

ISSN 1829-2003

ՎԱՐՁԱՐ



ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ԵՄՍԱՐԿՆԵՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՂ ԿԱԶՄԱԿԵՐՊՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
RESEARCH ON ARMENIAN ARCHITECTURE

DUTY OF SOUL

5 ՀՈՒՆՎԱՐ - ՄԱՐՏ 2012
N 5 JANUARY - MARCH 2012



Ashot Hakobian

**THE HERMITAGE OF
ST. GREGORY OF NAREK**

p. 21

Raffi Kortoshian

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



p. 1

Samvel Karapetian

THE ACCIDENTAL FIRES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

p. 11

Emma Abrahamian

THE PANTHEON OF MAHLAM



p. 15

Ashot Hakobian

THE HERMITAGE OF ST. GREGORY OF NAREK



p. 21

Samvel Karapetian

SOURB ASTVATZAMOR MONASTERY OF ZAREHAVAN (DERIK)



p. 33

Gagik Sargissian & Alexan Hakobian

THE NEWLY-UNEARTHED CITY SITE OF KARKAR IN ARTSAKH



p. 43

Samvel Karapetian

THE DISTORTION OF MONUMENTS IN OUR DAYS



p. 60



N 5 JANUARY - MARCH 2012

**ԳԼԽԱՎՈՐ ԽՄԱԳԻՐ
ՍԱՄՎԵԼ ԿԱՐՊԵՏՅԱՆ**

Editor-in-chief
SAMVEL KARAPETIAN

**ԽՄԱԳՐԱԿԱԶՄ
ԷՄՄԱ ԱԲՐԱԴՅԱՆՅԱՆ**

ԽՄԱԳԻՐ Editor
EMMA ABRAHAMIAN

ՀԱՍՄԻԿ ՀՈԿՀԱՆՆԻՍՅԱՆ

ԽՄԱԳԻՐ-ՍՐԲԱԳՐԻԶ
Proof-reader (Armenian text)
HASMIK HOVHANNISSIAN

ԳԱՅԱՆԵ ՄՈՎՍԻՍՅԱՆ

ԹԱՐԳՄԱՆԻԶ Translator
GAYANE MOVSISSIAN

ԱՐՄԵՆ ԳԵՎՈՐԳՅԱՆ

ՀԱՄԱԿԱՐԳՁԱՅԻՆ ԶԵՎԱԿՈՐՈՂ
Designer
ARMEN GEVORGIAN

ԼՐԱՏՎԱԿԱՆ ԳՈՐԾՈՒՆԵՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ԻՐԱԿԱՆԱՅՏՈՂ
**ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՃԱՐՏԱՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
ՈՒՄՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՂ ՀԻՄՆԱԴՐԱՄ**

RESEARCH ON ARMENIAN
ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION
Engaged in informational Activity

ՎԿԱՅԱԿԱՆ N 03U089223

ՏՐՎԱԾ 13.10.2010

Certificate No. 03U089223
Given 13.10.2010

ՀԱՄԱՐԻ ԹՈՂԱՐԿՄԱՆ

ՊԱՏԱՍԽԱՆԱՏՈՒ

ՍԱՄՎԵԼ ԿԱՐՊԵՏՅԱՆ

Responsible for this issue
SAMVEL KARAPETIAN

ՏՊԱԳՐԿԵԼ Է

«ԲՅՈՒՐԱԿՆ» ՀՐԱՏԱՐԱԿԶԱՏԱՆԸ

Printed by
BYURAKN Publishing House

ՏՊԱՔԱՆԱԿԸ` 1000

Number of copies: 1000

ԵՐԵՎԱՆ, ԲԱՂՐԱՄՅԱՆ 24Գ

Baghramian 24g, Yerevan, RA

<http://www.armenianarchitecture.am>

<http://www.raa.am>

✉ raayer@sci.am

☎ 010 52 15 25

© ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՃԱՐՏԱՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
ՈՒՄՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՂ ՀԻՄՆԱԴՐԱՄ

© Research on Armenian Architecture

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

by Raffi Kortoshian

See the beginning of the article in the previous issue

7

As of 2008, the castle of Balu had an information board (No. 7, photo by Samvel Karapetian) with the following texts:

(in Turkish)

Palu kalesi
(Urartu dönemi)
(M.Ö.9.-M.Ö.600 y.y)

