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**SAMVEL KARAPETIAN**

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ՀԱՄԱԿԱՐԳԳՅԱՅԻՆ ՔԵԿԱԿՈՐՈՂ

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Responsible for this issue  
**SAMVEL KARAPETIAN**

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<http://www.raa.am>

✉ [raayer@sci.am](mailto:raayer@sci.am)

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☎ 010 52 15 25

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## WHAT IS CONCEALED IN THE TURKISH INFORMATION BOARDS OF HISTORICAL MONUMENTS IN WESTERN ARMENIA?

by Raffi Kortoshian

For already many decades, the Turks have been busy publishing a great number of multi-language works in which they conceal or gerrymander historical facts out of political considerations, thus misleading both their nation and the world in general.

In few cases, this kind of publications are met with a proper response, but as a rule, they are viewed as too absurd to be anyhow commented on.

At the same time, however, these numerous works do prove of certain influence on people who are not professionals of the field. This is true of the Turkish information boards of the Armenian monuments in Western Armenia some of which are analysed below in an attempt to show what falsified information they contain and what they actually conceal.

1

In different times, three information boards were photographed in the vicinity of Sourb Khach (Holy Cross) Church of Aghtamar Island.

**Board No. 1 (photo by Armen Hakhnazarian, 1980s)**

(in Turkish)

Akdamar Kilisesi.

Kilise M.S. 915-921 yılları arasında inşa edilmiştir. kilisenin duvarları rölyeflerle iç duvarları ise freskolarla süslenmiştir.



Board No. 1

(in English)

Akdamar Church.

The church was built between 915-921 A.D. the exterior walls of the church are decorated with relief and interior walls with frescoes.<sup>1</sup>

Transl. from Turkish: Akdamar Church. It was built between 915 and 921. Its outer walls are decorated with reliefs, and the inner ones with frescoes.

**Boards No. 2 (photo by Samvel Karapetian, 2000) & No. 3 (photo by Stephen Sim, 2004)**



Boards No. 2 & No. 3

Both of them were placed by the district authorities of Gyavash and have similar contents:

(in Turkish)

Kilise 915-921 tarihleri arasında Ermeni Vaspurakan Hanedanından Kral I Gagik denetiminde Mimar Keşiş Manauel tarafından inşa edilmiştir. Kilise duvarlarının alt bölümündeki Hıristiyan dini ile ilgili konuları içeren kabartmalarla üst kısımlarındaki İslam sanatı etkili kabartmaların birlikteliği Hıristiyan ve İslam resim programlarının en başarılı ve ilginç örneklerindedir.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the English texts of the Turkish information boards of Armenian monuments abound in flagrant grammatical, stylistic and even spelling mistakes.

(in English)

Between 915 and 921 dates this church was built by the architect Kesis Manauel controlled by the king I Gagik who is from the dynasty of Armanian Vaspurakan the reliefs that are connected with Christian's religion on the lower part of church walls and the reliefs that are connected with Islam's religion on the upper part of it's walls have been existed together with on walls are successful and interesting sampleform Islam and Christian pictures programs.

Transl. from Turkish: The church was erected between 915 and 921 by Father Manvel, the architect, under the supervision of King Gagik I from the Armenian princely family of Vaspurakan. The reliefs of the lower parts of its walls, representing the Christian religion, and those of the upper sections, bearing the influence of Islamic art, are in integrity being some of the best and most interesting specimens of Christian and Islamic painting.

Note: These boards make absolutely no mention of the name of the church, Sourb Khach, i.e. *Holy Cross*, and call it Akdamar (the same is true of the island). The Turkish translation of the historical Armenian name of the island, *Akhtamar*, should sound as *Ahtamar*,<sup>2</sup> but in order to impart some meaning to it, they have changed it into *Akdamar*, which means *A White Vein*.

There are certain striking differences between the old and new boards: thus, the one photographed in the 1980s does not make any reference to the founder of the church, Armenian King of Vaspurakan Gagik Artzruny (908 to 943), whose name is found in the last two ones (they have been almost thoroughly changed). Boards no. 2 and no. 3 also contain some groundless information regarding the reliefs decorating the upper sections of the outer walls of the church, which are represented as bearing the influence of Islamic art. In fact, however, the 6 horizontal friezes of the exterior walls allegorically glorify Christianity, the Armenian nation's liberation struggle against the Arab rule, as well as the prominent representatives of Artzruny Family and their deeds. They also represent Armenian peasants' peaceful working routine, everyday life and centuries-old beliefs.<sup>3</sup> For instance, the volute-shaped ornamental band consisting of grape bunches and vines (the latter form circles in which reliefs of scenes from secular life—such as garden cultivation, harvesting and wine making—are found) could not be the result of

<sup>2</sup> In Turkish the sound of 'kh' is expressed through the letter 'h' and not 'k,' while that of 't' is written down through 't' and not 'd.'

<sup>3</sup> Հայկական սովետական հանրագիտարան [Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia], vol. 1 (Yerevan, 1974), 254. For a detailed study of the friezes, see Մնացականյան Ս., Արթամար [S. Mnatsakanian, Aghtamar] (Yerevan, 1983), 45-144.



Islamic influence, as the information board says, for the simple reason that Islam prohibits the making and use of this beverage. This comes to show that the allusion to Islamic influence is absolutely groundless and merely pursues the aim of representing the region as a conglomerate of different nationalities.

## 2

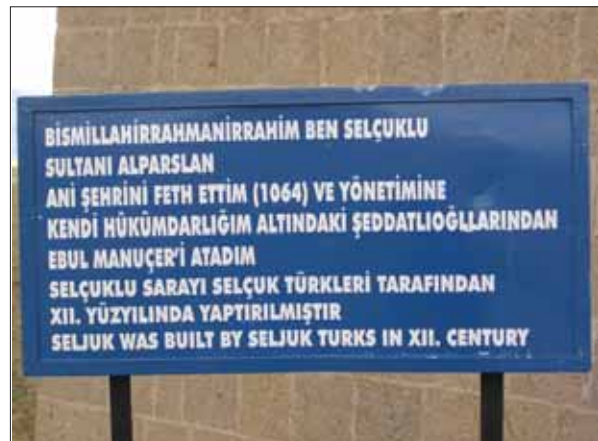
### Board No. 4 (photo by S. Karapetian)

In 2004 the research team of the RAA found this information board at the entrance to Paron's Palace in Ani City Site. It has the following texts:

(in Turkish)

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim ben Selçuklu Sultanı Alparslan Ani şehrini feth ettim (1064) ve yönetimine kendi hükümdarlığım altındaki Şeddatlıoğullarından Ebul Manuçer'i atadım.

Selçuklu sarayı Selçuk Türkleri tarafından XII yüzyıllında yaptırılmıştır.



Board No. 4

(in English)

Seljuk was built by Seljuk Turks in XII century.

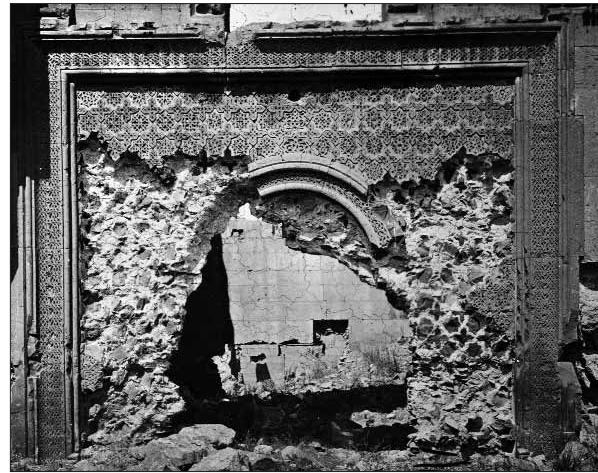
Transl. from Turkish: In the name of all-forgiving and merciful God, I, Seljuk Sultan Alp-Arslan, conquered the city of Ani in 1064 and appointed Ebul Manucher from the [family of] Sheddadle-Oghulus who are under my reign as its Governor.

The Seljuk palace was built in the 12th century by the Seljuk Turks.

Note: The Turkish board quotes an inscription allegedly left by the Seljuk sultan who conquered Ani in 1064 (it is noteworthy that it is missing from the English text). However, nothing is said regarding the place of its location: in fact, it does not have anything in common with Paron's Palace and aims at misleading visitors. As for the information found in it, it is absolutely wrong, for in 1065 Alp-Arslan left Ani to the Shaddadian Emir of Dvin, Abul-Asvar. After the latter's death, in 1067 the Shaddadian Emir of Gandzak, Patlun, purchased Ani from the Seljuk sultan in return for some expensive gifts and gave it to his younger brother Manuche.<sup>4</sup> Paron's Palace is represented as a Seljuk structure, whereas in fact, N. Marr and H. Orbeli trace it back to the period between the 12th and 13th centuries.<sup>5</sup>

The wall surrounding the door aperture of the palace was revetted with star-shaped sculptured stones (see plates 1-2). In 1905 another palace or a large house was unearthed north of Gagkashen Church in Ani. T. Toramanian studied the numerous star-shaped red and rhombus-shaped black stones found there and made up the reconstruction project of its portal, which is shown as identical to that of Paron's Palace. This attests that this composition was typical of the 12th- to 13th-century architecture of Ani (one of the star-shaped stones bears the inscribed name of Sargis, which is clearly read).<sup>6</sup>

According to different scholars, the decoration of the entire facade of outer doors with star-shaped mosaics and peculiar reliefs was characteristic of the Armenian architecture of the 12th to 14th centuries. There exist certain door facades built of hundreds of star-shaped, polygonal or square stones each of which is enriched with delicately-carved tiny reliefs in its turn.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, Paron's Palace has nothing in common with the Seljuks and was erected later—probably, by the princes Zakarian. Similar portals dating from the same period can also be seen in the following monuments in the Republic of Armenia: Saghmosavank (Aragatzotn Region), Nor Varagavank (Tavush Region) and Harijavank (Shirak Region), the portal of



Plates 1-2

the narthex of Meshkavank (Tavush Region) bearing the closest resemblance to the gate of Paron's Palace.<sup>8</sup>

### 3

Two different information boards were photographed at the entrance to Khoshab Castle.

**Board No. 5 (photo by Armen Hakhnazarian, 1980s)**

(in Turkish)  
Hoşab kalesi.

Bu kale M.S. 1643 yılında Osmanlılara bağlı olarak yaşlıyan Mahmudilerin beyi Sarı Süleyman tarafından yaptırılmıştır. Kalede iki Cami, Üç Hamam ve bir zidan vardır.

(in English)  
Hoşab Fortress.

This fortress was built in 1643 A.D. by Sari Süleyman the chief of the Mahmudis who were living

4 Հայ ժողովրդի պատմություն [History of the Armenian Nation], vol. 3 (Yerevan, 1976), 478-479.

5 Մնացականյան Ս., Անիի-պալատ-հյուրասանները [S. Mnatsakanian, "The Palace-Like Guest Houses of Ani"], «ՊԲՀ» [Historico-Philological Journal], no. 4 (95) (Yerevan, 1981), 76.

6 Հարությունյան Վ., Անի քաղաքը [V. Harutiunian, Ani City] (Yerevan, 1964), 73-74.

7 Թորամանյան Թ., Անի քաղաք, թե՞ ամրոց [T. Toramanian, "Ani City or Fortress?"], «Ազգագրական Հանդես» [Ethnographical Journal], no. 2, book 23 (Tiflis, 1912), 21-22; Азатян Ш., Армянские порталы [Sh. Azatian, Armenian Portals] (Yerevan, 1987), 31-36; Վան Խաչատուր, Գույներ Գ-ԺԺ դդ. հայկական ճարտարապետության մեջ [Van Khachatur, Colour in Armenian Architecture of the 4th to 19th centuries] (Yerevan, 2008), 21.

<sup>8</sup> Van Khachatur, plate no. 168.



Board No. 5

under ottoman dependence. There are two mosques, Three baths and a jail within the fortress.

Transl. from Turkish: Khoshab Castle. This stronghold was erected in 1643 by Sare Suleyman, the Prince of the Mahmudies who were subject to the Ottoman Empire. It has 2 mosques, 3 bath-houses and a prison.

#### Board No. 6 (photo 2008)

(in Turkish)

Hoşap kalesi.

Kale Osmanlı devletine bağlı Mahmudi Süleyman bey tarafından 1643 yılında yaptırılmıştır. Kuzeyden dış kale surları ile çevrili olan kale burçlar beden duvarları ile içerisindeki seyir köşkü, harem, selamlık, zindan, fırın, mescid ve sarnıç gibi yapılardan oluşmaktadır.



Board No. 6

(in English)

Hoşap Castle.

This castle was built in 1643 by Süleyman Mahmudi, who had been under the sovereignty of Ottoman Empire. The castle which is surrounded by the outer rampart from the north, consists of castle towers, walls with reception room, a dungeon, a small mosque and cistern.

Transl. from Turkish: Khoshab Castle. This stronghold was built in 1643 by Prince Mahmudi Suleyman, who was subject to the Ottoman Empire. In the north, the Citadel is surrounded with an exterior rampart. It consists of towers and walls which connect the former with each other. The castle has a palace for rest, special guest houses for women and men, as well as a gaol, a bakery, an Islamic chapel and a water reservoir.

Note: Neither of these information boards<sup>9</sup> mentions the two Armenian churches situated in the castle grounds, which were in a semi-destroyed state in the late 19th century<sup>10</sup> (the ruins of one of them were still preserved in the early 20th century).<sup>11</sup>

The original historical name of the castle is Mardastan, and it is only after the 13th century that it is mentioned as *Khoshab* meaning *Tasty Water* (the earliest record is provided by Arab historiographer Yakut Al-Hamavi).<sup>12</sup> In the Arshakids' times (66 to 428), it was the ancestral estate of the Armenian princely family of the Mardpetunies. Between the 9th and 11th centuries, Mardastan was included in the Artzrunies' Kingdom of Vaspurakan as a separate bishopric.

According to Turkish historiographer Evliya Chelebi, the castle was erected by Al-Abbas and shifted into the Kurdish Mahmudies' possession in 800 (1397) of Hijrah.<sup>13</sup>

In the 17th century, Khoshab became the centre of the principality founded by the Mahmudies<sup>14</sup> and still

<sup>9</sup> The second information board enumerates the buildings of the castle in quite a detailed form, but it contains no mention of the Armenian churches.

<sup>10</sup> Միրախորեան Մ., Նկարագրական ուղեորութիւն հայաստանի գաւառս Արեւելեան Տաճկաստանի [M. Mirakhorian, A Descriptive Journey to the Armenian-Inhabited District in the East of Turkish Armenia] (Constantinople, 1885), part 2, 124.

<sup>11</sup> Կարսեցի, Ճանապարհորդութիւն Թիւրքաց Քիւրդիստանում [Karsetsy, "A Journey to Turkish Kurdistan"], «Մուրճ» [Murj], no. 5 (1905), 102.

<sup>12</sup> Արաբական աղբյուրները Հայաստանի և հարևան երկրների մասին [Arabic Sources about Armenia and the Neighbouring Countries], vol. 3 (Yerevan, 1965), 61.

<sup>13</sup> Թուրքական աղբյուրներ, Էվլիա Չելեբի [Turkish Sources: Evliya Chelebi], vol. 3 (Yerevan, 1967), 259-260.

<sup>14</sup> Զյաթիբ Չելեբի, Ջիհան Նյումա, Թուրքական աղբյուրները Հայաստանի հայերի և Անդրկովկասի մյուս ժողովուրդների մասին [Kyatib Chelebi, Jihan Nyuma: Turkish Sources about the Armenians of Armenia and Other Peoples of Transcaucasia], vol. 2 (Yerevan, 1964), 38.

belonged to them during E. Chelebi's visit there in 1654. According to him, in 1060 (1650) of Hijrah, a high-ranking khan named Suleyman Zeman enlarged the castle.<sup>15</sup> In the 1830s, Khoshab was still the residence of Kurdish beys:

...the fortified town was the seat of Kurdish ruler Amin Bey... whose domination spread to quite many places: he was absolutely independent like his numerous predecessors...<sup>16</sup>

In 1847 the Ottomans conquered the castle and put an end to the Kurdish beys' reign.<sup>17</sup>

The information board does not make the slightest reference to the fact that the stronghold is an Armenian monument; moreover, the construction date mentioned in the text is incorrect as the year referred to might mark only its reconstruction.

#### 4

Two information boards were photographed at the entrance to the castle of Kars.

**Board No. 7 (photo by S. Karapetian, 2004)**



Board No. 7

**Board No. 8 (photo by S. Karapetian, 2007)**

They contain almost the same text:

(in Turkish)

Kars kalesi.

Kars Kalesi 1153 (hicri 547) tarihinde Saltuklu Sultanı Melik İzzeddin Saltuk'un veziri Firuz Akay tarafından yaptırılmıştır. 1386 (hicri 786) tarihinde Mogol istilasından sonra tahrip edilen kale, 1579 (hicri 987) tarihinde III Murad'n emriyle Serdar Lala Mustafa Paşa tarafından yeniden inşa edilmiştir.

(in English)

Kars castle.

Kars castle was build in the year of 1153 by Firuz Akay who was a minister. In the time of Melik Izzeddin Saltuk who was the Sultan of Saltuklu state. The castle which had been destroyed by the mogul invasion in 1386, was rebuil by Lala Mustafa Pasha who was ordered by Murad the third in 1579.

Transl. from Turkish: Kars Fortress. It was erected in 1153 (547 of Hijrah) by Firuz Aka, the Minister of Melik Izzeddin Saltuk, Sultan of Saltuklu. In 1386 (786 of Hijrah) it was destroyed in the aftermath of some Mongol raids. In 1579 (987 of Hijrah) it was rebuilt by Sardar Lala Mustafa Pasha on the order of Murad III.

Note: The information board ignores the most important parts of the history of the castle which are connected with the Armenians, as a result of which, visitors reading it get the impression that only the Turks' ancestors unfolded building activity there. The year



Board No. 8

1153, allegedly marking the construction of the fort, is groundless as the castle of Kars is first mentioned in Armenian sources in the 9th century under the following names: Karuts, Amurn Karuts, Amrotsn Karuts, etc. Both Armenian and foreign chroniclers (Stepanos Taronetsi, Tovma Artzruny, Aristakes Lastivertsy, Matthew of Edessa, Costandin Tziranatzin and others) speak about it in their works.<sup>18</sup>

In 888 the castle of Kars belonged to Prince of Vanand Sahak Mleh and was subject to Armenian King Ashot I Bagratid (in the same year, Mleh rose in rebellion against the king, but suffered defeat).

15 Turkish Sources, vol. 3, 259-260.

16 Mirakhorian, 125.

17 Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 5 (Yerevan, 1979), 72.

18 Ibid., 342. Also see Ա. Ե., Կարս բերդաքաղաքը [A. Ye., "Kars Fortress Town"], «Արձագանք» [Ardzagank], no. 3, March 1890, 10.

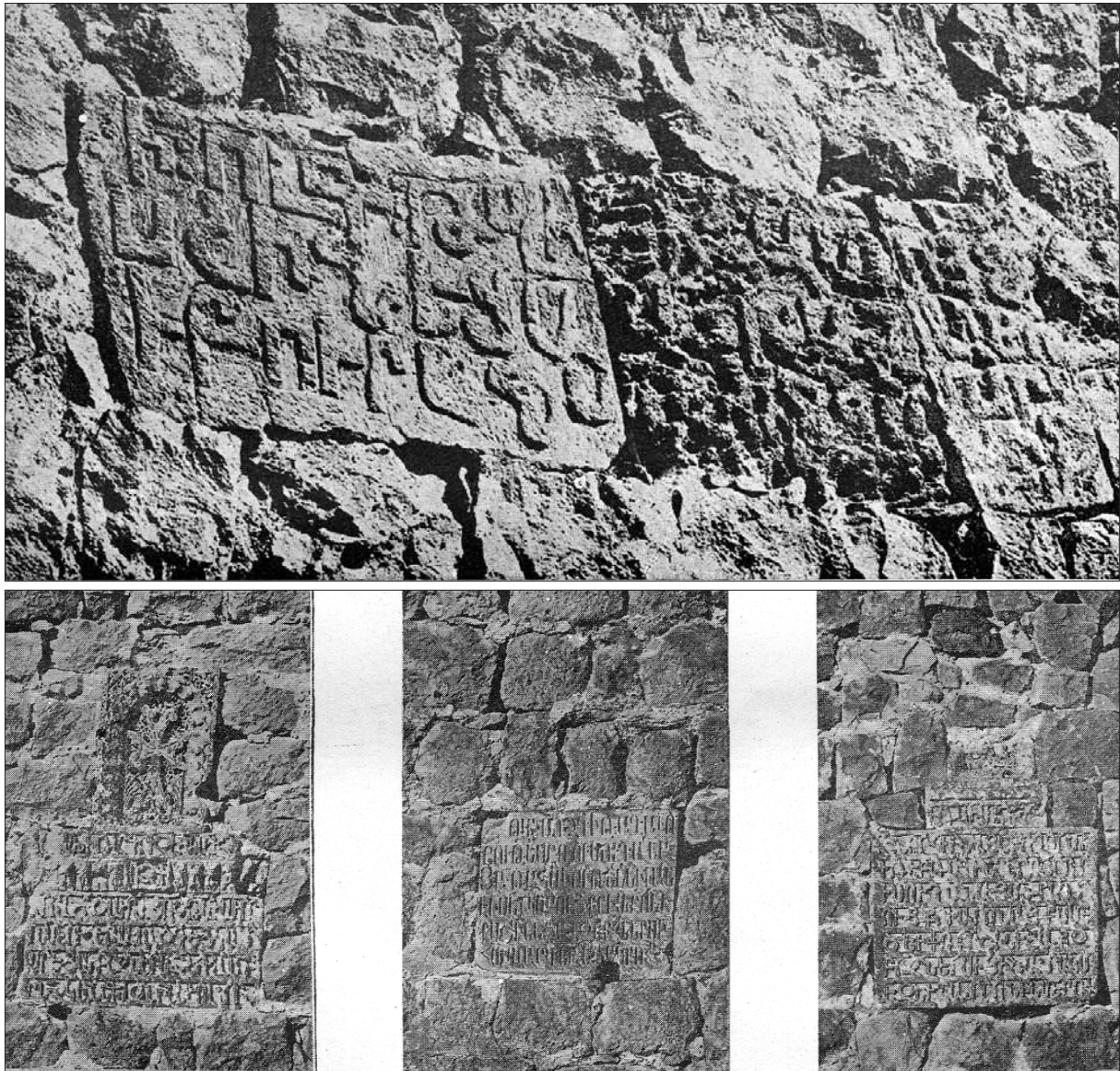


Plate 3

In 929 Armenian King Abas made Kars his residence and fortified the citadel<sup>19</sup> (he reigned until his death in 957).<sup>20</sup>

In 961 King Ashot III moved the Bagratids' court from Kars to Ani,<sup>21</sup> but in 963 his brother, Commander of the Armenian army Mushegh, declared himself king of Vanand and made Kars his capital,<sup>22</sup> reigning there until 984. He was succeeded by his son Abas,<sup>23</sup> who reigned from 984 until 1028,<sup>24</sup> and by his grandson, King of Kars Gagik (1029 to 1064), who yielded up the city to the Byzantians in 1064.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 5, 342.

<sup>20</sup> Աճառյան Հ., Հայոց անձնանունների բառարան [H. Ajarian, Dictionary of Armenian Personal Names], vol. 1 (Yerevan, 1942), 3.

<sup>21</sup> Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 1, 407.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., vol. 5, 342.

<sup>23</sup> Ajarian, vol. 3 (Yerevan, 1946), 462.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., vol. 1, 4.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 435.

In 1071 Kars shifted into the possession of the Seljuk Turks,<sup>26</sup> but their domination did not last long there: this is attested by the Armenian inscriptions preserved on the ramparts of the citadel and castle (plate 3), which report that the fortified towers were erected by the Armenian inhabitants of Kars.<sup>27</sup> In the 1890s, most of the inscriptions engraved on the citadel towers and on those of the ramparts enclosing the city were destroyed (fortunately, a considerable part of them had been deciphered in due time), and only some of them were miraculously saved (plate 4). For instance, the tower which is the sixth one when viewed from a large one at the north-eastern corner of the castle towards its south-eastern corner was engraved with the following inscription:<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 5, 342.

<sup>27</sup> A. Ye., "Kars Fortress Town," *Ardzagank*, no. 4, March 1890, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Քաջբերունի, Յիշողութիւններ [Kajberuny, "Memories"], «Լումայ» [Luma], no. 4 (1903), 132.





