its buildings and entrances makes it completely similar to Hovhanavank in Karbi [Aragatzotn Region, Republic of Armenia],

²³ *Ibid.*, 201.

²⁴ It should be noted that the toponym *Tegher*, marking the village rather than the monastery of the same name, is also mentioned in one of the inscriptions of the church of Amberd dated no later than 1212 (*Shakhhatunians*, 71). Also see **Տեղ-Սիմասյան Ե.**, Ամբերդաձորի հնությունները և արձանագրությունները [**Yer. Ter-Minassian**, "The Antiquities and Inscriptions of the Gorge of Amberd"], «Էջմիածին» [*Echmiatzin*], no. 5 (1961), 50.

¹⁸ **Տեղ-Մկրտչեան Մ.**, Մի քանի հին արձանագրություններ [**M. Ter-Mkrtschian**, "Several Old Inscriptions"], *Zeitschrift für armenische Philologie* [*Journal of Armenian Philology*] (Marburg, 1904), 46.

¹⁹ National Archives of Armenia, fund 319, list 1, file 181, p. 18.

²⁰ Վավերագրեր հայ եկեղեցու պատմության, գիրք Ը, Սասրէոս Բ Իզմիրլեան [*Documents on the History of the Armenian Church*, vol. 8: *Matteos Izmirlian II*] (Yerevan, 2001), 594.

²¹ **Յովսէփեան Գ.**, Խաղբակեանք կամ Պոռշեանք հայոց պատմութեան մէջ [**G. Hovsepian**, *The Khaghbakians or Proshians in Armenian History*] (Antelias, 1969), 195.

²² **Պետրոսյանց Տ.**, Վաչուտյաններ [**T. Petrossiants**, *The Vachutians*] (Yerevan, 2001), 198-200.



Tegher Monastery from the south-east (photo by T. Toramanian, 1924)

although it boasts higher architectural merits, its location being very impressive, too.²⁵

A record of the 1830s provides more details:

The central church does not have pillars at all. Its extensive narthex rests on four columns, each built of a whole block of stone. The monastery has beautifully-constructed chapels with high, solid arches of finely-dressed stone. It has three small domes, one of which surmounts the church, and the other two, the narthex. Two small chapels rise beneath these two, on the roof, their doors opening from the roof.²⁶

Another record states:

The monastery consists of a four-pillar narthex and a domed church absolutely without columns. Each of the south-western and north-western corners of the narthex is surmounted by a dome and has a holy altar.²⁷

Sourb Astvatzatzin Church of Tegher Monastery represents a central-domed structure, a composition that was particularly widespread in the High Middle Ages, its specimens abounding throughout Historical Armenia. The pearl of the architectural image of the monastery is its four-pillared narthex (1221 to 1232), which is singularly different from other structures of the same composition thanks to the existence of small, similarly central-domed churches at both western corners of its roof (a prototype

of this composition is the monastery of Yeghipatrush in Aragatzotn Region, Republic of Armenia, another fruit of architect Aghbayrik's creative mind).

Although small in number, monuments of double-domed composition are not alien to the Armenian architecture of the High Middle Ages. Specimens of this composition can be seen in the monasteries of Horomos and Nor Varag, although in these monuments, the domed chapels simply adjoin the free-standing monuments. It is only in the monasteries of Tegher and Yeghipatrush that the domed churches rise directly over the narthex.

Tegher Monastery between the 14th and 17th centuries. The earliest dated lapidary inscriptions of Tegher trace back to the 13th century. As for the numerous undated donation inscriptions of the monastery, they may be undoubtedly attributed to the 14th century.

Lapidary records of the 15th century (one of them is dated 1494) and the subsequent periods are rather rare. There are also some scraps of historiographical records regarding this period; thus, during the famine of 1431, mention is made of Zakare, a coenobite from Tegher.²⁸

In 1599 (1048 of the Armenian calendar) reference is made to Prior Ghukas, Father Superior of the monasteries of Ohanavank, Tegher and Vzhan. He penned a

25 Թաղիդանց Մ., Ճանապարհորդութիւն ի Հայս [M. Taghidiants, A Journey to Armenia], vol. 1 (Calcutta, 1847), 214.

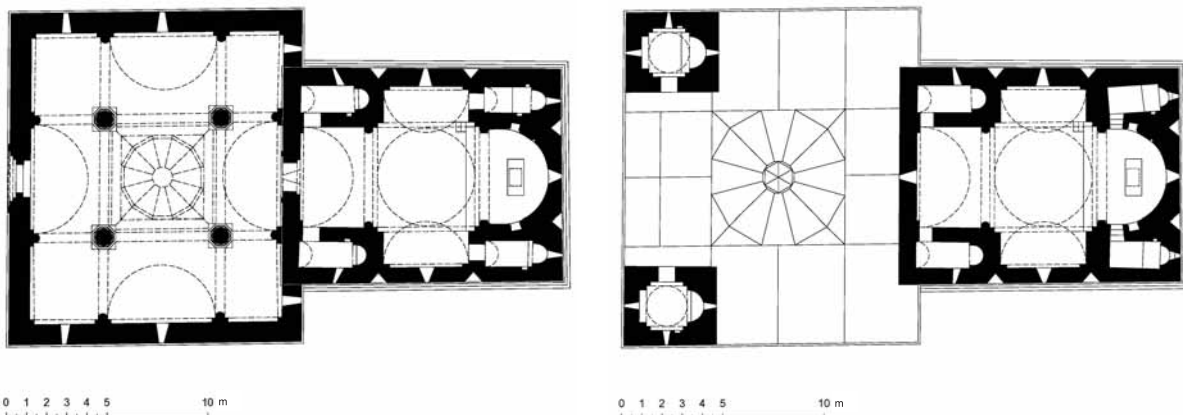
26 Shahkhatunians, 69.

27 Documents on the History of the Armenian Church, vol. 8, 594.

28 Թովմա Մեծօրհնի, Պատմագրութիւն [Tovma Metzopetsi, Historiography] (Yerevan, 1999), 161.



Tegher Monastery from the south-east (photo by S. Karapetian, 2012)



The plans of the first and second tiers of Tegher Monastery (measurement by A. Hakobian, 2013)

Gospel and donated it to Ohanavank (later it was taken to the village of Parpi).²⁹

In the 17th century, a certain Father Kirakos was ordained bishop and became Father Superior of Tegher³⁰ (he is also mentioned in 1677).³¹

29 Historiography by **Deacon Zakaria**, vol. 3, 32. Referring to this source, H. Shahkhatuniants mentions Prior of Tegher Monastery Ghukas, who had a Gospel written in 1048 (1599) (**Shahkhatuniants**, 72).

30 **Deacon Zakaria**, vol. 3, 8-9.

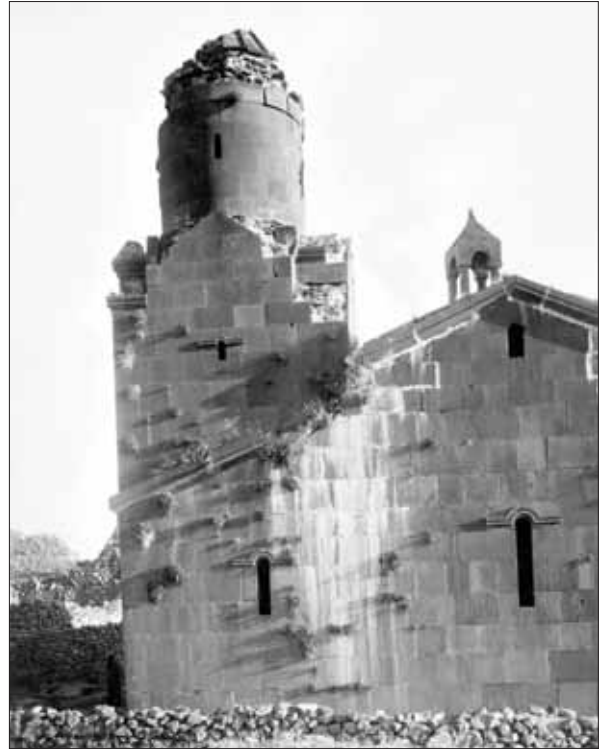
31 Մանր ժամանակագրություններ [Collected Chronicles], vol. 1 (Yerevan, 1951), 310.

Tegher Monastery between the 18th and 19th centuries. In the '30s of the 18th century, Tegher was one of the numerous monasteries tributary to the khan of Yerevan.³²

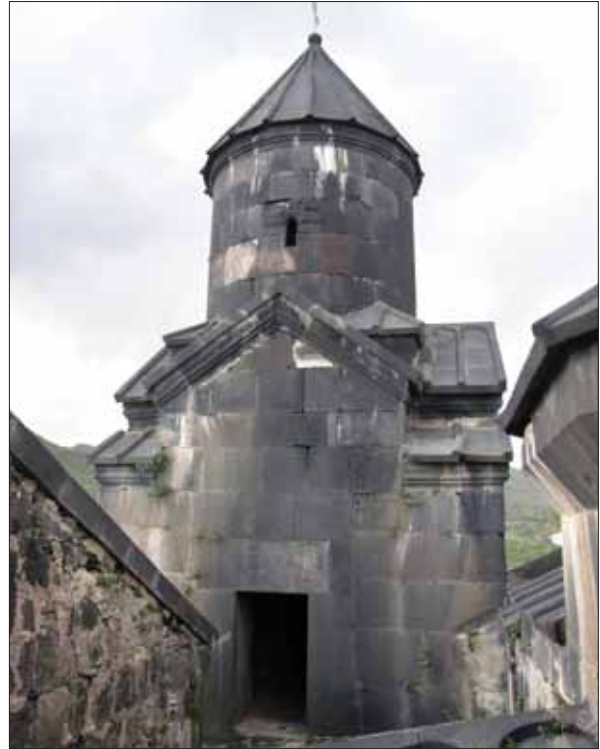
In 1766 Catholicos Simeon made an 11-day trip to the monasteries of Aragatzotn, including Sourb Astvatzatzin of Tegher, St. Gevorg, Ohanavan[k], Saghmosavan[k], St. Sargis and Artavazik.³³

32 Մատենադարանի պարսկերեն հրովարտականքներ [Persian Decrees Kept in Yerevan Research Institute of Manuscripts after M. Mashtots], book 4 (Yerevan, 2008), 36.