Kaya üzerine inşa edilen yapı, Urartular devrinde kral Menuas tarafından yaptırılmıştır. Kale üzerinde görülen dış surlar ve bazı yapı kalıntıları, moloz taş kullanılmıştır. Daha sonraki devirlerde onarım görmüştür. Çivi yazısından oluşan kaya kitabe Urartu Kralı Menuas'a aittir. Kalenin güney-doğu yönündeki dış surun bir bölümü ile bazı yapı kalıntıları mevcuttur. İçten kindik taşında son bulan gizli bir kanal ve "Ali gelmez" denilen Murat nehrine açılan, kısmen açık kanal taş merdivenli bir yolu vardır. Urartu kitabesi

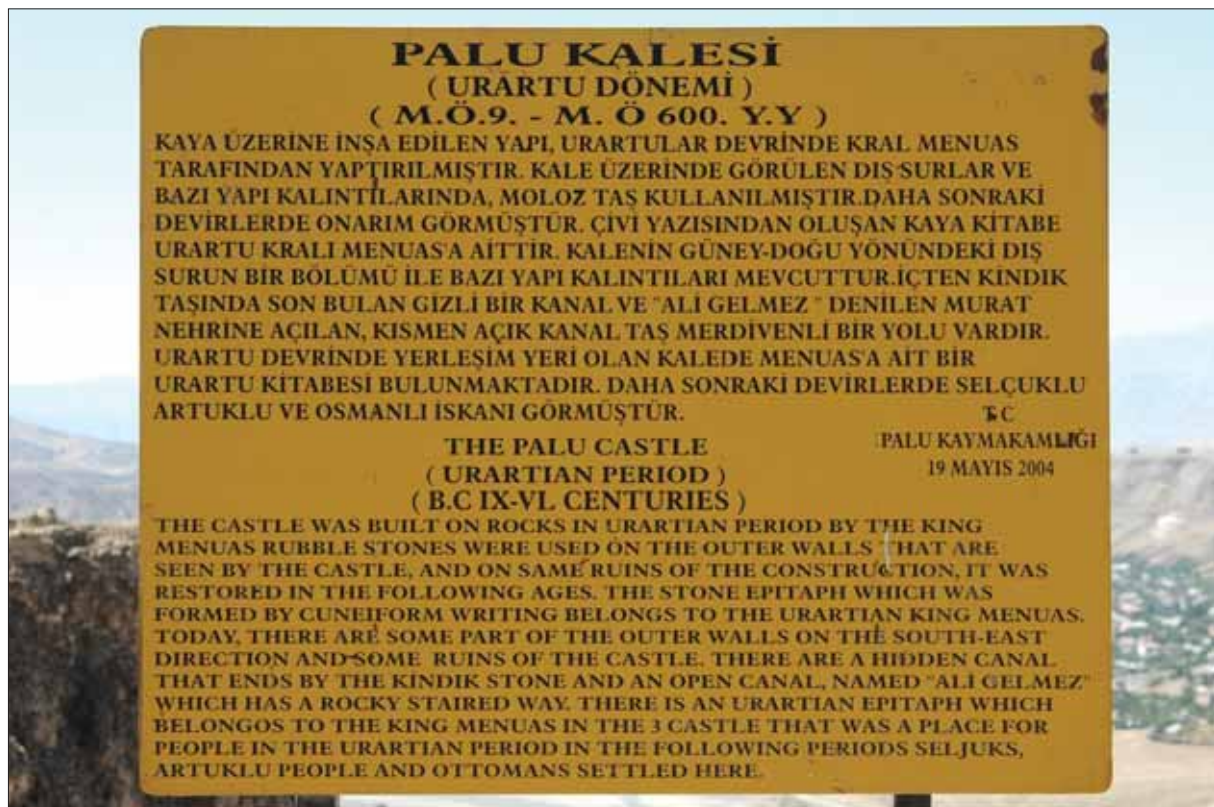
bulunmaktadır. Daha sonraki devirlerde Selçuklu, Artuklu ve Osmanlı iskanı görmüştür.

T.C

Palu kaymakamlığı
19 Mayıs 2004

(in English)

The castle was built on rocks in Urartian period by the king Menuas rubble stones were used on the outer walls that are seen by the castle, and on same ruins of the construction. it was restored in the following ages. The stone Epitaph which was formed by cuneiform writing belongs to the Urartian king Menuas. Today, there are some part of the outer walls on the south-east direction and some ruins of the castle. there are a hidden canal that ends by the Kindik stone and an open canal, named "Ali Gelmez" Which has a rocky staired way. There is an Urartian Epitaph which belongs to the king Menuas in the 3 castle that was a place for people in the Urartian period in the following periods Seljuks, Artuklu people and Ottomans settled here.