Plate 4 (photo by S. Karapetian, 2007)

Ի ՈԼԳ (1184) քվիս շինեցաւ բուրջնս յիշատակ  
Խաչոտի՛ն Կանկիտատոյն. աստուած ողորմի  
նմա՞<sup>29</sup>:

Transl.: *In the year 633 (1184), this tower was built  
in memory of Khachot Kankitat. May God have mercy  
upon him.*

In 1186 Georgian Queen Tamar appointed Armeni-  
an Prince Zakare Zakarian Commander General of the  
armed forces of her kingdom and his younger brother  
Ivane Guardian (*Atabek*) of the state.<sup>30</sup> As reported by  
historiographer Vardan Areveltsy and other contempo-  
rary chroniclers, it was these very princes who liberat-  
ed the castle of Kars in 1206.<sup>31</sup> They reconstructed it  
together with its towers, this being attested by the fol-  
lowing Armenian inscription carved on its ramparts:

Թվիս ՈՉԳ (1234) ի թագաւորութեւ ըն-ուսուղա-  
նա, յաթապակութենն Իւանէի մեք Կարուց քրիստո-  
նէքս շինեցաք զբրջներս ի հալալ արդեանց մե-  
քոց՞<sup>32</sup>:

Transl.: *In the year 683 (1234), under Rusudan's  
reign, when Ivane was Atabek, we, the Christians of  
Kars, built the towers through our honestly-earned  
means.*

In 1236 Kars was conquered by the Mongols. In  
1394 it was taken and devastated by Timur, and in 1579  
it underwent renovation by the Turks.<sup>33</sup>

5

Board No. 9 (photo by S. Karapetian)

In 2005 the RAA research team photographed this  
information board near the left-bank pier of Hovvi

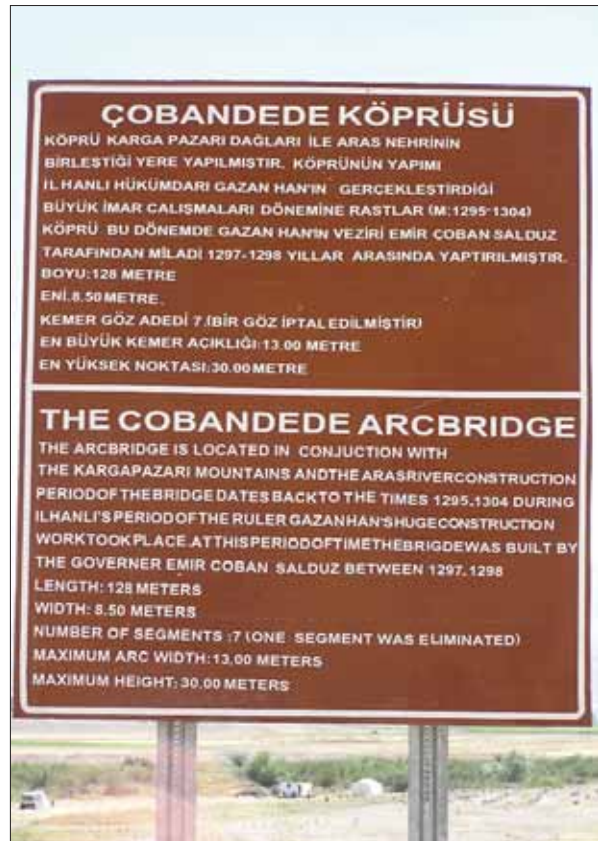
29 Орбели И., Избранные труды [H. Orbely, Selected  
Works] (Yerevan, 1963), 470.

30 Harutiunian, 123.

31 History of the Armenian Nation, vol. 3, 537.

32 Սարգիսեան Ն., Տեղագրութիւնք ի Փոքր և Մեծ Հայս [N.  
Sargissian, Topography of Armenia Minor and Armenia Maior]  
(Venice, 1864), 104.

33 Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 5, 342-343.



Board No. 9

(*Shepherd's*) Bridge (as of 2008, it remained  
unchanged).

(in Turkish)

Çobandede köprüsü.

Köprü Karga Pazarı dağları ile Aras nehrinin bir-  
leştiği yere yapılmıştır. Köprü'nün yapımı ilhanlı  
hükümdarı Gazan Han'ın gerçekleştirdiği büyük imar  
çalışmaları dönemine rastlar (M:1295-1304). Köprü bu  
dönemde Gazan Han'ın veziri Emir Çoban Salduz  
tarafından miladi 1297-1298 yıllar arasında yaptır-  
ılmıştır.

Boyuu: 128 metre. Eni: 8.50 metre. Kemer göz adedi  
7 (bir göz iptal edilmiştir). En büyük kemer açıklığı:  
13.00 metre. En yüksek noktası: 30.00 metre.

(in English)

The Cobandede Arcbridge.

The arcbridge is located in conjunction with the  
Kargapazari mountains and the Aras river construction  
period of the bridge dates back to the times 1295-1304  
during Ilhanli's period of the ruler Gazan Han's huge  
construction work took place at this period of time the  
bridge was built by the governor Emir Coban Salduz  
between 1297-1298. Length: 128 meters. Width: 8.50  
meters. Number of segments: 7 (one segment was  
eliminated). Maximum arc width: 13.00 meters.  
Maximum height: 30.00 meters.

Transl. from Turkish: Bridge of Chobandede. It was built at the conjunction of the Kargabazar mountains and the river Aras when the construction activity of Gazan Han (1295 to 1304) was at its peak. It was erected by Emir Choban Salduz, the Minister of Gazan Han, between 1297 and 1298. The bridge has a length of 128 and a height of 8.5 metres. It has 7 spans (one of them has been destroyed), the largest of which is 13 metres, with the highest point of the bridge reaching 30 metres.

Note: The construction date of the bridge remains obscure.<sup>34</sup> Yeremia Tevkants, who visited a nearby village in 1872, writes that in 1865 Archimandrite Timeteos copied an inscription carved on the bridge which commemorated its renovation of 1160:

...this bridge, founded by the Armenians, was repaired by the Magistros under the auspices of the monastery of Sourb Astvatzatzin and the castle of Darun [Daroink] in the year 609 (1160).<sup>35</sup>

As is evident, the inscription clearly states that the bridge was erected by the Armenians and renovated in 1160 with the participation of Magistros,<sup>36</sup> the monks of Sourb Astvatzatzin (Holy Virgin) Monastery<sup>37</sup> of Hasanghala and the lords of the castle of Daroink.



Plate 5

Kajberuny, who saw this inscription together with two others in the Arabic script in the early 20th century, says that they were carved above the bridge arches, on its eastern facade. Those in Arabic letters were wholly preserved, whereas the Armenian one was probably deliberately scraped away with hammer blows, and only the word «նորոգեալ» (*repaired*) could be clearly read in it.<sup>38</sup> At present the bridge has an inscription (plate 5) which Kajberuny failed to see during his visit although he watched the monument with great attention. This is not surprising at all suggesting that it was brought here later, probably after the removal of the Arabic inscriptions and the destruction of the Armenian one.

In 1854 the Ottomans destroyed the seventh span of the bridge in order to obstruct the passage of the enemies to Karin.<sup>39</sup>

In 1872 Yer. Tevkants became witness to the inaccurate and improper renovation of this span:

...they were not [re]building the span but merely patching it up...<sup>40</sup>

Presumably, it was during this very overhaul that the Armenian inscription of the bridge, which had been preserved intact for over 800 years, was scraped off, being later destroyed altogether and replaced by an information board which distorts the true history of the monument by stating that it was erected between 1297 and 1298.

34 «Արարատ» [Ararat] (1892), 336; **Mirakhorian**, part 1 (Constantinople, 1884), 24; **Գանալանյան Ա.**, Ավանդապատումն [A. Ghanalanian, Legends] (Yerevan, 1969), 216.

35 **Երեմիա Տեվկանց**, Դանապարհորդութիւն Բարձր Հայք և Վասպուրական [Yeremia Tevkants, A Journey to Bardzr Hayk and Vaspurakan in 1872 to 1873] (Yerevan, 1991), 58; M. Mash-tots Research Institute of Manuscripts, folder 54, document 13-I, pp. 37-38.

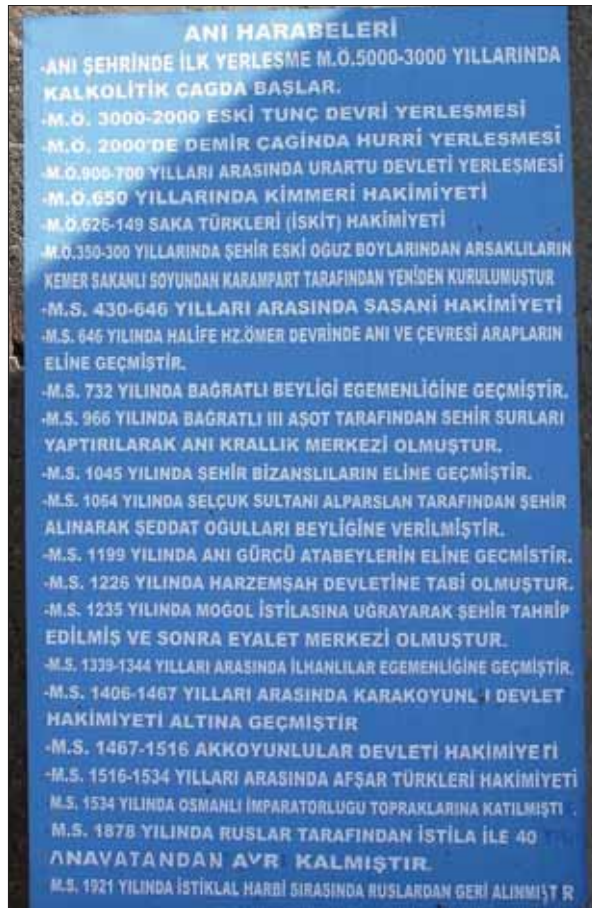
36 Grigor the *Magistros* (the *Master*), the son of Holum Vasak from the Pahlavunies' family, is also named Grigor-Martsen Pahlavuny or Bjnetsy. After his father's death, he entered into alliance with some ministers and made Gagik II King of the country in 1043. Later their relations grew inimical, and Grigor the *Magistros* left Ayrarat, taking up living in Taron. After the conquest of Ani, he passed sway over Taron to his son-in-law Tornik Mamikonian and moved to Mesopotamia, where he lived until his death in 1059. His remains are interred in the monastery of Basen or Hasanghala (**Ajarian**, vol. 1, 549). Grigor was Governor of Mesopotamia, his Governorate also including Vaspurakan, Taron and other south-western provinces of Armenia (Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 3 (Yerevan, 1977), 217). The Tornikians reigned in Sasun until the late 12th century (in the middle of the same century, their principality was the strongest in Armenia Maior). Apart from Sasun, their rule also extended over Japaghjur and Ashmushat, including the entire Aratzani valley: its southern border-line ran in the vicinity of Neperkert, and the northern one along the banks of the Aratzani (History of the Armenian Nation, vol. 3, 484, 487).

37 As legend has it, the monastery was built by Grigor the *Magistros* in the 11th century, this being attested by the inscription of its old building: *I, the Magistros, founded this church and dedicated it to the seven wounds of the Holy Virgin in the year 720 (1271) of the Armenian calendar*. The original reads: «Ես Մագիստրոսս այս տաճարի հիմնարկեցի. յանուն եղբ վիրաց սրբուհոյ Աստուածամորի ՚ի թուականութեան Հայոց Է՛ՃԻ (= 1271)» (**Tevkants**, 54-55). After Grigor the *Magistros*' death (1059), his descendants probably continued bearing his title. To the benefit of history, we might try to verify the years 1160 and 1271, mentioned in the inscriptions of the bridge and monastery respectively, but unfortunately, the Turks have annihilated them, depriving us of that chance.

38 **Kajberuny**, "Memories," *Luma*, no. 3 (1904), 154-156.

39 **Ալիշան Ա.**, Այրարատ [Gh. Alishan, Ayrarat] (Venice, 1890), 24.

40 **Tevkants**, 57-58.



Boards No. 10 &amp; No. 11

## 6

**Boards No. 10 and No. 11 (photos by S. Karapetian)**

In 2004 two information boards were photographed near Karoots (Kars) Gate of the city site of Ani. One of them contains a Turkish text (no. 10) and the other an English one (no. 11).

The Turkish text reads:

Anı Harabeleri.

Anı şehrinde ilk yerleşme M.Ö. 5000-3000 yılda Kalkolitik çağda başlar. M.Ö. 3000-2000 eski tunç devri yerleşmesi. M.Ö. 2000'de Demir çağında Hurri yerleşmesi. M.Ö. 900-700 yılları arasında Urartu devleti yerleşmesi. M.Ö. 650 yıllarında Kimmeri hakimiyeti. M.Ö. 626-149 Saka Türkleri (İskit) Hakimiyeti. M.Ö. 350-300 yıllarında şehir eski Öğüz Boylarından Arsaklıların Kemer Sakanlı soyundan Karampart tarafından yeniden kurulmuştur. M.S. 430-646 yılları arasında Sasani hakimiyeti. M.S. 646 yılda Halife Hz. Ömer devrinde Anı ve çevresi Arapların eline geçmiştir. M.S. 732 yılında Bağratlı Beyliği egemenliğine geçmiştir. M.S. 966 yılında Bağratlı III Aşot tarafından şehir surları yaptırılarak Anı krallık



merkezi olmuştur. M.S. 1045 yılında şehir Bizanslıların eline geçmiştir. M.S. 1064 yılında Selçuk Sultanı Alparslan tarafından şehir alınarak Şeddat Oğulları Beyliğine verilmiştir. M.S. 1199 yılında Anı Gürcü Atabeylerin eline geçmiştir. M.S. 1226 yılında Harzemşah devletine tabi olmuştur. M.S. 1235 yılında Moğol istilasına uğrayarak şehir tahrip edilmiş ve sonra eyalet merkezi olmuştur. M.S. 1339-1344 yılları arasında İlhanlılar egemenliğine geçmiştir. M.S. 1406-1467 yılları arasında Karakoyunlu devleti hakimiyeti altına geçmiştir. M.S. 1467-1516 Akkoyunlular devleti hakimiyeti. M.S. 1516-1534 yılları arasında Afşar Türkleri hakimiyeti. M.S. 1534 yılında Osmanlı İmparatorluğu topraklarına katılmıştır. M.S. 1878 yılında Ruslar tarafından istila ile 40 yıl anavatandan ayrı kalmıştır. M.S. 1921 yılında istiklal harbi sırasında Ruslardan geri alınmıştır.

The English board says:

The History of Ani

The first settlement in Ani was begun in 4th millennium B.C. in Kalkolitic era. In 3000-1200 B.C. the ancient Bronze age. In the 2nd Millennium Hurri settled down Iron age. In 900-700 B.C. the state of

Urtu settled down. In 650 B.C. sovereignty of Kimmer. In 626-149 B.C. sovereignty of Saka (Iskit) Turks. In B.C. 149 A.D. 430 sovereignty Arsaks. In 430-646 A.D. the sovereignty Sasaki. In 646 it was taken possession of Arabs in period of Hz. Ömer the Caliph. In 732 it was obtained by Bagrats. In 966 Ramparts of the city was built by Ashot III. who from Bagrat then the city was used as the capital of kingdom. In 1045 it was obtained by Byzantionus. In 1064 the city was obtained by Alparslan who was the Sultan of Seljuks after words it was given to the tribe of Şeddadoğullari. In 1199 it was obtained by Georgianus Atabey. In 1226 it was obtained by the state of Harzamşah. In 1235 it was demolished during the Mongol invasion. In 1339-1344 it was obtained by the state of Ilhanli. In 1406-1467 it was obtained by the of Karakoyunlu. In 1467-1516 the sovereignty of the state of Akkoyunlu. In 1516-1534 it was taken possession of Afsar Turks. In 1534 it was added to the lands of Ottoman empire. In 1878 it was invaded by Russia for 40 years. In 1921 it was taken back from Russia During the war of independence.

Transl. from Turkish: Ruins of Ani.

Habitation in the city of Ani dates back to the Aeneolithic Age, 5000 to 3000 B.C.

Between 3000 and 2000 B.C., it was an Early Bronze Age place (the English text of the board has the year 1200 instead of 2000).

In the Iron Age (2000 B.C.), it was inhabited by Hurrians.

From 900 until 700 B.C., it was an Urartian place.

In 650 B.C. Ani was made part of the Achaemenid State.

Between 626 and 149 B.C., it was under the reign of Saka (Iskit) Turks.

From 350 until 300 B.C., it was rebuilt by Karampart, one of the representatives of the Kamsarakans' family of the Arshakids, who descended from the old Oghuz tribe. Instead of all this text, the English board only says that it was under the Arshakids' rule between 149 B.C. and 430 A.D. ("In B.C. 149 A.D. 430 sovereignty Arsaks").

From 430 until 646, the city was under the Sassanids' reign.

Under Holy Caliph Omer, in 646, Ani and its vicinity shifted into Arab domination.

In 732 the city became part of the Bagratid State.

In 966 Ashot Bagratid III erected ramparts in the city which became the capital of his kingdom.

In 1045 it shifted into Byzantine rule.

In 1064 it was occupied by Seljuk Sultan Alp-Arsalan, who put it under the sway of the Sheddatoğullus.

In 1199 Ani was taken by the Georgian princes.

In 1226 it was subjugated by the state of Harzemshah.

During the Mongol invasions of 1235, the city was conquered and devastated. Later it became a provincial centre.

From 1339 until 1344, it was subject to the Ilhanlies.

Between 1406 and 1467, it was under the reign of the Kara Koyunlus, and from 1467 until 1516, the Ak Koyunlus dominated there.

From 1516 until 1534, it was under the reign of Afshar Turks.

In 1534 the city was incorporated into the territories of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1878 it was conquered by the Russians being isolated from its motherland for 40 years.

During the war for independence (1921), it was taken back from the Russians.

Note: The information boards contain a great number of flagrant mistakes, as well as premeditated omissions and distorted facts.

After the fall of the Urartian State, the Armenian kingdom of Armina (Hayk) was established in the region. Under the Medes' King Astiages (584 to 553 B.C.), it was tributary to Media, and from 550 B.C. to Achaemenid Persia. In 520 B.C., Achaemenid King Darius I put an end to the kingdom of Armina, the lands of which remained within the borders of the Achaemenid State until 330 B.C.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, the allegation that the Achaemenids conquered the region in 650 B.C. is wrong, and aims at ignoring the fact of the existence of the Armenian kingdom of Armina. As for the Sak, in 529 B.C. Achaemenid King Cyrus was killed when fighting them in the steppes of Middle Asia, but they failed to take possession of his state, for he was succeeded by his son Cambyses.<sup>42</sup> This indicates that the board information regarding the Sak's period of reign (626 to 149 B.C.) is merely a concoction.

During the period between 330 and 202 B.C., the region belonged to the independent Armenian kingdom of the Orontids,<sup>43</sup> whereas the board does not make the slightest reference to this fact. From 202 until 189, it belonged to the Seleucids.<sup>44</sup>

From 189 B.C. until 1 A.D., the lands of the former kingdom of Armina constituted part of the Armenian kingdom of the Artashesids,<sup>45</sup> after the fall of which, Rome and the Parthians entered into struggle for political influence in Armenia Maior.<sup>46</sup>

41 History of the Armenian Nation, vol. 1 (Yerevan, 1971), 435, 438-439, 444, 446, 504.

42 Ibid., 444.

43 Ibid., 501, 504, 508, 521.

44 Ibid., 516, 521, 526.

45 Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 2 (Yerevan, 1976), 140-141.

46 History of the Armenian Nation, vol. 1, 703-743; Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 2, 107.

In 66 the Parthians and Rome recognised the Armenian kingdom of the Arshakids, and Trdat I was declared King of Armenia, the region forming part of the Armenian kingdom<sup>47</sup> until its fall in 428.<sup>48</sup>

After the loss of the Armenian statehood, Ani shifted into the Sassanids' reign, then fell into the domination of the Arabs who recognised the city and its neighbourhood as parts of the estates of the Armenian princes Kamsarakan (this family is particularly known for its liberation struggle against the Sassanids and the Arabs).<sup>49</sup>

It is noteworthy that the Turkish board represents the Arshakids and Kamsarakans as descending from the Turkish Oghuz, but according to the Dictionary of the State Inspectorate of the Turkish Language, this tribe is first mentioned in the 11th century—its members lived in Khorezm and emigrated westward only later. They are considered the ancestors of the Turkomans, Azeris and the Gagavuz:<sup>50</sup> thus, the falsified information found in the board text is exposed by the very Dictionary of the State Inspectorate of the Turkish Language.

As for the Kamsarakans' princely family, the members of which played an important role in the political life of Armenia between the 3rd and 8th centuries, they descend from the Karenians' Parthian family. In the mid-3rd century, the latter were subjected to a massacre by the Persian Sassanids, but Perzomat's son Kamsar had an escape from it and found refuge in Armenia. In 321<sup>51</sup> Armenian King Trdat the Great presented them with the districts of Shirak and Yeraskhadzor (later renamed Arsharunik), which had been forming part of the royal estates, and promoted them to Senior Ministers. Within a short time, the Kamsarakans entered into kinship with the Mamikonians and the Arshakids and served their homeland and the Armenian nation faithfully for 5 centuries.<sup>52</sup>

As for the foundation of Ani, it is first mentioned as an impregnable castle in the 5th century by historiographers Yeghishe and Ghazar Parpetsy.<sup>53</sup>

In 780 Bagratid King Ashot *Mesaker* (the *Meat Eater*), who was granted the title of Armenian Prince in 790, purchased the districts of Arsharunik and Shirak from the Kamsarakans together with the castle of Ani and incorporated them into his domains.<sup>54</sup> According to the information board, it was Ashot the Meat Eater's grandfather Ashot the Bagratid (he held the title of Armenian Prince between 732 and 748)<sup>55</sup> who bought Ani from the Kamsarakans, which is a flagrant mistake.

In 961 the Bagratids (885 to 1045) moved the capital of their kingdom from Kars to Ani.

In 964 King Ashot III *Voghormatz* (the *Merciful*) built solid ramparts for the city and named them *Ashotashen* (literally translated as '*Built by Ashot*'). In 989 Smbat II erected the second fortified wall named *Smbatashen* (i.e. *Built by Smbat*).

In 1045 Ani shifted into the possession of the Byzantine Empire, and in 1064 the Seljuks established their rule there.

In 1072 Emir of Dvin Abulsuar bought Ani from Alp-Arslan and gave it to his son Manuche, thus founding Shaddadian Principality of Ani.<sup>56</sup>

In 1123 the Armenian population of Ani rose in rebellion against the Shaddadians and yielded up the city to Georgian King David the *Builder*. In 1126 the Shaddadians restored their rule over Ani. In 1161 Georgian King Giorgi III conquered the city, but it was re-taken by the Shaddadians in 1165. In 1174 the Georgian army again occupied Ani, but later it shifted back into the Shaddadians' rule.<sup>57</sup> Finally, in 1199 the Armeno-Georgian united forces liberated the city, which became the estate of the Armenian princes Zakarian.<sup>58</sup>

Another piece of distorted historical information is that in 1226 Ani was subject to the state of Khorezm (Harzemshah).<sup>59</sup>

47 History of the Armenian Nation, vol. 1, 760; Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 2, 107-108.

48 History of the Armenian Nation, vol. 2 (Yerevan, 1984), 125; Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 2, 107-108.

49 Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 5, 215.

50 The original reads: "Oğuz: XI. yüzyılda Harezmi bölgesinde toplu olarak yaşayan ve daha sonra batıya doğru göç ederek bugünkü Türkmen, Azeri, Gagavuz ve Türkiye Türklerinin aslınlı oluşturulan büyük bir Türk boyu." Available at: www.tdk.gov.tr

51 **Բասմայան Ա.**, Անիի անցեալն ու ներկան [K. Basmajian, "The Past and Present of Ani"], «Բասմայախ» [Basmajev] (September 1923), 263.

52 Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 5, 215. For information about the Kamsarakans' Armenian princely family, see the works by 5th-century historiographers Ghazar Parpetsy and Yeghishe (**Վազար Փարպեցի**, Հայոց պատմություն թուրք Վահան Մամիկոնյանին [Ghazar Parpetsy, History of Armenia: A Letter to Vahan Mamikonian] (Yerevan, 1982); **Եղիշե**, Վարդանանց պատմությունը [Yeghishe, History of Vardan and the Armenian War] (Yerevan, 1958), 71, 91, 106, 171).