33 Documents Relating to Armenian History, vol. 3, 456.



The church of Tegher Monastery from the south and the south-western part of its narthex (photos by T. Toramanian, 1924)
The monastery from the south-west (photo by S. Karapetian, 2013)



The northern chapel of Tegher Monastery from the south-west and south; the monastery from the west (photos by A. Hakobian & S. Karapetian, 2011, 2013)



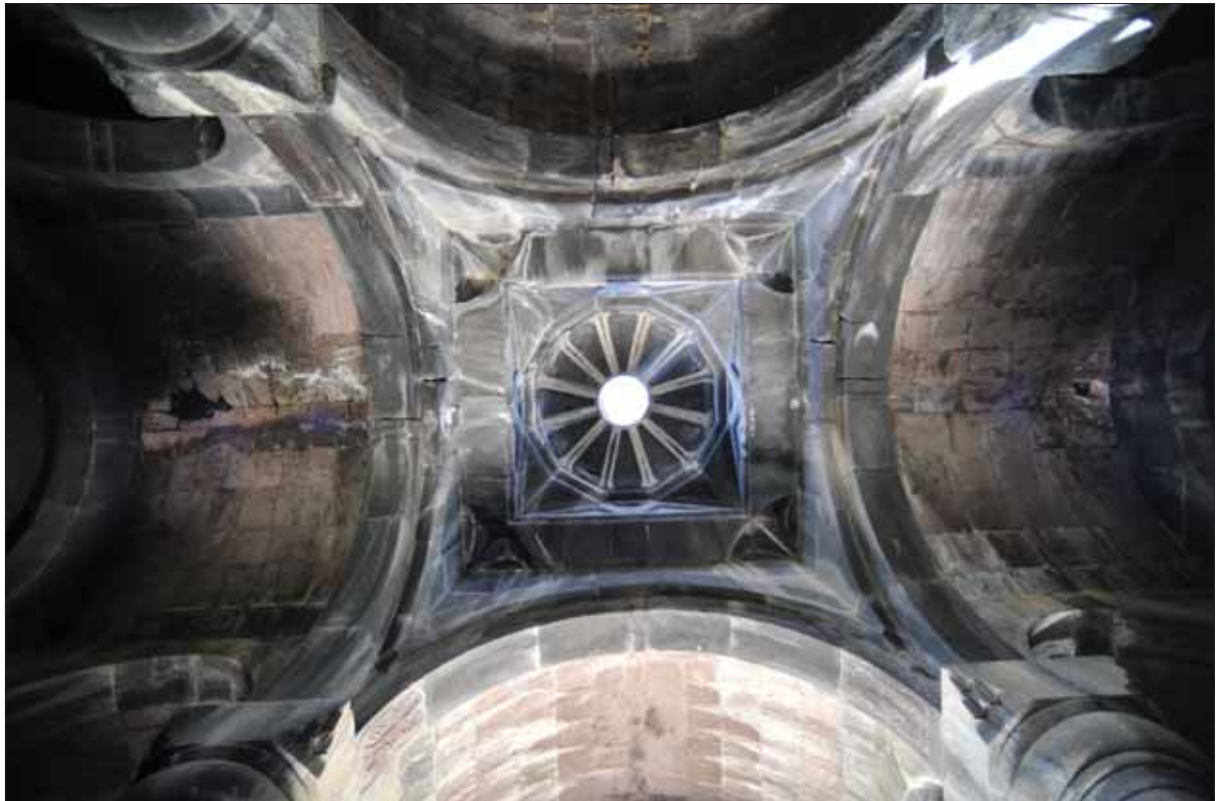
A partial view of the interior of Sourb Astvatzatzin Church of Tegher Monastery (photo by S. Karapetian, 2012)



A view into the dome of Sourb Astvatzatzin Church; its sanctuary (photos by S. Karapetian, 2012)



A partial view of the interior of the narthex of Tegher Monastery (photo by S. Karapetian, 2012)



Partial views of the interior of the narthex of Tegher Monastery (photos by S. Karapetian, 2012)

Seeing the inconsolable state of Tegher Monastery, the Catholicos decided to implement some reforms there:

It [the holy monastery] has neither a profitable diocese nor a parish to meet its needs, and for this reason, it is in abject poverty, with a lot of debts. Moreover, the monastic church, ramparts, cells and other buildings have reached a state of utter decrepitude due to their old age (they have also suffered from an earthquake). In a word, the holy monastery has lost its former grandeur and is consigned to total neglect. Seeing all this, we were imbued with pain and appointed our favourite son who is closely attached to the Holy See, Bishop Anania, a meritorious archimandrite, Father Superior of that renowned monastery... We urged him to go to that house of God and renovate it, first and foremost by the grace of the Lord, and with his own efforts. May he restore its splendour to the glory of Christ, to the love of the Very Blessed Holy Virgin, and to the pride of the Armenian nation.³⁴

However, these plans were not carried out as in the 1830s the monastery, although standing, still showed evident signs of decrepitude:

The church is mostly preserved, but its stones have partly fallen off, and an earthquake has damaged it... [The monastery stands] ...neglected and forsaken.³⁵

Tegher Monastery in the Early 20th century. On 15 August 1910, the issue of the inconsolable condition of the monastery was again raised by H. Hovhannissian:

The decrepit state of the centuries-old magnificent monastery of Degher Village has worsened in recent years, and it is on the verge of final fall “thanks to” the unforgivable disregard of the local ignorant population, and particularly, its worthless priest. The roof and walls of the monastery are covered with dense vegetation, which will, indeed, gradually corrode it. The finely-dressed stones of the revetment right of the entrance are about to fall down. The remnants of the large dome are similarly on the very brink of collapse. ...I know that an amount of several hundred roubles has been collected for the renovation of this venerable monument, but it is kept by some private individuals. ...We should not allow the squander of the money belonging to the church; nor should we permit the total collapse of one of the most beautiful specimens of our [Armenian] medieval architecture before the very eyes of Holy Echimatzin, just because of ignorance, disregard and indifference.³⁶

In the same year, Archimandrite Khachik Dadian addressed a letter to Catholicos Matevos II in which he reported that both the monastery and its domestic affairs were in a very disconsolate state due to the indifference and neglect to which it had been consigned for a long time “thanks to” Prior Garegin Ter-Avetissians, the parochial priest of Tegher:

Our investigation showed that throughout twenty-two years, Sourb Astvatzatzin Monastery of Tegher was gradual-

ly robbed of its budget due to the ignorance of village wardens and peasants, and because of the worthlessness of its priests. Its financial means have been lent not only to the people of Tegher but also to those of Talish and Byurakan. Between 1886 and 1905, an amount of 489 roubles 40 kopecks was lent to different people under both legal and illegal bills of exchange. If the worthless priest had restored at least several of the fallen stones of the monastery every year, the centuries-old monument would be in a state of complete preservation now: instead, however, he used part of the church means for the benefit of his brothers.³⁷

Archimandrite Kh. Dadian suggested doing the following for the renovation of the monastery:

The covering slabs of the large dome of the church, and some stones of other monastic buildings have fallen off. The vaults and roofs have become loose and are in danger of tumbling down. The narthex roof, which is covered with dense vegetation like that of the church, was slabbed twenty-five years ago, and its toppling down may be prevented only through partial overhaul. The eastern wall of the church is cracked from top to bottom, and the western one has some swollen sections. The outer masonry of the southern apse has a number of missing stones, and half of its vault has fallen down.

The monastic ramparts with towers, which were built in 1428 by Archimandrite Sargis from Byurakan, are now in a state of decrepitude: only half of the south-eastern tower is preserved semi-ruined, while the north-eastern one was pulled down by the very Priest Garegin, who built a house (not a solid one) in its site. These ramparts are adjoined by 23 Armenian houses each of which has between two and four roofs, their walls exposing a number of finely-dressed stones (some of them inscribed) from the monastery. These stones should be restored to their places, and the houses should be pulled down. In this way, it will be possible to repair the damaged parts of the monument at several hundred roubles. As for the church roof, it should be tinplated to prevent its impending collapse.³⁸

On 28 August 1910, Kh. Dadian again wrote to Catholicos Matevos II, stating that he would be able to renovate Sourb Sion [Holy Zion] of Saghmosavan, revive Sourb Astvatzatzin of Tegher and further preserve the ruins of the superb monasteries of Ushi's St. Sargis, Ohanavank, and Astvatzenzal only after freeing them from appropriation. He also underlined that the preservation of Armenian ancestral heritage was equal to building new monuments.³⁹

37 Documents on the History of the Armenian Church, vol. 8, 594. Also see National Archives of Armenia, fund 319, list 1, file 181, p. 32.

38 Documents on the History of the Armenian Church, vol. 8, 594-595. Also see National Archives of Armenia, fund 319, list 1, file 181, pp. 18-19 (with a list of the bills of the monastery on p. 20); file 226, pp. 1-2.

39 National Archives of Armenia, fund 319, list 1, file 181, p. 19, and the reverse side.

34 Ibid., 832-833.

35 *Shahkhatuniants*, 69.