Board No. 7

Transl. from Turkish: Balu Castle

Urartian period

(9 B.C. to 600 B.C.)

It was built on a rock by King of Urartu Menua. Its ramparts and several structures preserved there are erected of undressed stones. The stronghold underwent repairs in different periods. The cuneiform rock writing belongs to Urartian King Menua. The surviving parts comprise the north-eastern section of the outer ramparts, and several buildings inwardly. It has an interior underground passageway which ends with stones of the type of *kindik*. There is another subterranean passage of cut-in-rock steps leading to the river Murat and called Ali Gelmez (part of it is outside). Later the castle was inhabited by Seljuks, the Artukhlu and Ottomans.

Note: According to the text, in the post-Urartian period, the territory in question was inhabited by Seljuks, the Artukhlu and Ottomans.

First and foremost, we should differentiate among the state entities which established their rule in this area and the people who lived within each of them, for irrespective of the dominating force, Armenians always outnumbered the other nations inhabiting the Armenian Highland. The only exception is the recent fifty-year period, when the number of the natives of the country diminished in certain places from time to time in the aftermath of incessant pressure and slaughters. According to Teroyants, the Armenians grew fewer and fewer in the city of Balu "...with every single passing day..." beginning with the year 1870: "...almost one fifth of the Armenian population has emigrated..."¹

During the massacres of 1895, 1,200 Armenians were killed in the city.²

In 1915 all the Armenians of Balu were deported, and only very few of them survived.

Most presumably, the city remained purely Armenian-inhabited (without regard of the Arab army unit stationed in the local castle between the 8th and 9th centuries) until the late 12th century, when Tornikian Principality fell.

In 1613 Simeon Lehatsy (the *Pole*) wrote: "...I reached the township of Balu with a great number of Armenian villages... And it had a lofty and impregnable castle... And there were 8 Armenian churches there, new and finely-built of stone, together with a Kurdish mosque that was unclean and covered with straw, its walls made up of rope."³

Given the fact that Balu had 8 large Armenian churches and a small Kurdish mosque as of 1613, we may state that it remained mostly Armenian-inhabited at that time.

In 1880 the fortress town had a population of 585 Armenian and 500 Muslim houses.⁴

Balu had 3,500 Muslim and 1,700 Armenian inhabitants in 1892,⁵ and 2,500 Armenians with 7,500 Muslims in 1897.⁶

Before World War I, it had 780 Armenian and 450 Muslim houses.⁷

The aforementioned information board neglects the time-span between the Urartian period and the reign of the Artukhlu, but we shall bridge that gap below.

After the fall of the state of Urartu, the Armenian kingdom of Armina (Hayk, i.e. Armenia) was established in the region. In 520 B.C., Dareh I invaded and conquered the region which remained part of the Achaemenid State until 330 B.C.⁸ Between 330 and 202 B.C., it was included in the Armenian kingdom of the Orontids,⁹ after which, from 202 until 189 B.C., it was subject to the Seleucids.¹⁰

In 189 B.C. to 1 A.D., the region was incorporated in the Armenian kingdom of the Artashessids,¹¹ after the fall of which, Rome and the Parthians started struggling for political influence in Armenia Maior, each of the sides attempting to nominate his own protegee there.¹² Finally, in 66 A.D., when the independent Armenian kingdom of the Arshakids was established, Balu became part of it.¹³

Balahovit (Balu) was one of the autonomous principalities of South Armenia and was subject to the Arshakids until their fall in 428, after which all of these entities became independent, each with its own armed forces that consisted of the natives of the country, namely the Armenians. During the revolt against Emperor Zenon (485), the majority of them took the rebels' side, except the principality of Balahovit. Later, when Zenon succeeded in crushing the mutiny, he punished all the rebel princes, while those of Balahovit retained their rights. This situation was preserved until

1 Տերոյեանց Մ., Բալու, «Արարք», (1894-1895), 1897, գիրք Բ, էջ 38:

2 Հայ ժողովրդի պատմություն (henceforward: ՀԺՊ), հ. 6, Երևան, 1981, էջ 267-268:

3 Սիմեոն Լեհացի, Ուղեգրություն, Երևան, 1997, էջ 117:

4 Նաթանեան Պ., Արտուր Հայաստանի կամ Տեղեկագիր Բալուայ, Քարբերդու, Չարսանճագի, Ճապաղ ջուրի եւ Երզնկայու, Կ. Պոլիս, 1883, էջ 30, 32:

5 Փափազեան Տ., Պատմություն Բալահովիտի, Նյու Եորք, 1963, էջ 14-15:

6 Տերոյեանց Մ., idem, p. 38.

