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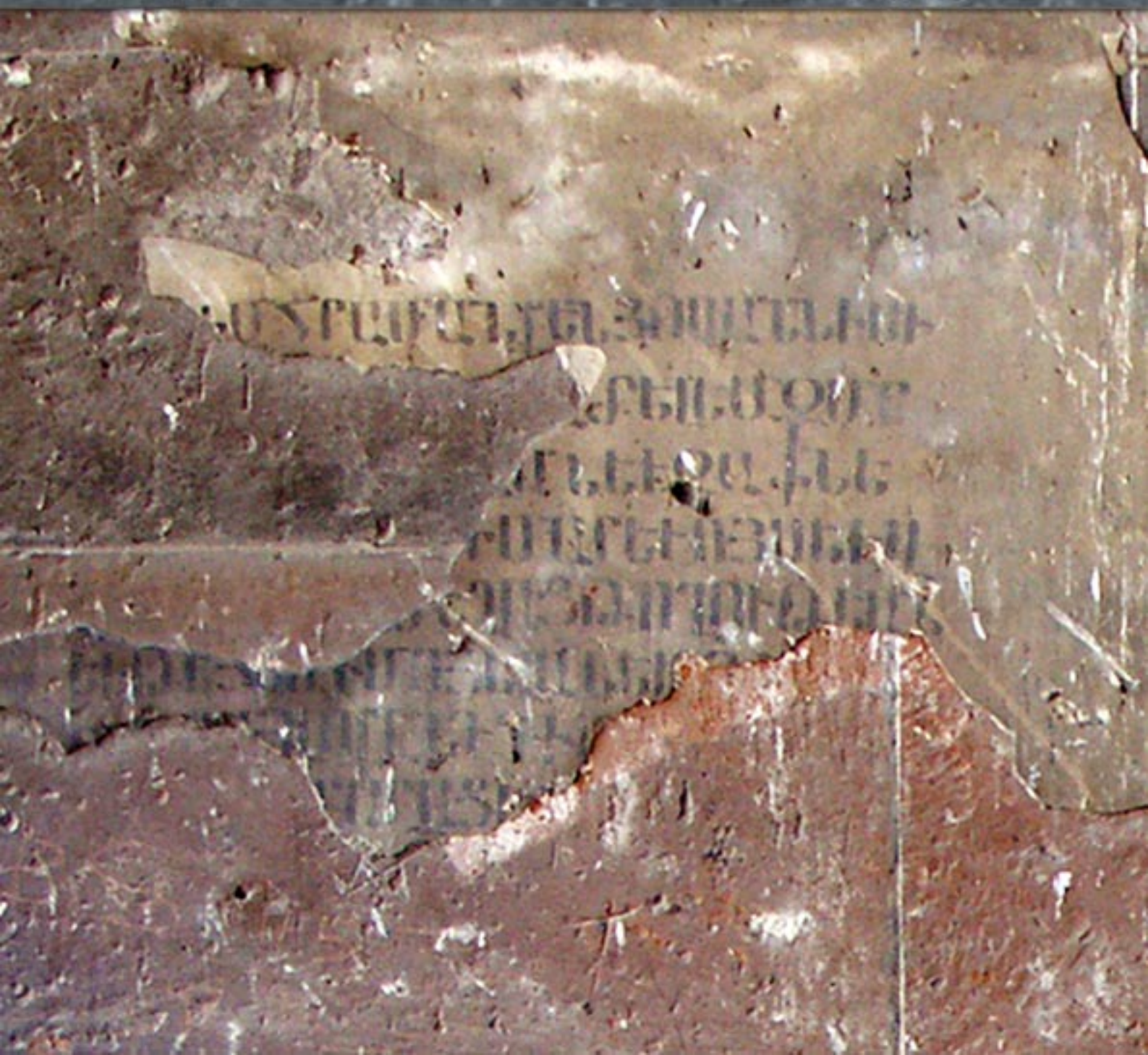


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PERSONA NON GRATA FOR GEORGIA: WHY?

by Samvel Karapetian

On 18 October 2015, the members of Research on Armenian Architecture (RAA) Foundation, including me, attempted to make a visit to the Republic of Georgia for the purpose of conducting research into historical Armenian monuments at present in the territory of this country. However, at the Armeno-Georgian Border Checkpoint of Sadakhlo, I was banned entry to Georgia without any explanation. As for the RAA group of specialists, immediately after crossing the border, they found themselves under the close watch of the Georgian Security Service: for 10 days, they were followed everywhere from morning until evening, both openly and secretly.

So, why am I considered persona non grata for Georgia? Why is the RAA research regarded so dangerous by the Georgian authorities?

Since 1978 I have devoted all my life to studies of historical Armenian monuments located outside the borders of the Republic of Armenia. The primary targets of my research have been the monuments of the historical Armenian lands that remain annexed by the states neighbouring Armenia, including Georgia. Indeed, some research has also been carried out in the settlements of the Armenian Diaspora. The same goal has also been pursued by Research on Armenian Architecture NGO (Founding Director: Dr. Armen Hakhnazarian), which has been working as a foundation under my directorship since 2010 (its Yerevan Headquarters were officially registered in the Republic of Armenia in 1998).

Studies of historical Armenian monuments located in Georgia have always been high on the RAA list of priorities. It should be noted that since 1989 to 1990, these monuments have been subjected to an attitude of flagrant discrimination and intolerance, in consequence of which, many of them, particularly the religious ones, have been either appropriated or totally annihilated. Armenian cemeteries have been levelled to the ground; medieval *khachkars* (*cross-stones*) have just “disappeared,” some of them being buried beneath plaster; hundreds of Armenian lapidary inscriptions and a great number of frescoes have been scraped away.

In the early 1990s, I published numerous articles exposing these acts of vandalism that showed no tendency of abating. In 1998 I also published a book (in Armenian) entitled *The State Policy of Georgia and the Monuments of Armenian Culture*: it presents eye-wit-

ness testimonies, substantiated with photos, against the destruction of Armenian monuments in Georgia (I hoped that my publications might help prevent further demolition and appropriation of these monuments). The contemporary Georgian press kept total silence about the formidable evidence included in the book. Some authors only expressed annoyance at the title of the work, which stressed the fact that the destruction of the Armenian architectural heritage of Georgia had been, and was being, perpetrated as a result of a persistently exercised state policy. In fact, however, only one of the photographs included in the book is enough to prove this: it shows Ed. Shevardnadze at the ceremony (1995) of the blessing of the foundations of a new Georgian church in the site of the historical Armenian cemetery of Khojivank, which was deliberately levelled to the ground in the 1930s (the President represents the state, does he not?).

Apart from publications exposing the destruction and appropriation of Armenian monuments in Georgia, the RAA has also produced the documentaries *Silence* (2008) and *A Day in Kakhet* (2012), which treat the same issue (available, also with English subtitles, on RAA Armenia YouTube Channel).

The works in the Georgian front of my activities also include: *The Mayors of Tiflis*¹ (2003, in Armenian and Russian); *The Armenian Collection of the Caucasian Museum* (2004, in Armenian); *The Armenians in Kakhet* (2004, in Armenian); *Javakhk* (2006, in Armenian; 2011, in English), and *Akhaltskha* (2008, in Armenian). These publications reveal the Armenian cultural and architectural heritage of Georgia, also

¹ The book presents the lives and activities of 47 mayors who governed Tiflis for more than 800 years (from the 12th century until 1917). It is interesting to note that only two of them were Georgians, and their graves are preserved intact, whereas those of the other 45, who were Armenians (they were buried in Tiflis), do not exist at all.

During the presentation of the book in the National Library of Armenia, Nino Aktsiauri, the cultural attache of the Embassy of the Republic of Georgia in the Republic of Armenia, expressed her indignation at the facts highlighted in the book. She particularly stated that Hayos and Kartlos, the eponymous patriarchs of the Armenian and Georgian nations respectively, were brothers, and it was impermissible to publish materials compromising this “fraternity.” Well, a question arises: if they were truly brothers, why did the descendants of Kartlos destroy the graves of Hayos’ scions? How can a brother excavate the grave of his brother and scatter his remains here and there?

showing the Armenians' decisive role in the history of this country and their contribution to its development.

It has already been several years since the Armenian diocese of Georgia raised the question of the restitution of several Armenian churches, appropriated since the 1920s to 1930s, to their only legal owner, the Armenian Apostolic Church. In order to support and substantiate this demand, which has been declared groundless by the Georgian side, I have prepared brief texts (published in the periodical *Norashen*) on the history of some of these churches to prove that they *do* form part of Armenian cultural heritage. In 2012 the RAA also published a book, *Sourb Nshan Sourb Nikoghayosi Church, Tbilisi* (in Armenian, Russian and English), in order to give an exhaustive answer to the long-disputed question of the belonging of this church (after its publication, no further encroachments were made by the Georgian side).²

The latest work in the Georgian front of my activities is a review of *The Miaphysite Monuments of Georgia, book 1: Kvemo Kartli* (in Georgian) by Giorgi Gagoshidze and Natia Chantladze (Tbilisi, 2009; editors: Zaza Alexidze, Professor of the Academy of Sciences of Georgia, and Professor Dmitri Tumanishvili, Dr. of Historical Sciences).³ In fact, this book is thoroughly woven around a newly-concocted thesis through which the Georgian side attempts to “substantiate” the appropriation of Armenian monuments located in Georgia. Thus, according to the authors and editors of the book, the Armenian churches preserved in Somkheti⁴ were originally built not by Armenians but by Georgians who were converted to the Miaphysite (namely, Armenian Apostolic) faith under the pressure

of Armenians; therefore, they are not Armenian, but Georgian churches.

The book also includes numerous Armenian inscriptions allegedly carved by the aforementioned Georgian converts. What is particularly noteworthy, the decipherments of these lapidary records are deliberately distorted and falsified, evidently, for the purpose of decreasing the age of the historical Armenian monuments mentioned in them: thus, for instance, the renowned cross memorial of Samshvilde, erected in 961 and dedicated to Armenian Prince of Princes Smbat, has been traced back to 1621, while the 1237 construction inscription of St. Sargis Church of Darvas Village, Bolnis District, has been ascribed to 1857. The authors of the book also mention the 1615 inscription of one of the Armenian churches of Gorel City Site, declaring that it is not a trustworthy record, being merely a fabrication by Armenians (perhaps, it was for this reason that it disappeared from the site!).⁵

These mistakes could be attributed to ignorance, even given the fact that the authors and editors of the book are renowned scholars. To my mind, however, these falsifications simply pursue the aim of reducing the historical value of the monuments in question.

I have always felt it my duty to protect the monuments of Armenian material culture against various encroachments, and because of my very activities, I have become persona non grata for Georgia. I have been stripped of my legal right to conduct studies of historical Armenian monuments on the spot. In this situation, when the authorities of the Republic of Georgia ban my entry into their country (although they always declare themselves as advocates of western values),⁶ certain Georgian scholars who are busy falsifying history to appropriate Armenian monuments have free access to the Republic of Armenia. Can there be any explanation for this fact?

If I am considered dangerous for the Republic of Georgia just “because of” my honest and truthful scholarly activities, the Georgian researchers publishing biased works abounding in anti-Armenian statements and distorted facts of history are far more dangerous and unwelcome for the Republic of Armenia...

² In 1995 I published a folded booklet with very brief information regarding the Armenian churches of Georgia, over 650 in number (including the name, location, construction and/or renovation year(s) or century(ies) and the condition of each church). It aroused a storm of indignation amidst Georgian researchers, including Armenologists. One of them, Bondo Arveladze, even published an entire book (“Армянские” или грузинские церкви в Грузии?) [“Armenian” or Georgian Churches of Georgia?], Tbilisi, 1996) to refute the information contained in the booklet, which, indeed, does not claim to be a scholarly work. You can judge about the trustworthiness of his “counter-arguments” regarding almost all the religious monuments mentioned in the booklet by looking through, for instance, the part on Sourb Nshan Church of Tbilisi (pp. 14-15).

³ See the review online in *Vardzk* no. 8 (Yerevan, 2013) at: http://www.raa-am.com/vardsk-8/Vardsk-8_E_poqr.pdf

⁴ The toponym *Somkhети*, which is translated as *Armenia*, has been used with reference to this region for centuries by the very Georgian sources. The authors of the book, however, have completely ignored it and concocted the name *Kvemo Kartli* (*Lower Kartli*). Apparently, they have followed the example set by their Turkish counterparts who deliberately avoid using the name *Ermanistan* in connection with the Turkish-conquered lands of Armenia although it can be found in abundance in the very Turkish sources: they have replaced it with the newly-coined geographical term *Eastern Anatolia*.

⁵ The same attitude has been shown to the historical Armenian monuments located in Azerbaijan: thus, for instance, various Azerbaijanian publications present the world-famous cemetery of Old Jugha, as well as numerous churches and monasteries once situated in the region of Nakhichevan as forming part of the heritage of Caucasian Albanians, the alleged ancestors of the Azerbaijani people. This, however, did not prevent the annihilation of these monuments by the very Azerbaijani authorities.

⁶ Immediately on my return from the Armeno-Georgian border, I wrote a letter to Tengiz Sharmanishvili, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Georgia to the Republic of Armenia, hoping to get some explanations. However, I have not received any answer yet.

ANCESTRAL RELICS

by Hayk Ajemian

Notes (including Inscriptions) Put Down during a Journey Made in Urmia (Rezaye), Salmast (Shahpur), Khoy and Maku Districts, West Azerbaijan Province, as well as in the City of Tabriz between 6 July 1958 and 13 November 1959 (130 Days)¹

KHOSROVA VILLAGE

13 August 1959

Probably, the Armenian church of St. Sargis is about 300 years old. The following inscription, dating from 1832, commemorates its overhaul (we do not know how many times it underwent repairs prior to this):

Շնորհիւ տեսան մերոյ Յի. Զի. եւ արդեամբ պարուն Սկրտիչ Մովիեանի համատանցոյ, շինեցաւ Սր. Սարքիս եկեղեցիս հայոց, ի թվին 1832. Մ. 2:

Transl.: *By the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Armenian church of St. Sargis was repaired with the means of Mr. Mkrtich Movian from Hamadan in 1832...*

Right of the inscription above:

Սոյն եկեղեցին վերանորոգեց պ. Միքայէլ Սահակեանը՝ ի յիշատակ իր ծնողների պ. Գաբրիէլ Սահակեանի հսկողութեամբ, 19 մայիսի 1955 թ., Խոսրովա.

Transl.: *This church was repaired by Mr. Michael Sahakian in memory of his parents under Mr. Gabriel Sahakian's supervision on 19 May 1955. Khosrova.*

On the entrance tympanum of the church:

Յիշատակ է զանգս եւ զանգատուն Գալխաթ Յունանեան, 1900 յնիսի 22:

Transl.: *This bell and belfry perpetuate Dalkhat Younanian's memory. 22 June 1900.*

¹ Hayk Ajemian (1898 to 1965), a meritorious scholar from Van, Western Armenia, put down these notes while travelling in Azerbaijan Province, Iran, and in several districts of Historical Armenia (such as Khoy and Salmast) that are within the borders of this country. After his death, the handwritten copy of his notes, entitled *Ancestral Relics* (in Armenian), was given to the late Armen Hakhnazarian, Founding Director of the RAA. In the mid-2000s, we had the chance of getting acquainted with the contents of this work, and realising the great importance of the information it contained, we had it entirely typed, hoping to publish it one day. In this issue of the journal *Vardzk*, we are at last carrying out this goal in token of tribute to Ajemian's memory and gratitude for his praiseworthy activities (note by S.K.). See the original of the *Ancestral Relics* in the Armenian version of *Vardzk* no. 11 at: http://www.raa-am.com/raa/pdf_files/164.pdf.

There are a number of inscribed tombstones close to the southern wall of St. Sargis Church. Below follow the epitaphs engraved on them:

Այս է տապան Շիրին Օհանեսեան, 1887 ամի օկտոսնու 28:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Shirin Ohanessian, [who died] on 28 August 1887.*

Ի դամբան միի Սարքիս Մուսեսեան, ծնեալ 1837 թ.-1897:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Mahtesy Sargis Musessian: born in 1837, he died in 1897.*

Այս է տապան Աբրահամ Սահակեան Գիլանջեանց, ծն. 1892. էսպանվեց հայրի ծեքով 1917 ապրիլի 7:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Abraham Sahakian Dilanjants: born in 1892, he was killed by some Armenians on 7 April 1917.*

Այս է տապան տիրացու Առաքելին Օհանեսան, 1870 յունիսի ԻԲ:

Transl.: *In this grave lies psalm-reader Arakel Ohanian, [who died] on 22 June 1870.*

Այս է տապան Յովսէփ Իսախանեանց, նստակվեցաւ 1917 սեկտեմբեր 4:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Hovsep Isakhaniants, who suffered martyrdom on 4 September 1917.*

Այս է տապան միսի Իսախան Մարտիրոսով, 1851 մարտի 20:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Mahtesy Isakhan Martirossov, [who died] on 20 March 1851.*

Note: *Mahtesy* is a title used with reference to Christian believers who are known to have gone to Jerusalem on pilgrimage.