36 National Archives of Armenia, fund 319, list 1, file 181, p. 17.

On 4 August 1911, Kh. Dadian improved the economic state of the monastery thanks to a contribution:

Israel Grigorian from the village of Tegher, which is within the jurisdiction of Parpi in Echmiatzin District, reached an agreement with Sourb Astvatzatzin Monastery and bequeathed his real estate to it, by selling his house at sixty roubles through Senior Archimandrite Khachik's mediation. Israel Grigorian's house was changed for that of Grigor Martirosian from Tegher, which is near Sourb Astvatzatzin Monastery.⁴⁰

Tegher Monastery in the Soviet Years. In 1928 Yeghishe Vardanian, the parish priest of Tegher, unfolded some educational activities and taught literacy to 4 young inhabitants of the village. However, his efforts were labelled as running counter to the interests of the Government of the country, and he was sentenced to three months of forced labour by the People's Court of Ashtarak (President of the Village Council Galust Gevorgian spared no efforts to reach this decision). After serving his term, the priest made the following noteworthy statement:

Now I am free and can perform my priestly duties, after having completed my compulsory labour, namely, the flagging of cattle houses belonging to the District Committee of Ashtarak.⁴¹

In the meantime, the state of Sourb Astvatzatzin Monastery worsened day after day, the earthquake of 1948 only aggravating it and making the partial restoration of the monument even more urgent. The Soviet authorities embarked on this work only in the early 1950s, a period marked with grave difficulties for the Republic of Armenia. The restoration of the monastery was completed in the 1970s:

The monument suffered serious damage in the aftermath of the earthquake of 1948, which created a lot of cracks there and tore away pieces of the wall and dome revetment. Between 1950 and 1953, it underwent complete renovation under the supervision of architect H. Hakobian: its dome tambours were re-laid and covered with slabs, with the spires tinplated.

The year 1975 saw the beginning of a new stage of renovation carried out under the supervision of architect A. Avetissian (head of the masons' group: M. Gasparian): the roofs of the monastery were thoroughly restored, and the spires re-laid, this time of stone, reinforced concrete being used in the constructive junctures of the monument.⁴²

Tegher Monastery Nowadays. At present the monastery faces some problems connected with its roof,

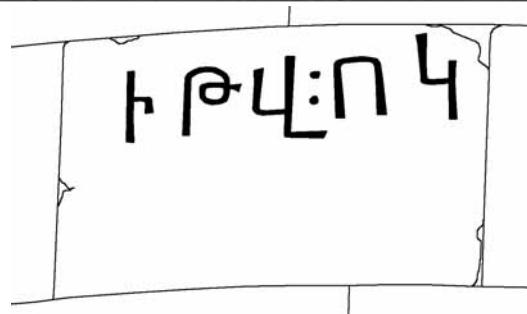
some of the covering slabs of which have become loose and displaced. It can be repaired with very limited financial means, but if the work is delayed for some more years, the expenses will, indeed, increase.

Lapidary Heritage. According to Hovhannes Shahkhatunians, who carried out research in Tegher as early as the 1830s, the inscriptions of the monastery were mostly distorted.⁴³ He copied and published only one of them, which was later re-published by Gh. Alishan.⁴⁴

In 1904 Archimandrite Mkhitar Ter-Mkrtchian published 6 inscriptions (5 of them for the first time), at the same time stating that the walls of the large and small churches of Tegher abound in lapidary records still awaiting publication.⁴⁵

From 27 until 28 September 1922, more coordinated studies of the lapidary heritage of Tegher Monastery were implemented by Yer. Ter-Minassian and Bishop Garegin Hovsepian (they, however, published the results of their work only four decades later).⁴⁶ Within two days, the meritorious Armenologists copied and deciphered 35 inscriptions (28 for the first time), some of them intact, and others only partly preserved.

Our research in Tegher Monastery started in 2003 and was completed between 2011 and 2013, with Emma Abrahamian taking an active part in it. On the whole, we copied and deciphered 57 inscriptions, 3 of which were presented above, and the rest follow below (22 published for the first time).



Inscription no. 4

40 National Archives of Armenia, fund 319, list 1, file 181, p. 31.

41 Վավերագրեր հայ եկեղեցու պատմության, գիրք Ա (1921-1938 թթ.) [Documents on the History of the Armenian Church, vol. 1 (1921 to 1938)] (Yerevan, 1994), 166.

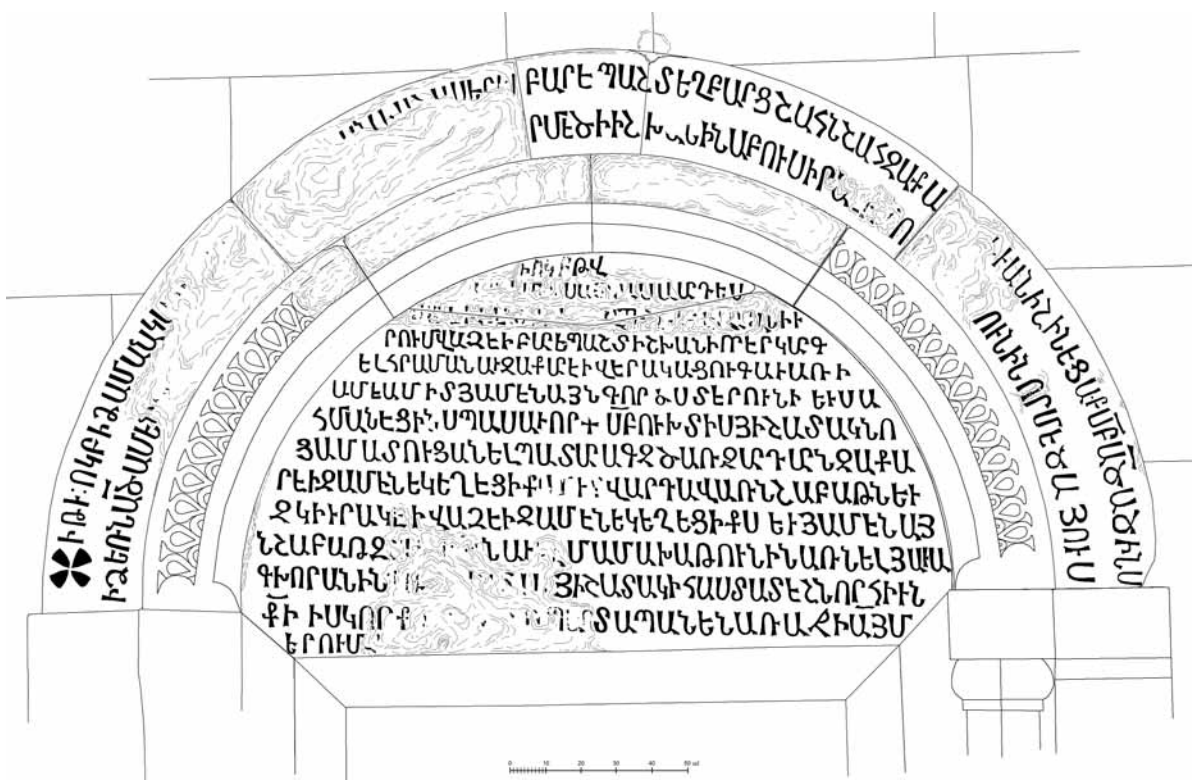
42 Հովհաննիսյան Ա., Դարձարապետական հուշարձանների վերանորոգումը Սովետական Հայաստանում [K. Hovhannissian, Repairs of Architectural Monuments in Soviet Armenia] (Yerevan, 1978), 248.

43 Shahkhatunians, 70.

44 Ալիշան Գ., Այրարատ [Gh. Alishan, Ayarat] (Venice, 1890), 147.

45 Ter-Mkrtchian, 45-47.

46 Ter-Minassian, 51-54.



Inscriptions no. 5 & 6

4. A single line carved next to the southern window of the tambour:

Ի քվ(ին) ՈԿԲ (1213):

In the year 662 (1213).

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53; **Բարխուդարյան Ս.**, Միջնադարյան հայ քարգործ վարպետներ [S. **Barkhudarian**, Medieval Armenian Masons] (Yerevan, 1963), 52.

Note: In some photos of the early 1920s, this inscribed stone is missing from the tambour. Probably, the Armenian letter Բ denoting

the unit, originally the final part of the inscription, was carved on an adjoining stone which has not been ever found.

5. Two lines on the blind arch edging the tympanum of the western entrance of the church:

*Ի քվ(ին) ՈԿԲ (1213), ի ժամանակս ...ա(ստուա)-
ծասեր բարեպաշտ եղբարց Շահնշահ Չաքա[ր]ի*



Inscription no. 7

Եւ Ի յւան(ե)ի շինեցաւ Ս(ուր)բ Ա(ստուա)ծածիմս | ի ձեռնն ա(ստուա)ծասէր ...ը մեծի իշխանին Աբուսիրա ... ունին, որ մեծայրու:

In the year 662 (1213), in the days of ...God-loving pious brothers, Zakare the Shahenshah and Ivane, Sourb Astvatatzin was built by pious ...Great Prince Abusir...

Published in: Ter-Minassian, 51.

Note: In our decipherment of the inscription, we have added certain words and parts of words not read before.

Prince Abusir, who is also mentioned in one of the inscriptions of Horomos Monastery under the name of Apusehr, is Mamakhatun's father. Petrossiants identifies him with Prince Hasan (Petrossiants, 313).

6. Fourteen lines on the same tympanum of the church, inside the narthex:

Ի ՈԿԲ (1213) թվ(ին) | ... | ...իւրում Վաչէի, քարեպաշտ իշխանի, որ էր կարգել հրամանաւ Չաքարէի վերակացու գաւառի, | ամէ ամ իմ յամենայն գործս տերունի եւ սահմանեցին սպասատրք ս(ուր)բ ուխտիս յիշատակ նոցա մատուցանել պատարագ զճառքարդարն Չաքարէի զամէն եկեղեցիքս ..., Վարդավառն շարաթն եւ | զԿիրակէի Վաչէի զամէն եկեղեցիքս եւ յամենայն շարաթ զ... Մամախատունին առնել յաւազ խորանին ..., յիշատակի հաստատել շնորհիւն | Ք(րիստոս)ի, իսկ որք ... պարտապան են առաջի ա(ստուծո)յ մերում:

In the year 662 (1213), ... of Vache, a pious prince, who was appointed overseer of the district under an order issued by Zakare. Year after year all my work... and appointed servants for the holy monastery. May a divine service be celebrated in their memory in all churches: on Palm Sunday for Zakare, and on Vardavar Saturday and Sunday, for Vache... and on all Saturdays... Mamakhatun... This should be complied with by the grace of Christ, and those who... may they atone before Our God.

Published in: Ter-Minassian, 51; Petrossiants, 253.

Note: In our decipherment of the inscription, we have added certain words and parts of words not read or erroneously deciphered before.