53 **Yeghishe**, 64; **Parpetsy**, 293.

54 Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 1, 487-488. Cf. **Տեր-Աբրահամյան Զ.**, Տեղագրություն Անի քաղաքին [H. Ter-Abrahamian, "Topography of Ani City"], «Մասեաց աղանի» [Maseats Aghavni] (1862), 270; *ibid.*, Տեղագրություն Անի քաղաքին [Topography of Ani City] (Theodosia, 1867), 8.

55 **Ajarian**, vol. 1, 181-182.

56 Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 1, 407-408.

57 History of the Armenian Nation, vol. 2, 525-528, 534.

58 *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 525-528, 534; Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 1, 407-408; **Harutiunian**, 123, 124.

59 In 1225 Jalal-ed-din, who was heir to the throne of the state of Khorezm (Harzemshah), fought the Armeno-Georgian army, led by Ivane, at Garni and defeated it. After the occupation of Tpghis, the capital of the Georgian Kingdom, in 1226, his brigands also attempted to take the other major cities of the region (Karin, Ani, Kars, Khat, Dvin, etc.), but they managed to conquer only Dvin. In 1227 the troops gathered from Ani, Kars and other cities liberated Tpghis. In 1228 Prince Prosh liberated Dvin. Later the united armies of the Emir of Khat, the Sultans of Ikona and Eyubia (Eyubis), as well as those of the Armenian Kingdom of

In 1236 the Mongols occupied the city. In 1249 and 1260, the local Armenians revolted against them, but in vain.<sup>60</sup> Under the Mongol rule, the Zakarians continued reigning in Ani.<sup>61</sup>

As for the allegation that the city belonged to the Ilhanlies between 1339 and 1344, it is incorrect, as it was subject to that state as early as 1256,<sup>62</sup> whereas the period specified is simply marked with Hasan Kuchuk's ascending the throne of the ilkhanate.<sup>63</sup>

From 1386 until 1387, between 1395 and 1396, and from 1400 until 1403, Ani was conquered and devastated by Timur's invading army.<sup>64</sup>

Between 1406 and 1467, the city belonged to the Kara Koyunlus,<sup>65</sup> in 1467 it shifted into the Ak

Koyunlus' rule, remaining under their domination until 1502, when the Safavids put an end to the Ak-Koyunlu State and took possession of its territories.<sup>66</sup> According to the information board, the Ak Koyunlus reigned from 1467 until 1516, which is not correct either.

After 1502 the Safavid State, the Ottoman Empire and the Russians kept the city under their domination in turn.

From 1918 until 1920, Ani was within the borders of the first Republic of Armenia.

In 1920 it shifted into Turkish possession under the illegal treaty of Kars signed between the Russians and Turks.

Cilicia defeated Jalal-ed-din at different battles. In 1231 he was killed at the battle near Amid (**Harutiunian**, 131-132; History of the Armenian Nation, vol. 3, 604-605).

60 Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 1, 408.

61 In fact, the Mongols recognised their hereditary right—Zakare's son Shahنشah I (he died in 1261), as well as his sons and grandsons (such as Shahنشah II, who died in 1320, as well as Vahram and Zazan in Ani) are mentioned as reigning in Ani and Shirak under their rule (**Harutiunian**, 291-292). In 1350 Armenian Prince, Shahنشah Zakaria III is mentioned as *Atabek* of Ani (History of the Armenian Nation, vol. 4 (Yerevan, 1972), 18), but in the same year, he was stripped of all his dominions (*ibid.*).

62 In 1256 the brother of Khan Mangu, Khan Hulavu (1256 to 1265), attacked Iran and subjugated the local princes, thus founding the Mongol-Iranian State (or Ilkhanate) of Hulavi. Hulavu was succeeded by Khan Abagha (1265 to 1282) and the latter's brother Tagudar (1282 to 1284), who became the first ilkhan to convert to Islam under the new name of Ahmad. Abagha's son Arghun (1284 to 1291) put him to death and occupied his throne. He was succeeded by his brother, Khan Keyghatun (1291 to 1295), then by Baydun, Ghazan (1295 to 1304), Uljeitun and Abu-Said. After Abu-Said's death (1335), the Hulavi State gradually lost its power and eventually fell in 1344 (History of the Armenian Nation, vol. 3, 628, 632, 634, 636-637, 640-641, 644).

63 *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 16-17.

64 **Harutiunian**, 332, 334.

65 The Kara Koyunlus who were members of a nomadic Turkoman tribe of warriors spread to the central and southern provinces of Armenia Maior, as well as to Atropatene in the 14th century. In 1378 Kara Mohammed established an independent emirate in Alashkert, and his son Kara Yousuf established his reign in Armenia and Atropatene. Kara Mohammed's grandson Iskandar sought for the Armenians' support in his endeavours to establish a centripetal state and declared himself Shah of Armenians, appointing the Armenian princes to high military and state positions (Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 5, 298-299).

66 History of the Armenian Nation, vol. 4, 56. Also see Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 1, 224.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AND RESTORATION OF MONUMENTS IN WESTERN ARMENIA

by Ashot Hakobian

Parallel with the destruction of Armenian cultural heritage ongoing in Western Armenia since 1915, in recent years the Turkish authorities have started restoring a number of Armenian monuments guided by political considerations.

The programme of restoration includes both secular (castles, bridges and palaces) and religious buildings. Excavations and research are conducted in certain archaeological sites.

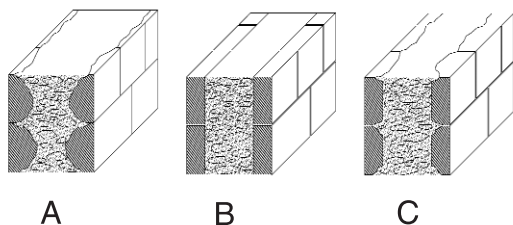
Between 2005 and 2007, Sourb Khach (Holy Cross) Church of Aghtamar was restored, and in 2007 Arakelots (Apostles') Church of Kars was renovated.

As a rule, excavations are carried out neatly and accurately being mostly followed by conservation. As for the archaeological finds, the publications relating to them give us grounds to state that they are not presented with scientific objectivity.

Indeed, the restoration of Armenian monuments should be welcomed as it secures their further existence, but these restoration or renovation activities are often marked with poor quality being carried out without any scientific basis.

It is praiseworthy that the restoration and overhaul of monuments are done with mortar, but those involved in this work have no knowledge of the traditional finely-finished Armenian stonework<sup>1</sup> called *midis*, and for this reason, stones are not laid correctly (drawing A: the traditional stonework of *midis*).

Turkish restorers mainly do masonry with stones regularly cut in modern quarries which are smoothly-dressed both inwardly and outwardly (drawing B).



<sup>1</sup> In the traditional stonework called *midis*, which is typical of medieval Armenian architecture, the outer surface of revetment stones has smooth trimming, while the undressed bulging surface of their rear parts secures maximum adhesion and junction of the stone and mortar. The stones forming rows are placed on one another by touching only a small part of each other's narrow lateral sides, with no mortar between their junctures. In this way, the filling of mortar becomes the main mass of the wall.

Sometimes they trim the edges of the inner surface of the stone, thus trying to imitate the old stonework (drawing C). In the last two cases, we merely deal with outer imitations of the old masonry which are devoid of the advantages typical of it. In essence, they represent examples of simple revetment, for a very tiny surface of the stones mixes with the mortar, and instead of resting upon it, they are merely put on one another to bear each other's weight, as a result of which, they fall off it in the course of years and tumble down.

While replacing the fallen stones, Turkish restorers do not usually bother themselves to find their exact equivalents in terms of colour and kind, which is a disregard of restoration norms.

Sometimes the restoration of certain monuments is carried out without the slightest scientific substantiation just as was the case with the towers of the ramparts and Paron's Palace of Ani, as well as Arakelots Church of Kars. Below follow a number of monuments which have been excavated and restored in recent years.

1. **Haykaber** (nowadays: Chavushtepe) is situated at the eastern extremity of Astvatzashen (present-day Chavushtepe) Village, Hayots Dzor District, Armenia Maior.

According to the oldest cuneiform inscription unearthed in the course of excavations, the castle was erected by Urartian King Sardur II (764 to 735 B.C.). Since 1961 archaeological excavations have been conducted there every year (their results have been published in a number of articles and works).<sup>2</sup>

The excavations unclosed the citadel ramparts and temples together with some palatial buildings and annexes. However, no conservation was carried out in Haykaber, in consequence of which, the upper rows of its walls, which remained exposed to the open air for many years, are in continual corrosion and may even collapse in certain parts.

2. **Andzav Castle** is located near Andzav (present-day Youmakle) Village, Van-Tosp District, Armenia Maior. The excavations which are still going on (as of 2011) have unearthed the exterior fortified wall of the monument and some annexes. Their quality is satisfactory.

<sup>2</sup> See **Afif Erzen**, Çavuştepe [Chavushtepe] (Ankara, 1988), 4.

**3. Newly-Found Funerary Chapels in Ani.** During the excavations of 2004, a number of adjacent mortuary chapels (their direction is north-southward) were unearthed very close to the eastern wall of the Cathedral. One of them had inscribed tombstones belonging to clergymen.

In 2007 we found these gravestones turned upside down, with the remains of the deceased thrown out and scattered here and there. Evidently, the acts of vandal-



**ANI. The funerary chapels unclosed east of the Cathedral during the excavations (2004) and after their destruction by “gold diggers” (2007)**

ism perpetrated by those searching for treasure beneath them are the result of the connivance of the security guards of the city site-museum, who are appointed by the authorities of the country; moreover, they may be directly involved in these barbarities.<sup>3</sup>

The houses and annexes unclosed near the principal street of Ani have been conserved, thanks to which, the monuments located there—they represent residential and commercial buildings of the Bagratids’ times, but

the Turks represent them as Seljuk structures—are save from corrosion.

**4. Paron’s Palace, Ani.** The entire palatial complex has been restored—its tumbled walls have been re-laid without any scientific substantiation, being erected to a level which is a major deviation from their original appearance.

The restored inner doors of the palace are higher than they used to be; the coloured star-shaped masonry



**ANI. Paron’s Palace from the south-east before and after its “restoration”**

has been replaced with equally-cut stones, whereas the upper part of the inner decorative arch has been laid with unproportional stones. Deviation from the original forms is also observed in the portal arch, while the ruined wall on its left side has been erected at full height, without any openings. The exterior destroyed wall of the vaulted ground floor of the palace, extending on the steep slope, has been thoroughly re-erected at the height of 2 floors (the ground floor excluded): on the first storey, windows opening at varying heights have been added, while on the second one, rows of small rectangular windows can be seen, all placed at the same height. A small narrow door has been made at the edge of this facade. All this has been carried out without any scientific grounds and is alien to medieval Armenian architecture.

<sup>3</sup> The city site has the status of a museum where admission is acquired with tickets until 6 p.m.; therefore, we may state that the act of destruction was committed inside a museum and remained unpunished. We are convinced that there would have been no such injustice if the damage had been caused to the minaret of the only Islamic monument of Ani—the mosque of Manuche...





ANI. Paron's Palace from the south before and after its "restoration"



ANI. The emblem of the city in the early 20th century and after its "restoration"

5. **Ramparts of Ani.** The restored parts of these walls seem to conform with the original ones, but certain bad mistakes are observed here. Thus, the emblem of Ani is placed on the rampart adjoining the Principal Gate of the city (named *Avag Door* in Armenian): according to the available old photographs, it represented a cross, depicted through the play of black and orange tuff stones, which protected the coat-of-arms of the city formed of a lion relief enclosed within a frame

(in other words, the cross was the protector of Ani). There were 2 windows on each of the right and left sides of the emblem.

Prior to the renovation, only the lion relief and the lower half of the frame were preserved, whereas after the restoration, the relief was placed within a simple



ANI. The towers adjoining the Principal Gate before and after their "restoration"; a partial view of a "restored" tower

rectangular frame, and the fortified wall was laid without the cross and windows.

The semi-ruined tower on the right side of the principal entrance was restored after a similar one located on its left side, namely, it was completed with outwardly finely-finished stonework, while inwardly, it was re-built with roughly-hewn stones, instead of finely-dressed ones.

6. **Castle of Baberd (Bayburd).** Its ramparts have been entirely restored: the old ones, which were laid with dark-colour stones, have been replaced with light-colour thin ones generally used in revetment. The local people have already spoiled the restored fortified wall



**BABERD.** Partial views of the “restored” castle ramparts

with painted scribbles. Unfortunately, the damaging of monument walls with writings of varying contents is rather wide-spread in Armenia as well.

7. **Church of Sper Castle.** It was partially restored with flagrant mistakes—the original finely-finished masonry of large stones of dark colour has been replaced with others of light colour which are twice as narrow as the old ones. The space between their junctures, the existence of which is not justified at all, has been covered with negligently-done plaster as a result of which, the actual scale of the stone rows has been distorted, and the exterior of the church changed.



**SPER.** Views of the partially “restored” church of the castle

8. **Castle of Seleucia, Cilicia.** Its rampart towers have been mainly restored, their old corroded stones having been replaced with new ones.



**SELEUCIA.** One of the restored towers of the castle; partial views of the “restored” fort ramparts

9. **Castle of Korikos, Cilicia.** It consists of two strongholds one of which stands on the sea shore and the other on the opposite island. The latter has been cleared of wild vegetation and thoroughly excavated, as a result of which, the foundations of a Roman structure with a mosaic floor were unclosed near its church (oil cloth was used for their temporary preservation). The corroded outer and inner surfaces of the ramparts have been partially restored with new rows of thin stones of revetment.



**KORIKOS.** The eastern tower of the castle before and after its restoration



As for the castle on the sea shore, the part adjoining its entrance and the upper section of the arch overlooking the sea have been restored in the same way.

10. **Castle of Anamur, Cilicia.** Restoration has been carried out in the entrances to the stronghold: the upper part of one of them has been restored not with stone, but with a layer of plaster. While restoring the upper section of the stone frame on the entrance tympanum, they should have preserved its original form, which resembled the one enclosing the emblem of Ani,



**ANAMUR.** A general view of the castle and its entrance tympanum after its "restoration"

whereas in fact, now it has a pentahedral ending, which cannot be justified at all.

11. **Castle of Tigranakert (nowadays: Silvan).** One of its towers has been restored, with its left corner filled up with old-styled thin revetment stones with juts.

12. **Bridge of Malabade.** This single-span bridge is situated near Malabade Village, Diarbekir District, Diarbekir Province. The walls of its two piers have been covered with plaster on which scribbled lines



**TIGRANAKERT.** A partial view of the “restored” ramparts of the castle

have been made to create resemblance to stonework. During the preparation of the plaster ground, the workers dug into the walls to some extent, which damaged the outer surface of the old stones.



**MALABADE.** General and partial views of the “restored” bridge

**13. Multi-Span Bridge of Adana.** Its upper part has been carefully restored, with stone drain-pipes placed in the main walls of the passageway: even today they secure the hydro-insulation of the bridge which is still used.



**ADANA.** General and partial views of a restored bridge

**14. Residential buildings in Adana.** The old Armenian houses of Adana, which were erected before the Great Genocide of 1915, were built of brick. They, however, have been restored without consideration of



**ADANA.** A restored house

their original appearance and peculiarities—the cornices and the slanting supports of the balconies have been altered (the simple supports of wood have been replaced with ornamental ones), as a result of which, these dwellings have undergone exterior changes.

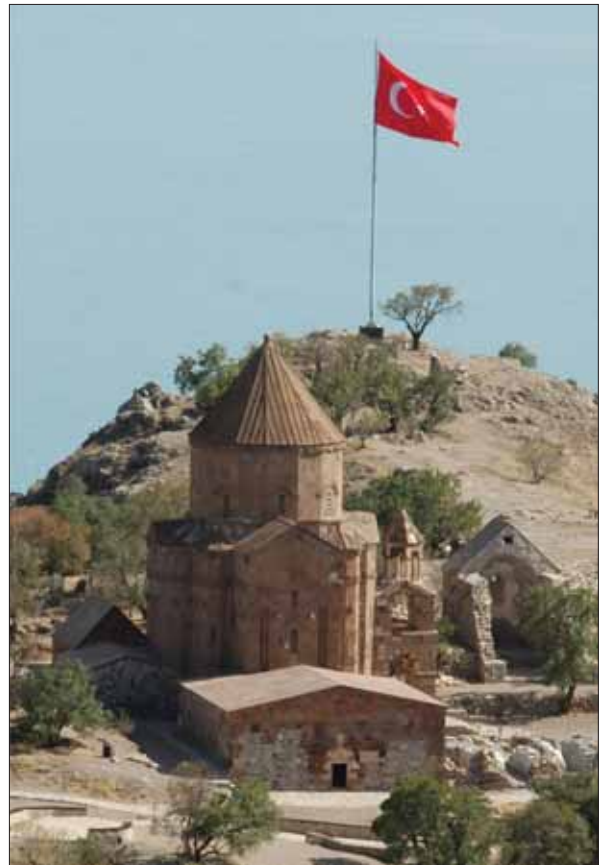
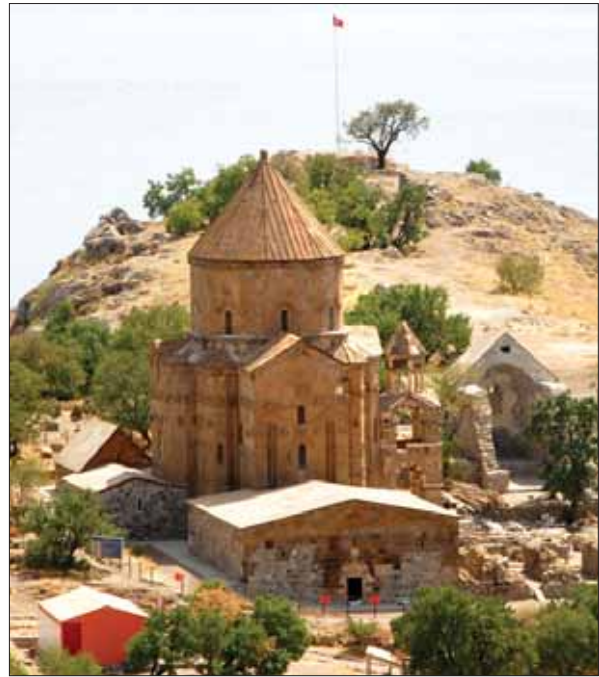
**15. Sourb Khach (Holy Cross) Church of Aghtamar.** Its restoration started in 2005, following the decision of the Prime Minister and Ministry of Culture of Turkey (the restoring organisation was Kartalkaya Proje İnşaat Sanayi ve Tic. Ltd. Şti. ve Er).

Zakaria Mildanoghlu, an Armenian architect from Constantinople who participated in the restoration of the monument throughout its process, says:

Before the renovation, it was agreed that no novelties were to be introduced, and the church was to be preserved in its original appearance. The broken covering slabs of its upper part were replaced with new ones, and this section was cleared of plants. The facade cracks were covered with a solution composed of the crumbled stones of the church and hydrolic mortar. The wonderful reliefs of its facades have



remained intact as only their broken and missing fragments have been replaced. Eventually, the church was washed with clean water of high pressure: no chemical substance or gel, no sand and comb-like tools (he means the metal brushes generally used for the cleaning of buildings - translator) were used for this purpose. The whole stones of the pavements were left in their places, while the empty parts were filled up



**AGHTAMAR. Sourb Khach Monastery during and after its restoration, with the new huge flag that replaced the previous one in the background**

with multi-coloured natural stones. The frescoes of the church were in a very poor state: they were broken to pieces, loosened off the walls and even obliterated in certain sections. The specimens of these mural paintings, taken from different parts of the monument, were subjected to laborato-



**AGHTAMAR.** The chapel located near the north-eastern corner of Sourb Khach Monastery: a partial view of its old indented covering slabs with cylindrical endings; the chapel roof after its revetment with smooth slabs

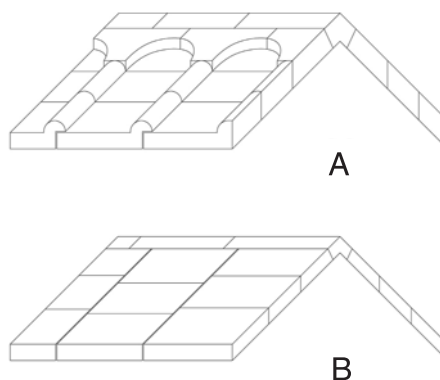
ry analysis, which helped determine the way of their recovery. First of all, the restorers tried “curing” their tiny edges, and after positive results, this method was applied to all their parts. In order to strengthen the parts of the frescoes attached to the walls, a special substance was injected and their surfaces were cleaned. The blue paint and all the dirt covering them were removed. In the course of the excavations carried out around the church, the kitchen, refectory and school of the monastic complex, as well as its rooms for work and rest, its administrative buildings and warehouses were unearthed.<sup>4</sup>

A photograph of the chapel, adjoining Sourb Khach Church from the north-east, clearly shows that it was formerly covered with serrated slabs, whose upper rows were preserved until the early 20th century and could serve as good grounds for the restoration of the monument in accordance with its original composition. Instead, however, the restorers gave preference to a mode of renovation carried out in a later period in a most primitive way. In fact, the same mistake was also committed during the restoration of certain parts of the slopes of the church roof; for this reason, the monument was not restored in an appearance typical of its construction time and reflects the approach manifested during the poor overhaul carried out with scanty means almost 1,000 years after its erection.

As for the niche where the font of the northern chapel used to be located, it has been adapted into a place where candles are lit now.

The earthen roof of the narthex has been replaced with smooth covering slabs of stone, under which hydro-insulation has been carried out with a hydro-insular package layer.

The missing part of the cross relief (it symbolises the scene of the Ascension of the Cross), decorating the section beneath the window of the western facade and



deliberately broken in the 1980s, has been filled up with a piece of dressed stone.

The sculptured stone banisters of the second floor of the southern apse, which had been destroyed prior to the renovation, have been replaced with a glass-covered retaining wall fastened to metallic bars.

The frescoes have been diligently cleaned of dirt and the blue paint which was added to them later: the old murals, which were unclosed from beneath them with their vivid colours thoroughly preserved, underwent conservation.

The chapel of St. Stepanos, situated south-east of Sourb Khach Church, has gone through partial restoration—its roof has been covered with flat slabs, but beneath the cornice of the northern and southern facades, two rows of thin facing stones were laid.

The lower stonework of the walls of a multi-dwelling structure, the Catholicosate and other buildings located in the south of the church have been unclosed: for the purpose of their preservation, white sandbags, arranged on one another, have been attached to them from two sides. This mode of preservation can serve its purpose for a very limited period of time, for

<sup>4</sup> **Zakarya Mildanoğlu**, Uyuyan güzeli uyandırmak [“Waking up the Sleeping Beauty”], *The Gate*, no. 77 (September 2006), 28-30.





the sacks will inevitably corrode, after which the sand will sully the church surroundings. Besides, the rows of white sandbags are a damage to the aesthetic image of the church.

After the restoration activities, the small Turkish flag hoisted at one of the extremities of the island in 2006, was replaced by an incomparably larger and higher one which competes with the monument complex inappropriately.

16. **Arakelots (Apostles’) Church of Kars** (turned into a mosque named Kumbet since 1998). The restoration of the monument started in July 2007 and was planned to be completed in December of the same year. The work was carried out by Damarci İnşaat Construction Company under the control of Kürşat Genç Company.

The roof of the church was cleaned of grass, and the corroded parts of its covering slabs were restored. However, a flagrant mistake was committed during this work—the partly-corroded semi-cylindrical projections of the old indented covering slabs of all the sec-

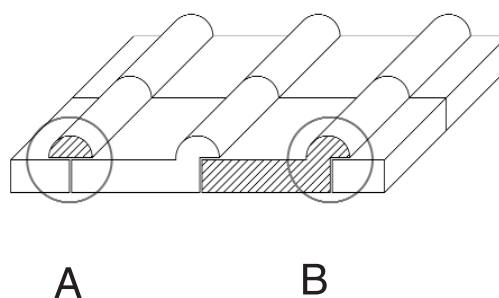


KARS. Arakelots Church before and during its “restoration”



tions of the church, except the dome spire, were trimmed and flattened, being replaced with newly-dressed long projections of separate stones. These resembled the old, single-piece covering slabs outwardly, but in fact, they were fixed in the place of the old ones with mortar, as a result of which, these newly-invented covering slabs are merely decorative and cannot perform a hydro-insular function.