Right of the western wall of the church, there are four tombstones of priests, only one of them, Father Asbatur's, having an epitaph:

Այս է տապան տէր Ասրատուր Պէտրոսեան, 1893 յուլիս 1-ին:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Father Asbatur Petrossian, [who died] on 1 July 1893.*

HAFTVAN VILLAGE

16 to 17 August 1959

These are the inscriptions engraved above the western entrance of St. Gevorg (George) Church, and right and left of the same entrance:

Շնորհոք բարերարին եւ արդեամբ եւ ողորմուր Սր հոգն շինեց. եկեղեցիս Սր Գեորգայ հոյ փրկուն

Պարսամա եպիսկոպոսն և պարոն Մելիք Ալեքսանին և Փիլոսին և առասարակ քից և ամ ժողովրդն արանց և կանց, ծերց և տղոց, ի հայրպետի են Փիլպի և մերյ արհեպեան Յովնէս վրդպտ և Եսայի Ա վրդպտ ի բզրուե փոքր Շահպասին, թվ. ՌՃԱ (1652):

Transl.: *By the grace of God and the Holy Spirit, this church of St. Gevorg was built for the salvation of the souls of Bishop Parsam and Mr. Melik Alexan and Pilos and all the priests in general and all the people, men and women, the aged and the young, in the days of Catholicos Pilipos and our archbishop, Archimandrite Hov[han]nes, and Archimandrite Yesayi I, in the days of Shah Abbas Junior, in the year 1101 [1652].*

Խաչս կանգնեցո հոգոյ փրկութեն Մելիք Ալեքսանին արեամբն ներկեալ քրիստոնքն անմեղ սպաննո ձեռամբ Սաֆի Դուլի խանին, ՌՃԹ թվին (1660):

Transl.: *This cross was erected for the salvation of the soul of Melik Alexan, an innocent Christian ... who was killed by Safi Ghuli Khan. 1109 [1660].*

On a small piece of marble set in the entrance facade:

Վերստին նորոգեցաւ
Դուռն Սր Գէորքա
Չեռամբ ֆռանկին,
Մսի Կապտին ...

Transl.: *The door of St. Gevorg [Church] was again repaired by Mahtesy Karapet, a Catholic ...*

Note: The year of the inscription was missing. H.A.

There are about 30 tombstones at the northern wall of St. Gevorg Church. Below follow the epitaphs of some of them:

Տապանիս ննջէ Դաւիթ Խանամիրեան, վանեցի, իսկ ան. Օհանէս Քանքանեան, ամի 1897 20 ապրիլ:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Davit Khanamirian, from Van by birth, and ... Ohanes Kankanian, [who died on] 20 April 1897.*

Lorto (Harutiun Hambardzum Vanetsy), who died on 27 March 1927, is buried next to Davit Khanamirian.

Այս է տապան Իսրայէլ սրբազան արքեպիսկոպոսին՝ | առաջնորդ Սր. Առաքելոյ վանից Բարթոլոմէոսին, | օծեալ ձեռամբ Եփրեմ կթղկոսին, | ծնունդն Կոստանտինպոլսեցին, | կատարում| Սր. Գեվորգայ եկեղեցին, | թվին ՌՄՁԴ (1835)-ին:

Transl.: *In this grave lies the Most Reverend Archbishop Israel from Constantinople, Prior of the monastery of St. Bardughimeos Arakyal [Bartholomew*

the Apostle] who was ordained by Catholicos Yeprem. He died in St. Gevorg Church in the year 1284 [1835].

Most probably, Archbishop Israel was killed in the yard of the church of Haftvan.

Այս է տապան Մեսրոպ վարդապետ Փափագեանի, որ նահատկեցաւ 17 ապրիլ 1891 ամի:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Archimandrite Mesrop Papazian, who suffered martyrdom on 17 April 1891.*

17 August 1959

The following epitaphs are from the Armenian cemetery of Haftvan:

Այս է տապան Մելիք Վարդանին, որդի էր Մելիք Յակոբին և էր հայր Մելիք Օրդու խանին, երիտասարդ յասակաւ վճարեաց ի կանս իւր և փոխեաց առ Քս, թվին ՌՃՉ (1731):

Transl.: *In this grave lies Melik Vardan, who was Melik Hakob's son and Melik Ordu Khan's father. He died an untimely death, consigning his soul to Christ in the year 1180 [1731].*

Այս է տապան Մելիք Յկոբի որդի Մելիք Սդիփանոսին:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Melik Hakob's son, Melik Sedpanos.*

Այս է տապան Շապարուն Մելիքեանին, որդի էր Մելիք Վարդանին և էր բոռ միի Ահարոնին Մուսէսին և իւր կողակից Նուպարին երիտասարդ հասակի, թիվն ՌՄԱ (1752):

Transl.: *In this grave lies Shaparun Melikian, who was Melik Vardan's son and Mahtesy Aaron Muses and his wife Nupar's grandchild. [He died] when still young in the year 1201 [1752].*

Այս է տապան պարոն Էվազին՝ որդի Մելիք Ալեքսանին և եղբայր Մելիք Յակոբին, որ երիտասարդ հասակաւ վճարեաց զկեանս իւր և փոխեցաւ առ Քս, թվին ՌՃԼ (1681):

Transl.: *In this grave lies Mr. Evaz, Melik Alexan's son and Melik Hakob's brother. He died an untimely death, consigning his soul to Christ in the year 1130 [1681].*

Այս է տապան Ահարոնի Պօղոսեան, 1876:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Aaron Poghossian, [who died] in 1876.*

Այս է տապանն Ալվերդի որդի Օյանէսին և իրան կողակից Ռումին, ՌՄԳԳին (1814):

Transl.: *In this grave lie Alverd's son Ohanes and his wife Rum. 1263 [1814].*

Այս է տապան Ահարնի որդի մհտի Սարգսին, որ փոխեցաւ առ Քս, հայոց թվին ՌՃ (1651):

Transl.: *In this grave lies Aaron's son, Mahtesy Sargis, who consigned his soul to Christ in the year 1100 [1651] of the Armenian calendar.*

Անորէն Սարգիս չիք տէր Օհանեան, մատնեաց անմեղիս պարսկաց մատեան, եղին ի բանտի

բոռով ուրասնեան, զոր ենթարկեցին ծածուկ սպանման, մի թովմասեանց Գէորգիս Սահակեան, 2. 1. 1887:

Transl.: *That cruel and worthless Sargis Ter-Ohanian betrayed me to the Persians although I was innocent. I was put to prison to serve a term of eight months, but I was treacherously killed there. Mahtesy Gevorgis Sahakian from Tovmas' family. 2. 1. 1887.*

KYOHNASHAHAR

18 August 1959

I took a carriage and left Shahpur for Kyohnashahar, one of the mountain villages in Salmast that was within about 12 km. Prior to the latest war [the Turkish invasion of 1918], Kyohnashahar had an Armenian population of 25 houses. They abandoned the village in 1946: some of them took up residence in Tabriz and Teheran, while others repatriated to Armenia. At present there are no Armenians in this village, except Nerses Babayan, a well-known specialist in the production of red cheese who runs a local cheese factory.

After quenching my thirst with the cool water of the fountain of Kyohnashahar, I told the cabman to take me to the site of the local Armenian church. It had been levelled to the ground, and its stones had been carried away, a vegetable garden now lying in its yard. Wandering in this forsaken site for a while, I then got on the carriage, my heart torn to pieces, to continue my way to the old Armenian cemetery of Kyohnashahar and to the chapel of St. Hovhannes [John]: the latter had been similarly pulled down, its stones having been appropriated.

I climbed the hill of St. Hovhannes Chapel with great difficulty, gasping for breath—the consequence of smoking—to see only a black gravestone that was about 900 years old. Then I descended to the foot of the hill and started walking in the Armenian graveyard that was more than a thousand years old. All the finely-dressed tombstones had been carried away, and the cemetery retained only some uninscribed stones without crosses that had been placed there some 700 to 1,000 years before. I examined these old gravestones, 325 in number. The names inscribed on them had mostly faded away and I was able to copy only the years, although they were hardly discernible.

Part of the epitaphs began in the following format: *May the Cross protect ...'s soul; This Cross stands in memory of ..., Lord Jesus Christ, may You remember the soul of Your servant ...* (the ellipses stand for the names of the deceased). The words in these epitaphs were mostly contracted, each with the corresponding sign.

The Armenians deliberately used rough, undressed and huge blocks of stone to prevent cases of theft and the defilement of graves. It was only after Shah Abbas the Great that they started adorning their tombstones

with crosses, reliefs and epitaphs. Such gravestones especially abounded in the Armenian cemetery of Savra Village, in Salmast. However, all these stones were appropriated after 1930, being used in the construction of some military barracks.

It took me five hours to work in the Armenian cemetery of Kyohnashahar. Exposed to the burning sun, all by myself, I copied the following epitaphs, both old and recent, with unspeakable difficulties:

ԹՎ. ՇԼ (1081):

Transl.: *In the year 530* [1081].

ԹՎ. ՉԺԱ (1162):

Transl.: *In the year 711* [1162].

ԹՎ. ՇԽԲ (1093):

Transl.: *In the year 542* [1093].

Խշս բարխս է առ ած / Մէք Մորսի որդի Մէք / Բարաիին, քվ. ՈԼԳ (1184):

Transl.: *May the Cross protect Melik Murat's son, Melik Badal, [who died] in the year 633* [1184].

Տր ած Յս Բս, յէա զհզիս / տր Խշտր նսոկ վրդպտին, քվ. ՉԼԲ (1283):

Transl.: *Lord Jesus Christ, may You remember the soul of Archimandrite Khachatur, who suffered martyrdom in the year 732* [1283].

Տր ած Յս Բս, յէա զհզիս / տր Յովհնէս վրդպտին, որ / նսոկցաւ ձեռնր ազգին / նետողաց, քվ. ՉԼԲ (1283):

Transl.: *Lord Jesus Christ, may You remember the soul of Archimandrite Hovhannes, who was tortured to death by [the members of] the nation of the archers [the Mongol-Tatars] in the year 732* [1283].²

Խշս բարխս է տիրցու / Մարտրսին, քվ. ՉԽԱ (1292):

Transl.: *May the Cross protect psalm-reader Martiros, [who died] in the year 741* [1292].

ԹՎ. ՊԾԳ (1404):

Transl.: *In the year 853* [1404].

ԹՎ. ՋԻԳ (1474):

Transl.: *In the year 923* [1474].

ԹՎ. ՋԾԹ (1510):

Transl.: *In the year 959* [1510].

ԹՎ. ՋՀԹ (1530):

Transl.: *In the year 979* [1530].

ԹՎ. Ռ (1551):

Transl.: *In the year 1000* [1551].

ԹՎ. ՌԼԸ (1589):

Transl.: *In the year 1038* [1589].

ԹՎ. ՌԾ (1601):

Transl.: *In the year 1050* [1601].

ԹՎ. ՌՀ (1621):

Transl.: *In the year 1070* [1621].

ԹՎ. ՌՂ (1641):

Transl.: *In the year 1090* [1641].

² Archimandrites Khachatur and Hovhannes suffered martyrdom together in 1283 (H. A.).

Յշակ է սր խչս անորդի | Խաւճա Մարտիրոսին,
թվ. ՌՂ (1641):

Transl.: *This Holy Cross stands in memory of Khoja Martiros, who died childless in the year 1090 [1641].*

Թվ. ՌՃ (1651):

Transl.: *In the year 1100 [1651].*

Խչս բրխս է առ ած | Մելիք Թաթնուհն, որ չարչր
մահնր մհակ եղե ձեռնր Սաֆի Ղուլի խանին, թվ.
ՌՃԱ (1652):

Transl.: *May the Cross protect Melik Tatos, who was cruelly tortured to death in the hands of Safi Ghuli Khan in the year 1101 [1652].*

Խչս բարխս է առ Քս Մելք Գուրդանի որդի Մելք
Սաֆարին, որ կեն գրու եղե ձեռնր Սաֆի Ղուլի խա-
նին, թվ. ՌՃԹ (1660):

Transl.: *May the Cross protect Melik Guldán's son, Melik Safar, who was tortured to death in the hands of Safi Ghuli Khan in the year 1109 [1660].*

Խչս բրխս է առ Քս | վսն խճա Վարդանին, որ կեն
գրու եղե ձեռնր | անրինգ, թվ. ՌՃԺԱ (1662):

Transl.: *May the Cross protect Khoja Vardan, who was tortured to death by the cruel enemy in the year 1111 [1662].*

Թվ. ՌՄ (1751):

Transl.: *In the year 1200 [1751].*

Թվ. ՌՄԺ (1761):

Transl.: *In the year 1210 [1761].*

Յշակ է սր խչս Մելիք Նզարին, | որ է որդի տէր
Չաքրին, | յար մեծի ուրբթին | աւանդեց զհոգն, | թվ.
ՌՄԺ (1761):

Transl.: *This Holy Cross stands in memory of Melik Nazar, who is Father Zakar's son. He consigned his soul to God on Good Friday in the year 1210 [1761].*

Խչս բրխս է առ ած | Ղոնդադասազ Գուրամրին, |
որ զխստցաւ ձեռնր քրդաց, | թվ. ՌՄԾԳ (1804):

Transl.: *May the Cross protect gunmaker Gulamir, who was beheaded by the Kurds in the year 1253 [1804].*

Խչս բրխս է առ ած վսն հոդյն Ոսկանի որդի
Մորատին, որ փոխեցաւ առ ած, թվ. 1818:

Transl.: *May the Cross protect Voskan's son Murat, who yielded up his spirit to God in the year 1818.*

Կեանք կենացս է ծաղկի նման, եկայք և տեսէք
զայս մահարձան, ես՝ Մարտիրոս որդի մհի Օհանէ-
սեան, ճարտար և խոհեմ արհեստիս ամենայն,
մահն անողորմ խլած զթելն իմ նոյն ժաման, ան
երեկ օրեր պատրաստ կան յախտեան, ծնեալ 1838,
անջեաց 1863:

Transl.: *Life is like a flower. Come and see this tombstone. I am Martiros, Mahtesy Ohanessian's son, a skillful and prudent craftsman. Cruel death severed the thread of my life.... Born in 1838, I died in 1863.*

In order to have some rest, I went to see Nerses Babayan. Our nostalgic memories took us back into

January 1931, when we were in his shop in Tabriz and he sang the songs of Ghul Harutiun, a travelling musician from Salmast, for me to put them down for my future lecture on Armenian minstrels. The venerable Armenian, who was already rather advanced in years, generously treated me to freshly-baked bread, *matzoon* [a fermented milk product, similar to yogurt] and red cheese.

“My friend,” he said to me, “my health is getting worse. One day I’ll depart this life.”

At 2 o’clock I started for the village of Savra, where I was going to visit a factory of dried apricots belonging to one of my former pupils, Hakob from Ghara-dagh.

SAVRA VILLAGE

19 August 1959

Orchards occupying vast plots of land, thick groves, meadows, grasslands, arables, fields and abundant canals—you are in Savra, once a rich and prospering village purely inhabited by Armenians. Its Armenian quarters have been reduced to heaps of ruins. The Armenian church is not preserved either, only two semi-ruined apses reminding of its existence. The church yard retains the tombstone of Murad, the principal character of the outstanding Armenian prose writer Raffi’s novel, *The Diary of a Cross Thief* [«Խաչագողի հիշատակարան»]. It has been covered with pebble to hide it from view and thus prevent its appropriation. Right of the church entrance, Priest Harutiun’s grave is located (see the epitaph below).

Hakob has been running a factory of dried apricots here for already 25 years.

It was particularly after the latest war and the arrival of the Russians that the Armenians of Savra sold their lands and gardens to the Turks at extremely low prices and left the village. In 1934 to 1935, on the initiative of the military authorities, thousands of ornate tombstones from the local Armenian cemetery were transported to Shahpur to be used in the construction of some barracks.

I spent 5 hours in the devastated and abandoned Armenian quarters and cemetery of Savra. Exposed to the burning sun, with my heart aching at what I had become witness to, I made actual-size tracings of two gravestones and put down the following epitaphs:

Այս է տարան տէր Յարութիւնին, որ առ ած
փոխեցաւ 1862:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Father Harutiun, who consigned his soul to God in 1862.*

Տր ած Յս Քս, | ողորմի կանաչ Խարմունին:

Transl.: *Lord Jesus Christ, may You have mercy upon ... Khatun.*

Թվ. ՌԻԲ (1573):

Transl.: *In the year 1022* [1573].

Խշու յշտկ է Թարլանին, քվ. ՌՃԻԸ (1679):

Transl.: *This Cross stands in memory of Tarlan, [who died] in the year 1128* [1679].

Խշու քրիստ է առ ած ի փրկութեն հզն Առստմեն, որ է որդի Յովանսին, քվ. ՌՃԻԸ (1672):

Transl.: *This Cross stands for the salvation of Hovhannes' son Arustam's soul. [He died] in the year 1121* [1672].

Յշտկ է խշու Առաքի որդի Սէլիք Աղամիրին, քվ. ՌՃԸ (1603):

Transl.: *This Cross stands in memory of Arakel's son, Melik Aghamir, [who died] in the year 1052* [1603].

Խշու յշտկ է Գուլոյի որդի Սիրգային, քվ. ՌՃՉ (1607):

Transl.: *This Cross stands in memory of Gulo's son Mirza, [who died] in the year 1056* [1607].

Տր ած Յու Զու, ողորմեա Սարուխանի որդի Ամիրխանին, քվ. ՌՍԼԱ (1782):

Transl.: *Lord Jesus Christ, may You have mercy upon Sarukhan's son Amirkhan, [who died] in the year 1231* [1782].

Թվ. ՊԽԹ (1400):

Բազմք նհտկ եղին ձեռնք ազգին նիտող:

Transl.: *In the year 849* [1400].

A great many people were tortured to death in the hands of [the members of] the nation of the archers [the Mongol-Tatars].

The following was carved on a gravestone serving as a bridge across a canal in Savra:

Խշու յշտկ է Մովսէսին, քվ. ՌՄՉ (1757):

Transl.: *This Cross stands in memory of Moses, [who died] in the year 1206* [1757].