7. Nine lines inwardly carved on the narthex tympanum:

Թո(ւի)ն :ՈԿԷ: (1218), | շնորհիւն ա(ստուծո)յ եւ՝ Վաչէ, | եւ ամուսին իմ՝ Մամախատուն, | շինեցաք զեկեղեց(իս) եւ զգաւիթս եւ | միաբանութե(ան) ...քեանց կամաւ, | որ ոչ եզի առնե ... զոչխար ոչ պա/իէգ եւ հայրն ...ա :Բ: (2) տրեխ հա/ստատել կամ ... որք խափանեն, նզովեացին (ի ՅԺԸ հայ)րապետացն, ամեն:

In the year 667 (1218), by the grace of God, my spouse Mamakhatun and I, Vache, built this church and narthex. And the brethren... ..sheep... and father... 2 bast shoes... confirm or... May those who impede this be cursed by the 318 pontiffs. Amen.

Published for the first time.

Note: Ter-Minassian saw this inscription, but failed to decipher it: Above the entrance arch of the church, there is a long inscription of eight lines engraved in black paint on the white surface. It is completely distorted and beyond decipherment (Ter-Minassian, 54).

The middle part of the inscription is so damaged that even traces of letters cannot be discerned. The unit in the year might be Ը, in which case we would have 1219.

8. Six lines on the western wall of the church, inside the narthex:

Ես՝ Աղբայր(իկ)..., | այգին զԱղբին ...(տաւ)նի Ս(ուր)բ Ա(ստուա)ծածիմ, ս(պասատ)րքս հաստա-



Inscription no. 8

տ(եցին ի տանի) ... իմ Համբարձման ... / մեղացու
տէր ...:

*I, Aghbayrik..., an orchard in Aghb on the feast day
of the Holy Virgin. The spiritual shepherds confirmed
the feast... Hambardzum... atone for my sins...*

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.

Note: This inscription was engraved between 1213 and 1221, as
the right section of its lines was buried all along its length as a result
of the construction of the narthex (1221 to 1232).

9. Seven lines carved above the tympanum arch, on the western
wall of the church, inside the narthex:

... Շահնշահի, ես՝ Քուրդ որդի Վաչէ, ... / ...սոր
Մարծպանա եւ Մամբանա կրկին հաստ(ատեցաք)
... / ...ցին եւ մայր մեր Մամախաթուն տվաք զ... / ... /
...եցին ի տարոջն Ի (20) ար ... ինձ՝ Քրդի... / ...կեն-
դանի ենք զ:Տ: (10) Վաչէին եւ զՏ (10) Մարծպա-
նա, / ...յետ էլից մերոց եղիցի ի տանի Անրոնի
սկսանին եւ ան/պակաս առնէն, ով խափանէ ..., կա-
տա(րիչքն արինին) ա(ստուծոյ), ամէն:

...Shahenshah... I, Vache's son Kurd, ...Martzpan
and Mamkan again confirmed... and our mother
Mamakhatun... gave... for 20 years ...me, Kurd... ...10
hours for Vache, and 10 for Martzpan... ...begin on the
feast day of Andon and observe unfailingly. May those
who impede this... May those who obey this be blessed
by God. Amen.

Published for the first time.

Note: This lapidary record traces back to the period between
1213 and 1221. Strange as it is, all former researchers considered it
as totally unintelligible and neglected it, whereas in fact, almost half
of it can be deciphered.

10. Six lines inwardly carved on the southern wall of the church:

Ի նաւակատեց ս(ուր)ք Տիր/ամարն մատու-
ցանի | պատարագ ամենայն խորանս Վախախին
եւ մար՝ / Մամախաթունին՝ շինողի եկեղեցոյս:

*At the consecration of [the church of] the Holy
Virgin, divine services were celebrated in all sanctuar-
ies for Vakhakh, the mother of Mamakhatun, its
founder.*

Published in: **Ter-Mkrtchian**, 46; **Ter-Minassian**, 53.

Note: Most presumably, the inscription which was surely carved
during Mamakhatun's lifetime (until 1232) dates back to 1213.

11. Six lines on the north-looking face of the capital of the south-
eastern pillar of the narthex:

Ի թիւ Ո՛Հ (1221), ես՝ Աղբայրիկ վարդալեա, շի-
նեցի զեկեղեցիս եւ | զգալիքս եւ միաբանեցա ար-
դեսմբ, եւ սպասատրքս հա/ստատեցին :Բ: (2) ար
ժամ ինձ / Ս(ուր)ք Խաչին, որ խափա(նէ), դատ(ի)
յա(ստուծոյ):

*In the year 670 (1221), I, architect Aghbayrik, built
this church and narthex, and its spiritual servants
pledged themselves to devote 2 hours of a mass to me
at [the feast of] the Holy Cross. May those who impede
this stand before Divine Judgement.*

Published in: **Ter-Mkrtchian**, 46; **Ter-Minassian**, 51-52;
Barkhudarian, 54.

Note: Ter-Mkrtchian's decipherment of the last two lines is
incomplete.

12. Three lines on the western facade of the narthex:

Ո՛Հ (1221), զԱբրահամ / բազմամեղ յի(շեցէք):

670 (1221). *May you remember heavy sinner*

Abraham.

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.

Note: The Armenian letters Ո՛Հ were erroneously regarded as an
interjection (Voh!) by Ter-Minassian.

All the donations commemorated in these lapidary records,
carved close to one another, were made for the construction of the
narthex; therefore, they were incised prior to 1232. Their writing
peculiarities as well as the stylistic and artistic features of the cross
reliefs near them show that they were engraved either simultaneous-
ly (in 1221) or closely followed each other.

13. Two lines on the western facade of the narthex:

զԱռաք/եալն յի(շեցէք):

May you remember Arakel.

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.

Note: These two lines were considered as forming part of the pre-
vious inscription.

14. A single line on the western facade of the narthex:

Միմէն:

Simeon.

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.

15. A single line on the western facade of the narthex:

զԹուշէր յի(շեցէք):

May you remember Tusher.

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.

16. A single line on the western facade of the narthex:

զՄարիամ յի(շեցէք):

May you remember Mariam.

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.

17. A single line on the western facade of the narthex:

զՄխիթար:

Mkhitar.

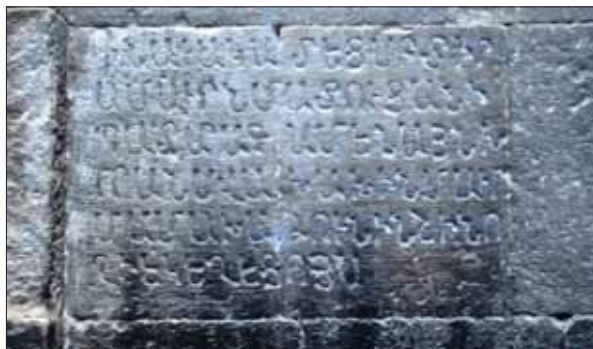
Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.

18. Three lines on the western facade of the narthex:

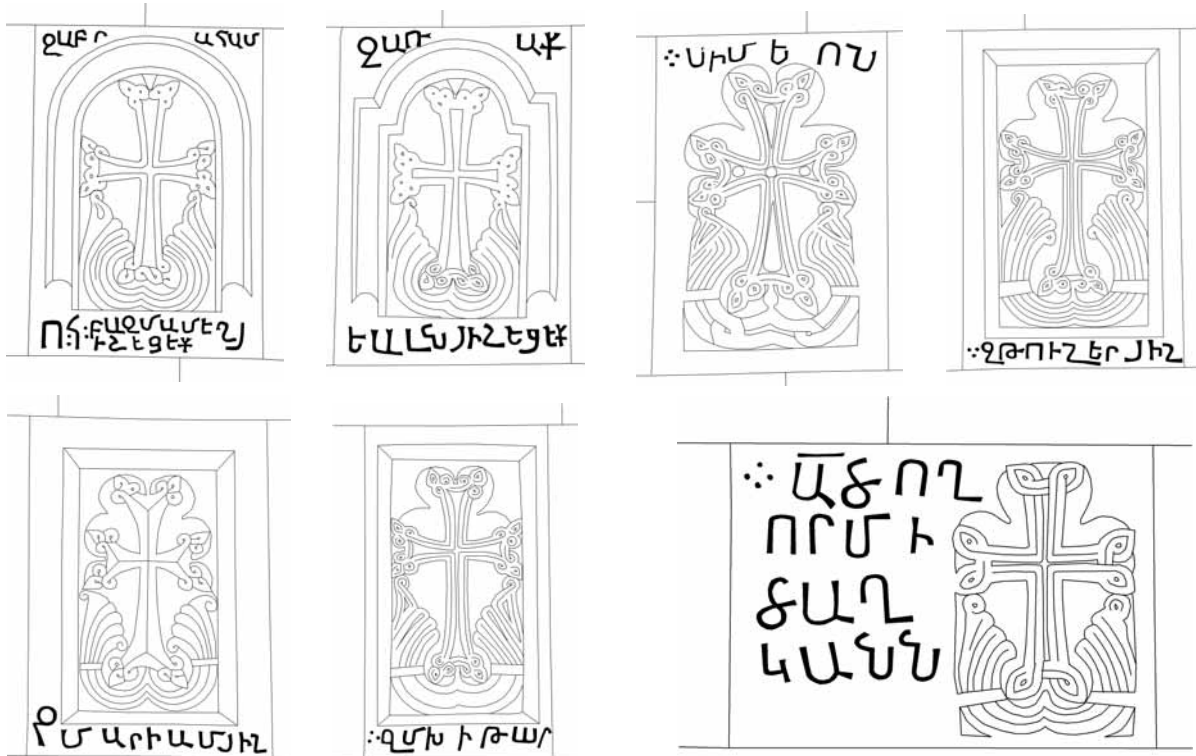
Ա(ստուա)ծ ողորմի Ծաղկանն:

May the Lord have mercy upon Tzagkhan.

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.