To summarise, we may state that the newly-initiated restoration of Armenian monuments ongoing in Turkey should be welcomed as it prevents them from



KARS. The covering slabs of Arakelots Church as already “restored” (A) and as they should have been restored (B)

further corrosion. At the same time, however, it should be mentioned that they are restored with evident omissions and mistakes, as those carrying out the work have absolutely no knowledge of the building principles typical of medieval Armenian architecture. Guided by the

strong desire of seeing historical Armenian monuments restored as flawlessly as possible, in order to hand them down to the coming generations intact, we think

that the collaboration of Armenian and Turkish restorers should be of immense use and contribution to this field.

## TWO NEWLY-FOUND CRYPTOGRAMS IN RSHTUNIK

by Emma Abrahamian

Pieces of writing in code date back to the depth of centuries and are found in almost all the written languages of the world.

In written Armenian, there existed a number of modes of encoding messages: they are defined as alternative forms of conveying speech in writing.

Armenian cryptograms are mostly found in manuscripts, whereas their number in lapidary inscriptions is rather small.

The oldest lapidary cryptograph known to science dates back to the '30s of the 7th century—it is a bilingual text (in Armenian and Greek) carved on the eastern facade of the church of Avan, Yerevan (it is encoded by means of letter substitution ciphers and mentions Catholicos Yezr).<sup>1</sup>

The next encrypted text is engraved on the rear of a cross-stone (10th to 11th centuries) placed inside a church standing a km west of Artzvanik Village, Syunik Region, RA. It is created with the application of six encryption methods at the same time—line and dot substitution, dot substitution, letter substitution, numeric value addition (addition ciphers), as well as right-to-left and double-clue (right-to-left writing and preceding letter substitution) ciphertexts.<sup>2</sup>

In 2006 while working in two different sites in Rshtunik District, Vaspurakan Province, Armenia Maior, we found two heretofore completely unknown cryptograms on cross-stones. One of them is in the cemetery (it is now totally destroyed) of the ancient village of Shatvan,<sup>3</sup> and the other in the graveyard (located at 1,936 metres above sea level) of St. Thomas Monastery near Gandzak Village, not far from the southern shore of Lake Van.

Let us start with the latter. The cross-stone, only the lower part of which is preserved (dimensions of the



**GANDZAK VILLAGE, RSHTUNIK (GYAVASH) DISTRICT. St. Thomas Monastery and a cross-stone with a ciphertext of line and dot substitution in its cemetery**

surviving part: 58 x 44 cms), is sculptured of hard bluish sandstone and has an irregular contour. Its centre is decorated with the tree of life from which the main cross emerges, enclosed within an apse-shaped design known as 'khoran' in Armenian miniature paint-

<sup>1</sup> **Գաֆադարյան Կ.**, Ավանի երկլեզվյան արձանագրությունը [K. Ghafadarian, The Bilingual Inscription of Avan] (Yerevan, 1945); *ibid.*, Երևան. միջնադարյան հուշարձաններ [Yerevan: Medieval Monuments] (Yerevan, 1975), 190-192.

<sup>2</sup> **Աբրահամյան Ա., Շահինյան Ա.**, Արծվանիկի հայերեն նորահայտ ծածկագիրը և նրա վերծանությունը [A. Abrahamian, A. Shahinian, "The Newly-Revealed Armenian Cryptogram of Artzvanik and Its Decipherment"], «ՊԲՀ» [*Historico-Philological Journal*], no. 3 (1975), 113-125. Also see **Աբրահամյան Ա.**, Հայկական ծածկագրություն [A. Abrahamian, Armenian Cryptography] (Yerevan, 1978), 180-189.

<sup>3</sup> It should be stated that part of the cross-stones of the cemetery were saved from destruction simply to be used as tables on which salt was put for sheep.



SHATVAN VILLAGE, RSHTUNIK (GYAVASH) DISTRICT. A cemetery

ing ('khoran' is the Armenian equivalent for 'apse' - translator). A small simple cross is carved within each of its pillars the capitals of which are embellished with a pair of quadrifoliate flower reliefs. The two-line inscription, only the second line of which is preserved, was engraved between the wings of the main cross of the composition and on the lower part of the cross-stone. It represents an encrypted writing of line and dot substitution.

In this cryptograph, the vertical lines—they are 1 to 4 in number—stand for the units, tens, hundreds and thousands of the numeric system of the Armenian alphabet, while the dots found on their right show the next numbers of the sounds:

||||: |. ||||: |: ||: ||||:  
 U w p q h u  
 (S a r g i s)

The ciphertext is entirely decoded as follows:

... | Յ(Խմ)ս Զ(ԻԽսոո)ս, | Սարգիս:  
 ...Jesus Christ, Sargis.

The stylistic and artistic peculiarities of the cross-stone, as well as its comparison with other similar monuments found in the same region trace it back to the period between the 14th and 15th centuries.

The other monument with an enciphered piece of writing is situated in the ruined cemetery of Shatvan Village, which extends at an altitude of 1,926 metres

above sea level. Its medieval khachkars, which amounted to about twenty, were mostly removed from their original places and broken to fragments. In their midst we found one of bluish basalt only the lower half of which is preserved at a height of 120 cms and a width of 130 cms.

The cross-stone has the following composition: the main cross emerges from the tree of life, with similar smaller crosses, resting on finely-carved rosettes enclosed within frames, on both its sides. Another cross carved in the same style, which is even smaller than these, is found on the right side of the lower wing of the main cross. On both sides, the composition is bordered with two pillars which join each other through an apse-like arch (their capitals are decorated with plant reliefs).

The cross-stone bears two cryptograms, one of which consists of two lines carved between the wings of the main cross, the other comprising 2 lines on its lower part and a single one on its left edge. Each of the inscriptions is remarkable for a peculiar mode of encoding.

The initial line of the first inscription is enciphered in the line and dot substitution way described above.

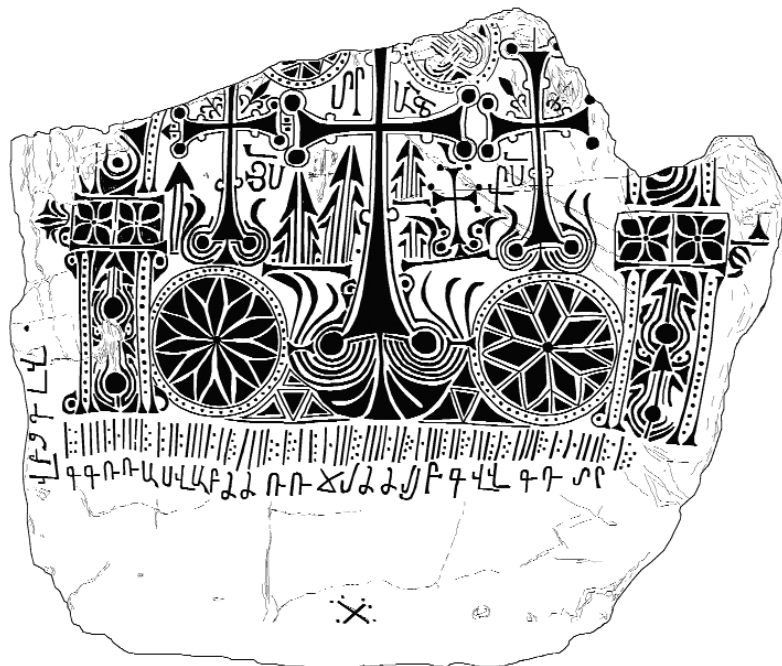
||: ||||: |. ||||: |: ||: ||||: ||: ||||: |: ||: |. ||||: ||||:  
 q U w p q h u Կ ր Գ խ ա չ ս

||: |. ||||: ||: ||||: |: ||||: |: |. ||||: |: ||:  
 Կ ա ն Կ ն Ե ց ր ա ր Է

It should be deciphered with the addition of several letters which are either omitted or were not engraved at all:

ՉՍարգիս Կր(աւնաւոր) Գխաչս Կանկնեց(ի),  
 բարե(խաւս):

I, clergyman Sargis, erected this cross to protect [me].



One of the lines of the other ciphertext is carved according to the method of numeric value addition, for the decipherment of which, several clues exist—here the arithmetic operation of addition is applied, namely, the numeric value of a single enciphered letter forms the sum of two others (thus for instance, «ԳԳ» (3+3) is equal to the numeric value of the letter «Ձ» (6), the only exception being the letter «Ա», which is used in its sound value):

ԳԳ ՌՌ ԱԱ ՎՎ ԱԱ ԺԺ ՌՌ ՃՃ ԺԺ ՍՍ ԲԲ ՎՎ ԳԳ ՏՏ  
 Գ Ս ա ր Գ ի ս յ ի շ Ե ց Է ք  
 May you remember Sargis

The third line is encoded in the preceding letter substitution mode, in the application of which, every letter stands for the one preceding it:

Վ Բ Յ Դ Լ Վ  
 Ս ա ր Գ ի ս  
 S a r g i s

The completely-deciphered inscription reads as follows:

*S(t)ր Ա(uոոու)ծ / Յ(hու)ս Զ(րհսոո)ս, | ԳՍար-  
 Գիս կր(աւնաւոր) Գիսսչս կաւնկնեց(ի), բարե(խաւս),  
 | ԳՍարԳիս յիշեցէք, | ՍարԳիս:*

Transl.: *Lord Jesus Christ. I, clergyman Sargis, erected this cross to protect [me]. May you remember Sargis, Sargis.*

To summarise, we would like to point out that these two cross-stones with cryptograms share evident artistic and stylistic peculiarities; moreover, they are typical specimens of Vaspurakan's unique school of cross-stone sculpture of the 14th to 15th centuries.

As for the name of Sargis, which is mentioned on both these cross-stones, we think that they were dedicated to the same person, clergyman Sargis of Rshtunik. This supposition is further substantiated by the fact that the sites where the cross-stones are found are quite close to one another.

## TZARAKAR MONASTERY

by Samvel Karapetian

A cut-in-rock monastic complex is preserved on the weathered and corroded south-facing side of a south-looking range of rocks extending along the left side of a small gorge, 1.2 km west of the village of Chukurayva,<sup>1</sup> 5 kms south-east of the fortified town of Kechror, Gabeghiank District, Ayrarat Province, Armenia Maior (Kaghzvan District, Kars Region until 1920; at present: Kars ili, Kağızman ilçesi, Kötek bucağı), at an altitude of 1,949 metres above sea level (geographical coordinates: N 40°14' 51.69", E 42°54' 49.07").

The monastery consists of a church which has several entrances connected with each other, at least six chapels and other adjoining buildings. It is remarkable for its very interesting structure and extended lapidary inscriptions mentioning outstanding historical personalities of the 10th century. Despite it, however, until recently neither specialists nor topographers ever paid any attention to it: strange as it is, it was ignored even by Primate of Kars Diocese Kyuregh Srapian, who compiled quite a detailed register of the inhabited places and ancient sites throughout the region of Kars in 1878, his list including monuments of less importance situated south of Kechror.<sup>2</sup>

It was only in 1999 that the monument was first visited by a specialist, namely Scottish researcher Stephen Sim, who took photographs of it and made its schematic plan.<sup>3</sup>

Later it was visited by seismologist Shiro Sasano, who published a small-scale research work on it together with several photographs he had taken there in 2009.<sup>4</sup>

In this way, these two foreign researchers discovered the cut-in-rock monastery and made it known to the scientific world. They, however, failed to find out its name and called it after the adjacent village at present inhabited by Kurds.

Realising the importance of conducting comprehensive studies in the monastic complex, in 2008 the members of Research on Armenian Architecture (RAA) Organisation included it in their programme of scientific expeditions and carried out some work there, continuing it in 2010 as well and revealing a lot of information relating to it.

The lapidary inscriptions preserved on the western and northern walls of the only surviving church report that it was erected in the 10th century. The available sources attest that this newly-discovered monument complex is the monastery of Tzarakar, which is mentioned in medieval records, and the location of which remained unknown until very recently.

The following facts give grounds for identifying the newly-found monastery with Tzarakar:

As is known, Tzarakar was one of the renowned monastic complexes in medieval Armenia, but in the course of centuries, it lost its glory and significance and was consigned to oblivion to such an extent that in our days even its location remained obscure.

Indeed, in the late 19th century, Gh. Alishan used the available sources to point to the area where the monastery could have possibly been situated:

...Tzarakar, which is mentioned in some works by historiographers and geographers, is known to have stood in a naturally impregnable site in the vicinity of Kechror: first of all, a cut-in-rock monastery was erected...<sup>5</sup>

He was followed by S. Eprikian, who almost repeated the same information:

Supposedly, a monastery of this name and a village used to be situated near Kechror, Gabeghenk District, Ayrarat [Province].<sup>6</sup>

Later, however, the issue of the location of the monastery became even more tangled, for it was argued that it might have been situated in the neighbourhood of Ani.<sup>7</sup> The *Dictionary of Toponymy of Armenia and the Adjacent Lands* states:

...according to some scholars, [the monastery was probably located] near the township of Kechror, Gabeghiank

1 The original Armenian name of the village is Prut. At present (2012) it has a Kurdish population of 40 houses.

2 Thus for instance, he states: *Amidst the ruins of Kilise Kyoy, located in a gorge south of Kechevan, at a distance of half an hour, there is a semi-destroyed monastery whose name remains unknown* (Մրասխան Կ., Ստորագրութիւն Կարսի շրջակայ գիւղօրէից և վանօրէից [K. Srapian, "A Description of the Villages and Monasteries Near Kars"], ԲՀԱ [Herald of the Armenian Archives], no. 2 (1970), 92).

3 S. Sim made his research trip through the RAA's financial support. His materials are kept in the archives of the foundation.

4 Shiro Sasano and Sasano Seminar, eds., *Historical Architecture of Eastern Anatolia in the Middle Ages, under the Prospect of Interactive Building-Techniques* (Yokohama, 2009), 127-128.

5 Ալիշան Գ., Այրարատ [Gh. Alishan, Ayrarat] (Venice, 1890), 47.

6 Էփրիկեան Ս., Պատկերագրող բնաշխարհիկ բառարան [S. Eprikian, An Illustrated Geographical Dictionary], vol. 2 (Venice, 1903-1905), 238.

7 Յովհաննէսեան Մ., Հայաստանի բերդերը [M. Hovhannisian, The Castles of Armenia] (Venice, 1970), 641-643.

District, [whereas] others hold [that it was built] near Ani, Shirak District...<sup>8</sup>

The colophon of an *Ashkharatsuyts* (a geographical work), dating back to 1656, dispels this uncertainty to a great extent:

...the district of Gabeghenits and the castle of Kaput also called Artagereits—the town of Kechror is situated there together with the cut-in-rock monastery of Tzarakar, where Archimandrite Khachatur Kecharetsi's grave is found...<sup>9</sup>

This passage reveals two facts of the utmost importance: firstly, Tzarakar Monastery was cut in the rock, and secondly, most presumably, it was situated not far from the town of Kechror.

That Khachatur Kecharetsi,<sup>10</sup> a worker of education and a poet who lived between the 13th and 14th centuries, was buried somewhere near Kechror, is also attested by the following note on a map of 1691 compiled by Yermia Chelebi Kyomurjian:

Town of Kechror, bordering on Basen, and Archimandrite Khachatur's grave.<sup>11</sup>

These two records clarify that the monastery of Tzarakar was truly located near the fortress town of Kechror. Indeed, the latter does not make direct reference to it, but as already stated above, the *Ashkharatsuyts* of 1656 reports that Khachatur Kecharetsi was interred in Tzarakar Monastery, and Kyomurjian adds that Kecharetsi's grave was near the town of Kechror.

Besides written records, the etymology of the toponym of *Tzarakar* is also of great importance to the clarification of the issue of the identification of the newly-found cut-in-rock monastery with Tzarakar. Every visitor may easily see that the structures of the monastic complex are cut into quite friable masses of rock which are naturally striped and have certain colouring, looking like the parallel circular lines showing the age of a cut tree—evidently, the name of *Tzarakar*, the Armenian equivalent for *Tree Stone*, is conditioned by this resemblance meaning *a monastery cut into a tree-like stone*.

It was in 2009<sup>12</sup> that the RAA first presented photographs of Tzarakar Monastery, with its location already ascertained, in one of its publications (the present article dwells on it in greater detail).



Tzarakar Monastery and Prut (nowadays: Chukurayva) Village from space

**A Historical Introduction.** The primary sources casting light on the historical events connected with Tzarakar are three lapidary inscriptions preserved in the monastery though they have reached us in a very deteriorated state. The first of them is carved on its western facade: it is marked with irregularity of writing, for its 11 lines and the size of its letters do not seem to have any order. It is a donation inscription dated 952 mentioning Tiran, spiritual shepherd of Vanand District, and Bishop Sahak Amatuny.

ՆԱ (952). յայս | ձեռնագիր է | Տիրանոյ՝ Վանանդա վերակացուին հայոց ... շահանշահ առի էտու | ...որսստ յազոն :ճ: (100) ... | ի կատ(ե)ւ(ան)ներուն ի ժամ հրի յազոն :ճ: (100) փասս ... հորիւացի վանս | :ճ: (100) փասս՝ Կարոց ի սորբ Գիրգորի ... | ...վասն իմն ... վասն իմ հոզոյ ... ով | այս գրոյս հակառակա նգովեալ եղիցի յա(ստուծոյ) եւ տ(եառ)ն Տիրան եւ տ(եառ)ն Սահակա Ամ(ա)տունեաց եպիսկոպոս[ա] | ...Յակոբ եւ յա(ստուծոյ) եւ կատարիչ հր(ա)մանացս առ(ր)հն(եալ) եղիցի | որ այս [գրոյ]ս հակառակա ի Յ եւ ԺԸ (318)-ի նգովեալ լիցի բաժին ընդ սատանի է.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Հայաստանի և հարակից շրջանների տեղանունների բառարան [A Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and the Adjacent Lands], vol. 2 (Yerevan, 1988), 842-843.

<sup>9</sup> Թօփճեան Յ., Յուգակ ձեռագրաց Դադեան Խաչիկ վարդապետի [H. Topjian, comp., A List of Manuscripts Collected by Archimandrite Khachik Dadian], part 1 (Vagharshapat, 1898), 77.

<sup>10</sup> Ստեփանյան Գ., Կենսագրական բառարան [G. Stepanian, A Dictionary of Biographies], vol. 2 (Yerevan, 1981), 46-47.

<sup>11</sup> G. Uluhogian, Un antica mappa dell'Armenia. Monasteri e santuari dal I al XVII secolo [An Ancient Map of Armenia: Monasteries and Sanctuaries of the 1st to 17th centuries] (Ravenna, 2000), 83, 86.

<sup>12</sup> S. Karapetian, Armenia: An Illustrated Album (Yerevan, 2009), 277-279.

<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that some parts of the inscription which still remain undeciphered could be read more successfully if it were possible to spend more time on the spot.





A general view of Tzarakar Monastery from the south

Transl.: 401 (952). *This is written by Tiran, spiritual shepherd of Vanand... shahanshah... gardener... St. Grigor ... for my soul's sake... may those who object to this writing be cursed by God, as well as ...Tiran and Bishop Sahak Amatuny... Hakob... may he who fulfills the commands be blessed and he who raises an objection to this writing be damned and fall into the devil's hands.*

Another extended donation inscription of 17 irregular lines, dating from the same period, i.e. 10th century, has come down to our days in a semi-distorted state. It is engraved on the northern wall of the same church and is especially important as it mentions the founder of Vanand (Kars) Kingdom, Mushegh<sup>14</sup>:

... | ...սաթրի... | ...կարս... | ...սուրբ Գրիգոր հրաման ...յամենայն | ...թառ... | ...ձեռագիր | ... | ալոյ յաւելլու: Յանուն ա(ստոծոյ) կամա եղեւ յամենա... | ...Մուշեղա հայոց թագաւորի ետու ... | ... եւ զջրհորն լերում եւ դաշտով ի ... | [վ]անքս եւս եկեղեցիքս հրամանով ա(եառ)ն Միրա... ...մատուցան | ... եւ ետու վասն իմ և... իոցս եւս խարդրի հետ իմ անցման :ԺԲ:

14 Mushegh I (birth date unknown – 984, Kars), Abas' (928 to 953) son and Ashot III the *Merciful's* brother, is the founder of Kars Kingdom and held the royal throne from 963. He declared himself King after Ashot III had moved the capital of the kingdom to Ani, appointing him Governor of Kars and the district of the same name. Ashot III the *Merciful* recognised Mushegh as the lord of a principality subject to him.

(12) առ ժամ յամենայն ... | ...ն եկեղեցիքդ, որ այս վճռիս ...տե ա... բաժինս ստանալ | ... ՅԺԸ (318) նզոված է, կատարիչ(ք) հրամանաց ... դատող նորստան | ... արհնեալ եղիցի ... | ...բապտոսթի(ւ)ն...:

Transl.: ...*St. Grigor ...handwriting... For God's sake... Armenian King Mushegh... the monastery and churches on the order of Father... after my departure... is cursed... those who carry out the orders... may be blessed...*

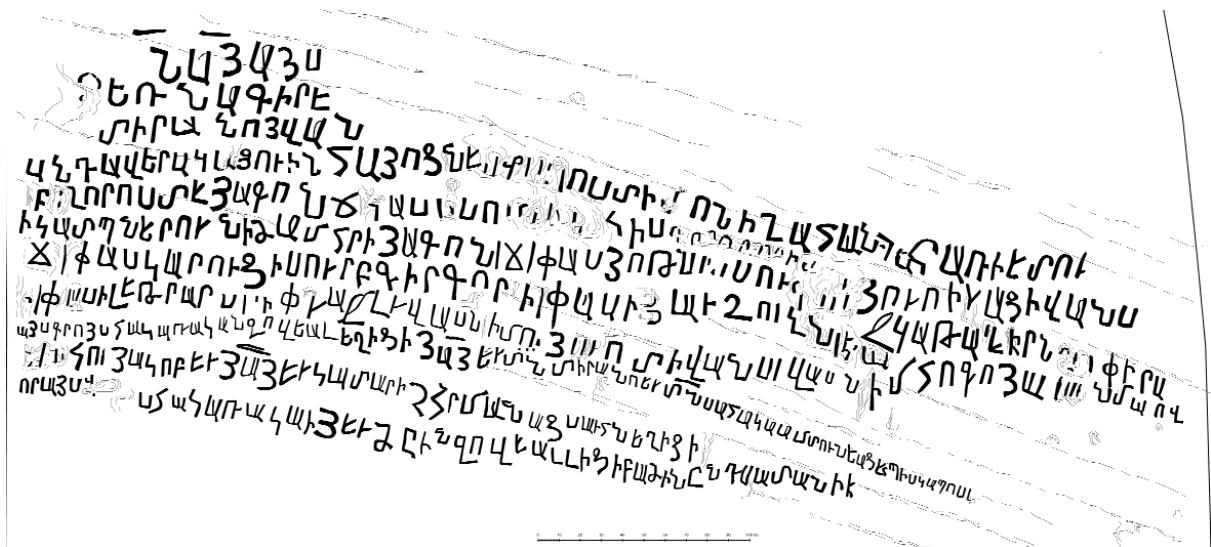
The third inscription, dated 952 like the first one, is even more distorted and consists of at least four lines (we are not sure about the existence of the fifth one). A considerable part of it has already been irretrievably lost due to natural corrosion and certain vandalistic actions probably committed by those searching for treasure in the monastery. At present only the following is legible from the inscription:

ՆԱ (952) թվականո[րթեանս] | հայոց ...[ը Տիրան<sup>15</sup>... | պե... | ...

Transl.: *In the year 401 (952) of the Armenian calendar ...Tiran...*

Another donation inscription which fully shares the writing style of the aforementioned ones can be dis-

15 Presumably, Tiran, who is mentioned in this inscription, is the spiritual shepherd of Vanand District referred to in the inscription of 952.