Յիշատակ է սբ. խշու մահտեսի Օրսուին, քվ. ՌՍԼԸ (1789)-ին:

Transl.: *This Holy Cross stands in memory of Mahtesy Ortu, [who died] in the year 1238* [1789].

Յիշտկ է սբ. խաշու Սարսիրոսին, քվ. ՌՃՀՉ (1727):

Transl.: *This Holy Cross stands in memory of Martiros, [who died] in the year 1176* [1727].

Another gravestone placed across a canal in a garden in the north of the Armenian cemetery was engraved with this epitaph:

Ի ժամանկս Ախտախանին,

Կոտորցին քրիստոնքն,

Բազմ ազգնք զերեցին,

Բազմ տղայք թլպտեցին,

Ով մր Յս՝ հաս օգնութիւն,

Ազգիս հայց տր փրկութիւն, քվ. ՌՍԼԹ (1790):

Transl.: *In Akhtakhan's days, Christians were put to slaughter, many nations were taken captive and a great many boys were circumcised. Oh, You, Lord Jesus, may*

You come to rescue and save the Armenian nation. In the year 1239 [1790].

Most probably, this tombstone was placed over a common grave where several martyrs were buried:

Յորժմ կարմիր գրակն, իսկ բազմք ի քրիստոնքն նհտկ եղն. քվ. ՉԼ (1281):

Transl.: *When the Kezelmashes [came], many Christians suffered martyrdom in the year 730* [1281].

Յիշտկ է սբ խշու, Խաչիկի որդի Առաքելին, քվ. ՌՃԽԱ (1692):

Transl.: *This Holy Cross stands in memory of Khachik's son Arakel, [who died] in the year 1141* [1692].

Յ է սբ խաշու Էվազին, ուր մայր Խոտմին, քվ. ՌՍԼԵ (1786):

Transl.: *This Holy Cross stands in memory of Evaz [and] his mother Khuom, [who died] in the year 1235* [1786].

Յիշ է սբ խաչ Սարքարտին, քվ. ՌՄԻԸ (1779):

Transl.: *This Holy Cross stands in memory of Markarit, [who died] in the year 1228* [1779].

Some of the old gravestones of the cemetery were carved with the following inscriptions:

Թվ. ՆՂ (1041):

Transl.: *In the year 490* [1041].

Թվ. ՇԽ (1091):

Transl.: *In the year 540* [1091].

Թվ. ՉԼԱ (1282):

Transl.: *In the year 731* [1282].

Թվ. ՌԵ (1556):

Transl.: *In the year 1005* [1556].

PAYAJUK

21 August 1959

Engraved on a marble stone lying south of St. Gevorg Church:

Այս է տապան տր Առաքելին, որ հանգուցեալ կա ի սբ եկեղեցին, ով որ հանտիպեք այս տապանին, լի թերանով դուք զողորմին:

Transl.: *In this grave, near the holy church, reposes ... Arakel. May those who come across it pray for his soul wholeheartedly* [undated - H. A.].

Ի դամբարանիս ննջէ Իսահակ արքեպս. Սարունեն՝ երախտատր առաջնորդ Ատրպտկնի Հայկական, 1857 ամի մարտի 24-ին:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Archbishop Isahak Sadune, the meritorious primate of the Armenians of Azerbaijan [Province]. [He died] on 24 March 1857.*

Ի դամբարանիս ննջէ Գրիգոր արքեպս Մուշեղեան՝ վիճակատր առաջնորդ Ատրպնի, որ հնգեալ որմի 1882 նոյ. 17:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Archbishop Grigor Mushheghian, Primate of Azerbaijan Diocese, who departed this life on 17 November 1882.*

Ի դասընթացին անջել խաչակիր ասագ քինյ տեր Աբրահամ Ստեփանեան, որ հանգեաւ 1874 օգոստոս 21:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Archpriest Abraham Stepanian, who had the honour of wearing a pectoral cross. He departed this life on 21 August 1874.*

Epitaphs from the cemetery of Payajuk:

Խչս յիշակ է Մարտիրոսին, թվ. ՌՃԹ (1660):

Transl.: *This Cross stands in memory of Martiros, [who died] in the year 1109 [1660].*

Այս է տապան Մելք Յկրի որդի Մելք Կրպտին, որ նհուկու ձեռնը Սաֆի Ղուլի խանին, թվ. ՌՃԹ (1660):

Transl.: *In this grave lies Melik Hakob's son, Melik Karapet, who was tortured to death in the hands of Safi Ghuli Khan in the year 1109 [1660].*

Տր ած Յս Քս, ողորմեա | Մելք Նազարին, որ չրչր | մահնը նհուկ եղև ձեռնը | Սաֆի Ղուլի խանին, | թվ. ՌՃԹ (1660):

Transl.: *Lord Jesus Christ, may You have mercy upon Melik Nazar, who was cruelly tortured to death in the hands of Safi Ghuli Khan in the year 1109 [1660].*

Խչս բրխատ առ ած Մելք Մանասերին, որ նհուկ ձեռնը Սաֆի Ղուլի խանին, թվ. ՌՃԹ (1660):

Transl.: *May this Cross protect Melik Manaser, who was tortured to death in the hands of Safi Ghuli Khan in the year 1109 [1660].*

Խչս յշակ է Աղամիրի | որդի Գուլամիրին, որ կեն գրու | եղև ձեռնը անրինաց, | թվ. ՌՃԹ (1660):

Transl.: *May this Cross protect Aghamir's son Gulamir, who was tortured to death in the hands of the cruel enemy in the year 1109 [1660].*

Ողորմեա | Մելք Նազարի որդի | Մելք Յկրին, թվ. ՌՃԹ (1662):

Transl.: *May You have mercy upon Melik Nazar's son, Melik Hakob, [who died] in the year 1111 [1662].*

Ի տպնի ախմ հնգչի | մարմին Մելք Գուլչին, | թվ. ՌՃԹ (1692):

Transl.: *In this grave lie the remains of Melik Gulchin, [who died] in the year 1141 [1692].*

Խչս բրխս է Քսի ծոյ տեր Յկրին, թվ. ՌՃԹ (1697):

Transl.: *May this Cross protect Christ's servant, Father Hakob, [who died] in the year 1146 [1697].*

Խչս յշակ է տր Թադէս քինին, որ է որդի տր Բրդղմս քինին, թվ. ՌՄ (1751):

Transl.: *This Cross stands in memory of Priest Tadevos, Priest Bardughimeos' son, [who died] in the year 1200 [1751].*

Խչս բրխս է առ ած վսն հոգն Հախնազին, որ է որդի Վրդազրին, թվ. ՌՄ (1771):

Transl.: *May this Cross protect the soul of Hakhnazar, who is Vardazar's son. [He died] in the year 1220 [1771].*

Այս է տապան լուսահոգի Սարգիս Օհանեան Բուտային, ի ժամանակ որ եղև մեծ շարժ ի քաղաքն Խոյա ամառ:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Sargis Ohanian Buta of blessed memory. [He died] during the great earthquake³ that struck the city of Khoy in the summer [the epitaph is undated - H. A.].*

Այս է տապան է Վազին, թվին ՌՄԿԹ (1810):

Transl.: *In this grave lies Vaz, [who died] in the year 1269 [1810].*

Յշակ է տապան Բուտայի որդի Օհանին ի 1827-ին:

Transl.: *This grave[stone] stands in memory of Butagh's son Ohan, [who died] in 1827.*

Այս է տապան մի Նազարի որդի Յակոբին 1832:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Mahtesy Nazar's son Hakob, [who died] in 1832.*

Այս է տապան մի Նազարին, 1832:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Mahtesy Nazar, [who died] in 1832.*

Այս է տապան Բոտաղ Օհանեան, 1871:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Botagh Ohanian, [who died] in 1871.*

Այս է տապան հանգստեան Յովհաննէս Բէկի Բուտայի, | երիտասարդ ազնուական, | ողորմի մի տալ մեծարժան, 1873:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Hovhannes Bey Butagh, a young nobleman deserving your prayers for his soul. 1873.*

Այս է տապան Խոտոյի որդի Գրիգորին, 1876 ամի նոյ. 2-ին:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Khuto's son Grigor, [who died] on 2 November 1876.*

Ես՝ Եղիազար վարդապետ, վշտակից | ք. առաջնորդ Բարդղղիմեայ վանից | ի ժամանակս մեծ պատերազմին ռուսաց կայսեր ընդ օսմանցուի, եղև տարագիր աստ ի Սալմաստ, ցաւօք հեծութեամբք փոխեցա առ ած: Ոհ, մնաց անկատար փափագս ըզանացս վասն վանիցս և ազգիս խղճեց, | ամի տնն 1878 | օգոստոս 28-ի Փայաջուկ, 1290:

Transl.: *I am sorrowful Archimandrite Yeghiazar, the Prior of the monastery of [St.] Bardughimeos [Bartholomew]. During the great war the Russian emperor fought against the Ottomans, I had to abandon it and come to Salmast. Unfortunately, I consigned my soul to God in pain and sorrow. Oh, my wishes connected with the ... monastery and my nation were left unrealised. [I died] in Payajuk on 28 August 1878 (1290⁴).*

3 Probably, this was the earthquake of 1779, which inflicted serious damage on many cities and districts such as Tabriz, Guna, Tasu, Salmast, Urmia, Van and Khoy. See Գիսան հայոց պատմութեան, գիրք Ժ [Documents Relating to Armenian History, vol. 10] (Tiflis, 1912), p. 146; Մանր ժամանակագրություններ, հ. Ա [Collected Chronicles, vol. 1] (Yerevan, 1951), p. 380; vol. 2 (Yerevan, 1956), p. 494 (note by the editor).

4 1290 is the year according to the Persian calendar (H. A.).

Աստ հանգչի Ջերեան՝ մայր Բաֆֆիի, ծնեալ 1819 թ., վախճանեալ 1904 թ. հոկտեմբեր 28-ին:

Transl.: *Here reposes Raffi's mother Jerian: born in 1819, she died on 28 October 1904.*

Աստ հանգչին ոսկերք ... Ջիբրայէլեան Բուսա-դեանցի, ծն. 1873, վխճ. 1904 հոկտ. 4:

Transl.: *Here repose ... Jibraelian Butaghiants' remains: born in 1873, [s]he died on 4 October 1904.*

Ազնի բարերար Տանոմիր Արամեան, երիտասարդ հասակի հասեալ ի մահուան, Խոստան Սանսերեան գովիի իշխան, բողեալ ի սուգ սիրտ մեր ամենայն, ամ 1887 յուլիսի 9-ին:

Transl.: *Noble benefactor Tanomir Aramian, who died an untimely death while still young. Praiseworthy prince Khutan Manaserian left all of us with mournful hearts on 9 July 1887.*

SARNA VILLAGE

23 August 1959

Carved on a tombstone:

Այս է տապան հանկուցեալ աշդ Հարութիինն, որ եղն մասնակից Բէշիշ Օղլի Էվազ, | ՌՄԼԵ (1786):

Transl.: *In this grave lies minstrel Harutiun of blessed memory ... Keshish Oghli Evaz, [who died] in the year 1235 [1786].*

Inscribed on the other side of the tombstone (in Turkish in the Armenian script):

Կալ Սամսալու Ղուլ Յարութին Եազլան կլոր Բաշան | Գուցին Վարզէշ էյլամանջան եսփշմա ազրր տաշան:

Note: The epitaph which is too unintelligible to be translated contains the toponym *Salmast* and the personal name *Harutiun* (note by the translator).

A cross is engraved beneath this Turkish epitaph.

Իջս բարեխս է | առ ած վսն փրկութ. | մհի Շայ-գալղին, | թվ. ՌՄՁ (1757):

Transl.: *May this Cross save Mahtesy Shahgald's soul. [He died] in the year 1206 [1757].*

Յշտկ է խաչս Կիրակոսի որդի մահի Ներսէսին, թվ. ՌՄԺԴ (1765) դեկտ. ԻԸ-ին:

Transl.: *This Cross stands in memory of Kirakos' son, Mahtesy Nerses, [who died] on 28 December 1214 [1765].*

Յիշատակ է սր. խաչս Սէլիք Ներոի որդի Խոսափէրիի աղային, | թվ. ՌԲԸԻ (1771) օգոստ. 4-ին:

Transl.: *This Holy Cross stands in memory of Melik Nero's son, Agha Khutaverdi, [who died] on 4 August 1220 [1771].*

Այս է տապան լուսահուզի Կիւլնազարին | Գրիգորեան, | ՌՄՀԵ (1826)-ին:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Kyulnazar Grigorian of blessed memory, [who died] in 1275 [1826].*

MAHLAM VILLAGE

23 August 1959

Every year the Armenians of Mahlam visit the pilgrimage site of *Vardanank*, in the neighbourhood of the village, to celebrate the feast of the Holy Commander Vardan and his followers. A requiem service is conducted to honour their memory, animals are sacrificed, incense is burnt, and a festive party is held, the people eating, drinking and dancing.

KHOY CITY

27 August 1959

I went to the Armenian church of the city, St. Sargis, together with Margar Torgomian and Vahan Sargissian, who were from Tabriz.

The following inscriptions were carved on the pillars of the church:

Մբ. խաչս բրխս է մրդցի Թաթնսի որդի Յարութիինն, թվ. ՌՃԺ (1661):

Transl.: *May the Holy Cross protect Harutiun, the son of Tatos from Maragha, [who died] in 1110 [1661].*

Մբ. խաչս բրխս Սինասի որդի Պարոսին մրադցի, թվ. ՌՃԼԲ (1683):

Transl.: *May the Holy Cross protect Minas' son Petros from Maragha, [who died] in 1132 [1683].*

Մբ. խսս բարխս Սարգսի որդի Ղուկասին, թվ. ՌՃԾ (1701):

Transl.: *May the Holy Cross protect Sargis' son Ghukas, [who died] in the year 1150 [1701].*

Մբ. խաչս յշտկ է Բիրքին, թ. ՌՄ (1751):

Transl.: *This Holy Cross stands in memory of Kirb, [who died] in the year 1200 [1751].*

Carved on some tombstones laid in the masonry beside the church door:

Թվ. ՌՃԸ (1659), | խսս յիշտկ է Ոսկանին, Սահկին:

Transl.: *In the year 1108 [1659]: this Cross stands in memory of Voskan [and] Sahak.*

Այս է տապան Աճատրի որդի Աղամիր, թվ. ՌՃԼ (1681):

Transl.: *In this grave lies Astvatzatur's son Aghamir, [who died] in the year 1130 [1681].*

Այս է տապան Յկորի որդի Պետրոսին, թվ. ՌՃԼԱ (1682):

Transl.: *In this grave lies Hakob's son Petros, [who died] in the year 1131 [1682].*

Engraved on a gravestone laid in the masonry beside the northern door of the church:

Այս է տապան Ոստա ... Իբարին, թվ. ՌՃԻԱ (1672):

Transl.: *In this grave lies master ...ibar, [who died] in the year 1121 [1672].*

SEYDAVAR VILLAGE

28 August 1959

The village of Seydavar, situated within 4 kilometres of the city of Khoy, has abundant water supplies, thanks to which, it is rich in extensive plots of land, cultivated fields, gardens, groves and meadows. Prior to World War I, it was purely inhabited by Armenians, with a population of about 100 houses. It had a small pitiable church and a two-floor school.

THE EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IN MAKU DISTRICT IN 1914 TO 1918⁵

We [Nazlu Hakobian-Tadevossian is recalling] were in the city of Maku in the summer of 1914, when the war broke out. The Russians entered Azerbaijan [Province] to advance towards Bayazed and Van. We lived in peace and safety in Maku until July 1915, when the Russians started retreating. Forced to move away from the city, we went first to Khoy and then to Julfa, but we did not stay in either of these places for long. Eventually reaching the Ararat Valley, we lived in Iğdir and Ghamarlu for some time. Later we returned to Maku, and in the autumn of 1917, we started living in the monastery of Sourb Tadevos Arakyal [St. Thaddeus the Apostle]. Both the monastery and the nearby village, which had around 30 Armenian houses with nearly two hundred inhabitants, were in prosperous conditions.

From December 1917 until January 1918, the Russians completely withdrew from the district of Artaz.

Within about 60 km of the monastery, the village of Kishmish Tapa was located, with around 40 Armenian houses (250 inhabitants). Maku City had an Armenian population of 70 houses (400 inhabitants).

In April 1918 the Turkish troops entered Azerbaijan. The inhabitants of Vank Village, who had found shelter in the monastery, put up a heroic resistance against them and the mob of the Kurds and Turks of Maku District.

After 15 days of siege, the Turks understood that it was impossible to go beyond the walls of the monastery and decided to put a bomb beneath a tower at night. The wall was exploded, after which a group of fighters defending the monastery broke through the siege through the collapsed part under a shower of bullets and descended towards the nearby gorge. Then they climbed the mountain on which the chapels are situated and headed in an unknown direction, taking advantage of the night darkness.

Throughout the siege, the Armenians resisted the Turks heroically. They had plenty of food (bread, oil, cheese and cereals), but they were in bad need of water which was procured from the river running in the gorge (the river was reached through an opening in the part of the walls that was close to the prior's room). Special mention should be made of a Turk named Zeynal who secretly provided the Armenians with water.