Inscriptions no. 9, 10 & 11



Tracings of inscriptions no. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18

19. Six lines on the west-directed face of a cross-stone pedestal inside a ruined church situated south-west of the monastery:

Կաման ա(ստուծոյ) ես՝ Վախախ/ս, զջուրս
բերի եւ զխաչս կանկնեցի, որք | երկիրպագանէք,
յա/դաբս յիշեցէք ի Ք(րիստո)ս, | :ՈՀ: (1221):

By the grace of God, I, Vakhakh, provided the
monastery with water and erected this cross. May wor-
shippers remember me in their prayers to Christ. 670
(1221).

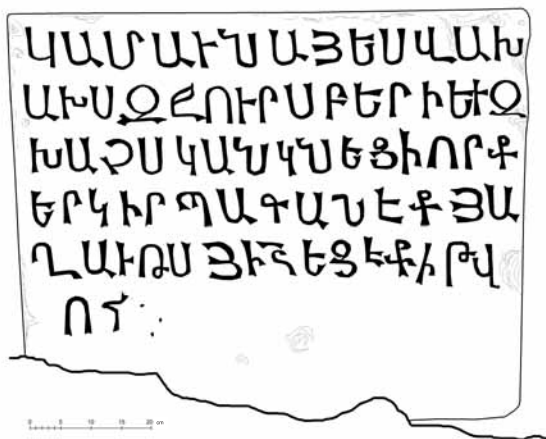
Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 54.

Note: Instead of «ՈՀ», Ter-Minassian has «ՈԿ». He writes that part of «Կ» is broken, and no unit can be discerned.

Vakhakh is Abusir's (Apusehr's) wife and Mamakhatun's mother.

20. Nine lines outwardly carved on the narthex tympanum:

ՈՉԱ (1232): | Շնորհիւն ա(ստուծոյ) ես՝ Մալմա-
խաթունս, շինեցի զեկեղեցիքս զմեծ եւ զփոքր եւ
զժամաստունս յիշատակ ինձ եւ առն իմոյ՝ Վաչէի,



իսկ բնակիչք | ս(ուր)ք ուխտիս հաստատեցին մե[զ] |
ի տարին պատարագ, ի | տաւնի Վարագա Ս(ուր)ք
Խաչին զ[ա]մենայն էկեղեցիքս | մատարով եւ սի-
րով, իսկ որ զգրեալս խափանէ, նայ | տայ պատաս-
խան ի առաջի Յ(իսուս)ի Ք(րիստոս)ի: Մխիթար
գրիչ:

681 (1232). By the grace of God, I, Mamakhatur, built the large and small churches [of Tegher], together with a narthex, in memory of my husband Vache and me. [In return], the inhabitants of this holy monastery pledged themselves to hold divine services for us in all churches every year, at the feast of Varag's Holy Cross, with love, and animals sacrificed. May those who impede this be judged by Jesus Christ. Scribe Mkhitar.

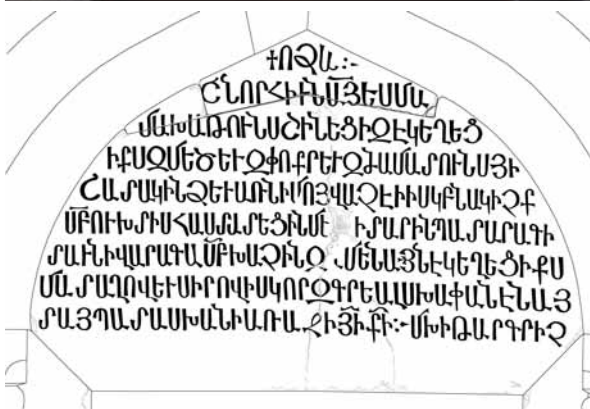
Published in: **Shahkhatunians**, 68-69; **Alishan**, 147; **Ter-Minassian**, 52-53; **Petrossians**, 200, 256.

21. Six lines inwardly engraved on the southern wall of the narthex:

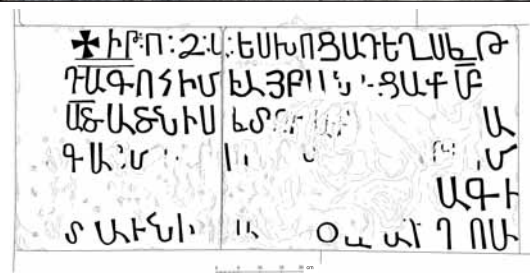
Բ ք(ուին) ՈՉԱ (1232), ես՝ Խոցադեղս, և
Թ/իշ)ազո(ւ)հի միաբանեցաք Ս(ուր)ք | Ա(ստուա)-
ծածնիս և տուաք ...ա|... | ... (պատար)ազ ի | տաւ-
նին ...աւրոսի:

In the year 681 (1232), Taguhi and I, Khotsadegh, reached an agreement with Sourb Astvatzatzin [Monastery] and gave... a memorial service on the feast day of ...oghos.

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 52.



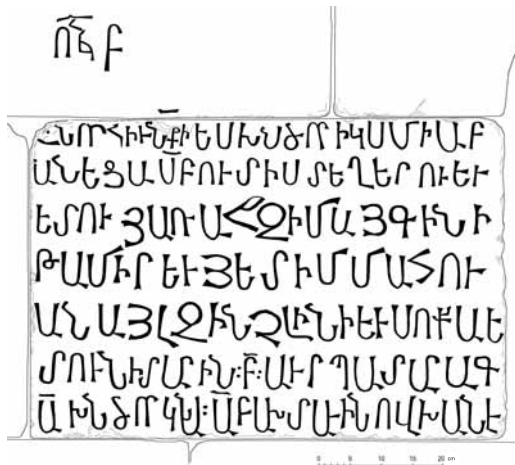
Inscriptions no. 19 & 20



Inscription no. 21

22. Seven lines outwardly carved on the eastern facade of the narthex, close to its southern corner:

ՈՉԲ (1233), շնորհիւն Ք(րիստոս)սի ես՝ Խնծո-
րիկս, միաբանեցա ս(ուր)ք ուխտիս Տեղերու եւ | ե-
տու յառաջ զիմ այգին ի | Թամիր եւ յետ իմ մա-
հու/ան այլ զինչ լինի, եւ սորա ե/տուն ի տարին :Բ:



(2) ար պատարագ | :Ա: (1) Խնձորկնա, :Ա: (1) Բախտալին, ով խա(փա)նէ:

682 (1233). By the grace of Christ, I, Khentzorik, reached an agreement with Tegher's holy monastery and donated my orchard in Tamir to it. Whatever happens after my death... And they promised two hours of memorial service, one for each of Bakhtav and Khentzorik. May those who impede this [atone for our sins].

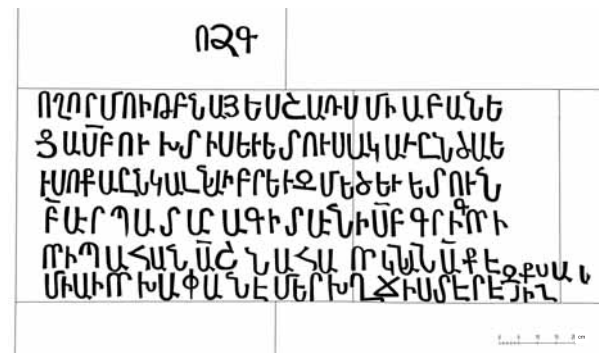
Published in: Ter-Mkrtschian, 45; Ter-Minassian, 53.

Note: Both Ter-Mkrtschian and Ter-Minassian made a mistake in the decipherment of the year: instead of ՈՉԲ (1233), they have ՈԿԲ (1213). The former's reading of the last two lines is incomplete.

23. Nine lines inwardly carved on the northern wall of the narthex, west of the window:

ՈՉԳ (1234), | ողորմութեամբն ա(ստուծոյ) ես՝ Շառս, միաբանեցաւ սուրբ ոյխախու եւ ետու սակաւ ընծա եւ ի սոքա ընկալան իրրեւ զմեծ եւ ետուն | :Բ: (2) ար պատարագ ի տանի սուրբ Գրիգորի, | որ ի պահան :Ա: (1) Շնահատրկանն, :Ա: (1) Քեմիայի, որ խափանէ մեր խղճիս տէր է, | զԲ(րիստո)ս... | յի-շ(եցէք):

683 (1234). By the grace of God, I, Shar, reached an agreement with the holy monastery and gave it a small gift. Considering it as something great, they [the brethren] promised two hours of memorial service, one for each of Shnahavorik and Kemia, at the feast of St. Grigor... May those who impede this atone for our sins. May you remember... Christ.



Published in: Ter-Minassian, 52.
Note: Ter-Minassian, who has «պսխսն» instead of «պսխսն», considers the continuation of the inscription unintelligible.

24. Six lines on the western wall of the church, inside the narthex:

Ի թո(ւին) ՉԻԳ (1274), ես՝ Շիրազարս, եւ ամուսին Աղչայս եւ | Սթալիկս, որդիաք մերաք միաբանեցաք սրբոցս եւ տվաք զմեր | հոգո բաժինս Ռ(1000) սպ(իտակ) :Լ: (30) ոչխ(ար), :Ա: (1) կանթեղն, :Ա: (1) նափորտ, եւ մեզ խոստացան | ի յամին :Ե: (5) ար պատարագ ի հոգոյն զալ(ստեան) սկսանին եւ անպակաս արնեն, որչափ | կենդանի ենք պարոնին արնեն, ինչ մեռանինք զմեր արն մեզ արնեն, | կատարիչք գրոյս արինին յա(ստուծոյ), ամեն: Շահ:

In the year 723 (1274), my spouse Aghchai and I, Shirazar, reached an agreement with the holy monastery



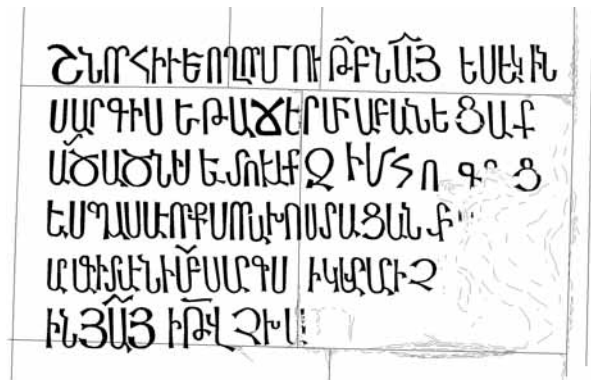
together with our sons and fulfilled our spiritual duty by donating a chandelier; a chasuble, 30 sheep, and an amount of 1,000 in silver to it. [In return], we were promised 5 hours of annual memorial service. May they begin at the feast of the Advent being observed unfailingly. May they be dedicated to the master as long as we are alive, [and] to us as soon as we die. May God bless those who will remain faithful to this pledge. Amen. Shah.