An 11-line inscription carved on the western wall of the church of Tzarakar Monastery and its tracing

cerned inside a cut-in-rock hall located north-west of Tzarakar and ending in a fake dome (it is decorated with a cross):

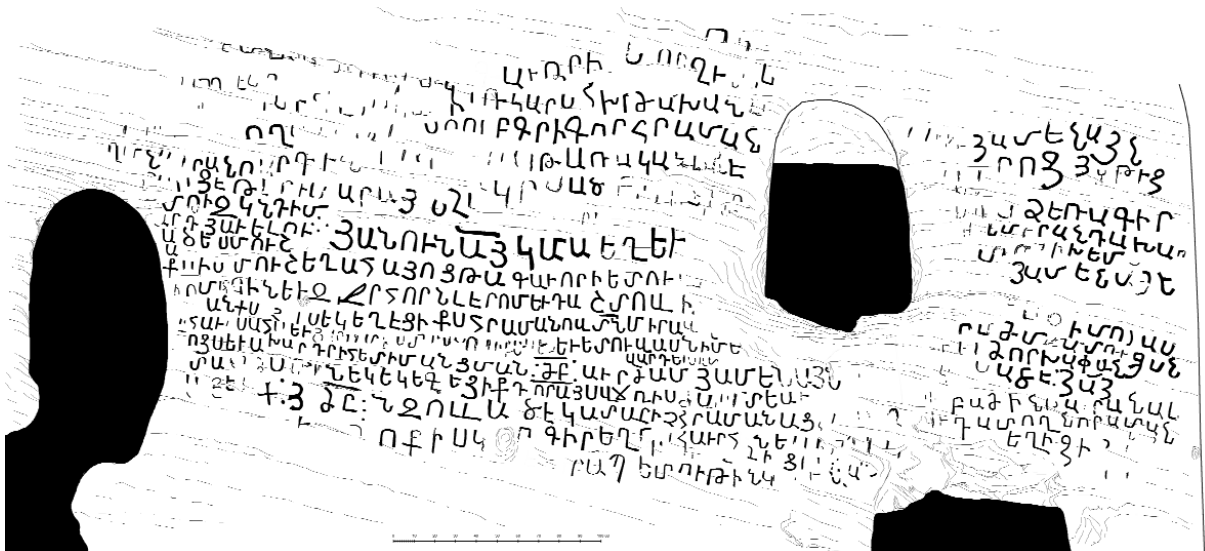
*Յս. Բս. տր. ած. ռդ/րքնի ամէն:*  
 Transl.: *May Lord Jesus Christ have mercy. Amen.*

In different parts of the monastery, visitors can see several brief inscriptions<sup>16</sup> which are mostly scribbled:

<sup>16</sup> For instance, «Ստեփան Չանփողատեան, 1890» (Stepan Janpolatian, 1890), «Գեղամ Պողոսեանց, 1903» (Gegham Poghossiants, 1903).

they were left by pilgrims between the 19th and 20th centuries, their existence showing that Tzarakar was known as a sacred place until at least the Turkish occupation of the region of Kars in 1920.

These remnants of inscriptions do not directly convey any information regarding the foundation of the monastery, but we hold that they were engraved immediately after its construction, when some income-yielding estates and production structures were donated to the newly-established sanctuary in order to secure its financial well-being. Anyway, Tzarakar must have



A 17-line inscription carved on the northern wall of the church of Tzarakar Monastery and its tracing

been founded earlier than 952, when its only dated inscription that has come down to us was carved on the western wall of its church. That the monastic complex dates back to the first half of the 10th century is also substantiated by its composition peculiarities, its stylistic and artistic features, as well as the writing characteristics of its lapidary inscriptions. Touching on the date of its establishment, Gh. Alishan, who was not even acquainted with the aforementioned inscriptions, states that it must have been erected prior to the 11th century:

...it is unknown when and by whom [it was built], but [it must have been constructed] before the 11th century...<sup>17</sup>

His viewpoint is based on the fact that in 1028 the monastery was renovated and made suitable for serving as a castle.

Likewise, Sh. Sasano arrived at a right conclusion regarding the foundation of the monastery: according to him it was built in a time period encompassing 500 years:

<sup>17</sup> Alishan, 47.



The remnants of an inscription (952), originally comprising at least four lines, preserved on the entrance tympanum of the porch adjoining the monastic church from the south

“...the caved complex was founded terminus post quem around in the sixth century while terminus ante quem around the 11th century.”<sup>18</sup>

The further history of Tzarakar is elucidated by pieces of scanty information reported by Armenian historiographers which is presented below in a chronological order. Thus, in 1029 it is mentioned in connection with some construction activity unfolded there by Prince West Sargis:

After a great number of buildings, including castles and churches, highly-honoured West Sargis erected the wonderful monastery of Khetzkonk the holy purgatory of which, known by the name of St. Sargis, was enriched splendidly. [He also constructed] the monastery of Tzarakar and fortified it with towers and solid ramparts of thick mortar. He also constructed the church of St. Gevorg there together with two other domed structures adjoining each other: St. Hovhannes and St. Sekenos.<sup>19</sup>

Information relating to this building activity is also reported by Mkhitar Ayrivanetsy:

18 Shiro Sasano and Sasano Seminar, 128.

19 Մամուլի քահանայի Անեցոյ Հատարմունքի ի գրոց պատմագրաց [A Collection of Historiographical Works Compiled by Priest Samuel Anetsy] (Vagharshapat, 1893), 106.

20 Catholicos Petros Getadardz I held office between 1019 and 1058.

...His Holiness Catholicos Petros<sup>20</sup> built Surmari and Tzarakar.<sup>21</sup>

Kirakos Gandzaketsi writes the following about the work unfolded in the late 1020s:

“In his<sup>22</sup> day the very distinguished Vest Sargis, after building many fortresses and churches, built the glorious monastery of Xts’konk’ and a church in the name of Saint Sargis; and making Tsarak’ar monastery a fortress, he built stronger walls and glorious churches in it.”<sup>23</sup>

The next record dates from 1178, when Turkish conqueror Gharachay took Kechror and the fortified monastery of Tzarakar:

On the same day, he took Tzarakar from some thieves on the order of Emir Gharachay of Kechror and sold it to Khezelaslan for much gold. And he settled it with dangerous men who did not cease bloodshed day and night until the Christians were exposed to darkness and famine..., with five clergymen being stabbed crosswise.<sup>24</sup>

21 Մխիթարայ Այրիվանեցոյ Պատմութիւն Հայոց [History of the Armenian Nation by Mkhitar Ayrivanetsy] (Moscow, 1860), 58.

22 The author means King Hovhannes-Smbat (1020 to 1041), who succeeded Gagik Bagratid I.

23 Kirakos Ganjaketsi’s History of the Armenians, <http://rbedrosian.com/kgtoc.html>.

24 Հատարումն պատմութեան Վարդանայ վարդապետին [History by Archimandrite Vardan] (Venice, 1862), 131.

In 1182 Gharachay, who still held Tzarakar under his reign, destroyed the renowned Gorozu Cross kept there:

In 631 [of the Armenian calendar] Kharachay, who had conquered Tzarakar, overthrew the cross named Gorozo with a crane...<sup>25</sup>

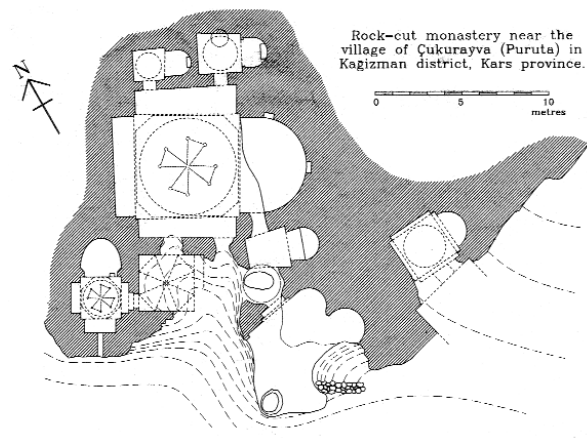
Within a short time, in 1186 the Armenians of Ani liberated Tzarakar through united forces:

In 635 [of the Armenian calendar] the inhabitants of Ani took the paternal estate of Barsegh (the bishop of Ani - translator),<sup>26</sup> mercilessly slaughtering those who were there, except the women and children.<sup>27</sup>

The sources of the subsequent centuries make almost no mention of the monastery.<sup>28</sup> However, taking into account the fact that prominent poet and worker of education Khachatur Kecharetsy was buried there in the 14th century, we can suppose that it actively continued its existence between the 13th and 14th centuries. The fact that Kecharetsy unfolded activity in this monastery and later found repose there was regarded with such great importance—even from the depth of centuries—that the map of 1691 does not mention it under its proper name and instead, simply says: *Archimandrite Khachatur's grave*.

Presumably, Tzarakar was finally ruined between 1829 and 1830, after the mass displacement and emigration of the local Armenian natives organised by Bishop Karapet Bagratid.

**Architectural Description.** The only surviving parts of Tzarakar Monastery are those of its structures which are cut in the rock, and therefore, are difficult to destroy, whereas the others have been irretrievably lost. For this reason, at present the complex is considered as only a cut-in-rock one consisting of 6 chapels and a main cruciform church with a pseudo-dome surrounded with annexes. It represents a small hall (inner dimensions: 10.67 x 8.31 metres) with a semi-circular irregular apse in the east. The bema is higher than the floor of the prayer hall by 1.15 metre. The ceiling is crowned by a semi-circular fake dome resembling an irregular circle and joining the underdome square with four corner squinches which are only of decorative use in this case. The top of the fake dome is embellished



The southern entrance to Tzarakar Monastery with the remnants of the inscription of 952; its plan according to Stephen Sim (1999)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>26</sup> Bishop Barsegh, the spiritual leader of Ani, is mentioned in the lapidary inscriptions of 1160 to 1191 (Աճառյաւն Հ., Հայոց սանճաւանունների բառարան [H. Ajarian, Dictionary of Armenian Personal Names], vol. 1 (Yerevan, 1942), 396).

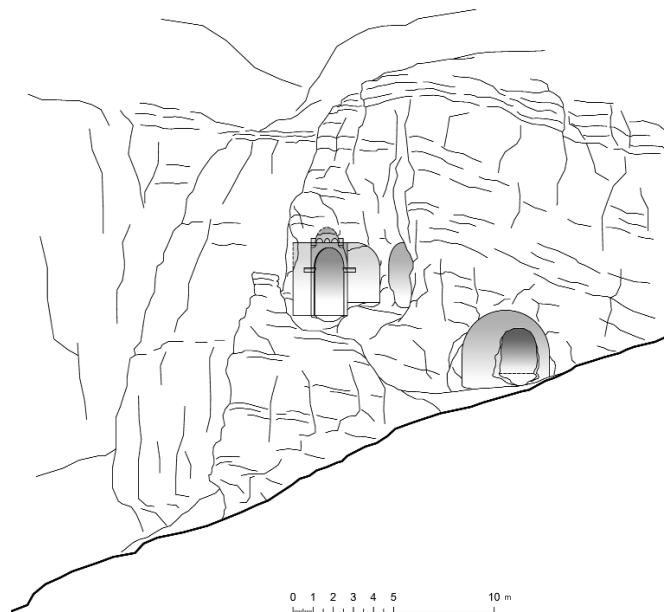
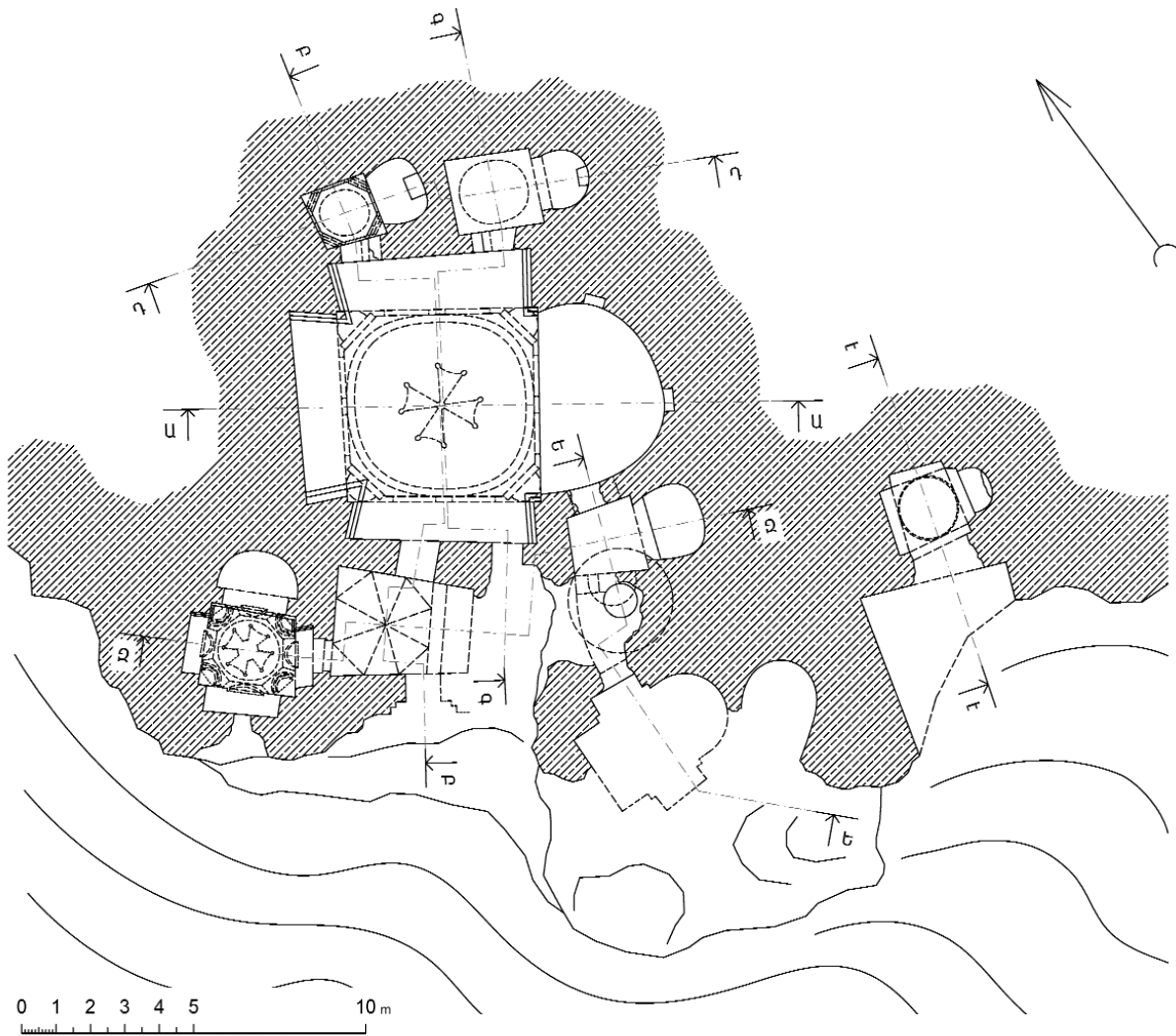
*Tzarakar formed part of the paternal legacy of Bishop Barsegh of Ani and was considered the estate of his family* (Eprikian, 238).

<sup>27</sup> Archimandrite Vardan, 133; Eprikian, *ibid*.

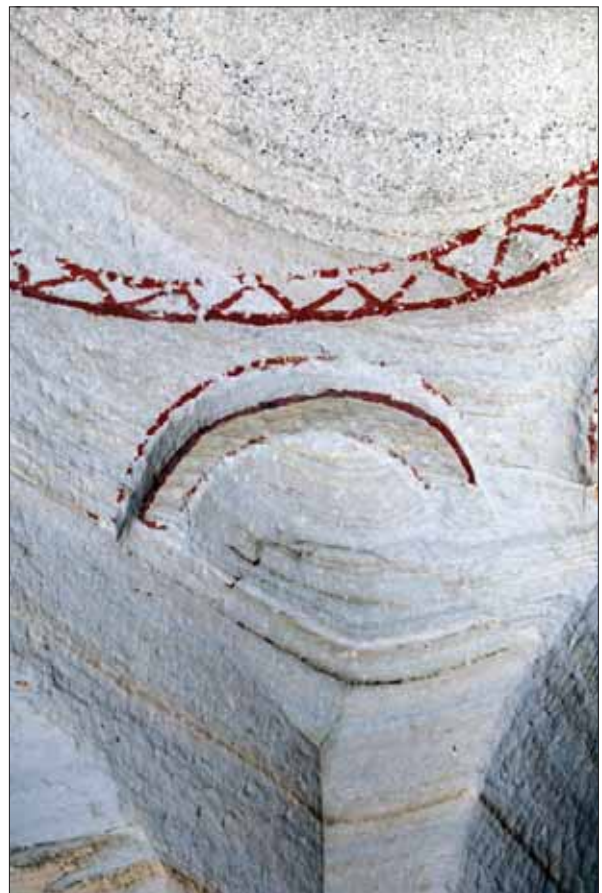
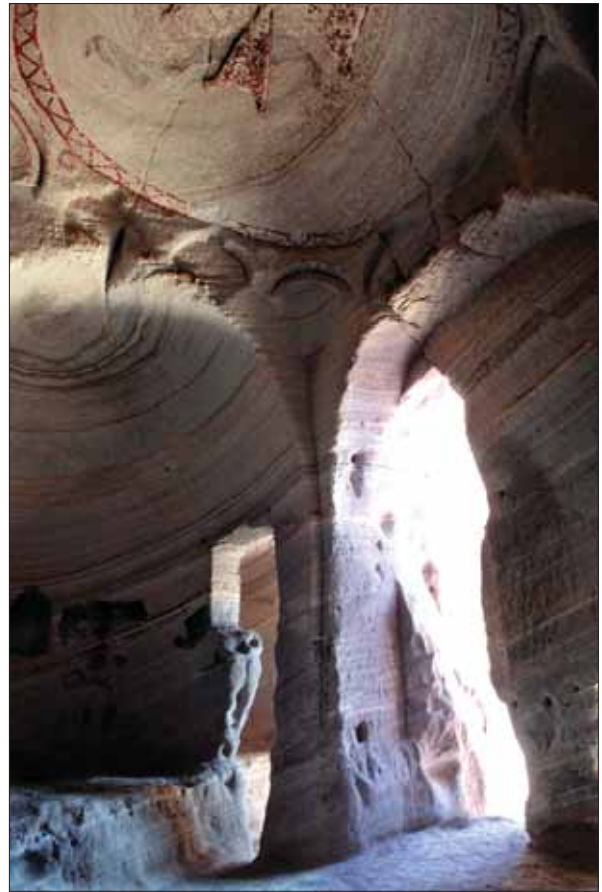
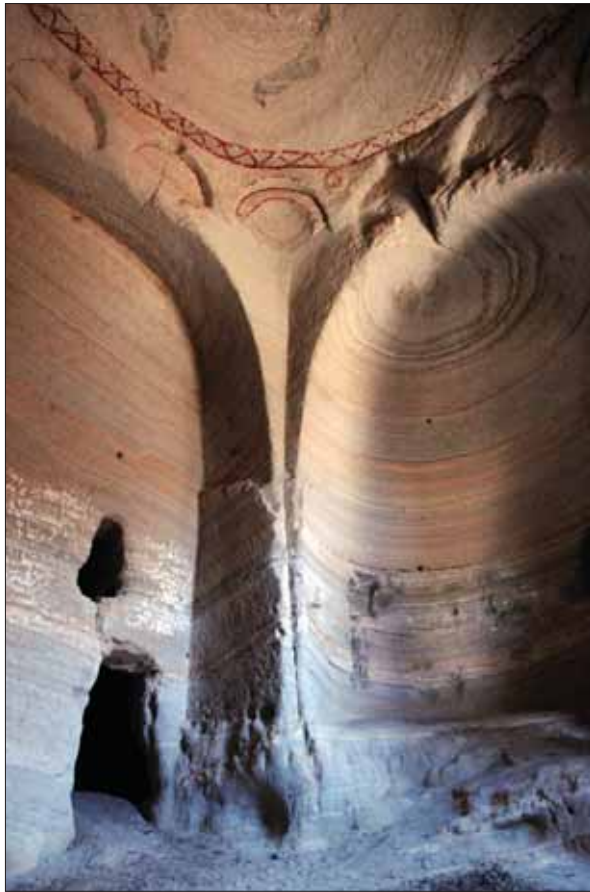
<sup>28</sup> The sources referred to above show that there *do* exist certain historical records relating to Tzarakar Monastery so that Japanese researcher Sh. Sasano has no grounds to state that “Neither historical documents nor previous authors mention about the caved churches in Purta” (Shiro Sasano and Sasano Seminar, *ibid*).

with an equal-winged cross which is accentuated with red paint together with the contours of the fake dome and squinches.

It is evident that the rock into which the monastic structures were cut is quite friable, and for this reason, it was found expedient to cover the walls with a layer of plaster to make them solid enough to bear mural paintings and inscriptions.



The plan of Tzarakar Monastery and the mountain front overlooking the south (measurement and graphical design by architect Ashot Hakobian, 2010)



The interior of the church of Tzarakar Monastery towards the north-east, south-east and south-west; its north-western squinch



The fake dome of the main church of Tzarakar Monastery and the concha of its sanctuary



The next cut-in-rock structure which comes second to the main church by its dimensions stands near the south-western corner of the latter. It almost shares the composition of the church described above, but it is smaller (4.78 x 3.72 metres). As a monument of Christian worship, it is especially noteworthy for its position towards the sides of the horizon—instead of the traditional east-westward direction, it stretches from the north southwards, that is to say, its semi-circular apse overlooks not the east, but the north. Its only entrance, which opens from the east, also serves as a means of communication with an adjacent hall. The structure is illuminated through its only window opening from the south. The chapel shares the decoration of the church: a relief of an equal-winged cross, covered with red paint, adorns the central part of the semi-circular fake dome, which joins the underdome square through squinches.

There is a structure (3.98 x 2.82 metres) between the chapel and the church which serves as an entrance hall for both of them. It is remarkable for its peculiar architectural features: it has an octahedral covering which rests on the intersecting semi-arches of the upper sections of the walls—a similar covering can be particularly seen in monuments of the 9th to 11th centuries, such as Horomos, etc. As a result of continual corrosion, the floor of this entrance hall is at present totally ruined: as a rule, friable rocks rapidly get weathered and slip downwards like sand.

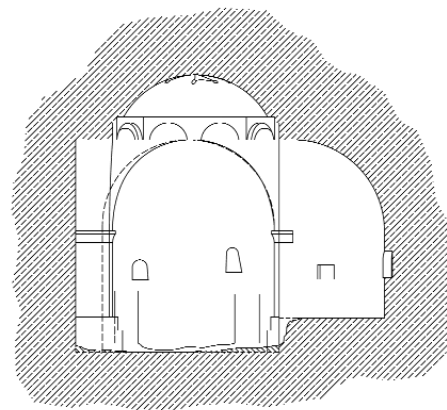
Researcher Sh. Sasano thinks that the reliefs of equal-winged crosses on the fake domes of the church and chapels of Tzarakar Monastery are the result of the possible penetration of Cappadocian clergymen into these parts of Armenia in the 6th century and the activity they unfolded there. He substantiates this viewpoint as follows:

This presumption is reinforced from its present condition in which the similar style of a cross employed in Cappadocia is discovered.<sup>29</sup>

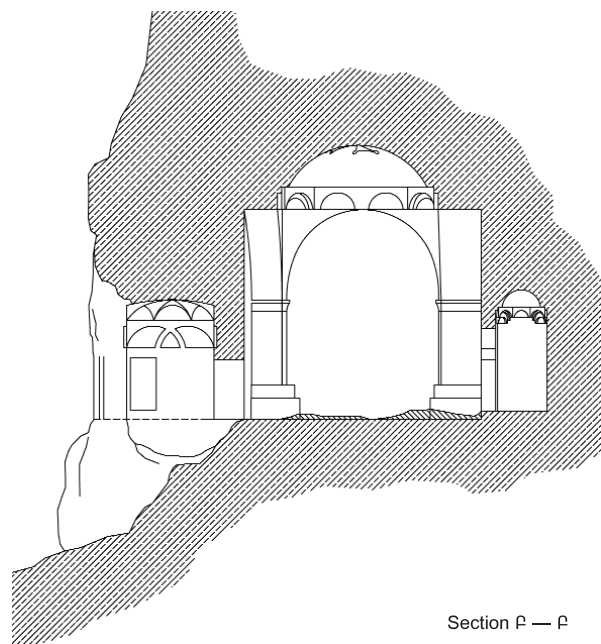
We, however, find this supposition absolutely groundless, as reliefs of equal-winged crosses were

29 **Shiro Sasano** and **Sasano Seminar**, 128. Generally speaking, the work by Sh. Sasano abounds in strange observations and conclusions which are the result of his lack of proper information relating to the subject under consideration. The same is true of his viewpoint regarding Tzarakar, according to which, “the caved church is rather rare” in the region where it is situated, whereas quite the opposite is true—the Armenian territories adjacent to the Arax valley and neighbouring the monastery of Tzarakar are particularly rich in cut-in-rock monuments of both secular and religious use such as the structures of Zivin Castle, including its church; the churches and chapels of the town site of Mezhenkert, amounting to about ten, and the church of Kers Village, Kaghzvan District.