The regular Turkish troops and the bands of Turks and Kurds broke into the yard of the monastery where there were only a group of old women and little children. Among them was Ano, a blind woman whom the Turks severely beat and whipped to force her to show them the hiding-place of the monastic property. The sacred vessels and utensils of the monastery, the priestly vestments as well as the silver, gilded right hand of St. Thaddeus the Apostle, which were kept in a cache close to the altar [according to the author, the cache was close to the dome] were all stolen. The beautiful young women and girls huddled up in the yard of the monastery were selected and taken away, while the aged, the sick and the injured were slaughtered.

The Armenians of the village adjacent to the monastery were either massacred or taken captive, only some of them escaping this carnage.

The Turks also killed Ano's husband Arshak, the verger of the village church, and took their daughter into captivity, forcing her to convert to Islam.

Most of the Armenians of Kishmish Tapa Village, mentioned above, were similarly killed, only those hidden being saved. Some of them, both boys and girls, had to convert to Islam and marry Turks.

Now the turn came for the Armenians of Maku. The order to slaughter them was given by either Sardar Iğbal Saytan or the Turkish commander Ali Ehsan.

One of the khans of Maku, a kind-hearted man named Mustafa Pasha, sheltered 16 families of Armenians in the yard of his large house for two months, until the Turks' withdrawal. If it is true that the Armenians of Maku City were slaughtered on the order of the sardar, that carnage was carried out by a blood-thirsty khan named Beklarbek, one of the sardar's subordinates.

A cemetery extending on a hill behind the monastery of St. Thaddeus the Apostle retains the remains of 16 of the 32 Armenian volunteers who organised the self-defence of the monastery in December 1914. During that heroic resistance, 16 of them were killed, while the other 16 kept fighting until they had totally run out of bullets. As already said above, they descended into the nearby gorge, and leaving the adjacent hills behind them, they reached a Turkish village. Its head promised not to betray them, but he did not keep his word.

Exhausted, sleepless, cold-stricken and hungry, the volunteers were having rest when all of a sudden an

⁵ This story was told to me by Nazlu Hakobian-Tadevossian, 85, born in Salakhane Village, on 10 November 1959 (on Tuesday night). H. A.

armed Turkish mob poured in and killed them right on the spot.

Now more than 40 years have passed since these events: careful and detailed studies in the district of Maku will certainly reveal that the Kurdish and Turkish villages of the district have a lot of inhabitants aged 45 and above who are considered to be Turks, but they say that they are Armenians. They still remember their parents although they have preserved no traits of Armenian identity.

From among the priors of St. Thaddeus the Apostle, mention should be made of Archimandrite Petros Ghazarian, who served the monastery throughout 34 years, defending its reputation and property at any cost. He was so influential that his opinions were often taken into account even by the sardar of Maku who was known as a true tyrant.

After the victorious end of World War II, many Armenians living outside the borders of Soviet Armenia, including those of Vank Village and Maku City, repatriated to their homeland.

Archimandrite Petros lived in the monastery all by himself for almost two years. Then he got ill and went to an American hospital in Tabriz where he died on 31 December 1948. He was buried close to the southern wall of the Armenian church of St. Shoghakat. His grave has a long, yellowish stone with an epitaph which can be read on page 12.

MAHLAZAN VILLAGE

28 August 1959

Carved on one of the pillars of the village church:

Ես՝ մեղաւոր անարժան և անպիտան փձուն և եղկելի մեղապարտ տիրացու Ավաքս, որ եմ սալմաստեցի կուղն Փայաջուկ, որ եղա Արտասգէս վրդպտին Խոյայ, գնացի երկիրն Սալմաստ բողոք տանել, հարք և եղբարք խնդրեմ ձեզանէ, որ մտանէք մեր եկեղեցին, միաբերան խնդրեմ սուրբ սրտի տէր ած և բանն ուղիղ է, ով հարք և եղբարք, ՌճՁԵ (1736):

Transl.: *I, worthless and wretched sinner ... psalm-reader Avag, from Payajuk Village of Salmast, met Archimandrite Artages of Khoy [and] went to Salmast to raise a voice of protest. Fathers and brothers, my request is that you enter our church ... Oh, you, fathers and brothers. 1185 [1736].*

Note: The ellipses stand for those parts of the inscription that are just clusters of words without any coherence.

The village church used to be paved with rough stones. Its dome, of symmetrical forms and inwardly adorned with murals, rises over four pillars. The font, sanctuary and altar stone are not preserved. The hollow of the font can be seen on the right side [in the northern wall]. The altar apse used to be adorned with

murals depicting *the Annunciation, the Entombment of Christ*, the 4 Evangelists and the 12 apostles. There were also other elements of decoration that were coloured.

Apart from the cruciform window of its sanctuary, the church also had 3 windows opening from each of its southern and northern facades. Its columns have inscriptions in Armenian dated 1620, 1635, 1637 and 1692.

The church has Persian arches [the author probably means lancet arches] and niched shelves in its walls.

The gavit (narthex) is adorned with arches. Right of its principal door, there are two ornate cross-stones one of which has the following inscription:

Սբ. խչս յշտկ է տր Սարգսն և կողկցն, թվ. ՌճԵ (1656):

Transl.: *This Holy Cross stands in memory of Father Sargis and his wife. In the year 1105 [1656].*

The following is carved on the main door of the church:

Կամօքն այ եւ.....ցի | եկղցս ի ժամանակի ՍԲ ԱՆ | Դղիտոր Սարթիփ Դուլի խանին հաքիմութի Աղու Ուզպշին ի հյրպատութ. հայոց տն տր Յկովբա առջնորդութի տր Միքաէլին ... շակցու Շամբեցի տր Խշտրն, աշկերտ է տն Յկի շնցւ ձոնք գիտս քինաի եւ ժղվրդ, թվ. ՌճԻ (1671) | մարտ Գ:

ՊՂԲ (1443) Գ (3) մ(ա)րդի:

Տր Յս, տր Յարութ:

Transl.: *By the grace of God ... this church in the times of ... Dghiotr Sartip Ghuli Khan ... Agha Youzbashi, in the days of Catholicos of Armenians Hakob [and] Primate Michael ... Khachatur from Shamb, ... Hakob's pupil. [The church] was built by the village priest and the [local] people on 3 March 1120 [1671].*

3 March 892 [1443].

Lord Jesus, Father Harut.

The gavit preserves about 10 large gravestones which are uninscribed. Only the year 1101 [1652] could somehow be discerned on one of them.

The church cemetery, extending opposite its eastern wall, covered quite an extensive area with hundreds of old, mostly uninscribed stones that were about 1,000 years old. A ram-shaped tombstone had the following epitaph:

Տր Առքել, թվ. Ռ (1551):

Transl.: *Father Arakel, [who died] in the year 1000 [1551].*

TABRIZ

13 September 1959 (the feast of the Holy Cross)

Sourb Astvatzatzin (Holy Virgin) Chapel in the quarter of Maralan

Carved on a gravestone:

Տիկին Գոհար՝ ամուսին Ստեփան Արզումանյան սալմաստեցոյ, վախճ. 18 մարտ 1911 թ. 86 ամ հասակ:

Transl.: *Mrs. Gohar, the spouse of Stepan Arzumanyan from Salmast: she died at the age of 86 on 18 March 1911.*

Թամար տիկին Գուլզատեանց՝ դուստր խանին Վահրամեանց, ի ծնանիլ մարդ յաշխարհ ծնայ ինքնին, առ աստուած վախճ. 21 ամեայ ի 15 հոկ 1881:

Transl.: *Mrs. Tamar Gulzatians, Khan Vahramiants' daughter. A human being is all by himself at birth. She died at the age of 21 on 15 October 1881.*⁶

10 November 1959

Epitaphs from the Armenian cemetery of Tabriz

Carved on the southern side of a memorial dedicated to Archbishop Nerses Melik-Tangian:

Աստ հանգչի սինեցի Տ. Ներսէս արքեպ. | Մեյիք-Թանգեան, | արիւնոտ օրերի ազգանէր առաջնորդ եւ պաշտպան Հայոց Ատրպատականի, | 1866-1948:

Transl.: *In this grave lies the Most Reverend Archbishop Nerses Melik-Tangian, the devoted leader and protector of the Armenians of Azerbaijan [Province] in the bloody days. 1866 to 1948.*

On the northern side of the memorial:

Հովիւ քաջ զանձն իւր դնէ ի վերայ ոչխարաց:

Կառուցեց և նւիրեց արձանագործ Իշխան Նալբանտեան:

Transl.: *A brave shepherd sacrifices himself for the sake of his sheep.*

Made and presented by sculptor Ishkhan Nalbantian.

Below follows the inscription of St. Shoghakat Church (I am the author of its text - H.A.):

Կառուցաւ Ս. Շողակաթ եկեղեցիս ի յիշատակ տիկ. Շողակաթ Մանուչարեանի արդեամբ որդոյ նորա՝ Սիմոնի ի ժամանակս առաջնորդեն հայոց տէր Ներսէս արքեպ. Մեյիք-Թանգեանի, | 28 յուլիս 1940-ի թուին, հայոց ՌՅՁԹ:

Transl.: *This church of St. Shoghakat was built in memory of Mrs. Shoghakat Manucharian with her son Simon's means in the days of the Primate of the Armenians [of Azerbaijan Province], the Most Reverend Archbishop Nerses Melik-Tangian, on 28 July 1940, in 1380 of the Armenian calendar.*

This simple epitaph was carved on a marble stone placed over Archimandrite Petros' grave close to the southern wall of St. Shoghakat Church:

Տապան Պետրոս վարդապ. Ղազարեան, | ծն. 1893 մայիս 10, | վախ. 1948 դեկտ. 31:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Archimandrite Petros Ghazarian: born on 10 May 1893, he died on 31 December 1948.*

Վաղամեռիկ սիրուն մանկիկ՝ Արմէն Աճէմեան, | ծն. 10 յունուար 1936, | վխճ. 22 յուլիս 1937:

Transl.: *Handsome child Armen Ajemian,⁷ who died a premature death: born on 10 January 1936, he died on 22 July 1937.*

Հանգիստ Շողակաթ Մանուչարեանի, ծն. 29 մարտ 1871, Հին Նախիջևան, Վխճ. 23 փետր 1939, Թարիզ:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Shoghakat Manucharian: born in Hin [Old] Nakhijevan on 29 March 1871, she died in Tabriz on 23 February 1939.*

Աշխարհի մը. ի՞նչ կայ յաւտ,

Քան անմոռաց յիշատակ,

Կանցնին դարեր, մարդիկ անհետ,

Անմահ կը մնա յիշատակ:

Transl.: *Is there anything ever-living in this world except perpetual memory? With centuries elapsing, people come and depart, only memory remaining immortal.*⁸

Տապան | ատամնարոյժ | Սկրտում Սահակեանի, | ծն. 1878 յուն. 12, | վխճ. 1918 հոկտ. 21:

Transl.: *In this grave lies dentist Mkrtum Sahakian: born on 12 January 1878, he died on 21 October 1918.*

Հայաստանի Հանրապետութեան գնդապետ Ա. Կորոլկով, | 1863-1927:

Transl.: *Colonel of the Republic of Armenia A. A. Korolkov. 1863 to 1927.*

Also engraved in Russian on the other face of the stone - H.A.

Գասպար Յակոբեան, 1884-1932:

Transl.: *Gaspar Hakobian. 1884 to 1932.*

Մելքոն Յակոբեան, 1889-1954:

Transl.: *Melkon Hakobian. 1889 to 1954.*

Տապան Արմենակ Աֆթանդիլեանի, | ծն. 24 յուլ. 1885, | վխճ. 11 յունիս 1941:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Armenak Aftandilian: born on 24 July 1885, he died on 11 June 1941.*

Տապան | Գալուստ խան Աղազարեանի, | վախճ. 20 մայիս 1938:

⁶ These lines were carved on the tombstone of Mesrop Taghitarian's wife, lady Tang. In 1881 it was still in the yard of the mother church of Tabriz, but later it was moved away (note by H. A.).

⁷ My son's tombstone (H. A.).

⁸ I myself have written this epitaph (H. A.).

Transl.: *In this grave lies Galust Khan Aghazarian, who died on 20 May 1938.*

Հանգիստ Միհրան Գրիգորեանի Տուրուբերանի Հարք գաւառից, | ծն. 1883, վխճ. 16 սեպտ. 1936, Թաւրիզ:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Mihran Grigorian from Hark District of Turuberan [Taron Province]: born in 1883, he died in Tabriz on 16 September 1936.*

Տէր Մեսրոպ Աւետիսեան, | մակեցի, | վխճ. 31 մայիս 1936:

Transl.: *Father Mesrop Avetissian from Maku: he died on 31 May 1936.*

Վարդան Աղաբէկեան, | ծն. 1893, | վխճ. 1938:
Transl.: *Vardan Aghabekian: born in 1893, he died in 1938.*

Բժ. Ռուբէն Տէր Ստեփանեան, խարբերդցի, | ծն. 1887 նոյեմբ. 11, | վխճ. 1937 յունիս 5:

Transl.: *Doctor Ruben Ter-Stepanian from Kharberd: born on 11 November 1887, he died on 5 June 1937.*

Մարտին Շաթիրեան, | տարագիր, | ծն. 18 փետր. 1867, | վխճ. 10 օգոստ. 1940:

Transl.: *Martin Shatirian: born on 18 February 1867, he died on 10 August 1940, while away from home.*

Սամսոն (Հ.Յ.Գ. զինանշան) Թաղէնուեան, ծնուած 1870, Ագուլիս, | վխճ. 1 մարտ 1945, Թաւրիզ:

Transl.: *Samson [the emblem of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Party carved next to the name - H. A.] Tadevossian: born in Agulis in 1870, he died in Tabriz on 1 March 1945.*

Ազգային և յեղափոխական քաղաքացիական գործիչ | Հայրապետ (Հ.Յ.Գ. զինանշան) Պանիրեան, | ծն. 1879, Վան, | վխճ. 1947, Թաւրիզ:

Transl.: *Meritorious national and revolutionary figure Hayrapet [the emblem of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Party carved next to the name - H. A.] Panirian: born in Van in 1879, he died in Tabriz in 1947.*

Վարդան Թումանեան, | ծն. 15.7.1868, | վխճ. 28.4.1939:

Transl.: *Vardan Tumanian: born on 15 July 1868, he died on 28 April 1939.*

Վատարիմէ Գազարեան, ծն. 1862, | վխճ. 1945 յունուար 4, | Թաւրիզ:

Transl.: *Katarine Ghazarian:⁹ born in 1862, she died in Tabriz on 4 January 1945.*

Epitaphs copied in the cemetery lying in the yard of the Armenian church of St. Sargis

Այսբան արիւն թէ ներեն ձեզ մեր որդիք, թող որջ աշխարհ հային կարդա նախախնիք, 1896:

Transl.: *If our sons forgive you all this bloodshed, the whole world may then reprimand the Armenians. 1896.*

Ջալալ-Սկրտիչ Ջալալբէկին, 23 տարեկան:

Transl.: *To Jalal-Mkrtich Jalalbek, aged 23.*

Շէկօ-Արշակ Բարսամին, 27 տարեկան:

Transl.: *To Sheko-Arshak Barsam, aged 27.*

Տապան Աւագ Սարգսեանի, | ծն. 1870, | նահատակուած 1915 2 յունուար:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Avag Sargissian: born in 1870, he suffered martyrdom on 2 January 1915.*

Տապան | Պետրոս խան Մելիք Անդրէասեանի, | ծնուած 1879 դեկտ. 26-ին, | վաղճան. 1912 յունվ. 7-ին:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Petros Khan Melik Andreassian: born on 26 December 1879, he died on 7 January 1912.*

Արտաշէս Պահլավունի, | ծնված Իգդիրում 1873 թ. | վախճան. Թաւրիզ, 1922 թ.:

Transl.: *Artashes Pahlavuny: born in Igdirdir in 1873, he died in Tabriz in 1922.*

Carved on the monument dedicated to the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Party, together with its emblem:

Սկրտիչ Ջալալբէկեան	1896
Արշակ Բարոնեան	1896
Միսակ Մանչօեան	1909
Արտեմ Ռազմիկ	1908
Նիկոլ Գանձակեցի	1908
Մարտիրոս Չարուխչեան	1909
Կարօ Արտամետցի	1909
Մէքօ Հացիկցի	1909
Գեորգ Կիրակոսեան	1909
Պեդրոս Մ. Անդրէասեան	1912
Ստեփան Տ. Սկրտչեան	1917
Transl.: Mkrtich Jalalbekian	1896
Arshak Baromian	1896
Misak Manchoyan	1909
Artem Razmik	1908
Nikol Gandzaketsy	1908
Martiros Charukhchian	1909
Karo Artamettsy	1909
Seto Hatsiktsy	1909
Gevorg Kirakossian	1909
Pedros M. Andreassian	1912
Stepan T. Mkrtichian	1917

⁹ She is Raffi's sister (note by H. A.).