Published in: **Ter-Mkrtschian**, 46-47; **Ter-Minassian**, 51.

Note: Instead of «արսեն, ինչ մեռանիք», Ter-Mkrtschian has «(°) ամենեին (°) զմեռանիք», and instead of «զալ(ստեան) սկսանիք», Ter-Minassian and G. Hovsepian have «զալստենին (°)» in their joint decipherment.

25. Six lines on the western wall of the church, inside the narthex:

Շնորհիւ եւ ողորմութեամբն ա(ստուծոյ) եւ եւ կին՝ | Սարգիս եւ Թաճեր, միաբանեցաք | Ա(ս-



տուա)ծածնիս եւ տուաք զիմ հոգոց, | եւ սպասաւորք սորա խոստացան մի (ի տարումն պատ)արագ ի տանի ս(ուր)բ Սարգիս, կատարիչք (արին)ին յա(ստուծոյ), ի թվ(ին) ՉԽԱ (1292):

By the grace and mercy of the Lord, my spouse Tajer and I, Sargis, reached an agreement with [the church of Sourb] Astvatzatzin and gave our share of donation [for the salvation of our souls]. And its servants promised us an annual memorial service on the feast day of St. Sargis. May God bless those who will keep this pledge. In the year 741 (1292).

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 52.

Note: A number of words and parts of words as well as the year are missing from Ter-Minassian's decipherment. Instead of «ես եւ կին» (...my spouse... and I...), he has «ես Ամիր» (I, Amir...).

26. Five lines inwardly carved on the southern wall of the narthex:

Ես՝ Գերգու, եւ աղբրանցս միաբանեցաք {ս} սուրբ ուխտիս եւ խոստացան մեզ ի տարին :Բ: (2) պատարագ ի տանի Գեորգա զարավարին, | կատարիչքն արինին ի տե(ան)նէ :ՉԽԲ: (1293):

My brothers and I, Gerg, reached an agreement with the holy monastery and were promised 2 hours of annual memorial service on the feast day of [Holy] Commander Gevorg. May the Lord bless those who will keep this pledge. 742 (1293).

Published in: **Ter-Mkrtschian**, 47; **Ter-Minassian**, 52.



Inscription no. 26

27. Six lines inwardly engraved on the southern wall of the church:

Կաման ա(ստուծոյ) եւ՝ Վասիլիս, եւ Զրի/ստունայս միաբանեցաք Ս(ուր)բ Ա(ստուա)ծածնիս եւ տվաք ինչս, եւ սորա խոստացան | ի տարին :Բ: (2) պատարագ ի տանի Յոհաննոս եւ | Յակոբա, կատարիչք զրոյս արինին | յա(ստուծոյ), ամէն:

By the grace of God, Kristonia and I, Vasil, reached an agreement with Sourb Astvatzatzin and donated our property to it. [In return], we were promised 2 annual requiem masses on the feast days of [Sts.] Hovhan and Hakob. May the Lord bless those who will keep this pledge. Amen.

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 52.



⊕ԿԱՄ ԱՆ ԱՅԵՍՎԱՍԻՍԵԻԲԻ
 ԱՏՈՂԱ ՅԱՄԻԱԲԱԵՅԱԲԱՏԱՆ
 ԿԵԼԵՎԱԲԻՆ ԶԱՍԵՍՈՒՄՈՒՄՍԱՅԱՆ
 ԻՏԱԿԻՖ ԴԱՏԱԱԳԻՏԱԵՆԻՅՈՒՄՈՒԹԻ
 ՅԱԿՈՒՄ ԱԿԱՏԱՐԻ ԶԲԳՈՅԱԿՆ ԻՆ
 ՅԱՅԱԿՆ

Inscription no. 27

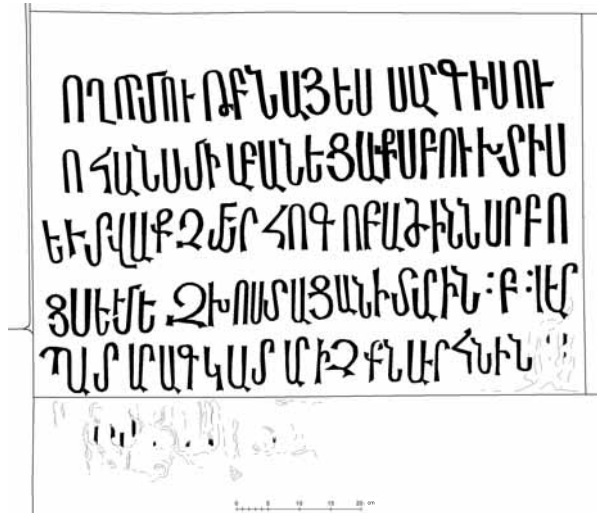
28. Six lines on the western wall of the church, north of its entrance, inside the narthex:

Ողորմութ(եամ)ք ա(ստուծո)յ ես՝ Սարգիս, ու / Ռհանս միաբանեցաք ս(ուր)ք ուխտիս / եւ տվաք զմեր հոգո բաժինն սրբոցս, եւ մեզ խոստացան ի տարին :Բ: (2) ար / սլատարագ կատարիչքն արհնին ... / ...:

By the grace of God, Ohan and I, Sargis, reached an agreement with the holy monastery and gave our share of donation [for the salvation of our souls]. [In return], we were promised 2 hours of annual memorial service. May those who keep this pledge be blessed...

Published in: Ter-Minassian, 52.

Note: Ter-Minassian omitted the personal name «Ռհանս» (Ohan).



Inscription no. 28

29. Six lines inwardly carved on the southern wall of the narthex, beneath a window:

Յուսովն ա(ստուծո)յ, ես՝ Խութրոյս, եւ Տիրանց {յաւ} մեր որդիս՝ Ամիրս, միաբանեցաք ս(ուր)ք ուխտիս եւ տվաք ինչս / սրբոցս, եւ մեզ խոստացան ի տարին Դ (4) ար / սլատարագ, կատարիչքն արհնին ...:



ՅՈՒՄՈՒՄ ԱՅԵՍՎԱՍԻՍԵԻԲԻ
 ՐԱՆՑԻՄԵՐՈՒՄ ԱՄԻՐՍԵՐԱ
 ԵՆՑԱԲԻՆՈՒՄ ԵՎ ԵՎԼԵՆՑՈՒՄ
 ՍՐԲՈՅԱԵՆՑ ԽՈՍԱ ԱՅԱՆԻՄ
 ԻՆ:Դ:ԵՐ ԳԱՐԱԳ ԿԱՏԱՐԻՉԻ
 Ն ԱՆԻՆ Դ (4) Բ

Inscription no. 29

With my hopes pinned on the Lord, Tirants, my son Amir and I, Khutulys, ...reached an agreement with the holy monastery and donated our property to it. [In return], we were promised 4 hours of annual memorial service. May those who keep this pledge be blessed...

Published in: Ter-Minassian, 52.

Note: At the end of the inscription, Ter-Minassian has the year ՉԾԲ (1303) although he states that he is not sure about it (as for us, we did not discern any traces of it).

Tirants is probably the same Tirants who is buried in the narthex.

30. Five lines inwardly carved on the southern wall of the narthex, beneath a window:

Շնորհիւն Զ(րիստոս)ի ես՝ Էմանոս, եւ Բելխատ-թունս եւ որդի մեր՝ Սադոն(ս)նս, միաբանեցաք



Inscription no. 30

ս(ուր)ք ուխտիս եւ սվաք զմեր հոգոյ բաժինս եւ ընկալաք ի յամին :Բ: (2) պատարագ ի Նոր Կիրակեն, որչափ կենդանի են | մեր ծն(աւ)դ արմե մեն մեզ ե...:

By the grace of Christ, Belkhatun, I, Emanos, and our son Sadun reached an agreement with the holy monastery and gave it our share of donation for the sake of our souls. [In return], we were promised 2 annual memorial services on New Sunday. As long as our parents are alive...

Published in: Ter-Minassian, 52.

Note: Instead of «Էմանոս եւ Բելխատթունս» (Belkhatun, I, Emanos), Ter-Minassian erroneously read «Էտնոսս եւ Ելգատնս» (Ethnos and Yelgatun).

31. Eight lines on the western wall of the church, inside the narthex:

Շնորհիւն Զ(րիստոս)ի ես՝ Դաւիթ, ու Բարթո-ղիմոս միաբանեցաք | ս(ուր)ք ուխտիս եւ տուաք մեր ծնոյղք զհող, որ այ... զԽոյզաղէղին սրբոցս, եւ մեզ իսխատագան ի տարին :Բ: (2) պատարագ ի տաւնի Դաւթի մարգարէին, | Խոյզաղէղին, ամէն:



By the grace of Christ, Bartoghimos and I, David, reached an agreement with the holy monastery and gave our parents' land... ..Khotsadegh... saints. And we were promised 2 annual memorial services on the feast day of David the Prophet. Khotsadegh. Amen.

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.