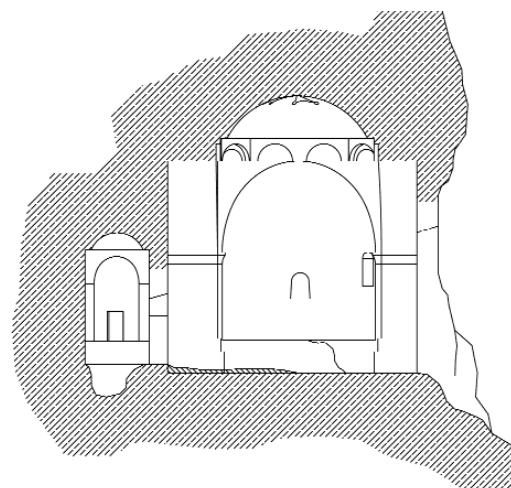
Nor are there any grounds for Sasano’s allegation that the monastic complex of Purta “must have been established rather earlier than the other monasteries left in the republic of Armenia” (ibid.).



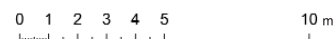
Section U — U



Section P — P



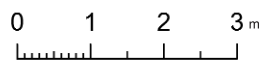
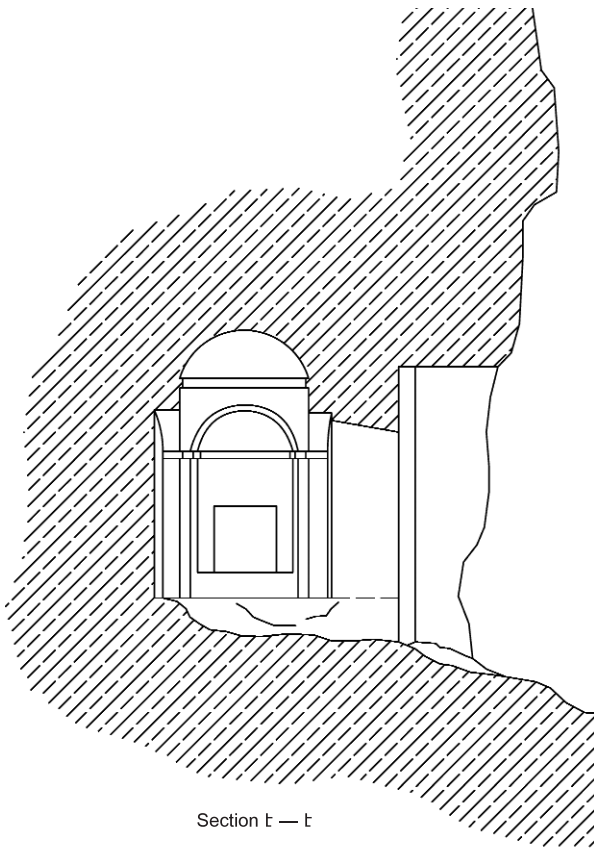
Section Q — Q



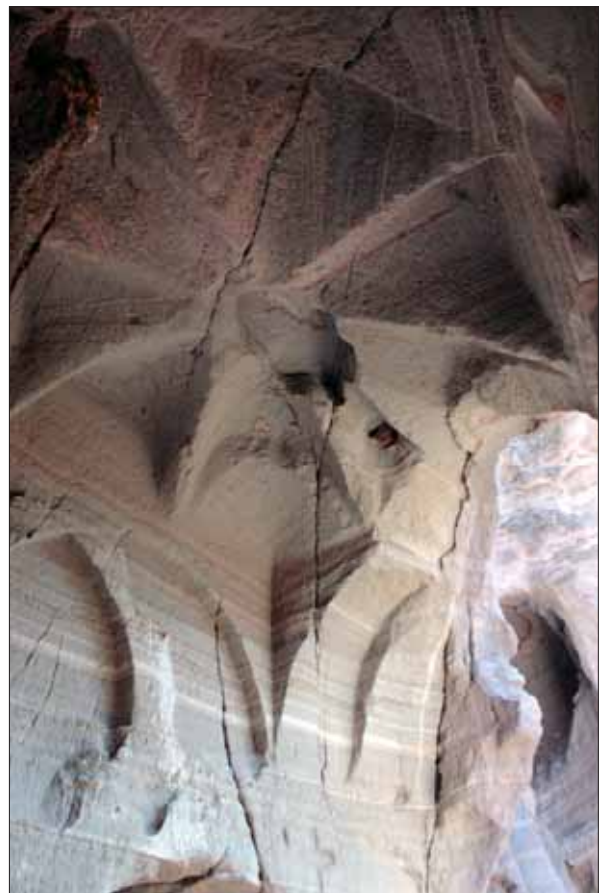
Sections of the church of Tzarakar Monastery to the east, west and north (measurements and graphical design by architect Ashot Hakobian, 2010)



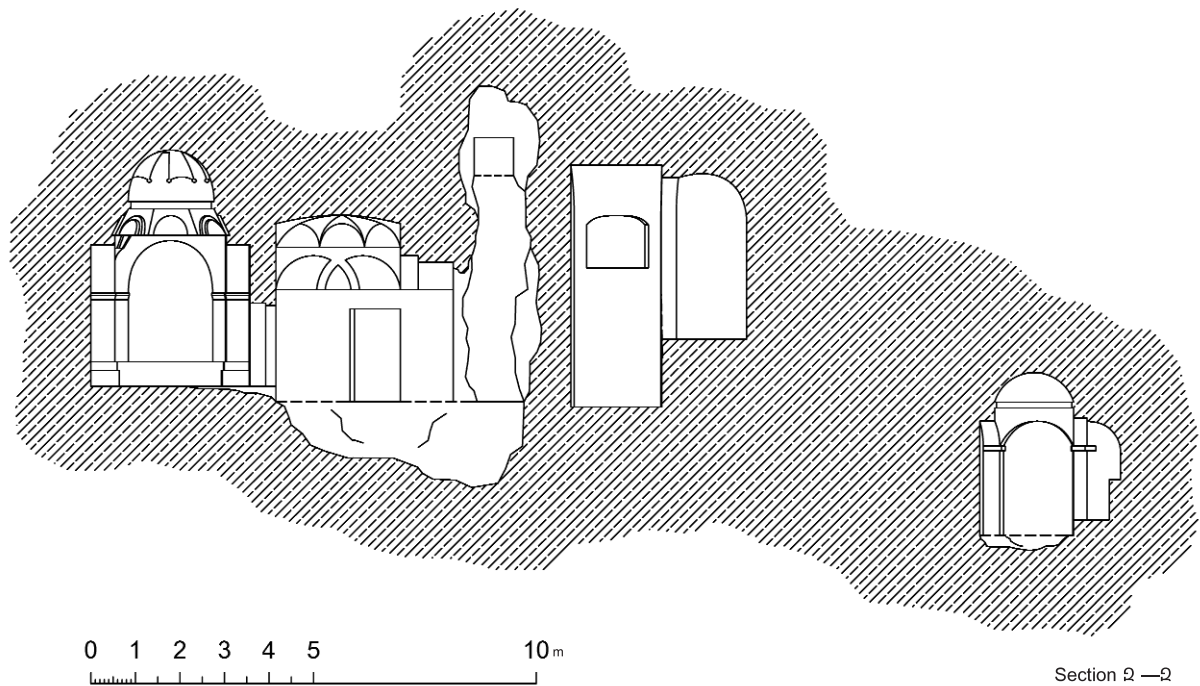
The fake dome of the south-western chapel of Tzarakar Monastery; its interior to the sanctuary (north); its north-western squinch and south-western wall pylon



Partial views of the south-western chapel of Tzarakar Monastery



The hall situated between the church of Tzarakar Monastery and the chapel of its south-western corner



**Tzarakar Monastery. A cross-section towards the north (measurement by architect Ashot Hakobian, 2010)**

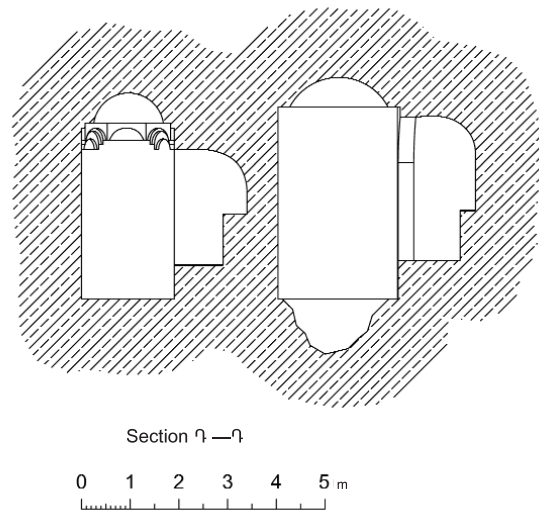
wide-spread in many other districts of Armenia and can be found in numerous monuments of the early Christian period. Besides, such reliefs were carved throughout the Armenian Highland not after the 6th century, but after the adoption of Christianity as the official religion of Armenia.

The next two chapels, which may also be considered as the northern vestries of the central church, resemble the aforementioned buildings in composition. Each of them communicates with the church through an entrance opening from the south. On the same side, each of them has a window securing its illumination.

The western chapel/sacristy (3.37 x 1.80 metres) is remarkable for its composition, decoration and architectural features. Its bema is higher than the floor of the prayer hall by 68 cms. It has a cut-in-rock altar rising at a height of 1.10 metre above the floor of the bema.

The semi-circular fake dome of this structure, which shares the composition of the church and south-western chapel almost entirely, is smooth and plain, and lacks a cross relief: its decoration is simpler, for it merely has a painted ordinary equal-winged cross.

The eastern chapel-vestry (4.06 x 2.21 metres) is slightly larger than the western one, but its covering is not distinguished for any peculiarity: thus, the under-dome square joins the fake dome without squinches which might be only of decorative use, if any. Its altar-stone forms part of the original mass of rock into which the structure was cut. The bema is higher than the floor

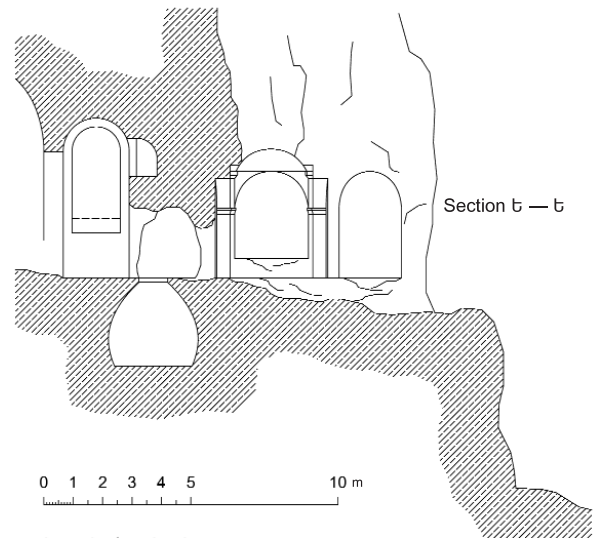


of the prayer hall by 82 cms, and the altar rises at a height of a metre above the bema. Even the cut-in-rock floor of the prayer hall did not escape the destroying hands of the searchers for treasures, and now a pit has formed there.

Another cut-in-rock monument of the complex is a chapel located near the southern side of the church bema. Like the other two ones, it may be regarded as the third vestry of the church. Its dimensions (3.95 x 1.99 metres) do not differ much from those of the other chapel-sacristies. Its northern door leads directly into



the bema of the church, while its southern entrance, which is almost totally corroded at present, provides communication with the sixth chapel. This last structure has already mostly corroded due to its centuries-



Tzarakar Monastery. Partial views of the interior of the chapel/vestry standing north-east of the church



**Tzarakar Monastery. The ceiling and western wall of the chapel/sacristy located south of the sanctuary of the monastic church**



**Tzarakar Monastery. Remnants of an equal-winged cross in red paint on the plaster**

long exposure to weather. It shares the composition of the church or the south-western chapel, but is smaller in dimensions and has an intermediate small hall with an underground well.

On the whole, the seventh chapel (3.16 x 2.42 metres), which is situated in the easternmost part of the monastic complex and has a slightly isolated position, shares the composition of the monuments described above. Its semi-circular bema has an altar-stone which is cut into the main mass of rock into which the entire complex is built. The prayer hall has a semi-circular fake dome of simple composition which is not decorated with any cross relief. The interior of the chapel used to be plastered. Its bema preserves a piece of writing left by a pilgrim who visited the monastery in the late 19th century.

A little far from these main structures, at the west-facing base of the rock range, a comparatively larger hall is cut into a semi-natural cavern. It has an irregular plan, and the level of its floor is not higher than the natural soil, the entire height of the hall hardly reaching 2 to 2.5 metres. The ceiling has a semi-circular fake dome enriched with a relief depicting an equal-winged cross. Unlike the other structures of the complex, this is the only one which freely communicates with its surroundings and is accessible for domestic animals



**The interior and fake dome of the caved hall located in the north-west of Tzarakar Monastery**



**The sanctuary of the chapel standing at the eastern edge of Tzarakar Monastery**

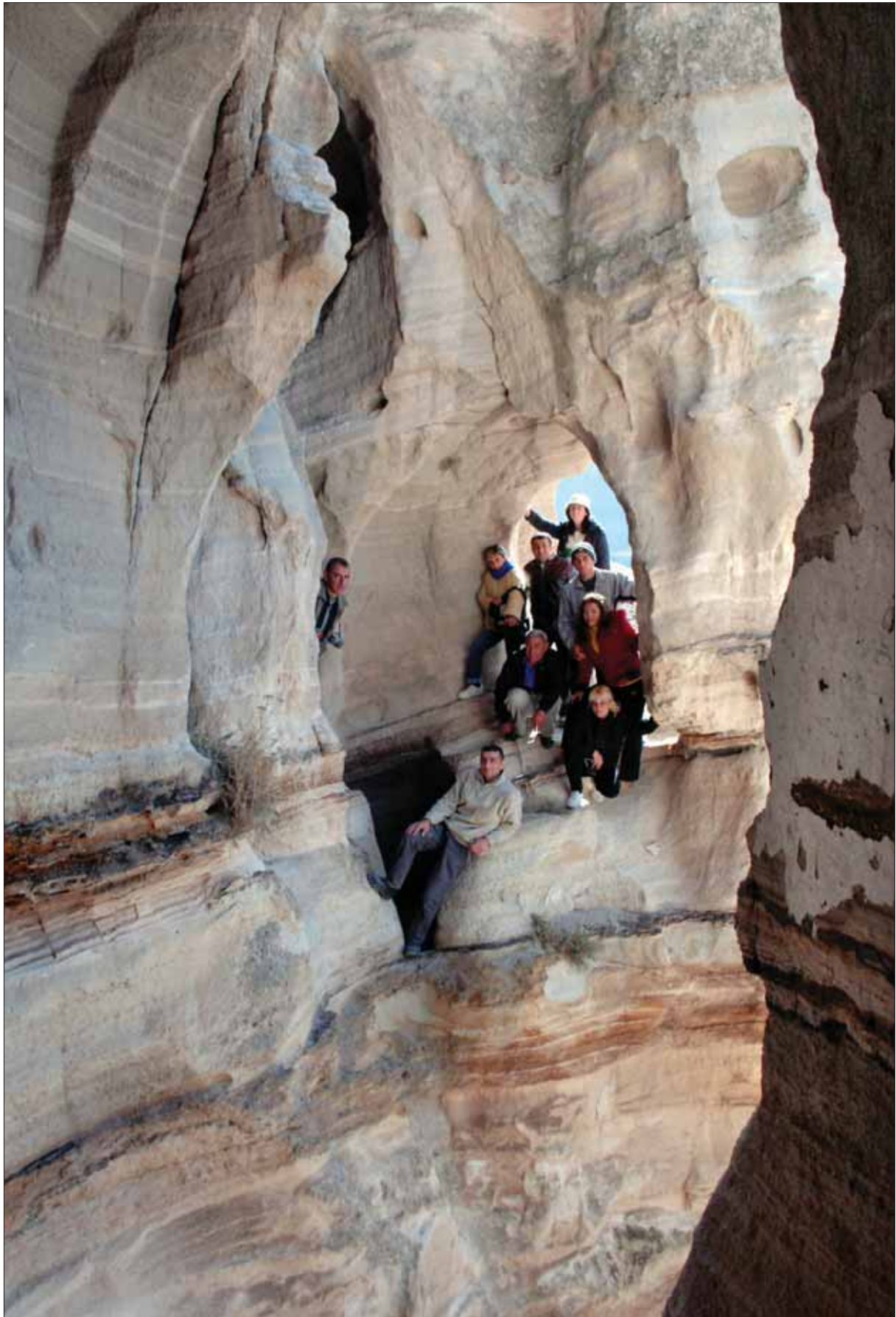
which attempt to avoid heat in the cool of the cavern. Inside the cavern hall, a two-line piece of writing is seen, left by an unknown person praying God for mercy.

Presenting this brief article on the monastery of Tzarakar, which lived an active cultural life during several hundred years after its establishment in the mid-10th century, we would like to stress that the study of its composition, architectural features and artistic dec-

oration, which contains certain novelties, can be easier if scholars view it and appreciate its significance on the general background of research into tens of cut-in-rock monuments preserved in numerous adjacent sites.

We hope to offer specialists such a research work in the future.





A visit to Tzarakar Monastery in 2010

## THE RESULTS OF THE EXCAVATIONS AND STUDIES OF THE MONASTIC COMPLEX OF CHAREKTAR VILLAGE

by Samvel Ayvazian & Gagik Sargissian

The monastery of Charektar is situated at the top of a hill rising on the right bank of the river Trtu, in Verin (Upper) Khachen District, Artsakh Province, Armenia Maior (present-day Charektar Village, Martakert District, Republic of Artsakh).



A general view of Charektar Monastery from the north-east

The available historical sources do not report much information regarding the monastery, the history of which is elucidated through the lapidary inscriptions preserved there (unfortunately, some of them were lost in the years of the Soviet Azerbaijanian rule). Since the 19th century, its lapidary heritage has been studied and published by S. Jalalians, M. Barkhutarians, M. Ter-Movsissian, H. Voskian, S. Barkhudarian and Sh. Mkrтчian.

So far no sources have been found to reveal the motives and time of the foundation of Charektar Monastery; nor do there exist any records concerning its

name. Deciphering the inscription of a cross-stone found here, S. Jalalians came to the presumption that it was called Mshahan<sup>1</sup> (the same viewpoint was later expressed by M. Barkhutarians). Later, however, M. Ter-Movsissian<sup>2</sup> and S. Barkhudarian<sup>3</sup> rejected this name, which had been put forward as a result of Jalalians' incorrect decipherment of the inscription. At present this cross-stone can no longer be found *in*



*situ*—only a small fragment, with part of the inscription, can be seen in the stonework of one of the walls of a cattle-shed erected on the foundations of the monastic narthex. Another inscription which we failed to find anywhere states that the church of the monastery was named Sourb Astvatzatzin (Holy Virgin).<sup>4</sup>

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the estates of Charektar were within the jurisdiction of Echmiatzin together with those of Dad Monastery (Khutavank) and were mentioned as Khotavank (i.e. Khot Monastery) or Charekdar Monastery in official documents.<sup>5</sup> That the

1 Ջալալեանց Ս., ճանապարհորդութիւն ի մեծն Հայաստան [S. Jalalians, A Journey to Greater Armenia], part 2 (Tphgis, 1858), 228.

2 Տէր-Մովսիսեան Ս., Հայկական երեք մեծ վանքերի Տաբեի, Հաղարծնի եւ Դադի եկեղեցիները եւ վանական շինութիւնները [M. Ter-Movsissian, The Churches and Other Buildings of Three of the Major Armenian Monasteries, Tatev, Haghartzin and Dad] (Jerusalem, 1938), 98.

3 Գիվան հայ վիմագրութեան, կազմող Բարխուդարեան Ս. [S. Barkhudarian, comp., A Corpus of Armenian Inscriptions], vol. 5 (Yerevan, 1982), 132.

4 Jalalians, 229; Corpus, *ibid.*, 134. Also see Ոսկեան Հ., Արցախի վանքերը [H. Voskian, The Monasteries of Artsakh] (Vienna, 1953), 113.

5 Ter-Movsissian, 83, 97.



A general view of Charektar Monastery from the south

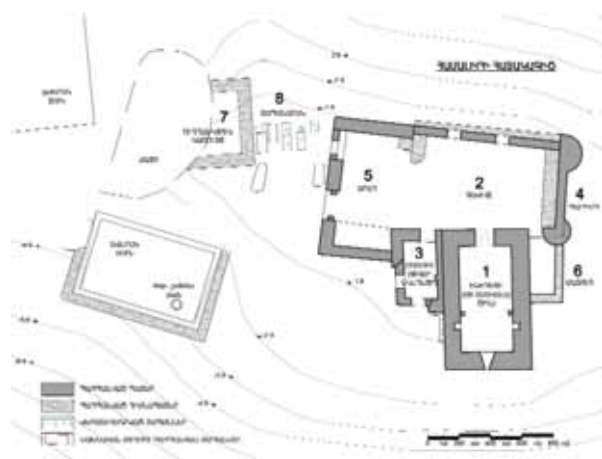
monastery of Charektar is referred to together with that of Dad as *a vast estate* shows that it played an important role in the spiritual life of the region. In the Soviet years, the village of Charektar was totally stripped of its Armenian population, being re-settled with Azerbaijanians. Naturally, the monastery was left uninhabited, too being under the control of the Azerbaijanian authorities with all the grave consequences ensuing from that condition: it was subjected to gradual, deliberately-planned destruction. Almost all the cross-stones of the monastery were broken and used as building material, its structures being reduced to cattle-sheds.

After the liberation of Artsakh, the Department of Tourism at the Government of the Republic of Artsakh embarked on the restoration of the monastery. In order to draw up a scientifically-based project, it was necessary to start excavations in the monastery grounds, and this was carried out between 13 and 23 June, 2009. The archaeological expedition was headed by archaeologist Gagik Sargissian, and the architect was the author of the restoration project of the monastery, Samvel Ayvazian.

It was necessary to excavate the monastery grounds and clean them to be able to carry out measurement there. We were to find out whether the monument had been a fortified monastery enclosed within ramparts or not. At the same time, we were also to clarify the func-

tional significance of the preserved buildings, the chronological order of their construction, trying to find out how many times and to what extent they had undergone renovation.

The excavations revealed that the main monument group of the complex, which was situated at the top of a conical hill dominating the village, consisted of the following structures:



1. The main church, the composition, building technique and material of which trace it back to the period between the 12th and 13th centuries. It represents a basilica in which the apse and hall have equal width,

namely, it is a rectangular hall divided in two parts by a pair of small pilasters (24 cms). The eastern section, which is comparatively smaller, serves as a sanctuary: it rises at a height of 96 cms above the level of the praying hall. The church used to be vaulted and had a tiled roof (we shall substantiate this below): at present neither the vault nor its roof are preserved.

2. A narthex where only half of the retaining walls are preserved.

3. A small church or chapel adjoining the main one in the south and completely sharing its composition with smaller dimensions. Fortunately, part of its vaulted ceiling and tiled roof is preserved. In size and form, the tiles are identical to those found in Dad Monastery and Handaberd, which attests that all these monuments were erected in the same period (12th to 13th centuries).

4. Ramparts with two towers adjoining the narthex in the north.

5. A hall adjacent to the narthex in the south, and another chapel adjoining the church in the north.

S. Jalalians, who visited Charektar in the mid-19th century, writes:

Within the narthex walls, a funerary chapel is built, with a large cross-stone opposite it... nearby can be seen some other chapels with holy altars, but entirely in ruins, with stones heaped around them—probably, they are the remnants of the monks' rooms.<sup>6</sup>

M. Ter-Movsissian writes:

The monastery of Charekdar consists of four small chapels closely adjoining each other.<sup>7</sup>

When presenting the lapidary inscriptions of the monastery, he also uses the word 'church' with reference to its structures, but it is evident that the complex does not comprise only chapels or churches, and there are also structures of other functions.

In the early 1960s, the following was said with reference to Charektar Monastery:

The monastic buildings are in a semi-ruined state: four structures, namely, a church, a narthex, a funerary chapel and another built of undressed stone stand close to one another.<sup>8</sup>

Most probably, the mortuary chapel is the hall mentioned above, and the narthex was probably preserved to some extent. At present only the foundations of the western wall of the narthex are preserved together with its main wall, which was unclosed during the excavations.