Below follows the construction inscription of St. Sargis Church:

Շինեցաւ Ս. Սարգիս եկեղեցիս ի 5 մարտի 1845 ամի, և ի թուին հայոց ՌՄԳԲ, ի հայրապետութեան տեառն Ներսիսի Ե-ի, աշխատութեամբ Չաքարեա ատագ քահանայի Տէր Չաքարեանց, արդեամբ բարեպաշտ հայազգի ժողովրդականաց:

Transl.: *This church of St. Sargis was built on 5 March 1843, in 1292 of the Armenian calendar, in the days of Catholicos Nerses V, through Archpriest Zakaria Ter-Zakariants' efforts, with funds donated by pious Armenians.*

The following is the inscription carved on the entrance facade of Tamarian School:

Կառուցաւ տարոցս արդեամբ աղա Գրիգոր Թումանեանի՝ ի յիշատակ իր հոր՝ Չաքարբ., մոր՝ Ջաւահիրի, վաղամեռիկ քրոջ՝ Թամարի, և կոչեցաւ Թամարեան դպրոց, 1895:

Transl.: *This school was built through Agha Grigor Tumanian's donation in memory of his father Zakare, his mother Javahir [and] his sister Tamar, who died a premature death. And it was called Tamarian School. 1895.*

Տապան տր Յակովբ ատագ քահանայի Տէր Կարապետեան մուծմբարցոյ, վախճանեալ 79 ամաց հասակի և 47 ամեայ քահանայութե իւրում, 11 յունիս 1890 ամի:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Archpriest Hakob Ter-Karapetian from Muzhambar, who died at the age of 79, in the 47th year of his priesthood, on 11 June 1890.*

Ի յիշատակ վաղամեռիկ ուսանող Բարգէն Ստեփանեանի, ծն. 10 հոկտ. 1920-վախճ. ... ապրիլ 1940, կառուցաւ զանգակատուն արդեամբ հորն իւրոյ՝ Սմբատ Ստեփանեանի:

Transl.: *The belfry was built in memory of student Babgen Stepanian: born on 10 October 1920, he died a premature death in April 1940.*

Below follow two inscriptions carved on the north-ern door of St. Sargis Church:

Բարգուշատցի միդսի Պետրոսեան և իր կողա-կից Դնիեա Յասարաբեան շինեց զդռոս այս յիշակ. Վան եկեղեցոյս Սբն Սարգսի, որում օգնական լիցի յուն, թ. 1821 ապրիլ ամսեանն:

Transl.: *This door of St. Sargis was built by Mahtesy Petrossian from Bargushat and his spouse Dniya Hasratian in April 1821 in remembrance of St. Sargis Church of Van...*

Յ Ն Թ Հ /տր ած Յս Բս, /թվն. ՌՄՀ (1821) ապրիլի Ա:

Transl.: *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Lord Jesus Christ. 1 April 1270 [1821].*

TEHERAN

17 December 1959

Inscriptions carved inside the Armenian church of Sts. Tadevos (Thaddeus) and Bardughimeos (Bartholomew); epitaphs from the cemetery located in its yard, and other commemorative texts

The sanctuary of the church of Sts. Thaddeus and Bartholomew is adorned with a large (1 x 1.50 metres) oil painting—I suppose the work of the court artist Hakob Khan Hovnatanian also known as Naghash Bashi—depicting the Holy Virgin on the throne, with infant Jesus in Her arms. On Her right side, Thaddeus the Apostle stands, holding a handkerchief on which Jesus' head is painted. On Her left side, Bartholomew the Apostle stands, holding a painting of Her in his hand. Two angels with outstretched wings hold a crown above the Virgin's head, and above them the Holy Spirit is descending incarnated as a dove, with God the Father seen amidst the clouds. The painting frame was a very beautiful work of art made in great taste.

The bema of the church was beautifully built, with a stepped altar stone.

The following six-line inscription was carved beneath the oil painting of the sanctuary:

Հրաշակերտ այս սբ. եկեղեցի վաղուց հիմնեցել ի նախնեաց անտի ի մր. այլազգեաց ի Պարսկաստանի՝ Դեհրան կոչեցեալ ի նոյն քաղաքի, անուամբ կառուցիչ՝ սրբքոյն Թադր.՝ է բարեխօս միշտ հայոցըս ազգի. ետուան զպատկերս տերու-նականի՝ յանուն սբ. Ածածնայ յոգ սեղանի: Սար-րաֆեան տոհմ է Կրպետ յարգի՝ այլըն բարեպաշտ ազնի սիրելի. եւ խրպաղցի Ներսեսեան յոչի, Պետ-րոս անուն ազնուագարմի: Սոքա երկոքին մի շունչ մի հոգի՝ վառեալ սբ. հոգով լըցին զեղծ սրտի՝ ան-ջինջ հայելի ի մերազնր., որ կացեալ արձան ի սբ. տաճարի՝ յոր միշտ հանապազ առաջի նորեն՝ կա-տարի պաշտօն ի տես ամենի, հանցէ տէր բաժին իւրոյ անցելոց՝ արևշատութիւն յիւրեանըս կենի, հազար ութ հարիւր թիւ փրկչականի քառասուն և ինն (1849), ի վեց յունիսի, զյիշատակ սոցին յարա-տենեցի՝ մինչև ի զալըստեան տուն Յսի:

Transl.: *This magnificent, sacred church was found- ed by the [Armenians'] ancestors amidst foreigners in the city of Dehran [Teheran] in Persia after ... St. Tade [Thaddeus], the protector of the Armenian nation. The [oil] painting of the Holy Virgin is a gift from respectable Karapet from the Sarrafians' family, a noble and pious man loved by everyone, and from noble Petros Nersessian from Gharabagh [Artsakh]. ... May You, Lord, grant them longevity ... on 6 June eighteen forty-nine (1849). May their memory be per- petual until the Advent of Lord Jesus.*

One of the church walls bore a very old oil painting of the Holy Virgin (34 x 27 metres) enclosed within a

narrow, black frame. Winged angels were painted in its four corners, with a *yerkatagir*¹⁰ inscription of a single line beneath the painting:

Յիշատակ է Միմննիս զի Թաթէնսի: Եսի: Սաբրի եւ Նաղաշի (անթուական):

Transl.: *In memory of Simon di Tatevos ... Sabr and Naghash [undated - H.A.].*

Another painting donated to the church had the following inscription:

Յիշատակ 1959 քին Արուսեակ և Թադէնս Թադէնսանից Սուրբ Թադէնսին առաքեալ եկեղեցուն:

Transl.: *1959. To the church of St. Tadevos [Thaddeus] the Apostle from Arusyak and Tadevos Tadevossian.*

Epitaphs carved on the tombstones located in the yard of Teheran's Armenian church of Sts. Thaddeus and Bartholomew

Carved on a marble stone the edges of which are adorned with a floral relief:

*Ի 11 նոյեմբեր 1854,
Ի հասակի 18 ամսոց 18 օրեայ,
Արքայութե արժանիս,
Թոյլ տուք մանկանց զալ առ իս
Հոգովդ Աննա Պետրոսեան,
Յացախեցոյ Ներսեսեան,
Երբ տէր զբեզ հրաւիրէ
Յաղաւնէրում օրեան,
Թող աստ մարմինդ հանգիցէ,
Ելք քոյ զքո ծնողաց սիրտս ի կսկիծ
Ետ համակ այլ քեզ լեցի,
Պարծանաց խաղաղութիւն յիշատակ:*

Transl.: *You departed to the Heavenly Kingdom on 11 November 1854, aged 18 months and 18 days. ... Anna Petrossian Nersessian from Artsakh ... May your body rest here. Your departure imbued your parents' hearts with grief and mourning...*

*Sacred
To the memory of Rosina Regina
the daughter of R:W:Stevens Eso
H.B.M. Consul, at Tehran.*

On a broken marble stone:

Այս է տապան պասրաջի Սվէլի որդի Ուսովին, որ փոխեցաւ առ 18 ... դեկտ ...:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Usop, the son of Manvel from Basra, who departed this life on 18 December...*

On a marble stone adorned with reliefs showing carpenter's tools:

¹⁰ *Yerkatagir* is the oldest type of the Mashtots-invented Armenian script consisting of only majuscules or capital letters. It was widely used in lapidary inscriptions which were carved with an iron pole; hence the name *yerkatagir*: *yerkat* is the Armenian equivalent for *iron*.

Այս է տապան տէր Խաչատրի որդի քաջահմուտ արհեստաւոր շնորհօք լի Գրիգորի, որ փոխեցաւ աստի յերկինս քվին 1832 սեպտեմբերի 17-ին:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Father Khachatur's son, skillful craftsman Grigor, who departed this life on 17 September 1832.*

*Տապան Սկրտում Ամիրեան դավրիժեցի: Վա-
յելքն աշխարհին և վիշտքն ի մին քաղի զաղօտ լոս
կենաց ի անյոյս, որ աստ ի յերկրի անժառանգ կեցի
յուսան անդինին ի ժառանգել զերկին: 1831 ամի
յուլիս 7:*

Transl.: *In this grave lies Mkrtum Amirian from Tabriz. ... 7 July 1831.*

*Աստ հանգչի ինգլիս Չալի Սահար, յամի տեսուն
1833ին նախայ 3-ին (յուլիս 3):*

Transl.: *In this grave lies Chali Sahab, an Englishman, [who died] on 3 ... July 1833.*

*Տապան հանգուցեալ Արգար Կարապետեանի,
հանգեալ ի տէր 1857 յուլիս 5:*

Transl.: *In this grave lies Abgar Karapetian, who died on 5 July 1857.*

*Ի տապանիս ամփոփի մարմին ծաղկափթիթ
մանկան Մարգարտի Խաչիկեան, ի 1852 ի 2 յուլիս:*

Transl.: *In this grave lie the remains of little girl Margarit Khachikian, [who died a premature death] on 2 July 1852.*

*Այս է տապան Մարգարտի Խօղաղատեան, որ
հանգեալ ի մէր 1833 օգոստ. 2-ին:*

Transl.: *In this grave lies Margarit Khodadatian, who died on 2 August 1833 .*

*Այս է տապան Խօղաղատ Գալստանի դուստր
Անարին, որ հանգեալ ի մէր ի մի ամ հասակի եւ ի
1848 մախ 1-ին:*

Transl.: *In this grave lies Khodadat Galstan's daughter Anar, who died being just a year old, on 1 May 1848.*

*Տապան հանգուցեալ Մատթէոս Ներսեսեան,
ծնեալ 1825 մայիս 4, վախճանեալ 1875 մարտ 17:*

Transl.: *In this grave lies Matevos Nersessian: born on 4 May 1825, he died on 17 March 1875.*

*Այս է տապան մահտեսի Պօղոսի որդի Թադէն-
սին, որ փոխեցաւ աշխարհ վերին ի քվին 1846 նո-
յեմբեր ամսի 1-ին:*

Transl.: *In this grave lies Mahtesy Poghos' son Tadevos, who departed this life on 1 November 1846.*

*Աստ հանգչի Մէլիք Շահնազար Օրբէլեան,
հանգեալ 1855 ապրիլ 30:*

Transl.: *In this grave lies Melik Shahnazar Orbelian, who died on 30 April 1855.*

Ի հանգստեան աստ ամփոփի գրի պարոն Շահնազար Սարգսի՝ վաճառական ոմն ի նոր ջողայեցի, մահուան, ցաօք, պանդուխտ եղեալ, փոխեցաւ ի դասս փրկչին յամի տեառն 1846 ի ամսեան յուլիսի 21:

Transl.: *In this grave lie the remains of Mr. Shahnazar Sargis, a merchant from Nor [New] Jugha, who unfortunately died away from home on 21 July 1846.*

Տապան ի տէր հանգուցեալ լուսիկ Առաքելի միտսի Յակոբին Մասումեանց դարաբաղցոյ, որ ի 1846, ի 22 յուլիսի:

Ի նետ աստկազին դրոն օրհասին, որ մխտալն ի ժանտ, կալիր մարպասին(°), հարեալ ուժգնապէս բրգան(°) իմ անձին, անկաւ ի տապաստ ի հող դիւրագին:

Մաշին իմ ոսկերք երիտասարդական յայս տապան մթին, ի վեր անձնական կարօտ և փափակ գթոյ մայրական եւ զուրկ ի տեսոյ եղբայր պատուական:

Չեղէ ես ժաման յԱրցախ հայկական ի ցանկալին իմ, յերկիր հայրական գրկեալ հառաչմամբ յոգոյ կենսական: Իջի աստ ի հող, սեւ պանդխտական:

Մաղթեմ, անցաւորք, ընդ իմ ...րն հայցելով ինձ մուտ ի յերկնից խորան, յիշեսջիք, ի հող է մեր հանգարան, իսկ տուն աշխարհիս հոգոց մեր դարան:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Mahtesy Arakel Hakob Masumians of blessed memory from Karabakh [Artsakh]. [He died] on 22 July 1846....*

My young body has become prey to this dark grave ... unable to see my respectable brother.

I was unable to visit the Armenian [land] of Artsakh, the much loved country of my father ... [and] was put into this grave as a wandering traveller.

May you, passers-by, ... pray for me to enter the Heavenly Sanctuary...

Տապան վաղամեռիկ Գալուստ Պապայեանց դավրիժեցոյ, անգիտակցաբար մահաբեր գնդակին, 14 փետրվար 1904ին ի հասակի 27 ամաց, ի Թէհրան:

Transl.: *In this grave lies Galust Papayants from Tabriz, who died a premature death falling victim to a lethal bullet at the age of 27 in Teheran on 14 February 1904.*

Виктору Ивановичу Макарову
сконч. 3 фев. 1864.

Transl.: *To Victor Ivanovich Makarov, who died on 3 February 1864.*

Արձան նորաստեղծ Թեկղեայ

Ղուկասեան, ծնաւ..., հանգեալ 1878 8 օգոստ.:

Transl.: *In memory of newly-married Tekghea Ghukassian: born ..., she died on 8 August 1878.*

Տապան մեծարելի Մարտիրոսի Մովսիսեան համադանցոյ, ի 40 ամաց հասակի հանգեալ յ2 յուլիսի 1864:

Transl.: *In this grave lies venerable Martiros Movsisian from Hamadan, who died at the age of 40 on 2 July 1864.*

Տապան տիկին Սարրայի Դատիթխանեան արքունի բժշկապետին, որ հանգեալ ի 26 օգոստ. 1893:

Եւ որդոյն Սարթիփ Սողոմոն խանի,

Արքունական երկրաչափին, որ 53 ամաց հասակի գրաւեցաւ ի կենաց էր 10 հոկտ. 1895:

Կաւալէր նշանաւ ասպետութիւն մեծ բժիշկ ... թագաւորական:

Transl.: *In this grave lie Mrs. Sarra Davitkhanian, the chief royal doctor who died on 26 August 1893, and her son, Sartip Soghomon Khan, the royal geometer who died at the age of 53 on 10 October 1895. ... a great royal doctor...*

THE DEATH MARCH OF AGHJAGUNEY ARMENIANS

by Hovhannes Gyulian

This story was written down by my maternal grandfather Hovhannes Gyulian. He describes the death march of his family during the deportation of the Armenians of Aghjaguney, his native village.

Nune Grigorian¹

Hovhannes Gyulian was born in the village of Aghjaguney on 1 May 1874.² He had a cheerful childhood enjoying the warmth and tenderness of his mother Vardine, his father Hambarzum and his grandfather Sargis. However, even in this atmosphere of joyousness, despite his young age, he always felt the danger threatening his father's life. The little boy often became witness to the persecutions the Armenian peasants had to suffer in the Turks' hands. When already of school age, Hovhannes started attending the village school, but he was not very fond of studying and did not get proper education unlike his brother Harutiun, who distinguished himself as an excellent pupil. Harutiun received further education in America, where he specialised in the legal profession. He later returned to his birthplace and soon became one of the best jurists in the region. As for Hovhannes, he worked in tobacco fields from his early youth years, being the main breadwinner of their family.

In 1914 20-year-old Hovhannes married Iskuhi and formed a family. Their happiness, however, was not to last long: World War I broke out soon. The order fixed on the local church wall stated that all men aged from 17 to 70 had to present themselves to the Military Commissariat within 8 days. Those trying to escape military service would face the tribunal. In September 1914 the young men of Aghjaguney went to the Commissariat in Charshamba under the village head's leadership. Husein Effendi, a classmate of Hovhannes' brother, succeeded in delaying the military service of Aghjaguney Armenians for a month. Then the village head again led the boys to the Commissariat. Their fellow villagers accompanied them up to the outskirts of the village. Embracing her son, Hovhannes' mother

said in tears, "I wish Husein Effendi gave you another month."

The young men of Aghjaguney were sent from Charshamba to Sebastia. Hovhannes' mother had given him 100 *kuruses* [a monetary unit], which he handed over to the disabled and beggars he came across on the way. The group stopped in Kavza to have some rest. It was here that Hovhannes saw *lavash* [traditional Armenian bread] for the first time in his life: coastal villages and cities did not have *tonirs* [underground ovens] and used a type of bread called *tayin*. The owners of the mills and factories built on the river bank were Armenians who willingly hosted the Armenian recruits.

In the morning, the group set out. Pursuing their way along the course of the Green Channel (Yershil Ermakh) for two days, they reached Amasia and thence Tocat, Zile and Sebastia. After a month of military training, the young men of Aghjaguney were sent to the front, to Sarighamish. The road to this place extended via a number of Armenian villages and towns, one of the former being Kovtun, the birthplace of the outstanding hayduk leader Sebastatsy Murad. Leaving Svaz behind them, the young men reached Yerznka, and after a military training check-out, they were assigned to the 9th brigade of Sarighamish.

The way to Sarighamish passed via Erzurum. Before getting there, Hovhannes had not faced any difficulty and had not felt any death threat, but in Erzurum, he became witness to horrific scenes and started having a foreboding of the danger threatening the Armenians. Everywhere he saw houses that had tumbled down during bombardment. The snowstorm and severe cold impeded the group's advance and they somehow found a night shelter in a Turkish village. Six of the group members had lost their way, and 20 were badly ill and stayed in that village. The other members of the group continued their way to Basen, where they were herded into a caravanserai like animals and were locked there. They could neither remain standing nor lie down, many of them being so cold-stricken that they could not even talk.