7 Հալաջյան Գ., Հայ ազգագրություն և քանահյուսություն, № 5, Երևան, 1973, էջ 77:

8 ՀԺՊ, հ. 1, Երևան, 1971, էջ 435, 438-439, 444, 446, 504:

9 Idem, pp. 501, 504, 508, 521.

10 Idem, pp. 516, 521, 526.

11 Հայկական սովետական հանրագիտարան (henceforward: ՀՍՀ), հ. 2, Երևան, 1976, էջ 140:

12 ՀԺՊ, հ. 1, էջ 703-743: Also see ՀՍՀ, հ. 2, էջ 107.

13 ՀՍՀ, հ. 2, էջ 107-108:

529, when Emperor Justinian I struck a final blow to the last remnants of the independent Armenian principalities.¹⁴

Between the 8th and 9th centuries, Balahovit was subject to the Arab Caliphate together with entire Armenia. As a border zone, the district of Shimshat, where the city of Balu was located, was an independent entity under the Abassids and had its own Military Governor.¹⁵

As of 885, Balu formed part of the Bagratid Principality of Taron and admitted the supremacy of the Armenian kingdom of the Bagratids.¹⁶ Later, in the 970s, it was under the control of the Byzantine Empire.¹⁷

After the fall of the Bagratids of Taron, Tornikian Principality was founded in the same territories:¹⁸ it did not recognise the Byzantine Empire and preserved its independence.

During the Seljuk incursions, the princes Tornikian fought them successfully and escaped subjugation. According to historiographer Matthew of Edessa, their army defeated the Seljuks at the battle fought at the foot of the Taurus mountains in 1056. The Tornikians held possession of Sasun, Japaghjur and Ashmushat. The period of their powerful reign came to an end after 1184, their principality being confined to the mountain regions of Sasun.¹⁹

8

In 2006 we saw an information board near the entrance to the church of the fortress town of Balu (board No. 8). In 2008 we found it removed from its original place and lying on the ground near the monument.

Its Turkish text reads:

Kilise
(Bizans İmparatorluğu dönemi)
(475-1453)

Kesin tarihi bilinmemekle beraber bir Bizans eseridir. Kilisenin yalnız naos kısmı ayaktaadır. Diğer kısımları yıkılmıştır. Kare planlı mekanın üzeri kubbe ile örtülüdür. Kubbe, bu gün yıkıktır. Sadece kubbe kasnağı mevcuttur. Kubbe, kasnağında yuvarlak kemerli pencereler yer alır. Kubbeye geçiş pantatiflerle

sağlanır. Kubbeyi taşıyan dört kemer, payelerle oturulmuştur. Derin, dışarı taşkın apsisi üzeri yarım, kubbe önü ise tonozla örtülüdür.

Duvar frekleri apsisi, kemeri yazı firizlidir. Tonoza yakın kısımda iki kanatlı melek, kemerin alt köşesinde sağda Hz. Meryem, solda Hz. Cebrail motifi vardır. Apsisin yarım kubbesinde Hz. İsa tasviri tamamen harap olmuştur. Apsis önü tonoz ortasında ise, güneş tasviri yer almaktadır. Kubbe kasnağında iki pencere, aralarında ise, aziz tasvirleri pantatiflerde ise 4 incilin yazar figürü görülür.

T.C
Palu kaymakamlığı
19 Mayıs 2004

The English text says:

Church
(Byzantium period)
(475-1453)

Though when it was built is unknown, it is abyzantine master. Only the naos part of the church has come to our time. Other parts had collapsed. The square shaped place is covered with a dome This dome is collapsed now. There is only a dome hoop at present. There are windows with circle arches on the dome hoop. Passing through the dome is by means of pendentive. The four arches carrying the dome are put in ranks. The arch which is deep and extending out wards is half and front part of the dome is covered with vault. The wall presgoes: The abscisca and arch are writing frieze. Are an angel with two wings near the vault, vingin Mary at the bottom, on the right corner and on the left a motif of archangel Gabriel. The motif of Christ is completely ruind. In the middle part of the vault which is in front of the abscisca, there is a description of the sun. There are two windows on the dome hoop; between them are the descriptions of the saints and on the pendentives we see the figures of writers of the four ribles.