The excavations conducted in the southern yard of the main monument group unearthed the vestiges of a rectangular building abutting on the rock, as well as a grave-yard with tombstones.



The remnants of a rectangular building and a cemetery unclosed in the south of Charektar Monastery during its excavations

In the east, the monastic complex was fortified with a series of multi-step retaining walls rising up the hillside: they artificially widened the useful square-like space at the top of the hill.

Most probably, some structures of everyday use were located in the south-eastern part of this square, their vestiges comprising a well serving as a barn and the remnants of a leaning structure. In consequence of the collapse of the main walls and the construction activity of the nomads who took up a sedentary life in the village in the 20th century, the historical environment of this part of the hill has been completely dis-



The monastery as seen in its distorted historical surroundings

<sup>6</sup> Jalalians, *ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Ter-Movsissian, 98.

<sup>8</sup> Corpus, *ibid.*



The church floor as flattened with mortar

torted as residential and utility buildings have been constructed here together with cattle-sheds.

We started the excavations with cleaning the interior of the preserved structures. In the course of this work, we found out that the church floor had been smoothed by means of mortar. The floors of the other structures have not come down to our days.

The examination of the inner surface of the rampart with two towers, serving as the northern wall of the cow-house erected close to the western facade of the church, showed that the inner layer of the wall was not laid in the accepted simple way, like the outer surface of the same rampart: instead, the stones and backfill of



An inner view of the northern wall of the cattle house adjoining the church

the masonry were realised as touching some surface serving as an encasement. Judging from this, the rampart was linked to another wall, and in order to clarify this point, we dug deeper into the floor of the cow-house in its section close to the rampart, unclosing the lower row of the wall masonry. As the western wall of



The unearthed thick retaining wall

the cattle-shed had been erected on the basis of the thick retaining wall of an earlier structure, it became clear that a building used to stand in the west of the church—it might be either a narthex, as was usually the case in the volumetric-spatial composition of medieval monastic complexes, or a fortified wall (not the present-day ramparts with two towers). We think that it was a narthex—the one described by Jalalians and the authors of the *Corpus of Armenian Inscriptions*—the remnants of which comprise only its northern and western main walls with a small unearthed part (178 cms in length) of the main western section of its southern wall erected on a rock basis that can be seen inside the cattle-shed.

The rampart and its two towers were later attached to the narthex wall, apparently, for the purpose of its consolidation.

After removing the soil in the north of the monastic complex, we found out that the ramparts did not have a continuation, and encompassed only the northern wall of the narthex, which is destroyed at present. Close to the northern wall of the church and the eastern tower of the rampart, we unclosed a small rectangular struc-



The remnants of a chapel unclosed north of the church

ture—most presumably, a chapel—which used to be vaulted judging from the vault fragments scattered throughout the interior of the structure. The chapel is preserved to a height of 2 to 3 rows and has a western entrance leading to the narthex. The steps constructed later in the east of this structure (only some meagre remnants of them can now be found) lead to the attic of the cattle-house.

After carrying away the soil in the south of the monastic complex, we unclosed a rectangular building preserved to the height of 2 to 3 rows, its eastern and western walls joining the rock in the south. Beyond it,



The southern part of the complex after the excavations

no wall traces can be seen, which suggests that the southern wall of the structure was totally levelled with the ground.

Four grave-stones were unearthed in the area between the rectangular building and the hall: they were preserved *in situ*, which shows that this part comprised the monastic cemetery. Two of them, placed side



Two inscribed tombstones unclosed in the cemetery after the excavations

by side near the northern wall of the rectangular building, bear inscriptions.

We found and restored the upper fragment of the first tombstone which contained most of its four-line inscription reading:

*Այս է հանգիլստ Ըստեփ/անոսի քահ/անայի:*

Transl.: *In this grave reposes Priest Stepanos.*



The epitaph of Priest Stepanos

The grave-stone was deliberately broken, this being attested by the fact that its head part was used for making mortar (the lime remnants were clearly seen on it): this was probably done during the construction of the cow-house.

The other tombstone is engraved with a 7-line inscription:



One of the two inscribed tombstones unclosed in the cemetery after the excavations

Այս է հանգիստ Պետրոսի եղբայր ս(եանն) Մարգարէին եւ | Առաքելա, ա(ստուա)ծ | յղորմի սնա, սն/եմ:

Transl.: *In this grave repose Petros's brother, Father Margare, and Arakel. May God have mercy upon them. Amen.*

One of the other two tombstones was placed near the north-eastern corner of the rectangular building, and the other in the central part of the hall, close to its southern wall.

The excavations also unearthed other displaced grave-stones one of which was broken to several



An inscribed tombstone fragment used as the base of a wooden pillar in a cattle-house

pieces. We were able to find only two of its fragments, one of which had been used as a fust for the wooden pillar of the cow-house. The other part of the four-line inscription was on the fragment (or fragments) missing from the upper left corner of the grave-stone.



The tombstone fragments as joined together

[Այս է] տապա[[ն Յոհ]ա-նիսի որ[դի] ...արտի ե[լ խաթ]ունի:

Transl.: *In this grave reposes Hovhannes's son... and Khatun.*

The lower half of another tombstone (its upper part is engraved with an inscription the contents of which are well-known),<sup>9</sup> was used during the construction of the monastic hall, being placed in its southern wall. Later it fell off (we joined these parts together).

Similarly well-known is the inscription carved on the upper part of another grave-stone,<sup>10</sup>



The tombstone fragments as joined together

<sup>9</sup> For its decipherment, see Corpus, 135, no. 453p.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., no. 453u.

but we were unable to find its lower fragment. We collected all the displaced fragments, joined the broken parts together and arranged them beside the grave-stones of Priests Stepanos, Margare and Arakel that had been found in the south of the hall.

A number of wholly-preserved and broken cross-stones were unclosed in the course of the excavations and during the work in the monastic grounds and the ruins of the nearby houses. The composition and stylistic peculiarities of the reliefs of these cross-stones trace them back to the time-span between the 12th and 14th centuries. Some of them bear inscriptions which follow below:

1. An ornate cross-stone of white marble broken in two parts was found in the yard of a house far from the monastery. Its back part bears an inscription of 12 lines:

*Կամսուն ա(ստուծոյ) ես | Մխիթար Փորսկար-  
դի | որդի անուանի խաչգործ կանգնեցի զս(ուր)ք  
Գրիգորս ի բարեխաւսութի(ւն) հոգոյ իմն, | որք ըն-*



The cross-stone (1240) erected by prominent master Mkhitar

*բեռնոյք լի | բերանով ասացէք | Ք(րիստոս)ս ա(ս-  
տուս)ծ ողորմի Մխիթարայ եւ իւր ծնողացն, ամէն,  
| ՈՉԹ (1240) էր թիւն:*

Transl.: *By the Lord's will, I, Mkhitar Purskard, the son of an outstanding cross-stone master, erected St. Grigor for the salvation of my soul. May those who read this sincerely pray for God Jesus' mercy upon Mkhitar and his parents. Amen. The year was 689 (1240).*

Apart from its artistic value, the cross-stone is also remarkable for the reference to the sculptor's name, and especially, his profession (cross-stone master).

2. A finely-ornamented cross-stone which is completely crumbled all along its northern edge was found in the midst of the ruins of a house situated in the south-west of the monastic complex. The following



The front and one of the sides of a khachkar of 1290



lines are carved on both sides of the upper cross wing and on its narrow southern side (on the whole, at least 9 lines):

*ՉԼԹ (1290), | ...ս... | ...[կ]անգ[[նե]ցի զխաչս  
ծնողսց իմ եւ եղբարց իմ, | յիշեցէք ի Ք(րիստոս)ս:  
Transl.: 739 (1290)... I erected this cross in memory  
of my parents and brothers. May you remember [us] to  
Christ.*

3. The upper part of a small cross-stone, found from the midst of the same ruins, bears the beginning (5 lines) of a multi-line inscription carved on its northern narrow side:

*Ա(ստուս)ծ | ողորմի Խոտսադ(եղա)...*

Transl.: *May God have mercy upon Khotsadegha...*

4. Six lines are engraved on the lower part of a small cross-stone:

*Ես Գրգորիկ | արկի զհզին, | տվի Սարգիսայ  
տարին Ա (1) ալր ժամ, ով | ...*

Transl.: *I, Grgorik, planted a garden, gave Sargis an hour a year..*

5. A finely-finished piece of marble which once served as a revetment stone bears 5 lines:





The cross-stone of Grgorik, who is known to have planted a garden (inscription 4)



The fragment of a cross-stone erected by a coenobite in 1208 (inscription 6)



The donation inscription of monk Pokrik (inscription 5)

Ա(ստուծո)վ, ես՝ Փոքրիկ միաբանեցա ս(ուր)բ ուխտիս, Յոհանէս եւ եղբարքս ետուն :Բ: (2) | սւր ժամ ս(ուր)բ Գրիգորի, ով | խաւիան դատի յս(տուծո)յ:

Transl.: *By God's will, I, Pokrik, joined the holy monastery, Hovhannes and the brethren gave [a holy mass] 2 hours a day [on the feast day] of St. Grigor. May those who hinder this be subjected to divine judgement.*

6. Engraved on the back part of a cross-stone fragment:



The fragment of a cross-stone dating from 1002 (inscription 7)



Remnants and specimens of tiles unclosed during the excavations

ԹՎ(ԻՆ) ՈԾԷ (1208), (Կամսաւն) | ա(սսուծոյ) էս  
 Հա... | աբեղես կա(ն)գ/եցի զս(ուր)ք յաղ... | ...ս...:  
 Transl.: *In the year 657 (1208), by God's will, I, coenobite Ha... erected the holy...*

7. Only the initial 5 lines of an inscription are preserved on the lower left part of a cross-stone fragment:

ԹՎ(ԻՆ) | ՆԾԱ (1002), | Ի ժա|ման|ալս...  
 Transl.: *In the year 451 (1002), in the times of...*

The monastic walls and grounds used to bear some more inscriptions and cross-stones<sup>11</sup> which cannot be found *in situ* at present.

While cleaning the roof in the part where the church and chapel (the smaller church) adjoin each other, we unclosed part of the tiles of the latter which is preserved *in situ*, this attesting that it used to have a tiled roof. It was filled with scattered remains of broken tiles, which shows that those of a taller structure evidently fell on it: this could have been only the church adjoining the chapel, which suggests that the former used to have a tiled roof, too (at present its inner overhead covering and the roofing material are missing).

The tiled roof of the chapel was constructed in accordance with the medieval principle of traditional tiled roofs: first the smooth ribbed table-shaped tiles were laid, with their junctures covered with semi-cir-

cular tiles with projections. The hydro-insulation of the junction of the church and chapel was carried out through a raffle slanting eastward: it was made by means of smooth table-shaped tiles.

During the excavations, we also removed the corroded roof (originally built of wood and slates of asbestos) of the cattle-shed built in the site of the narthex and hall.

The results of the excavations and the available historical records lead us to the following conclusions:

1. Charektar Monastery served as a place of religious worship as early as the beginning of the 11th century, this being attested by the cross-stone fragment of 1002.

2. The existence of tombstones belonging to secular and spiritual leaders, the numerous ornate cross-stones, as well as its being mentioned as an estate together with Dad Monastery between the 19th and 20th centuries show that despite the small volume of its structures, Charektar Monastery played a significant role in the spiritual and public life of Artsakh in the Middle Ages.

3. The northern rampart, which had two towers, did not extend any farther, which suggests that the complex was not a fortified monastery.

4. The first of the rectangular structures unearthed in the north and south of the complex may be considered as a chapel. As for the southern one, we failed to find out its function.

5. The aforementioned tombstones and khachkars were found from beneath the layer of earth and in the walls of the dwellings of the Muslims who took up living in Charektar in the 20th century.

The chronological order of the construction of the buildings of Charektar Monastic Complex is as follows:

The oldest surviving structure is the church (12th to 13th centuries) of a rectangular apse, which was later adjoined by a narthex in the west (at present only the foundations of the latter's northern and western walls are preserved together with a small part of the base of



The chapel adjoining the western part of the southern facade of the church

<sup>11</sup> Corpus, vol. 5, 132-135.

its southern wall). Next comes the smaller church (chapel) adjoining the western section of the southern wall of the church (by the time it was erected the narthex had already been considerably damaged). We have arrived at this conclusion after a detailed study of the western wall of the chapel the surface of the lower part of which shares the structure of the inner surface of the ramparts described above within a height of about 250 cms. This indicates that it was erected to adjoin the narthex wall existing in that section, while above the height specified, it is laid in accordance with traditional stonework, like the other walls. Therefore, the western wall of the chapel was erected as attached to the narthex wall with its lower section, the upper one representing it as a free-standing wall as the narthex wall no longer existed above that level.

The next stage which might coincide with the construction of the smaller church (chapel) marks the building of the northern rampart with two towers. It was outwardly attached to the northern wall of the narthex probably for consolidation (as already stated above, the narthex walls had already been damaged or ruined by that time). This construction activity may have been unfolded between the 13th and 14th centuries.

Then the hall with a vaulted ceiling was erected. Its northern wall was built onto the southern facade of the narthex, and for this reason, the Muslim newcomers who planned to build a cattle-shed there levelled it with the ground together with the narthex. The other walls of the hall underwent changes. The southern wall of the hall used to have two wide openings with arches of arrow-



The southern wall of the hall

shaped ends. The eastern opening was laid with stones into a rectangular entrance, while the western one was changed into a window. The mortar of this structure flagrantly differs from that of the other monastic buildings in colour, composition and hardness (it is yellowish and probably contains clay being less solid). It may have been erected in the 17th century or even later.



Traces of reconstruction on the church pediment

The last stage of construction activities unfolded in Charektar encompasses the 20th century, when the Muslims used the walls of the former narthex and hall to build a cattle-shed of thinner walls resting on wooden pillars and covered with slates of asbestos.

The church underwent reconstruction for several times, its traces being evident both inwardly and outwardly. Studying these remnants and taking into account the unclosed tiles, we have come to the conviction that originally it used to be a vaulted building of a tiled roof, like the smaller church and chapel.

After the construction of the narthex and smaller church (chapel)—apparently, during the erection of the hall—the church was plastered inwardly and its vault was replaced by a wooden covering. Its plaster still preserves a frieze made up of circular rosettes and bearing the traces of blue and red paint. It goes round the entire interior of the church, running over its entrance and eastern window.



Ornament remnants on the plaster

After the excavations, the working team made certain analysis and carried out architectural studies the results of which became the basis for the elaboration of projects for the complete restoration of the church and chapel of the complex and the partial restoration and consolidation of its other structures.

## THE POPULATION OF KESAB BETWEEN 1906 AND 2006

by Raffi Kortoshian

At present the district of Kesab, the centre of which is the city of the same name, forms part of Latakia Province and is situated at the north-western extremity of the Syrian Arab Republic.

It consists of 11 Armenian-inhabited villages (Garaturan, Garatash, Sev Aghbyur, Nerkin, Chinar, Chakaljek, Korkyune, Ekizoluk, Tyuzaghaj, Veri (Upper) Paghjaghaz and Vari (Lower) Paghjaghaz) and occupies an area of about 90 sq. kms.<sup>1</sup>

The district borders on the Turkish village of Muselek and the Mediterranean Sea in the north-west (in the west as well); Mounts Cassius and Pallum in the north; the Turkish village of Bezeku in the north-east; the Turkish-inhabited district centre of Ortu in the east; the valley of the Leghejyor in the south (the borderline runs along a gorge extending to Faga-Hasan), and the Turkoman villages of Faga-Hasan, Hyurmetli and Petrusie in the south-west.

The highest peak in the district is Mount Cassius (1,750 metres), which is followed by Mount Pallum (1,250 metres).<sup>2</sup> Other mountains include Seltran (1,129 metres)<sup>3</sup> and Tunak (838 metres). It does not have perennial rivers or streams. The Meghradzor and Tyuzaghaj tributaries are not ever-flowing ones.

All the villages of Kesab, with the exception of Pashort, have fountains which flow throughout the year, that of Chinar being the most abundant of all.

The southern, south-western and south-eastern parts of the district are mostly covered with fir woods, while its northern, north-western and north-eastern lands are mainly planted with oak and laurel trees.

During the period between the early 20th century and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the district of Kesab formed part of Ortu Nahie, which was within the jurisdiction of Jeser-Sheghur Kaza of Aleppo Governorate. The only exception were the villages of Veri (Upper) Paghjaghaz and Vari (Lower) Paghjaghaz, which were included in Damascus Governorate and belonged to the Mutasarifat of Latakia.<sup>4</sup>

In 1919, under the French rule, Kesab was made part of Antioch Kaza as a separate nahie the jurisdiction of which spread to all the Armenian-inhabited villages of the district, except Veri (Upper) Paghjaghaz

and Vari (Lower) Paghjaghaz, as well as to the Turkish village of Muselek.<sup>5</sup>

In 1939 the sanjak of Alexandreta, Antioch Kazan, was incorporated into Turkey (Kesab District excluded), as a result of which, part of the estates of the population of the district appeared within Turkish territories, according to the newly-specified borders. Likewise, the most important mountains of the district, the Cassius and the Pallum, shifted into Turkish possession.<sup>6</sup>

In 1955 the villages of Veri (Upper) Paghjaghaz and Vari (Lower) Paghjaghaz were included in the district centre of Kesab.<sup>7</sup>

Kesab remained a purely Armenian-inhabited district until the mid-19th century. The local inhabitants were followers of different religious denominations: Apostolic, Evangelical (officially recognised in 1853), Catholic (officially recognised in 1857) and Latin (officially recognised in 1890).<sup>8</sup> In 1946 those adhering to the Latin Church merged into the Catholic community.<sup>9</sup>

The Armenian population of the district considerably diminished after the massacres of 1909, the Genocide of 1915 and the repatriation of 1947. In the 1960s, the Arab Alawis who had been working for the influential Armenians of Kesab for almost a century came to replace them as the inhabitants of the district: taking advantage of the state legislation, they assumed possession of some estates and took up permanent residence there, continuing their peaceful co-existence with the local Armenians.

According to the population census of 1906, the district of Kesab had 1,318 purely Armenian houses, including 678 Apostolic, 531 Evangelical, 66 Catholic and 43 Latin ones. The Apostolic Armenians had 2 schools and the Evangelicals 11. The Catholics and Latins together had 3 schools.

The district centre of Kesab had an Armenian population of 450 Apostolic, 320 Evangelical and 30 Catholic houses. The Apostolics had a single school for boys, and the Evangelicals 2 primary, 1 secondary and 2 unisex higher ones.

1 Չոլաքեանի Յ., Էրուսը [H. Cholakian, Kesab], vol. 3 (Aleppo, 2004), 61.

2 Ibid., vol. 1 (Aleppo, 1995), 45.

3 Ibid., vol. 3, 68.

4 Ibid., vol. 1, 49.

5 Ibid., vol. 3, 63.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., vol. 1, 143.

8 Ibid., 51.

9 Ibid., 389.



Kesab



For the villages of the district, the results of this population census were as follows:

Garaturan: 120 Apostolic, 48 Evangelical and 12 Catholic houses, with a school belonging to each of these communities;

Sev Aghbyur: 25 Apostolic, 21 Evangelical and 4 Catholic houses with a single functioning school for the Evangelicals;

Nerkin (Lower): 17 Apostolic, 5 Evangelical and 8 Catholic houses;

Chinar: 28 Apostolic, 10 Evangelical and 12 Catholic houses with a single school for the Catholics and Latins together;

Chakaljek: 20 Apostolic and 45 Evangelical houses with a single school belonging to the Evangelicals;

Korkyune: 10 Apostolic and 28 Evangelical houses with a single school for the Evangelicals;

Ekizoluk: 50 Evangelical houses with a school;

Tyuzaghaj: 6 Apostolic and 9 Evangelical houses;

Veri (Upper) Paghjaghaz: 2 Apostolic and 15 Evangelical houses with a single school for the Evangelicals;

Vari (Lower) Paghjaghaz: 43 houses of Latins with a school.<sup>10</sup>

In April 1909, the Armenian villages of Kesab District were plundered and burnt, with their inhabitants being put to a massacre.<sup>11</sup> It is for this reason that the population census of 1911, carried out by Archimandrite Movses Voskerichian, shows their number as decreased by 10.31 %, as compared to the data available for 1906.

This census revealed the following statistical picture of the Armenian population of the district: Kesab City - 543 houses; Pashort - 13, Garaturan - 237, Sev

Aghbyur - 71, Nerkin (Lower) - 33, Chinar - 38, Chakaljeke - 25, Korkyune - 67, Ekizoluk - 59, Tyuzaghaj - 22, Veri (Upper) Paghjaghaz - 22,<sup>12</sup> and Vari (Lower) Paghjaghaz - supposedly about 52.<sup>13</sup> To summarise, in 1911 the district of Kesab had a population of 1,182 houses.

As of 1911, the Apostolics of the district had 7, the Evangelicals 8, and the Catholics and Latins together 4 schools. In the district centre of Kesab, the Apostolics had a single unisex school, and the Evangelicals 2 schools one of which was a higher unisex institution and the other a female one. The Catholics and Latins together had a single unisex school.