At last on 23 December 1914, the group reached Plalati and joined the 9th brigade: 500 young men had set out of Erzurum, but only 200 reached their destination. Now the young men of Aghjaguney were assigned to different military units, Hovhannes, Galust and Husein being in the same one. The soldiers were in a

¹ This story is based on Hovhannes Gyulian's memoirs, which are written in a handwriting rather difficult to make out; for this reason, there may be certain inaccuracies connected with some events and names, for which I beg the reader's pardon.

² Aghjaguney is situated 12.3 km south-west of the town of Charshamba, the capital of the district of the same name in Trabzon Province, Turkey. The village name has not changed.

terrible state: there being nothing to eat, they had to single out the barley grains from the horse dung to somehow satisfy their hunger.

Sarighamish, which was defended by Baratov's small forces, resisted heroically until the morning of 24 December 1914, when the Germans ordered to bombard it from all directions. The town surrendered to the Turks: 200 Russian soldiers were taken captive and slaughtered before they reached Erzurum.

With an aching heart, Hovhannes witnessed the deplorable state of the Armenian villages around Sarighamish. The aged men, women and young boys who were only 15 carried the very last portions of food on their backs in the bitter cold of the severe winter, to pass them to the Turkish *askyars* [soldiers]. It was Enver Pasha's order: "I do not need any villagers; I need only troops."

Entering a house with his friend, Hovhannes became witness to a dismal scene: all the members of the family had died and there was nobody to bury them. An old man asked them for their dead horses and donkeys for the surviving people to eat them.

About three days later, some Turkish bandits laid siege to Sarighamish, this giving rise to worry and panic amidst the German and Turkish commanders. All of a sudden, some Russian troops came out of a nearby forest and started fiercely slaughtering the Turkish bandits. Seeing the advance of the Russian army, the Turkish soldiers took to their heels. Hovhannes' Turkish friends advised him not to run away, saying: "You are Armenian. The Russians won't kill you."

Hovhannes, however, thought that he had better run away with his Turkish friends: the Russians might kill him before he managed to tell them who he was. Holding one another's hand, they threw themselves into the nearby gorge and, wallowing in the snow, soon found themselves at its very bottom.

The night darkness and cold were horrible. If the men slept down, they would certainly freeze to death. They somehow spent the night hours and continued their way as soon as the sun rose. Throughout the way, they came across wounded men and fleeing soldiers. Hardly had they found some shelter in a Turkish village when they learnt that the Russian army was advancing. They again took to their heels and somehow got to Ketek on 12 January 1915. They asked the local peasants for some shelter, but the latter were scared of the Russians' advance, too and wanted to run away.

Hovhannes and the surviving Turkish soldiers reached Erzurum and went to the Commissariat. They were given military identification cards with permit to be on leave for some time. On their way to Samsun, they were repeatedly attacked by Turkish bandits and escaped death only thanks to the fact that they were armed. Hovhannes handed his arms over to the

Military Commissariat of Aghjaguney and went home. He had been walking for 28 days to reach Aghjaguney from Sarighamish: he was emaciated and could hardly drag his feet. All in tears and anguish-stricken, Vardine hugged her son. Hovhannes and Iskuhi's first son had been born during his absence: he had been named after grandfather Sargis and was already a month old.

Five days later, all the young men of Aghjaguney were again summoned up to the Central Military Commissariat in Charshamba. Then, to their surprise, they were sent to the front in the direction of Terme and not Samsun. It took the group of 1,200 men three days to reach from Terme to Nixar, 400 of them being killed on the way. Many of the Turks preferred to run away and become bandits instead of being killed by the Russians. On 22 March Hovhannes and his fellow recruits reached the Armenian village of Purk and were temporarily accommodated there to undergo some military training. Afterwards, they had to go to Ketek to fight against the Russians. The young men of Aghjaguney, who had decided to stay together in the same detachment, bribed the Turkish servicemen with the tobacco of Samsun. The Armenian peasants of Purk warmly received the young men, willingly hosting and feeding them. A week later, the village head was ordered to arrange the delivery of wheat to Yerznka by the local women. Each of the 200 women of the village had to carry a large sack of wheat, weighing a pood, to Yerznka on her back (they returned in 8 days).

The Armenians of Purk were in a dreadful state. To force the men to give up their weapons, the Turks imprisoned them and subjected them to unspeakable torture, leaving them without water or a piece of bread. How could they obey this order if they had no weapons at all? During the search, only several rifles and pistols were found, nothing else. The local women often told Hovhannes in tears that they did not know what would become of them: they had absolutely nothing, having given up everything to the Turks. Hovhannes tried to somehow comfort these poor women. The Turkish soldiers were asked if their own villages were subjected to the same atrocities, and the answer was negative.

Late on Easter evening, all the Christian soldiers were disarmed. That night seemed to be endless: everybody was horrified thinking that they could be killed at any moment.

As soon as the sun rose, the recruits were taken to the centurion. With a fake and flattering smile and a pretended politeness typical of the Turks, he attempted to convince them that he would willingly go to the battlefield with the Armenians, but the commander of the military unit had to disarm them and send them to Susheher, taking into account their high road-building skills (even ten Turks could not do the job of an Armenian in this work).

The Armenian recruits from different places were gathered together to be sent to Sansar Tepesi. Everybody realised that they were being sent to die... Sargis and a Greek named Levter ... were sent to work in a hospital; to be more exact, to bury the dead. At that time, a fierce epidemic was raging in the village, but it was impossible to understand whether it was plague or typhus. There was no hope for survival. One day, while washing at the fountain, Hovhannes felt that he had been infected, too. The remedies prepared by Levter cured him and he regained consciousness 9 days later. He owed his recovery to his friends. When learning about his disease—something he was trying to conceal—Chavush got angry with him and immediately took him to hospital. His friends visited him every day. Hovhannes had sent a telegram to his brother and wondered why he had not answered yet: knowing his brother very well, he was sure that he would not be late with the reply.

Three days later, the medical attendant on duty entered the ward and loudly read Hovhannes' name and surname. Opening his eyes, he saw the prison warden of Samsun, Osman Effendi. Consulting the doctors, the latter decided to send Hovhannes and his friends on leave for three months. Osman Effendi was a close friend of Hovhannes' brother Harutiun, who always sent him some tobacco and a red cow every year.

Obedying the doctors' order, the hospital attendants helped Hovhannes go to the yard and sit under a tree. It was here that he saw his fellow villager Yorika, a Greek, and his younger son. They had been given permit for leave like him. They were in a dismal state and could hardly get home alive. What had become of that courteous man of good manners! Two days before, Hovhannes had seen his wife's sister's husband in the same state and had given him money to go home, but he could hardly survive.

Taking their military identification cards from Osman Effendi, Hovhannes and his friends set out for Kerasun. The Effendi told them that he had paid the fare and had telegraphed his wife Nejie Khanum in Samsun to receive them. In order to change horses, the group had a stop in the caravanserai of Havuz. In the morning, they saw tens of dead bodies in the yard of the caravanserai the owner of which told them that they could witness the same scene every day. "Even if they don't die here, anyway, only 10 percent of these people get home. The opposite earthen hillocks marked their graves, separated from the village cemetery.

The next stop was in Shapin Garahisar. During the deportation and massacres of the local population, 150 young men fortified themselves in the fortress and resisted the Turks for six months. Later they had to surrender, but as soon as they descended from the fortress, they opened fire against the Turks. Some of them were

killed, while the others were able to escape through the mountains, crossed the border and settled down in Ajaria.

After some four days' rest in the town of Kerasun, Hovhannes and his friends set out for Samsun by boats. In the town of Iyne, their boatman changed, and the newly-arrived one demanded payment. The young men were surprised as they knew that their fare had been paid. Putting his hand onto his weapon, the ferryman threatened to throw all of them into the sea if they did not give him the money. To escape the danger, the young men had to give him their last 150 kuruses. When they got off in Samsun, the gendarmes checking their documents wanted to take them to the military commissariat as they were in a good health condition. In order to get rid of them, the young men gave them their last scraps of tobacco and went to Osman Effendi's place. Osman's wife told Hovhannes that she had informed his brother about her husband's telegram. The following morning the young men thanked Nejie Khanum for her hospitality and set out for Aghjaguney.

The family members and relatives of all the so-called recruits (because the Turks were simply going to use them as workforce in the construction of roads, railways, etc., after which they were going to be exterminated) had gathered on the outskirts of the village, eager to get some news from their dear ones. Among them were Hovhannes' mother Vardine and his sisters. Hardly had he dismounted when the people surrounded him from four sides and started asking questions. Hovhannes, however, was completely emaciated so that his mother and brother asked them to wait a little until he had had some rest. The following morning not only the locals but also the inhabitants of the nearby villages started visiting him: everyone wanted to hear something about their dear ones, but what could Hovhannes tell them? Indeed, he urged them not to worry and be hopeful, but he knew very well that some of the "recruits" were no longer alive, while others were fatally ill and would never get home alive. But for his friends, particularly Levter, he himself would be lying dead somewhere on the roads.

One day Hovhannes was walking in their fields that were close to the village church. Suddenly he saw his brother who reproached him for having left the house: once the Turkish gendarmes saw him in good health again, they would certainly summon him back, while Harutiun was attempting to prolong his leave. Besides, what was the point in supervising the ploughmen when the entire world was in such a chaotic state and they did not know whether they would be able to preserve all their lands or not?

One day, when Hovhannes was returning home through the village gardens after a visit to his brother-in-law, some gendarmes standing at their house saw

him and immediately took him to Hajji Kamil's house. Harutiun hurried there and bribed the gendarmes with Hajji Kamil's help, taking Hovhannes back home. The latter's son was already 8 months old.

On 2 May 1915, the Turkish neighbours of the Armenians of Aghjaguney told them about the impending massacres planned by the Government. Learning that the outstanding, influential Armenians of Charshamba had been imprisoned, the young girls and boys of Aghjaguney, including Hovhannes, took up arms and climbed the nearby mountains at night. Only the aged stayed in the village. The following day, on 3 May, the jailed Armenians of Charshamba were set free, and the rumour spread that massacres were planned in Van, Bitlis and Mush. For exactly a month and a half, the elderly people of Aghjaguney tried to persuade the young men and girls to return to the village. They, however, did not agree as they did not believe in the fake promises of the Turkish Government: it was customary for the Turks to lull the Armenians into a false sense of safety and then carry out their evil plans.

Part of the Armenians of the region were gathered in Charshamba and forced into converting to Islam. They pretended to obey, thinking that they could deceive the Turks. Hajji Zekir Bey, a Circassian who was much respected among the Armenians, was well-aware of the Turkish plans of exterminating the Armenians. A good friend of the Gyulians, he was eager to somehow help them. The Governor of Samsun was Circassian, too and he hoped that they could find a way out together. One day Hajji Zekir Bey came to Aghjaguney and told the locals about their planned deportation. The Governor of Samsun and he had decided to shelter the Armenians of Aghjaguney in his village. However, soon the Governor got a telegram which said: "Stop taking bribes from the Armenians and protecting them. You should now start deporting them."

Hajji Zekir, who was with the Governor at that time, read the telegram, too. They had been able to delay the deportation from 2 May until 7 June. Now they could do absolutely nothing.

Immediately after receiving the telegram, the Turkish gendarmes surrounded Aghjaguney. The Gyulians were forced to leave their house like the rest of the locals, taking only two carts and a horse. Trapizon (Trabzon) having been occupied by the Russians, the local Turks had moved to Aghjaguney. Hardly had Hovhannes left his house when he noticed two Turks quarrelling over it, quarrelling over the house that his grandfather Sargis and his father Hambardzum had built with the sweat of their brow. How could that be true? Was it an irony of fate? Later

Hovhannes learnt that the Turks had eventually burnt down the house so as nobody would own it.

The deported Armenians were gathered together near the village bridge. Almost all the young men were at the front, the remaining ones forming only five percent of the entire population. They thought of running away, but how could they abandon the women, children and the aged? Hovhannes blamed the elderly people of the village for again believing the Turkish authorities and calling them back from the mountains. They had taken up arms to struggle against the Turks and had even chosen a leader, Kehoghli (Kehian) Hakob, whose cleverness and courage did not at all make him inferior to Hovhannes Minassian (Minasoghli). Struggling heroically and dying while fighting would have been far better than being slaughtered like animals with the Turkish yataghan.

When the caravan of deportees was passing through the village of Hajji Zekir, his brother and son deliberately invited the gendarmes to their place to take some rest for the Gyulians to find a shelter in their yard. Zekir Bey's sons secretly approached Hovhannes and Harutiun and advised them to load their baggage slowly to win time until their father returned from Samsun and made the gendarmes leave the place. The Bey's brother even suggested that Harutiun should hide in their house until some way out was found, but he did not agree: he could not leave his family alone. And so he stayed with the caravan of his compatriots who were doomed to walk and walk in an unknown direction to an unknown destination...

Hajji Zekir was being late. The women kept praying for his quick return, and his family did their best to keep the gendarmes in the house as long as possible, but in the end, the deportees were made to continue their way towards Merkez. From this place, they were driven to Charshamba, being then sent to unknown destinations.

When Hajji Zekir came at last and saw his friends among the refugees, he started crying and said: "I should have come before the prayer ended. I could have hidden you in my house, but now I can do nothing."

Anyway, this man had done everything within his power for a month and a half, putting his own life at risk, and Hovhannes' family was grateful to him. He could save even more Armenians if some mean Turkish beys who had once enjoyed the Armenians' hospitality and patronage did not betray him. Talaat Pasha sent a telegram to him and the Governor of Samsun, saying that they should stop taking bribes from the Armenians and protecting them; the Armenians had to be deported within 24 hours. Zekir Bey and the Governor were powerless to do anything.

The caravan in which Hovhannes was with his family and relatives had to move on. The young men,

including Hovhannes and Harutiun, were separated from the rest of the deportees to join the Turkish army. The women, children and the aged were left absolutely alone, with nobody to defend them. Now the women had to harness the oxen to the carts themselves.

The gendarmes locked the young men in an armoury. Harutiun and four other men who had documents exempting them from military service applied to the Military Commissariat with protests: why on earth had they been given those papers if nobody was going to take them into account? The Commissariat promised to inquire into the matter and find out everything. An hour later, a response came from Samsun stating that those exempted from service had to rejoin the caravan of refugees. Harutiun and Hovhannes embraced each other: they realised that they were not going to see one another again. The former gave some money to the latter in case he managed to run away. Then Hovhannes' sisters tried to approach him to say good-bye to him, but one of the gendarmes pushed Mariam so brutally that her children who were in her arms fell down. What could Hovhannes do? Stifling his emotions, he somehow said: "Dear Manik, sister, don't come up. Don't you see they are beasts? This time I'll return with your husband Esteban. Please, don't cry."

Hardly had he stopped talking when the gendarmes brutally drove the caravan away. The farther the refugees moved, the smaller they became until they completely vanished from sight. This was the last time Hovhannes had seen his dear ones.

The young men were forced to convert to Islam. They pretended to obey, but every day they secretly prayed in Armenian. From Merkez 2,200 men were moved to Charshamba and then to Samsun. On the way the Turks assured them that they would join their deported families after the war.

The caravans of deported Armenians, surrounded by gendarmes from four sides, stopped in the vicinity of Samsun. One of the women had just given birth to twin boys. Hovhannes' ears were pierced by the heart-rending words of an aged woman: "Damned wretches, when home, you didn't deliver a single baby, while now, when you're just miserable refugees, you're giving birth to twins. We don't need boys now. Go and throw them into the sea. You don't know: you will be forced to get rid of your other children, too."

And these horrifying scenes were in the vicinity of Samsun... What awaited the refugees was no less terrifying than the true inferno.

The Russian army started bombarding Samsun. The oil depot and other state buildings were burnt away. This infuriated the Turks even further and they began attacking the Armenians fiercely, mocking at them and saying: "Your uncle is coming to help you." Not only Turkey but also the great powers of the world, Germa-

ny, Russia, England and France, were enemies of the Armenians.

Everybody ran away from Samsun to escape Russian bombardment. The fields near an adjacent Greek village were soon overcrowded with caravans of Armenians from different places, including the one where Hovhannes was. The Turks were waiting for additional forces to drive the Armenians farther. Here Hovhannes came across Agha Nshan Garejemian. This man reminded the Armenians around him about what he had said during Hovhannes Minassian's funeral: "Killing Minassian, they lifted their hands against the entire Armenian nation. If he were alive now, he would set up self-defence, saving many, many Armenians from certain death. Now all of us are going to be slaughtered."

At 9 o'clock in the evening the Turks received additional forces. Hovhannes and his friends decided to run away: they could be either caught or killed, but if they managed to reach Aghjaguney and find the arms they had hidden, they might be able to organise self-defence. At 2 a.m. they fled. If they were lucky enough to get to the village safe and sound, they would reach their goal. However, they were caught halfway: all the village heads had been informed about their escape. They had to bypass only a single Turkish village to reach Aghjaguney, but they were encircled right there, being surrendered to the gendarmes with the help of the local Turks. Some of the runaways were shot to death, while others were moved to Merkez as captives and put into the hands of some bandits. Hovhannes and his friends were brutally tortured and then driven on like animals. When the gendarmes sat down for rest, they started checking their arms, using the Armenians as targets and killing four or five of them. The Turks "amused" themselves in this way until reaching Samsun and left behind them some 30 or 40 corpses. After Samsun had been passed, those falling behind were first trampled with hooves, then shot in the head and left dead on the road. Those daring to say that they were exhausted, wanted some rest or water shared this fate. While having some rest, the gendarmes demanded that the Armenians give them 2,000 kuruses. Although the surviving young men could barely drag their feet, they were made to walk fast. Those who had lagged behind the caravans ahead lay all along the roadside, having lost consciousness because of the heat. Those still able to talk asked for water, but alas, the young men could not help them. What was most dreadful, the children, whether alive or not, lay on their killed mothers, with crows flying over their heads.