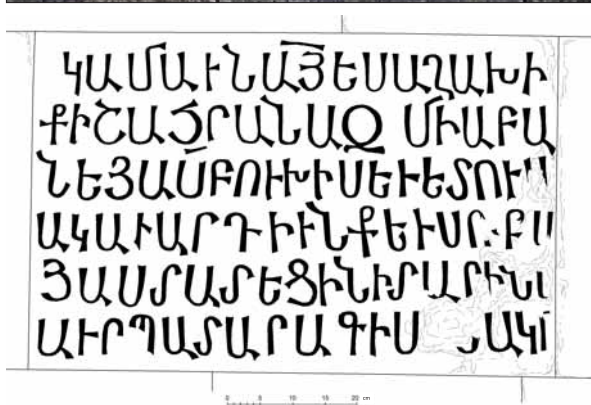
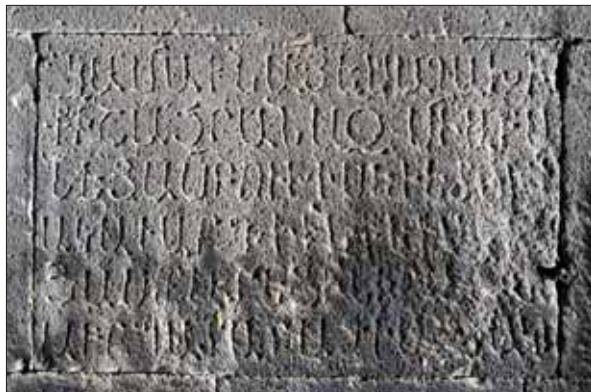
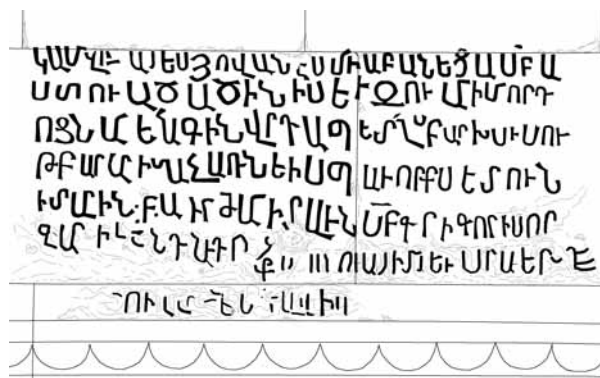
Note: Instead of «ծնոյր զհոռ, որ այ... զԽոյցադեղին սրբոց, եւ մեզ» (...parents' land ...Khotsadegh... saints. And we...), Ter-Minassian has «...հոգորածին... .. սրբոց եւ սրբա». The concluding part («Խոցադեղին, ամէն») transl.: *Khotsadegh. Amen* is missing from his decipherment.

32. Six lines inwardly carved on the southern wall of the narthex:

Կամսան ա(ստուծոյ) եւ՝ աղախի(ն) / Զ(րիստոս)ի Շահրանազ, միաբա/նեցա սր ուխ(տ)իս եւ ետու ս/ակաւ արդիւնք, եւ սրբա / յաստատեցին ի տարին Ա (°) / այր պատարագ ի ս ... ակ...:

By the grace of God, I, Christ's maid Shahranaaz, reached an agreement with the holy monastery and made a small donation to it. [In return], I was promised an hour of annual memorial service...

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.



33. Seven semi-distorted lines outwardly carved on the western facade of the narthex:

Կամսա ա(ստուծոյ) եւ՝ Յովանէս, միաբանեցա Ս(ուր)բ Ա/ստուածածինիս եւ զուս(°) իմ որդիոցն արեւագին վ(ա)րդապետն... բարխաստոթ(եամ)ք արարի պահ առն (°), եւ սպասաւորքս ետուն / ի

տարին Բ (2) այր ժամ ի տան ս(ուր)բ Գրիգորիս, որ / զար... / ...:

By the grace of God, I, Hovhannes, reached an agreement with Sourb Astvatzatzin and... my sons... archimandrite... intercession... and its servants promised me 2 hours of annual memorial service on the feast day of St. Grigor..

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 54.

Note: Most presumably, the inscription was engraved after 1232.

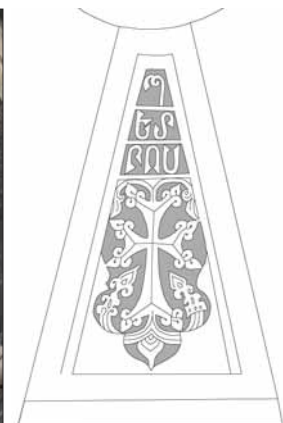
34. Three embossed lines carved above a cross relief adorning the west-facing side of the tambour:

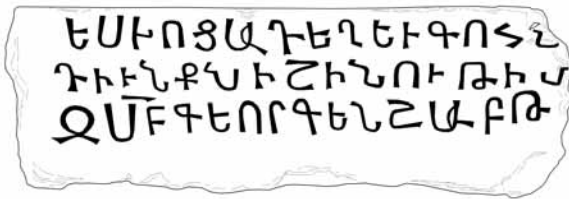
Պ/ետ/րոս:

Petros.

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.

Note: This inscription, which dates either from 1232 or the period shortly following it, bears the imprint of the writing style of the inscriptions of Ani.





Inscription no. 35

35. Three lines carved on a fragment set in a wall erected west of the church:

Ես՝ Խոցադեղս, եւ Գոհ... / ... (ար)դիւնքն ի շինութիւնն ... / զՍ(ուր)բ Գեորգեն շար(ա)թ ...:

Goh... and I, Khotsadegh, ...St. Gevorg...

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 54.

Note: Evidently, the continuation of the inscription was engraved on another stone.

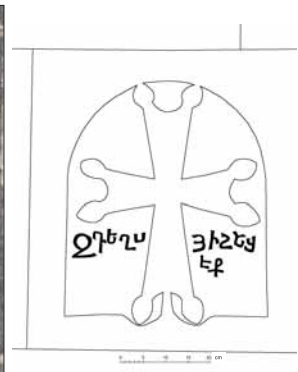


36. Three lines on the western pediment of the church, south of a window:

Յ(իսու)ս Ք(րիստո)ս, զՍա|րկաւազս | յարարթս յիշեցէք:

Jesus Christ. May you remember Sarkavag in your prayers.

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.



37. Two lines in the centre of the western pediment of the church:

զԳեղս յիշեցէք:

May you remember Degh.

Published for the first time.

38. A single line on the western pediment of the church, north of a window:

Սոսէս:

I, Sose.

Published for the first time.

39. Ten semi-distorted lines inwardly written in black paint on the plaster layer of the southern wall of the narthex, east of its central window:

...հր(ամանաւ)...անին եւ ի պ... / սպասալարին որդի Բվանե ... մեծին Շահնշահի եւ Դաւիթ ... / ...Քրդին ... եւ թռռն Վա(ալի?) եւ իմ որդիքս ք... եւ Վա-

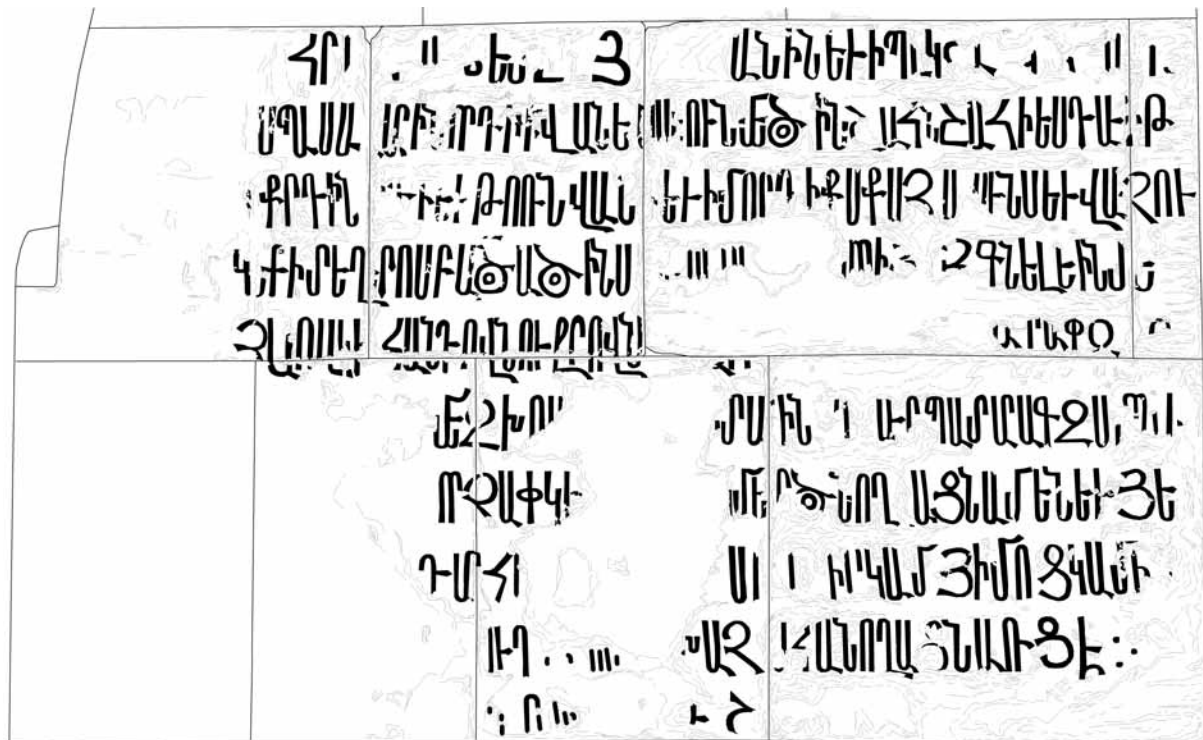
The western pediment of Sourb Astvatzatzin Church and lapidary inscriptions (see nos. 36, 37 & 38) near three cross reliefs

չու(տն) ... ի Տեղերո Ա(ստուա)ծածինս ...զնե... / ...հանդովն ու ջրովն ... / ...մեզ խոս(տացան ի) տարին ...սուր պատարագ գ... / ...որչափ կե(նդանի եմք) մեր ծնողացն ամեն եւ յե(տ) / ... կամ յիմոց կամ ի ... / ...խաչահանողացն առցէ / ...:

...on the order... spasalar's son Ivane... Shahenshah the Great, I, David... Kurd... and grandchild Vasil (?) and my sons... and Vachut... Astvatzatzin of Tegher... purchase... ..together with the fields and water... ..we were promised ...hours of annual memorial service... as long as we are alive, for our parents and then...

Published for the first time.