The picture of schools in different villages was as follows:

Garaturan: 2 for the Apostolics, a unisex one for the Evangelicals and another for the Catholics and Latins together;

Sev Aghbyur: a school for each of the Apostolic and Evangelical communities;

Nerkin: a single school belonging to the Apostolics;

Chinar: a school for the Apostolics and another for the Catholics and Latins together;

Chakaljeke, Korkyune and Ekizoluk: a school for the Evangelicals in each of them;

Tyuzaghaj: a school for the Apostolics;

Veri (Upper) Paghjaghaz: a school for the Evangelicals;

Vari (Lower) Paghjaghaz: a school for the Latins.<sup>14</sup>

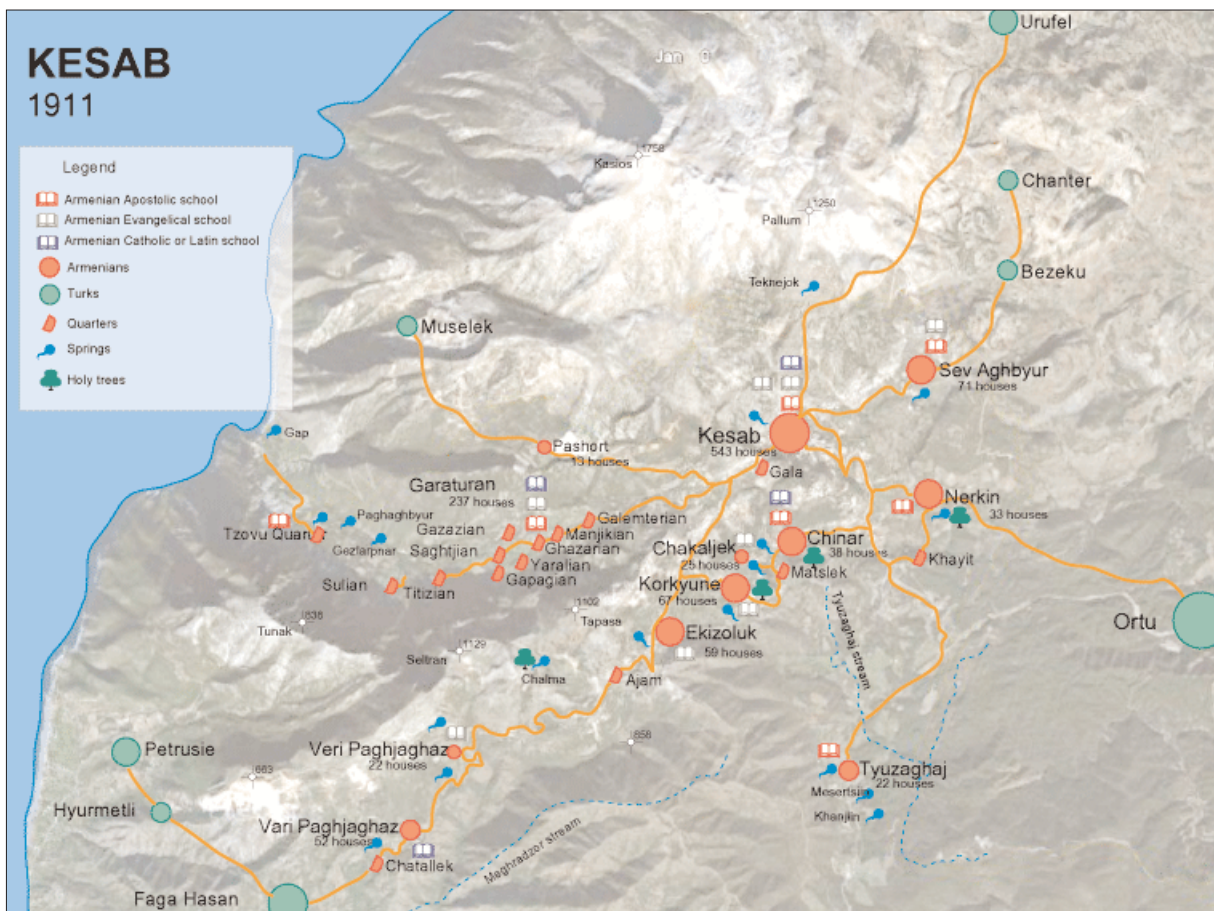
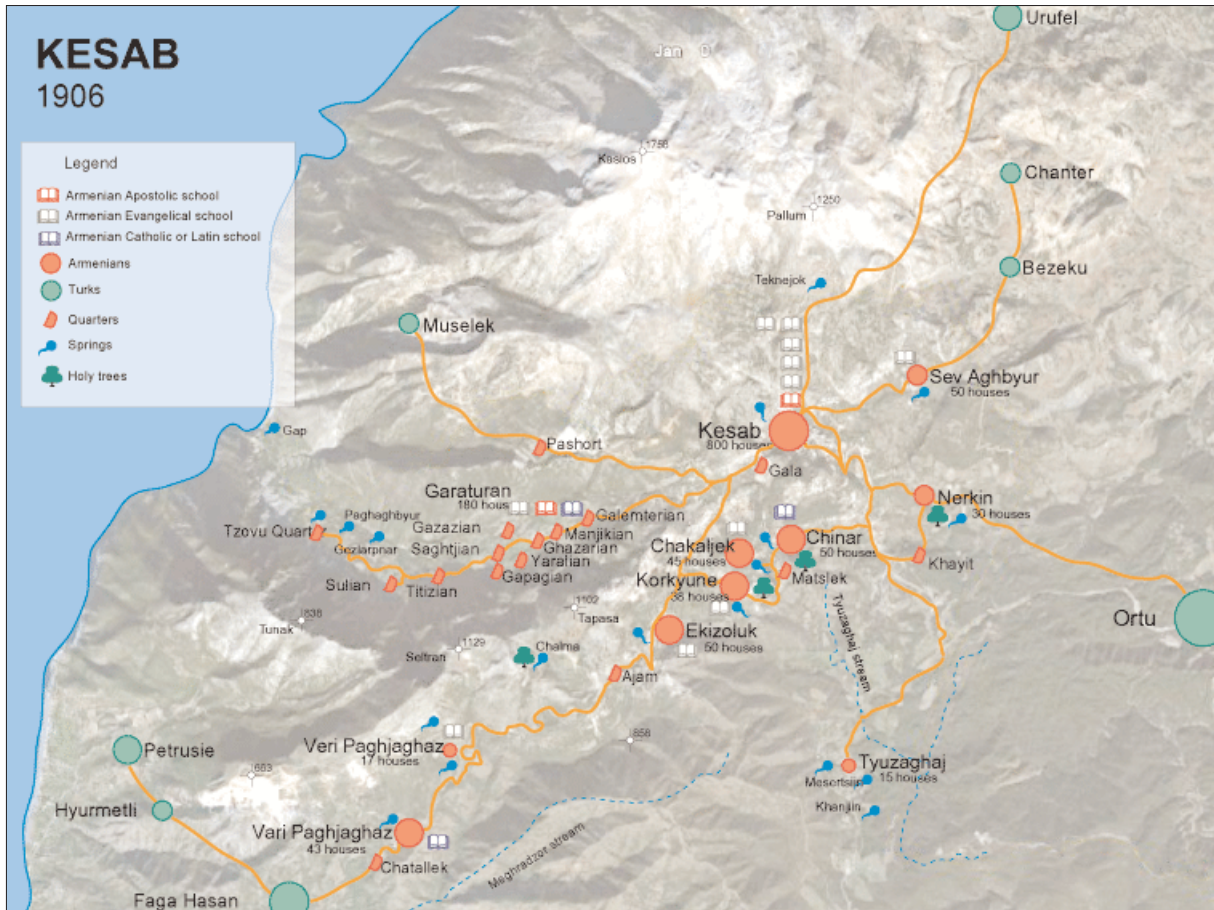
<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 351, 422, 436, 440, 442, 444-445, 449, 454-455.

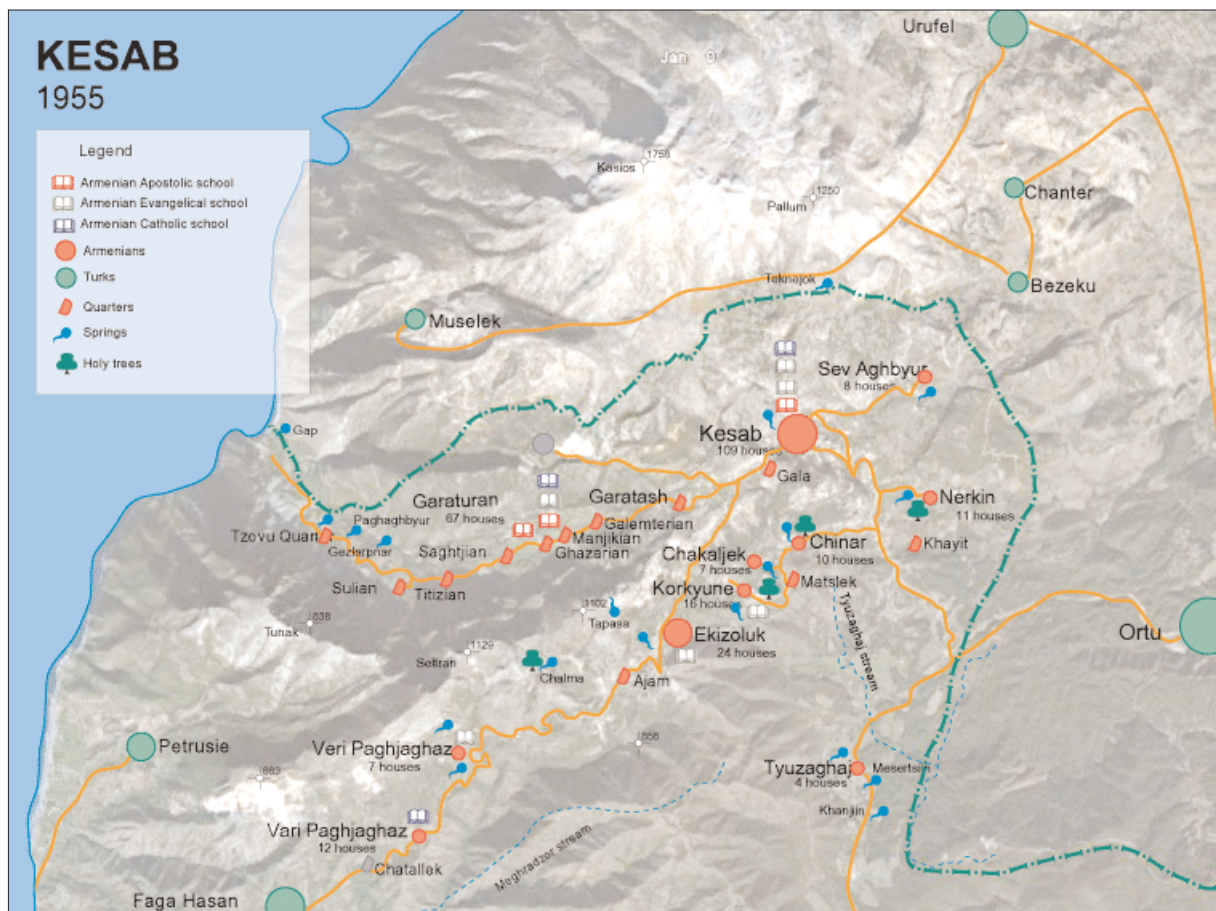
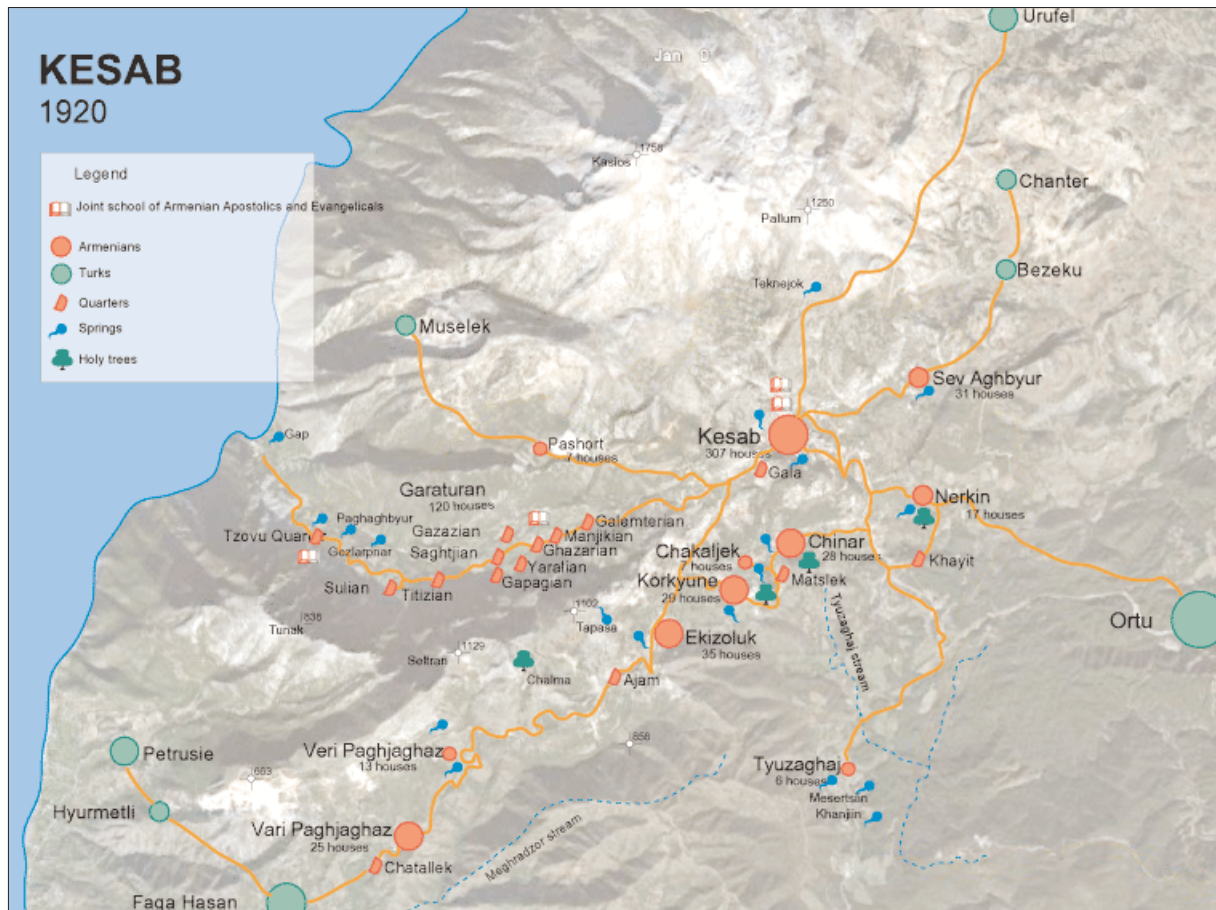
<sup>13</sup> Archimandrite Movses Voskerichian shows the number of the population of Vari (Lower) Paghjaghaz as merged in that of Faga-Hasan (**Cholakian**, vol. 1, 392) so that there are no exact data regarding their number. We have provided the number of the village population for 1911 taking into account the process of the growth of the inhabitants of Veri (Upper) Paghjaghaz in 1906 and 1911.

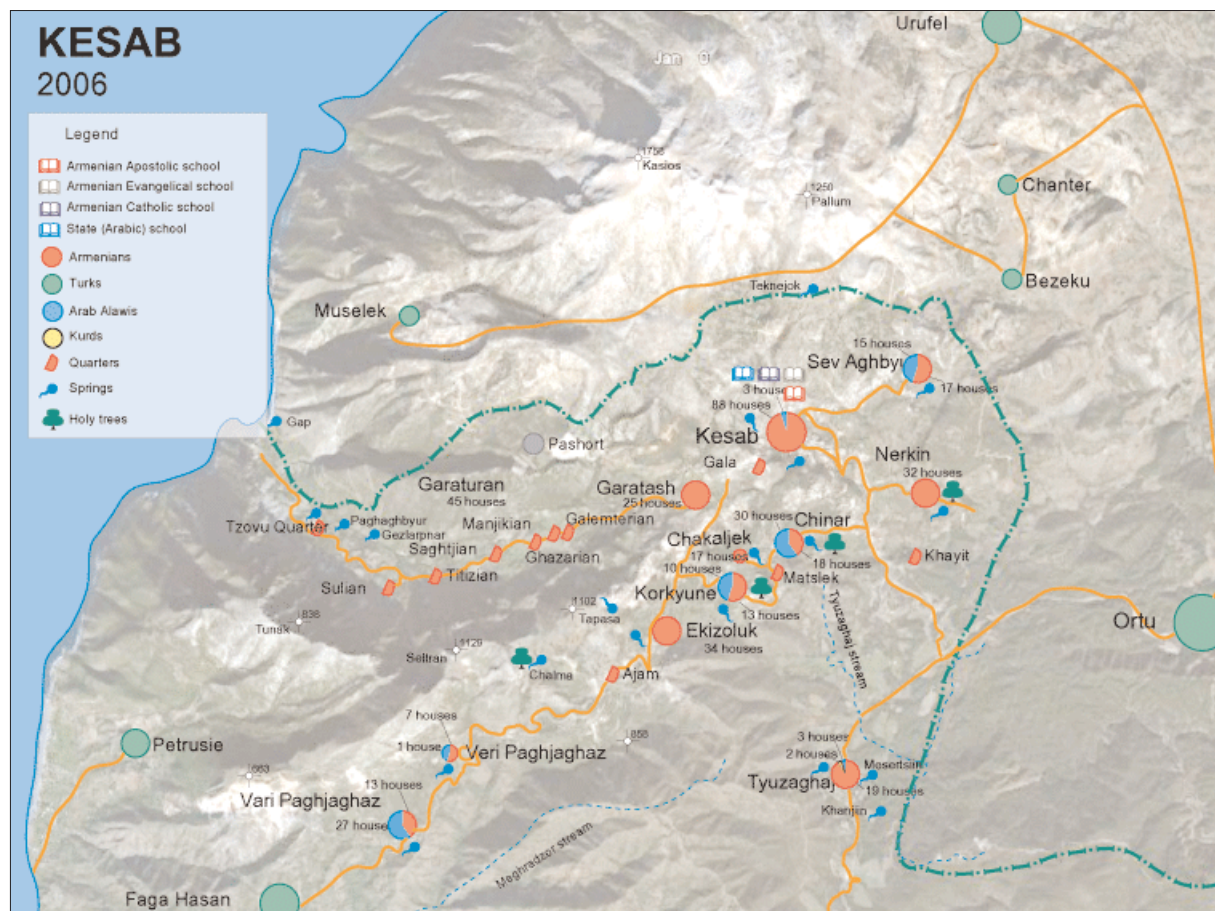
<sup>14</sup> **Cholakian**, *ibid.*, 242, 249, 253, 316, 318, 320-321, 335, 343, 347-348, 351, 361, 370, 378, 382, 391.

<sup>10</sup> «Արևելեան մամուլ» [*Arevelian Mamul*], no. 50 (1906), 1228-1231.

<sup>11</sup> **Cholakian**, vol. 1, 91-94.







The comparison of the data available for 1906 and 1911 shows that school building activity became especially wide-spread among the Apostolic Armenians of the district after the disaster of 1909.

In 1915 the population of Kesab was subjected to a deportation and a slaughter. After 1918 those who had had a miraculous escape from the massacres started returning to their native villages. The population census carried out by Simon Ayanian in 1920 clearly showed that the number of the inhabitants of the district had decreased by 47.1 %, as compared with that of 1911.

According to this census data,<sup>15</sup> the district centre of Kesab had a population of 307 houses; Sev Aghbyur 31, Nerkin 17, Chinar 28, Chakaljeke 7, Korkyune 29, Ekizoluk 35, Tyuzaghaj 6, Veri (Upper) Paghjaghaz 13, Vari (Lower) Paghjaghaz 25,<sup>16</sup> Garaturan approximately 120, and Pashort 7 ones.<sup>17</sup> On the whole, in 1920 Kesab District had a population of 625 houses.

In 1920 the Evangelicals and Apostolics of the district had 4 schools together: a male and a female one in the district centre and 2 in Garaturan.<sup>18</sup>

In 1921 the Catholics started building schools. After 1924 the collaboration of the Apostolics and Evangelicals in the sphere of education came to an end, and each of these communities continued its activity independently.

In 1947 around two thirds of the district population repatriated to Soviet Armenia as a result of which, the village of Pashort was left totally uninhabited,<sup>19</sup> and the schools which had reopened during 1920 to 1946 began closing one after another.

The population census of 1955<sup>20</sup> showed that the number of the inhabitants of the district had diminished by 56 %, as compared to the data for 1920.

According to its results, the district centre of Kesab had 109<sup>21</sup> houses, Garaturan 67, Sev Aghbyur 8,

<sup>15</sup> Simon Ayanian presents the number of all the inhabitants of Kesab who lived in the district and outside it as of 1920, but we have given that of only those inhabitants who lived in Kesab in the same year.

<sup>16</sup> Cholakian, vol. 3, 237-291.

<sup>17</sup> The results of the population census of 1920 carried out by Simon Ayanian do not include data for the villages of Garaturan and Pashort: we think that the document containing this information has not come down to us or no census was conducted there for some reason or another (ibid., 233-234). We do not have trustworthy information regarding these places and have offered the statistical evidence for 1920 by comparing the decrease of the population in the other villages of the district in 1911.

<sup>18</sup> Cholakian, vol. 1, 245, 318-319.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>20</sup> During the population census of 1955, the inhabitants of the district were registered by the number of souls. As the previous censuses represent that of houses, we have divided the number of souls registered in 1955 by 6, thus getting that of houses in each village.

<sup>21</sup> Cholakian, vol. 1, 138. We have got the number of the population of Kesab District Centre by extracting that of the inhabitants of all the villages from the total of the district population.



Nerkin 11, Chinar 10, Chakaljek 7, Korkyune 16, Ekizoluk 24, Tyuzaghaj 4, Veri (Upper) Paghjaghaz 7, and Vari (Lower) Paghjaghaz 12 ones.<sup>22</sup> On the whole, in 1955 the district had a population of 275 houses.

In the same year, the Apostolic Armenians of Kesab District had 3, the Evangelicals 6, and the Catholics 3 schools.

The district centre had 2 schools belonging to the Evangelicals, and one for each of the Apostolic and Catholic communities.

The Apostolics of Garaturan had 2 schools, each of the local Evangelical and Catholic communities having one.

The Evangelicals had a single school in each of the villages of Korkyune, Ekizoluk and Veri (Upper) Paghjaghaz, and the Latins had one in Vari (Lower) Paghjaghaz.<sup>23</sup>

In the 1960s, part of the population of the district emigrated to Lebanon, thence to the USA and later to the United Arab Emirates. As already stated above, during the same period, the Arab Alawis took possession of the Armenians' estates and assumed permanent residence in Kesab.

Fortunately, the scale of emigration decreased in the 1970s thanks to the fact that Kesab had become a tourism centre and a place of summer residence for the Armenians of Aleppo.

Between 1990 and 2000, the district grew into one of the high-class tourism centres in Syria, thanks to which, the local population manifested numerical increase for the first time in the 20th century.

During our visit to Kesab in 2006, the population of its villages represented the following picture:

	<i>Armenians</i>	<i>Alawis</i>	<i>Kurds</i>
Kesab District Centre	88	3	
Garaturan	45		
Garatash	25		
Ekizoluk	34		
Nerkin (Lower) Village	32		
Chinar	18	30	
Chakaljek	17		
Sev Aghbyur	17	15	
Vari (Lower) Paghjaghaz	13	27	
Veri (Upper) Paghjaghaz	7	1	
Tyuzaghaj	19	3	2
Korkyune	13	10	
<i>Total</i>	<i>328</i>	<i>89</i>	<i>2</i>

In the same year (2006), the Armenians of the district represented the following statistical picture from the standpoint of religious identity: Apostolics - 212 houses, Catholics - 71, and Evangelicals - 45.



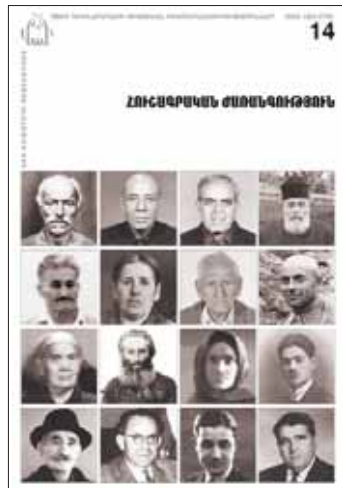
The villages of Ekizoluk, Garaturan and Korkyune

The district centre had a single school belonging to the Apostolics with 250 Armenian and 20 Alawi pupils. The Evangelicals had a school with 45 Armenian and 15 Alawi pupils, and the Catholics a state school and another with 40 Armenian and 20 Alawi pupils.<sup>24</sup>

22 Cholakian, vol. 1, 281, 334, 340, 347, 351, 358, 366, 377, 381, 390.

23 Ibid., 239, 247, 252, 255, 315, 319-320, 322, 361, 372, 383, 391.

24 We owe the statistical data for 2006 to the late Abraham Ashagian from Ekizoluk and his wife Khatun Ashagian, who knew the inhabitants of all the villages name by name.



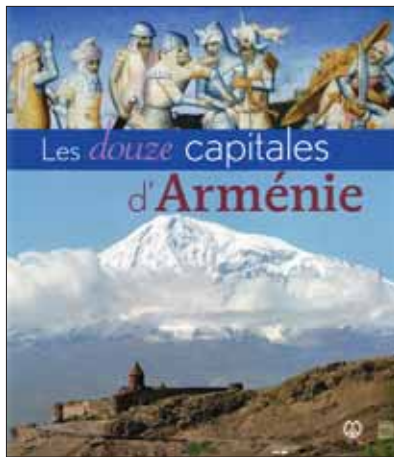
## NEW RAA PUBLICATION

*Collected Memoirs*—this is the 14th volume of the RAA Scientific Research Series published early in 2011 under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia.

It presents the heretofore unpublished memoirs of 19 survivors of the 1915 Genocide who were mostly natives of Western Armenia. The book provides ample information on different events marking the recent period of the history of the Armenian Homeland and the Armenian nation.

## CONGRATULATIONS

Armen Kyurkchian and Hrayr-Baze Khacherian have published their joint research entitled *Armenian Ornamental Art*. Particularly remarkable for the unusually rich and coordinated information it contains, it is a serious contribution to further studies of Armenian art and culture.



Armen Mutafian and Patrick Tonapetian have published their joint work devoted to the 12 capitals of Armenia, *Les douze capitales d'Arménie* (Paris, 2010).

We extend our gratitude to the Committee of the Armenian Cultural Centre of Marseilles in the person of Gerard Shaljian for providing the RAA library with a copy of this book.

Doctor of Architecture Murad Hasratian, Head of the Department of Architecture of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, has published his three-language work entitled *Early Christian Architecture of Armenia* (Moscow, 2010). Abounding in measurements and photographs, it is a major contribution to the study of the history and theoretical aspect of Armenian architecture.



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RAA Foundation expresses its gratitude to the Ohanians for their donation of over 200 books on Armenian Studies and art history to the RAA library.

Apart from its great value and usefulness in our everyday work, that collection is also of special significance to us as it will keep our senior friend and great patriot Aram Ohanian's (Karmir Aram) memory ever living in our hearts.

Our thanks are also due to artist Arthur Khachatrian, who made another donation of over thirty books on Armenian art and culture history to the RAA library.

The members of RAA extend their cordial thanks to linguist Artem Sargissian, the editor-in-chief of the Dictionary of the Dialects of the Armenian Language (in Armenian), for presenting our library with its first 6 volumes.

We are very grateful to Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and particularly, the Head of its Armenian Department, Dr. Zaven Yegavian, for sponsoring the publication of the present issue of the Vardzk periodical.



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