Hovhannes walked in the middle of the caravan to escape being killed. Before setting out, his brother had given opium to all their family members to drink it, if needed, and die easily. But life is precious. Thanks to his steadfastness and will power, Hovhannes was able

to overcome unspeakable privations and hardships, unwilling to take the opium.

Hovhannes and Harutiun kept in touch despite their being in different caravans. The latter sometimes succeeded in bribing the gendarmes and sending some news to his brother. For the last time, Hovhannes heard from his family when Harutiun wrote to him about their sister Iskuhi's cruel death. The emaciated girl fainted, but the heartless gendarmes did not allow her family to help her. Moreover, they brutally hit her to death with bayonets. "Our sister died before my very eyes and I was absolutely unable to do anything," Harutiun wrote...

At last, five days later, Hovhannes and his fellow villagers reached Amasia. From their group of 2,400, 162 had survived the excruciating "journey." They were herded into a mosque and checked one by one. A cup of water was sold at 5 kuruses, while a piece of bread cost a mejitie. At night all the young men were sent to prison, a small room with conditions very far from being suitable for human presence. There were 165 people herded together there, those sitting on the floor being in the worst condition as each of them had to bear another prisoner on his shoulders. There was no space. The prisoners kept changing places until the sun rose. Hovhannes was sitting on the window-sill together with two of his fellow villagers, the doctor and head of Aghjaguney (the latter was his mother's cousin). There was nobody sitting on their shoulders. No one was allowed to go out, even for the toilet. One could just go mad in the smell of human excrement and urine. While in the mosque, the young men had been severely beaten, in the aftermath of which, two of them died in prison. They had covered the way hungry and thirsty and were too emaciated to offer any resistance.

Husein Effendi, who happened to be in the prison on some business, saw his fellow villagers there and was worried as he knew that all of them were going to be killed at 10 o'clock in the evening. It was impossible to approach the jail. A Turkish prisoner serving a term of 101 years had opened a shop there and wanted to make the Armenians buy some food. Anyway, they were going to be killed, so why did they need any money? Husein Effendi begged that blood-thirsty criminal to arrange his meeting with Hovhannes: he just wanted to say good-bye to him. He was allowed to see Hovhannes, but he was so moved that he could not utter a word. Hovhannes, who was in total despair, had already reconciled himself to his fate: if his family had perished, he was ready to share their fate.

As soon as the sun rose, the prisoners were overcome with horror. They knew that they would soon be killed. Then Husein Effendi came again and said the following, without pausing for breath: "Congratulations! I haven't slept the whole night: we've been pray-

ing and God heard my entreaties. You're free: today Kurban Bayram is celebrated, and on that occasion, all the Armenians are saved from murder."

Husein advised his fellow villagers to apply to the Governor of Amasia with a request to improve their conditions.

After he left, the head of Aghjaguney told the young men that they had been forgiven and asked them to collect 10 gold coins for the prison warden. The young men had sewn their gold coins onto their clothing so as the gendarmes could not seize them. The village head gave the money to the prison warden, who, in return for this, arranged his meeting with the Governor. The petition of the Armenian prisoners was met and orders were given to improve their conditions.

After returning, the head of Aghjaguney told his friends about the reception he had been given by the Governor. Hardly had a quarter of an hour passed when a gendarme came and said that ten of the prisoners had to go out. The Armenians looked at each other in horror, unwilling to obey the order: they thought they were going to be killed. Hovhannes, who had served in the army, knew that if they did not obey the order within 3 minutes, they would be forced to do so. He turned to his uncle, the village head, and said: "I will be the first to go. Let them first kill me."

He was immediately followed by the others: ten young men went to the prison yard and lined up there. It turned out that they were going to the bakery to fetch some sacks of bread. Then they were taken to the bathhouse, given some clothes that had been seized from Armenians and told to burn away their old ones. When they came back accompanied by the gendarme, they were taken by surprise: three rooms had been cleaned and cleared of the corpses for them. The rest of the young men were sitting on the floor: they had had a bath and changed their garments, too. The village head gave all of them bread which they started eating with great appetite.

Around 2 July 1915, Hovhannes and his friends were taken to a construction site to work there. The masters were all Armenians who had not been killed only thanks to their being craftsmen. Then the young men were taken to Amasia to empty the houses of 18,000 Armenians who had been exterminated there. The scene was heart-rending: it was evident that some people had been killed right in bed; others while working or during a meal, right at the table. Stifling their emotions, the Armenians of Aghjaguney kept working. Their patriots' property was being taken out of their comfortable houses and amassed in the church yard. Only the Lord knows what fortune the gendarmes accumulated thanks to the Armenians. During the evening break, all the young Armenians were checked near the church door and then given some bread and a piece of *thal* [also

called *ghavurma* or *khavurma*, it is a homemade meat preserve famous in the regions of Armenia].

The group was continually taken from one place to another for work. One day they were taken to an abandoned Armenian house amidst some gardens located on the way to Amasia. The young men repaired it, and the authorities who came for checkup after the work was over were pleased with them. Hovhannes heard one of them saying to the other: "Our Government has committed something very bad. How can you kill your milch cow and eat its meat?"

While in this place, the young men got acquainted with Hamti Bey. During their break, they helped him gather his fruits and put them in the baskets. As a sign of gratitude, the bey gave them four baskets of fruits to sell them and eke out their existence.

Every day various caravans of deportees passed along the road. Seeing Hovhannes and his friends working, they were surprised and wondered how they had been given that work. The young men did not tell anybody that they had been set free only thanks to Kurban Bayram and tried to give them hope that they would be given work in some other place.

Once, in the morning, Hovhannes and the other men of the group heard a child crying. They entered the garden and started looking for him, finally finding a two-year-old child: evidently, his parents had thrown him there to save him at least in that way. The men kept the child with them at night; in the morning they took him to Amasia and put him in charge of a Greek acquaintance.

Hamti Bey promised to help the young men whenever they had any problems. Once, one of Hovhannes' friends committed a crime and was arrested. The men went to Amasia, found Hamti Bey in a cafe and told him what had happened. The bey promised to free their friend. A judge who was sitting at the table with the bey asked: "What nationality are these men"?

"They are Armenians," Hamti Bey answered.

On hearing these words, the people sitting in the cafe were taken by surprise and started looking at each other, as if asking silently, "Are there still any surviving Armenians?"

In the evening the bey visited the young men together with their friend who had been released.³

Soon there was an order that 60 people had to go from Amasia to Veziil Kebri. Hovhannes and his friends joined these people and went back. The road was covered with blackened corpses. The mayor of Veziil Kebri had issued an order allowing the village heads to choose 3 or 4 people and take them to their villages. Now Hovhannes was with his uncle and the doctor of

Aghjaguney. On 8 August a gendarme took them to the place of Hajji Bekir Agha in the village of Tanushi. Coming from the threshing floor and learning that they had been sent by the mayor, the Agha agreed to keep them in his house.

In the autumn, when the threshing season was over, Hajji Bekir went to the mountain pastures to graze his livestock. The mayor accommodated Hovhannes and his friends in Sivri Hovhannes' splendid house. The Turkish inhabitants of the village told them that the former owner of the house had been a musician who always participated in all the remarkable events held in the neighbourhood.

The village head employed Hovhannes and his friends in his warehouses of flour which he had bought from their former Armenian proprietors. The young men had to arrange the transportation of the flour to the mill. Soon no less than 100 loads of flour were ready and the village head was very pleased with them. He then asked them to count the sacks of ground flour in the factory and arrange their conveyance to Samsun. The young men were paid for this work. The mill, once belonging to Nshan Shirinian, was leased by Osman Effendi. According to him, Nshan Effendi's wife had converted to Islam and thus saved her life. She demanded that Osman Effendi pay her recompense, and the latter sent her 100 banknotes. It was not clear whether Osman Effendi was telling the truth or lying, but it was evident that Nshan Effendi had been a man of great fortune. Opposite his three-floor mill, a 200-hectare field extended, including 20 hectares planted with mulberries for silkworm breeding. In addition, there were 150 cows on his farm.

The head of Tebekey Village applied to the mayor of Veziil Kebri for permission to move the Armenians to his village, and the mayor gave his consent. Forty of the sixty Armenians were in the village and twenty in the city. It was the Armenians of the village who had asked the head of Tebekey to re-unite them with their friends. So, Hovhannes moved to Tebekey, which was inhabited by Circassians. He started living in Nurin Chaush's house, and his uncle moved to Garbej Bey's place. The bey's father-in-law, Shankeri Bey, sometimes visited him and put his horse under his uncle's watch. "Poor uncle! What has become of him," Hovhannes thought, but the Circassian did not allow him to help his uncle with the horse.

The locals suggested that the Armenians convert to their religion and marry their girls, thus establishing their own households. There were absolutely no hopes that they could see their families one day. It goes without saying that the Armenians refused and forbade them to talk about this again.

Zekia, Garbej Bey's daughter, once invited Hovhannes to their place and confessed that she was in love

³ Later five of these men managed to run away to Samsun, and two of them, Hovhannes Atmajian and Sedrak Mumjian, were lucky enough to move to Russia by ship.

with him. She even complained of his indifference. The loving girl also unclosed some secret information for Hovhannes: the Armenians of Samsun were struggling against the Turks and had decided not to surrender at all. Zekia promised to provide the young men with arms and horses if they wished to join these Armenians; they could reach Samsun at night.

In the evening Hovhannes told his friends about Zekia's proposal and it was approved.

While the young men were still in Tebekey, Hakob Poladian died and was buried in this village. The priest conducting the funeral service was Hovhannes' wife Iskuhi's cousin (her uncle's son). All his family had perished during the deportation. He had married again and had an adopted son and daughter.

Five of the members of the group had run away and nothing was known about them. A caravanserai owner who came to Tebekey for a short stay told the priest that two of them, Shek Hovhannes and Harutiun, were in Samsun. Allegedly, they had applied to the Military Commissariat to find out how long they were going to stay in Tebekey and had been told that they could be sent to Samsun at any moment. Shek Hovhannes and Harutiun had asked the caravanserai owner to advise their friends to follow their example and move to Samsun.

The priest told the young men about this and they unfortunately believed in this disinformation. In November they went to the Military Commissariat and were registered there. They were promised to be sent to Samsun, but on the same day, it was decided to send them to Kavza to work on the central highway.

The night seemed endless. The young men did not know what was predestined for them. As soon as the sun rose, they were lined up and sent not to Samsun but to Sebastia. The road was gloomy and excruciating. The severe cold of winter could already be felt. The young men were so emaciated and hunger- and cold-stricken that they could barely drag their feet. The head of Aghjaguney and the doctor simply wished they were dead. Once they had to spend the night in a caravanserai, next to animals. However, in their situation, they were pleased even with these conditions: yes, they were lying on the cold ground, but at least they were indoors. Besides, they themselves were to blame for their state.

The road continued to Amasia, Tocat and Sebastia, the last stop being in Kochesar. The day following the group's arrival at Kochesar, they were taken to the village of Avren. It was already December and they had to build a road in the severe cold of winter. Every day they faced the threat of certain death if they failed to break and crush the fixed amount of stones. These were the tombstones of an Armenian cemetery that the excruciated Armenians had to carry to the construction

site on carts to crush them into pebble. Many of them were unable to endure the cold and hunger. There was not enough bread.

Hovhannes worked in a group where everybody was Armenian; only the centurion and chiliarch were Turks. Both of them had adopted Armenian boys, changed their names and married them to Turkish girls. These boys helped Hovhannes a lot: they persuaded the storekeeper who was an Armenian, too to increase the Armenians' daily ration of bread. One of these adopted boys was Ruben Malian, who later immigrated to Armenia from America.

One day part of the road still under construction collapsed because of the tributary of the river Karmir [Red] flowing there. It was announced that those who would work in the water would get an increased daily ration. However, only 3 of the 50 workers, Hovhannes, Melkon and Hakob, dared to go into the water in that freezing cold. The tumbled dam was being repaired with the stones of the plundered and destroyed Armenian houses. The cold was unbearable, but not for 20-year-old Hovhannes: his young organism resisted it successfully, while for his uncle, the village doctor and priest this was a true trial. Seeing their state, Hovhannes felt pity for them. Soon his uncle seriously fell ill and could not move at all. Hovhannes took him to hospital in Kochesar (the nurses of this hospital were captive Armenian women who had lived in a village close to Kochesar before coming here, from 2 May 1915 until 10 February 1916). Hovhannes' uncle died, but the priest did not tell the young man about this, as he knew that the man had been very dear to him and he would be deeply upset. Before going to hospital, the village head had tried to give the money he had, 13 pieces of gold, to Hovhannes, but the latter had refused.

Hovhannes learnt about his uncle's death from Hekmet Bey. The bey also hinted that the gold had been given to the priest, but at that moment money did not matter to Hovhannes at all. He had lost his only surviving relative. His lost family came before his eyes, and for the first time during his odyssey, he broke into tears and sat down on the ground, overwhelmed with pain and sorrow.

Every month an American charitable organisation allocated two pieces of gold to each of the surviving Armenians.

Hovhannes was put in charge of a group of 20 Greeks to gather the alfalfa growing in the vicinity of the Armenian villages around Tuzasar.

It was July 1916. The village was called *Tuz* (translated from Turkish as *Salt*) as there were salt mines there. The young men decided to gather salt from the nearby mountains and sell it at a cheap price to the owners of the caravans passing through those places. In this way, they started earning their everyday bread.

Tuz used to be a large Armenian village. Once, passing by the local school, Hovhannes heard two women speaking Armenian. Truly, they were Armenians who had come from Maghara to take care of 300 little Armenian children who had been Turkified and were sheltered in the school house of Tuz (the men of Maghara had been taken to the army, indeed, not as soldiers but simply as workers). Hovhannes had heard about Enver Pasha's order not to kill Armenian children but Turkify them.

When the young men returned to Kochesar, the Greeks suggested that they should run away. Hovhannes was against this as the nearby mountains teemed with Turkish bandits and there would be no escape from them. However, the Greeks insisted and Hovhannes had to agree, although he did not trust them much. What could he do? He was alone against them. The Greeks who were from the villages around Samsun promised to find a hiding-place for Hovhannes, but he had another desire: he wanted to join the Armenians fighting in the mountains of Samsun.

The group set out at night. They did not have a compass, only the stars guiding them. They could not move in broad daylight as they might be caught. The young men found a hiding-place in a gorge, but they were soon attacked by some Turkish bandits from the nearby mountains (in fact, they were deserters). They were robbed of their clothes and even of their last pieces of bread. They were set free only because they told the bandits that all of them were Greeks. If the group was able to continue its way and reach Amasia, Hovhannes could at least go to Tebekey, the Circassian village. But this was impossible as the mountains teemed with Turkish bandits and the roads with Turkish gendarmes who would certainly check their documents. In the daytime, the young men hid somewhere; they secretly gathered barley from the nearby fields to satisfy their hunger. Overcoming many hardships, they spent 4 nights and finally reached Tocat. The road leading to the city was overcrowded, some people leaving it and others just arriving. All of them were half-naked: they had sold most of their clothes not to die of hunger. Hovhannes wanted to secretly join these people and enter Tocat. Fortunately, three of the Greeks offered the same as they were too emaciated to continue the way. Those entering the city were mainly ill, which meant that everybody, including the young men of the group, would undergo some medical examination and would certainly be sent to hospital.

At night the young men left their hiding-place and mingled with the crowd of the sick. Hovhannes was taken to hospital as he had stomach-ache and indigestion. The doctor, Nshan Effendi, who was from Charshamba, recognised him, but did not show it. He prescribed some medicine for him and the young man

recovered within 3 days. Seeing that he was well, the hospital staff told him to do some work, namely to take the dead outside, but the doctor did not allow this: a sick person could only give bread and water to the others.

During the morning examination, Nshan Effendi decided to send Hovhannes to the first hospital. This doctor was giving treatment to the wounded soldiers of 7 battalions without anybody's help, all by himself. The Turks were in need of doctors; that's why Nshan Effendi was alive. The following day Hovhannes asked him if they were going to send him to the military unit, but the doctor made him understand that he was to decide it.

Hovhannes was released from hospital in 15 days and went to the military unit in Amasia to join his friends. Soon they were mingled with a caravan of Armenians passing through the city.

When the caravan was passing through a desert, the young men were able to run away. Wandering here and there for 18 days, they joined a group of Armenians going to Sebastia.

Unfortunately, my grandfather's story does not continue from this point. It remained unfinished due to his death, and I will try to complete it with the pieces of fragmentary information that I have heard from his children.

During his odyssey, Hovhannes had several miraculous escapes from death: once he was wounded and fell down, the corpses of Armenians gradually piling up right over him and thus saving him from certain death. In another case, he was saved as he pretended to be an askyar (the Turks did not suspect him as he was very fluent in Turkish). Hovhannes slept far from the askyars so that they could not hear the Armenian words he might say while sleeping. Once Hovhannes and his friends were on a train that had arrived in Turkey from India (I cannot say why they had got on that train): one of the passengers, an Armenian doctor, heard them talking secretly and hid them in the train together with 100 other Armenians. Hovhannes got off at the railway station of Alexandrople [nowadays: Gyumri]: he was in Eastern Armenia, which meant that he had been saved, but he could not feel any happiness. He was the only surviving member of his large family of 18 people. He accidentally saw his sister's husband, Ferdinand Manukian, among the refugees who had been sheltered in the gymnasium of Alexandrople. So, the two of them were the only surviving members of their large family. They decided to stay together and tell everybody that they were brothers.