Note: If the wall is cleared of the centuries-old soot covering it, the decipherment of certain parts of the inscription might be more complete.



Inscription no. 39

Inside the narthex, 44 tombstones are preserved, 14 of them engraved with brief undated texts.

40. Engraved on a tombstone:
 Մամախատուն է:
 This is Mamakhaturun.

Published in: Ter-Mkrtchian, 46.
 Note: We failed to find this gravestone in situ.

41. Two lines on a tombstone:
 Սուլթան որդի ... / ...:
 Sultan, son...
 Published for the first time.



42. Two lines on a tombstone:
Ստեփ(անոս) / ք(ա)հ(անա) Մարտ(իրոս):
Priest Stepanos Martiros.
 Published for the first time.



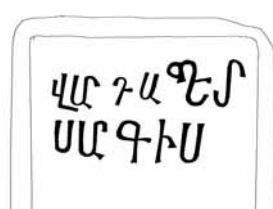
47. A single line on a tombstone:
Հազարշահ:
Hazarshah.
 Published for the first time.



43. Two lines on a tombstone:
Վարդասպետ / Սարգիս:
Archimandrite Sargis.
 Published for the first time.



48. A single line on a tombstone:
Թամ(ա)զին է:
To Tamaz.
 Published for the first time.



44. Two lines on a tombstone:
Աւետիսն է իր|իցորդին:
This is Avetis, the priest's son.
 Published for the first time.



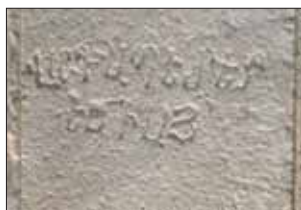
49. Two lines on a tombstone:
Մայրաժայր:
Mayratzayr.
 Published for the first time.



45. Two lines on a tombstone:
Վարդասպետ Եր|եմիայ:
Archimandrite Yeremia.
 Published for the first time.



50. Three lines on a tombstone:
Ձեր|իքան|ի(ն) յիշ(եցեք):
May you remember Zeritan.
 Published for the first time.



46. A single line on a tombstone:
Սարգսայ:
To Sargis.
 Published for the first time.



51. A single line on a tombstone:
Տիրանց:
Tirants.
 Published for the first time.



52. A single line on a tombstone:

Այս է հան:

Here [reposes].

Published for the first time.

Note: The inscription is unfinished.



53. A single line on a tombstone:

Մար...:

Mar...

Published for the first time.



54. A single line on a tombstone inside the north-eastern sacristy of the church:

Վ(ար)դ(ապետ) Յ(ն)վ(հաննէս):

Archimandrite Hovhannes.

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.



55. Two lines on a tombstone lying east of the church:

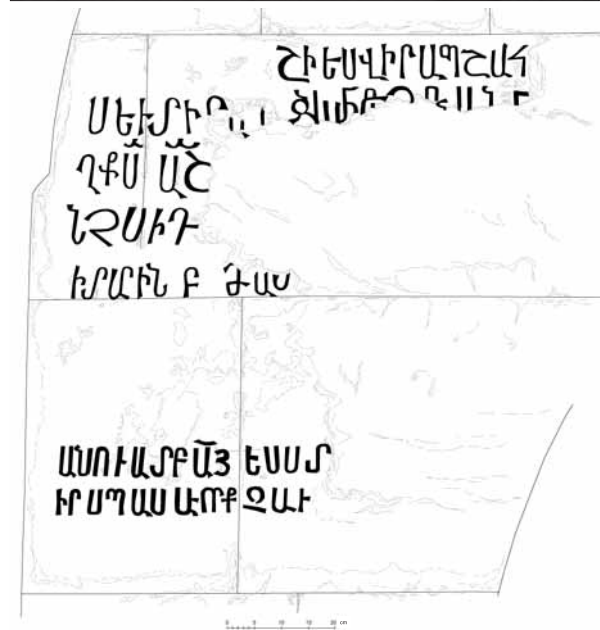
Վդ Մյս:

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 53.

Note: We failed to find this tombstone in situ. The meaning of the inscription remains obscure as it contains only abbreviations.

56. Seven lines on the outer plaster layer of the western facade of the church, north of its entrance (the initial two lines and the third one painted black and red respectively, and the rest engraved):

...շի ես՝ Վիրապաշահ..., .../ս ես Տիրանց ... /զ Զ(րիստո)ս ա(ստուս)ծ ... (ի)/նչս ի Գ(եղերո)... / ի տարին Բ (2) ժամ ...: // Անուամբն ա(ստոծո)յ ես՝ Սն(բատ), ... /իր սպասարորք զաւ(ագ) ...:



...Tirants and I, Virapshah... God Jesus... my property to Tegher's... 2 hours of annual memorial service... In the name of the Lord, I, Smbat... its servants...

Published for the first time.

Note: Beneath this inscription, there is another of five lines which is even more damaged: it begins with the word «Ողորմութեամբ» (By the mercy).

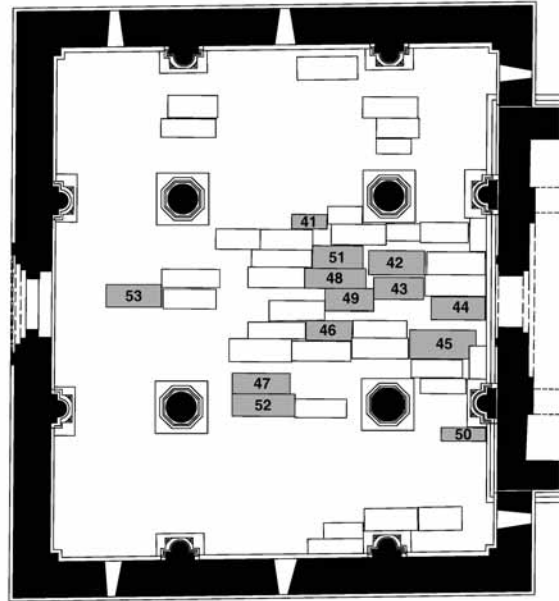
57. Eight lines in white paint engraved inside the eastern niche of the southern wall of the church:

ԹՎ(ին) ԶԽԳ (1494), / ով եղբայրք, / եթե կամ/առ չարչար/իք, վարձք է ձ/եզ, թե յակամ/այ սնտետու/թի ...:

In the year 943 (1494). You, brothers, if you voluntarily choose suffering, you will certainly be rewarded, [and] if involuntarily...

Published in: **Ter-Minassian**, 54.

While working in the monastery, we also saw 4 other lapidary records which were so damaged and distorted that proved completely beyond decipherment. These inscriptions were the following: 1. five lines on a block of stone inwardly set in the northern wall of the narthex; 2. four lines on the west-looking face of the capital of the north-eastern pillar of the narthex; 3. and 4. five and seven lines carved on the western wall of the church, right and left of its entrance respectively.



Uninscribed tombstone
 Inscribed tombstone

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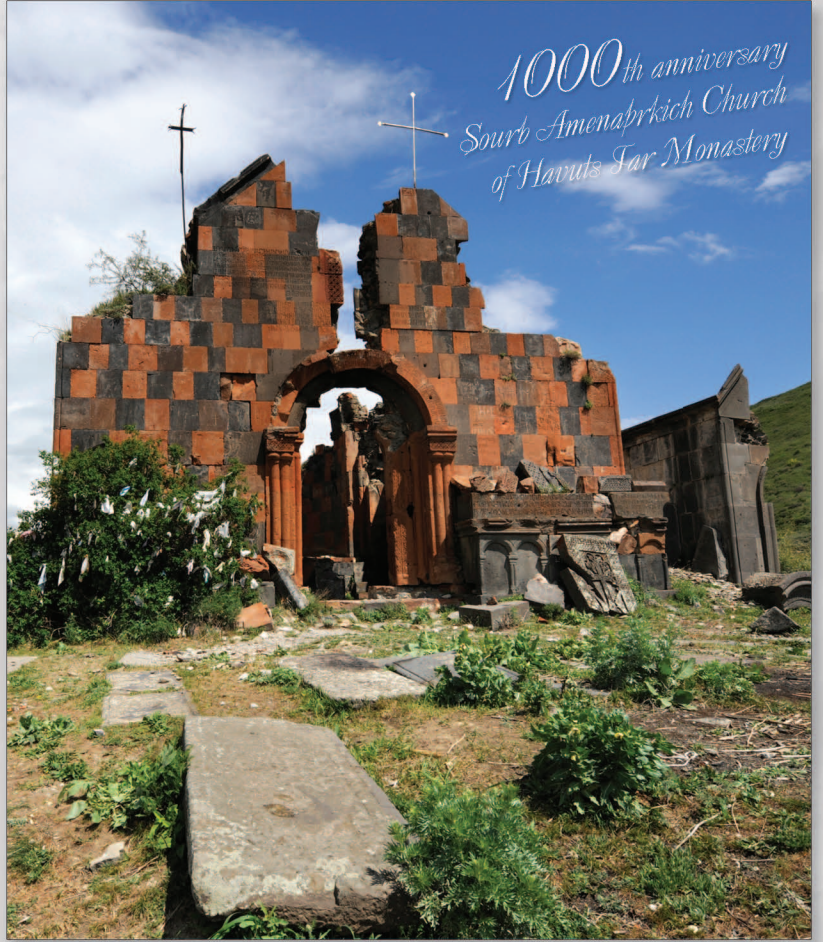
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*1000th anniversary
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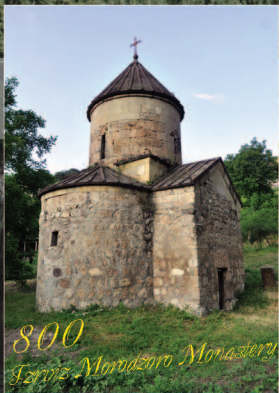
*800th anniversary
Sourb Nshan Church of
Kecharis Monastery*



800
Mausoleum of Mikhael Gosh



800
Sourb Karapet Chaper
Havutsa Tor Monastery



800
Sourb Momtsiro Monastery



400
Great Hermitage of Savra



250
Faghazur Bridge

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