Transl. from Turkish: Church
Period of Byzantine Empire
(475 to 1453)

The exact year of its construction is unknown, but it is a Byzantine monument. Only its nave is preserved while the rest of it has been reduced to ruins. This section, which has a rectangular plan, used to be crowned with a dome, but at present it is destroyed. Only its tambour is preserved standing, with arched windows on it. The passage towards the dome has been realised through pendentives. The four dome-bearing arches are covered with step-shaped cornices. The inner part of the outwardly accentuated apse is covered with a con-

¹⁴ ՀԺՊ, հ. 2, Երևան, 1984, էջ 219-221:

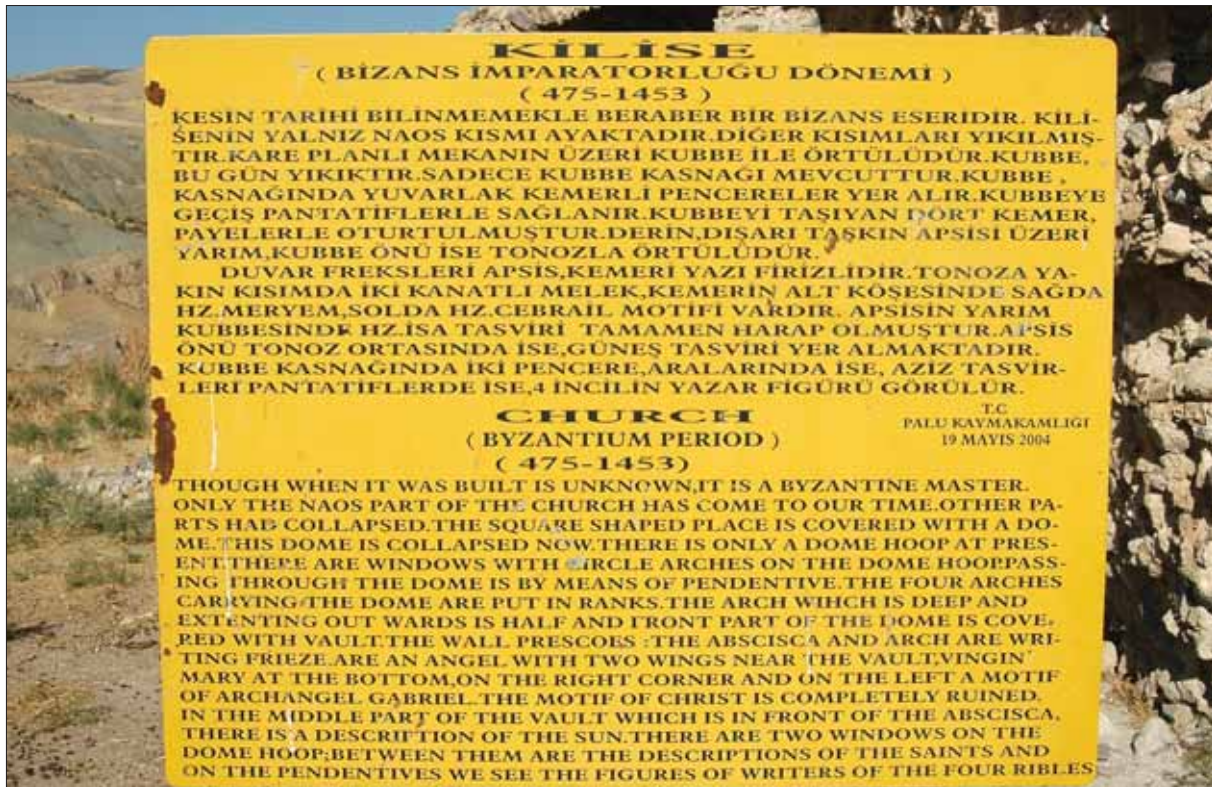
¹⁵ Idem, pp. 362-365.

¹⁶ **Գրիգորյան Գ.**, Տարոնի Բագրատունիների ֆեոդալական իշխանությունը IX-X դարերում, Երևան, 1983, էջ 116, 121-122:

¹⁷ Idem, p. 181.

¹⁸ **Պետրոսյան Վ.**, Սասունի Թռռնիկյան իշխանությունը. Հայկական ՍՍՌ գիտությունների ակադեմիայի տեղեկագիր, Երևան, 1955, № 2, էջ 85:

¹⁹ ՀԺՊ, հ. 1, էջ 435, 438-439, 444, 446, 504:



Board No. 8

cha, and its front part with a vault. The apse arch bears an inscription in painted characters. The sanctuary is embellished with murals: two winged angels are seen near the vault, with Holy Virgin Mary on the right side of the arch, Archangel Gabriel on its left side and the sun in its centre. The representation of Jesus on the concha has been thoroughly decomposed. There are other frescoes showing the apostles between the windows of the drum, with the 4 Evangelists on the pendentives.