In 1918 Hovhannes married Varsenik Hakobian and formed a family for the second time (the ceremony was

performed in Sourb Nshan Church of Alexandropole). However, soon the Turks attacked Eastern Armenia, turning Shirak, Lori and Sardarapat into battlefields. The plunder and massacres committed in Western Armenia now threatened these lands. Varsenik (she was from Bozyokhush (now: Musayelian) Village) was hiding in a cave together with her relatives and the people of Ashotsk. As for her husband, he was selflessly fighting at Sardarapat. Varsenik's labour pains started in the cave and she gave birth to a son. However, the child's cry might reveal the hiding-place and Varsenik had to make a fatal decision: to get rid of the newborn child to save hundreds of lives. The baby was placed under some bushes far from the cave...

The following day, Hovhannes came (he had approached the hiding-place through some secret paths) and took Varsenik to a safer place. They walked amidst corpses lying here and there, through ponds of blood.

For many years, Varsenik and Hovhannes were not able to have a child, and the former thought that it was her punishment for the sin she had committed. But how could God punish her? She had saved hundreds of people, had she not? Later they had 4 children.

In 1919 the Turkish army again threatened to attack Shirak. Varsenik persuaded Hovhannes to leave the village with his friends: the Turkish askyars might recognise him. At that time, Commander Andranik arrived at Bozyokhush with his fighters and suggested that the locals join them to escape sufferings and slaughter. However, the men of the village did not agree and stayed there, only the women and children following the Commander. Overcoming the difficult passes of Ashotsk, they reached Jalaloghli (Stepanavan) and then moved to Gharakilisa (Vanadzor). In the morning, the villagers found out that the Commander had left and decided to return to their village. On their way back, they encountered some Turkish troops. The aged members of the group met the enemies with bread and salt and the Turkish commander allowed them to continue their way.

Wandering here and there for half a year, Hovhannes finally returned home. His friends had left for Georgia to move to America from there, but he had not joined them. He had already once lost his family and did not want to suffer that pain again. Upon returning, Hovhannes found Varsenik seriously ill: an epidemic of typhus was raging in the region and she was among those affected. Fortunately, her young organism overcame the disease.

In 1926 Hovhannes and Ferdinand left for Abkhazia for permanent residence. The former's uncles Hakob and Harutiun had moved to Sukhumi in the late 19th century. On the train they told their wives [apparently, Ferdinand had married again, too] that they were not brothers: anyway, this would be revealed



Hovhannes Gyulian

when they were among their relatives in Abkhazia. Only uncle Harutiun was alive. When Varsenik was pouring water on his hands, he looked up to the sky and said: "Lord, may Your Glory be eternal. I have lived to see my brother's daughter-in-law pouring water onto my hands."

For some reasons unknown, Hovhannes and Ferdinand did not stay in Abkhazia and returned to Leninakan [another name for Gyumri].

In September 1941 Hovhannes was at the railway station of Leninakan to send his elder son Mkrtych to the front. He asked his son to take revenge on the Turks for everything they had done, and the latter promised so. However, he was not able to keep his promise and later, when already rather advanced in age, he often repented this (he was suffering from amnesia at that time).

Hovhannes Gyulian, who took up permanent residence in another part of his homeland [in Eastern Armenia], died on 29 January 1972, surrounded with his children and grandchildren. He died with his heart still aching over the loss of his birthplace and his dear ones. His last words were: "Iskuhi, give me something to eat. I'm tired."

Iskuhi was his first wife, who had perished during the deportation...

The following members of the Gyulians' family fell victim to the Genocide: Hovhannes Gyulian's mother Vardine, his wife Iskuhi and his son Sargis; his brother Harutian with his wife Hripsime and their son Hambardzum; Hovhannes' brother's daughters Vardine and Azniv; Hovhannes' three sisters: Mariam with her husband Esteban, her son and daughter; Iskuhi with her two children, and Almast with her husband and child.

ROYAL DECREES ENGRAVED IN MREN CATHEDRAL

by Samvel Karapetian

The cathedral of Mren, situated in the city site of the same name in the region of Kars (under Turkish occupation since 1921), was built between 639 and 640 by Prince Davit Saharuny. Apart from its highly valuable construction inscription, it also abounds in numerous other lapidary records relating to both the Bagratid Kingdom of Armenia and later periods, particularly the second half of the 13th century.¹

The cathedral used to have seven inscriptions dating from the Bagratid period (some of them are no longer *in situ* due to the collapse of its southern facade): one of them is traced back to the times of Smbat the Shahenshah (977 to 990); three were engraved under Gagik I (990 to 1020); two under Hovhannes-Smbat (1020 to 1041), and one under Gagik II (1041 to 1045).

As early as 1917, all these inscriptions (four of them are engraved and three are written in black paint on the plaster layer) were prepared for publication thanks to H. Orbely's efforts, but they eventually saw the light only in 1974 (without any photographs or tracings).²

The present article dwells on the aforementioned three paint-written inscriptions. In 2013 the celebrated art historian Patrick Tonapetian visited the cathedral and took some photographs which enabled us to prepare the tracings of these lapidary records.

All the three inscriptions are inwardly engraved on the western wall (north of the entrance) of the cathedral. These are royal decrees aimed at the settlement of certain economic problems: one of them was issued by Smbat the Shahenshah, and the other two by Hovhannes the Shahenshah.³

The 10-line decree of Smbat the Shahenshah is almost entirely preserved: only the concluding parts of its last two lines have fallen off together with the plaster. The decree was issued for the settlement of an economic dispute Mren had with two major cities of medieval Armenia, Ani and Bagaran.

Յանուն ա(ստուծո) այս իմ հրամանք են Սմբատա / շահանշահի. ազատեալ եմ զՄրենոյ գոշխարի հասն վասն իմ արեոյս եւ իմ մեղացն թողութեան, որ չկա ոչինչ աղման Բագր(ա)նէ, գի | ո՛չ Անոյ ի վերա Մրենոյ վասն ոչխարի, եթե | որ ընդդիմանա հրամանաց իմոց, յիմոց | կամ այլ որ ով իցէ՝ պարտական եղիցի սպանման արեանն Զ(րիստոս)ի եւ իմ մեղացս եւ իմ ամենյայն ազգի մեղաց տէր է. 3ԺԸ (319) [հայրապետ]ացն նզովեալ եղիցի եւ դատ[ող] նորա տէր է]:

Transl.: *In the name of God, this is my decree, the decree of Smbat the Shahenshah, with which Mren is exempted from the sheep tribute for the sake of my longevity and for the atonement of my sins... If anybody stands against my orders, whether any of my family members or others, may they atone for Christ's blood and for my sins and for the sins of the entire family of mine. May they be cursed by the 319 Holy Fathers. May God administer justice against them.*

Beneath this decree, King Hovhannes-Smbat's edict is engraved in larger letters which are now unfortunately semi-distorted. Only the first eight lines of this lapidary record are preserved, its concluding part missing. Anyway, the inscription is still able to convey the main meaning of the king's decree:

Եւ ես՝ Յովաննէս շ[ահանշա]հ, հաստատեալ եմ զիմ հար/անցն հրամանքս, որ չկարէ | որ ի Մրենոյ ոչխարէ ոչինչ հակառուլ, եթե որ ը[նդդի]մյանա իմ հարանց[ն] հրաման[աց] ... իմ պարտա[կան] ... | ...:

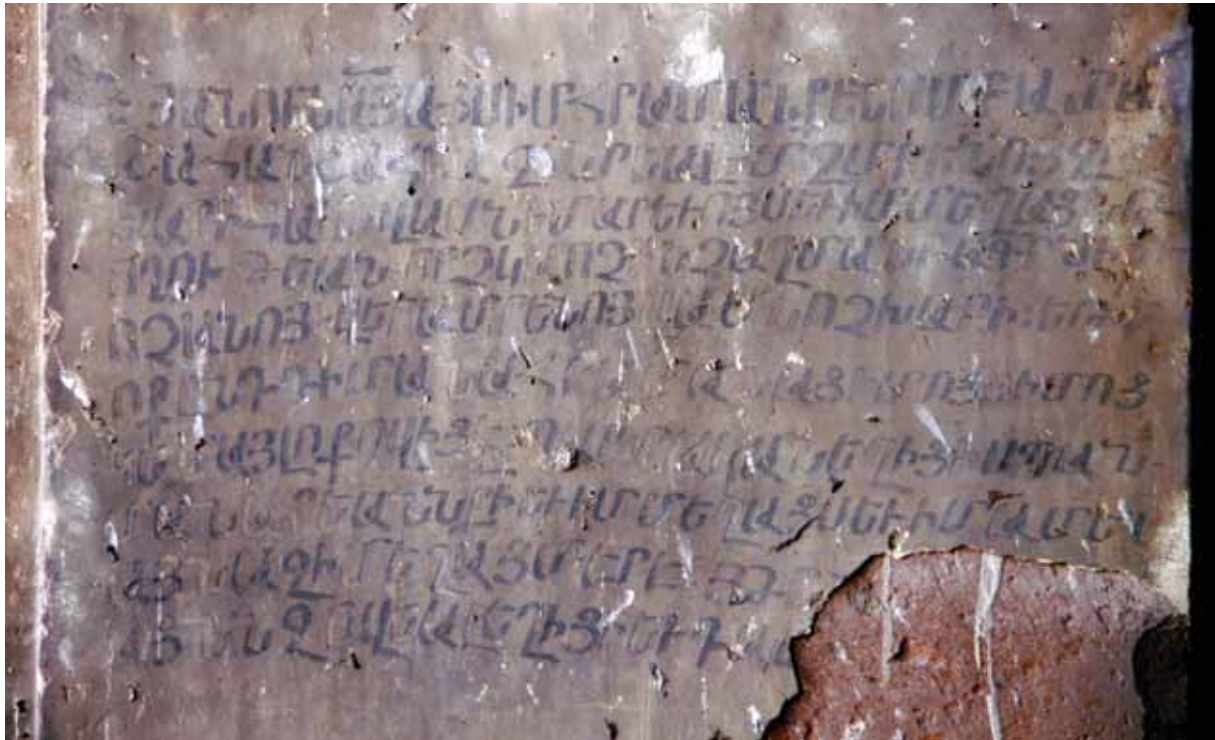
Transl.: *And I, Hovhannes the Shahenshah, corroborate my forefathers' edicts exempting Mren from paying the sheep tax. If anybody shows resistance to my forefathers' decrees, ... may they ...*

The third edict, carved left of these two, is in a worse condition, only certain fragmentary scraps of its eight lines being still intelligible. These pieces reveal that the inscription was engraved to settle certain economic problems, like the two previous ones. Its letters almost share the size of those of the first one.

1 See Орбели И., Надписи Мрена [H. Orbely, "The Inscriptions of Mren"], in: «Հայագիտական հետազոտություններ» [Armenological Studies], book 1 (Yerevan, 1974), pp. 33-43; Կարապետյան Մ., «Մրենը և նրա հուշարձանները» [S. Karapetian, "Mren and Its Monuments"], «Վարձք» [Vardzk], no. 7 (2012), pp. 31-63.

2 Orbely, "The Inscriptions of Mren," p. 41.

3 Gagik I's (990 to 1020) elder son Hovhannes (1020 to 1041) was also known by the name of Hovhannes-Smbat, but we do not think that the same king could be mentioned by one name in 2 of the inscriptions and by another in the third. Based on this, we are inclined to attribute the paint-written inscription of Shahenshah Smbat to Gagik I's father, Smbat II Tiezerakal (Master of the Universe, 977 to 990). This supposition is further substantiated by the location of the inscriptions as it is evident that the first of them is the decree of Shahenshah Smbat, the other two following it beneath and left of it. This shows the chronological order of the engraving of these inscriptions.



The decrees of Shahenshah Smbat (photo by P. Tonapetian, 2013)



[Այս] իմ հրամանք են Յովաննիսի | ...[ազա]տել
 են զՍր[ենոյ] ... [զոչխարի հա]սն եւ չափն ե[ւ...
 վասն] իմ արեւոյս եւ վ[ասն եւ իմ ազգի մ]եղաց թո-
 դոթեան | եւ թե յետ իմոյ ելանելոյ յաշխա[րհես]
 այլ որ ընդդիմ[անայ յիմոց յա]տարաց եւ...:

Transl.: *These are my decrees, the decrees issued by
 Hovhannes ... I have exempted Mren ... from the sheep
 tribute ... for my longevity and for the atonement of the
 sins of my family, and if anybody, whether any of my
 family members or others, stands against [this decree]
 after I depart this world...⁴*

To summarise, we would like to point out that in recent years, the cathedral of Mren has suffered considerable damage: in 2006 to 2007, its southern wall almost entirely collapsed due to the deliberate undermining of its foundations. It is only by a happy chance that the part of the western wall, bearing the aforementioned inscriptions, is still standing.

⁴ The part in the 3rd line of the inscription reading «չափն եւ...» (not translated into English because of the obscure meaning), may be the initial part of a toponym; for instance, «զԱփնել...».



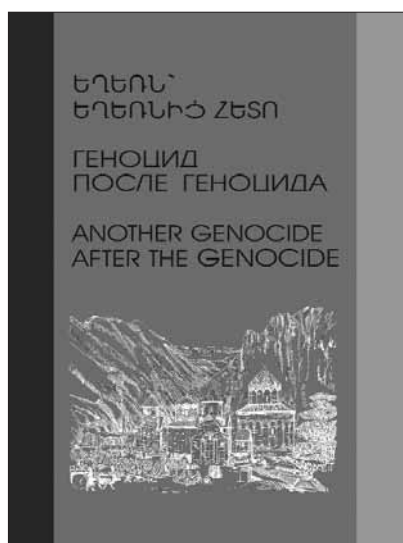
The decrees of Shahenshah Hovhannes-Smbat (photos by P. Tonapetian, 2013)



The part of the western facade of Mren Cathedral on which the three paint-written royal inscriptions are preserved (photo by P. Tonapetian, 2013)

PUBLICATIONS OF 2015

The RAA has published S. Karapetian's work *Hayots Dzor* [in Armenian], the first book in the 36-volume series entitled *History of Armenia*. The publication of this volume was made possible thanks to the generous contribution of the Armenian Hikers Association, the Armenian Hiking Society, the Armenian Cycling Association and the Hye Riders Motorcycle Club, Los Angeles, CA, USA.



S. Karapetian's work entitled *Another Genocide after the Genocide* [in Armenian, Russian & English] was prepared and published with the support of the RA Ministries of Urban Development and Culture, Mon-Arch Company and Hayastan All-Armenian Fund.



The Historical Monuments of Arinj Village (in Armenian), by S. Karapetian, came to add to the number of the booklets published within the series *Villages and Towns of Armenia*. This series was initiated in 2014 thanks to the financial support of Vardan Harutiunian, a person concerned with raising and increasing awareness of Armenian cultural heritage. The other booklets (all of them published in Armenian in 2014) are: *The Historical Monuments of Kotayk Village*; *The Historical Monuments of Norgyugh and Mayakovski Villages*; *The Historical Monuments of Kaputan Village*; *The Historical Monuments of Akunk and Katnaghbyur Villages*; *The Historical Monuments of Zar and Sevaberd Villages*.



The RAA has published Samvel Ayvazian's book entitled *The Restoration of Dadivank Monastery between 1997 and 2011* (in Armenian). The publication was financially supported by the RAA USA and an anonymous donor (in memory of Adrine Martirosian).

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We are also thankful to Mushegh Lalayan, Vice President of the Republican Party of Armenia, for his continued donation of Armenological literature to the RAA library.

We owe special thanks to the art historian Zaven Sargissian, Curator of Parajanov Museum, for presenting the RAA with a digitised copy of his private collection of photographs.

**SARGIS DARCHINIAN, AN EXPERT IN THE HERITAGE OF TPGHIS (TIFLIS) ARMENIANS
WE HAVE LOST OUR DEAR FRIEND**

Sargis Darchinian, a devoted researcher who spent most of his life vigorously studying and documenting the heritage of Georgian Armenians, succumbed to a fatal disease in October 2013. He left a unique collection of various documents and photographs which need to be processed into scientific works—a painstaking task to which the RAA has committed itself in token of respect of the memory of the outstanding archivist and our dear friend.



**Sargis Darchinian in front of the font of Sourb Astvatzatzin (Holy Virgin) Church of Ananur
(photo by S. Karapetian, 16 April 2012)**

**YOUR EFFORTS AND
CONTRIBUTION WILL
ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED**

**Sargis Darchinian and the RAA members in the
Pantheon of Khojivank, where he was to find
eternal repose just several months later (photo
7 May 2013)**

ԵՂԵՈՆ՝
ԵՂԵՈՆԻՅ՝ ՀԵՏՈ

ГЕНОЦИД
ПОСЛЕ ГЕНОЦИДА

ANOTHER GENOCIDE
AFTER THE GENOCIDE



ՀԱՅԿԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԴՊԱՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԳԵՂՄԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԿԵՆՏՐՈՆ

ՀԱՅՈՒՆ ԶՈՐ



Hayots Dzor (in Armenian)

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ԳՍԳԻ ՎԱՆԶԻ ՎԵՐԱԿԱՆԳՆՈՒՄԸ
1997-2011 ԹԹ.

ՍԱՆՈՒՆ ԱՅՈՒՆՅԱՆ



« The Restoration of Dadivank Monastery
between 1997 and 2011 (in Armenian)

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ԱՌԻՆԶ
ԳՅՈՒԴԻ
ԴԱՏԱՍԿԱՆ
ՀՈՒՇԱՐԶԱՆՆԵՐԸ