Note: Indeed, the construction date of the church is unknown, but it is not a Byzantine monument, as said in the board. There exist an abundance of archive materials attesting that it is an Armenian sanctuary, but the principal factual evidence is the Armenian inscription engraved in painted letters on the arch of the church apse (see photos No. 1 & No. 2). The author of the board mentions it in the text, but he deliberately makes no reference to its being written in Armenian.

As reported by the available archive materials, the church was named St. Grigor Lusavorich (*Gregory the Enlightener*). It is mentioned as a scriptorium in the 17th century: in 1628 deacon Martiros wrote a *Collection of Motets* "...in St. Grigor of the city of Balu."²⁰

²⁰ Հայերեն ձեռագրերի ԺԷ դարի հիշատակարաններ, հ. Բ, կազմ.՝ Հակոբյան Վ., Հովհաննիսյան Ա., Երևան, 1978, էջ 303:

In 1647 scribe Tadevos copied a *Jarentir* "...under the protection of [Sourb] Lusavorich in the village town of Balu..."²¹

In 1652 scribe Tughman created a *Collection* "...under the auspices of St. Grigor Lusavorich in the village town of Balu..."²²

In 1653 the aforementioned scribe Martiros authored a *Calendar of Festivals* "...in St. Grigor, Balu City..."²³

It is only in 1788 that the sanctuary is mentioned as a functioning Armenian church.²⁴ Most presumably, its present-day building was erected in the site of an older church in the 19th century. A visitor who saw it in the early 1880s writes: "The church of the Holy Enlightener is newly-built, domed and cruciform..."²⁵ In the mid-1890s, divine service was held only in the churches of St. Grigor Lusavorich and Sourb Astvatzatzin (*Holy Virgin*) due to the paucity of the inhabitants of Balu. At that time, that of the Holy Enlightener, which stood near the market, in the heart of the city, was considered its Mother Church²⁶: "The

²¹ Հայերեն ձեռագրերի ԺԷ դարի հիշատակարաններ, հ. Գ, կազմ.՝ Հակոբյան Վ., Երևան, 1984, էջ 276:

²² Idem, p. 503.

²³ Idem, p. 580.

²⁴ Դիվան հայոց պատմության, նոր շարք, գիրք առաջին, հատոր Բ, Երևան, 2003, էջ 349:

²⁵ Նաբանեան Պ., idem, p. 33.

²⁶ Տրոյեանց Մ., Բալու, «Արար», 1897 (1894-95), եօթերորդ տարի, էջ 42:



Photographs by 1) Jean-Michel Thierry, 1970, & 2) Raffi Kortoshian, 2006

traveller in the distance first caught sight of the fine high dome of Sourb Lusavorich Church with the red tiles covering it.”²⁷

²⁷ Մարգիսեան Յ. (Ալեքս), Բալու. իր սովորոյթները, կրթ. ու իմաց. վիճակը եւ բարբառը, Գահիրէ, 1932, էջ 229:

Another visitor who saw the monument in the 1910s writes: “This church was of moderate dimensions, not very large. It was cruciform, more resembling a square. In the south, it had quite large windows. The admirable beauty of the magnificent church, which had absolutely no pillars, made it a splendid pearl, lux-

uriant and glorious in appearance—the more you watched its neat dome of equal proportions, its fascinating cross-carrier, radiant altars, and especially, its main apse, delicately-made, gilded and mysterious, the more their bewitching beauty struck you.”²⁸

9

In 2006 the following information board (No. 9) could be seen on the entrance to the castle of Van:

(in Turkish)

Van Kalesi

Kale M.Ö. 825 yılında Urartu Kralı Sardur 1 tarafından inşa edilmiştir. Urartular M.Ö. 900. 600. yılları arasında bölgede üstün bir medeniyet seviyesine ulaşmışlardır. O zamanki adı Tuşba olan Van Kalesi 100 yıl kadar Urartuların başkenti olmuştur. Kalede 12 mezar odası bir açık hava mabedi ve çivi yazılı kitabeler vardır. Urartulardan sonra kale Selçuklu'lar ve Osmanlı'lar tarafından kullanılmıştır. Bu dönemlerden kalede ve eskişehirde bir çok camii mevcuttur.

(in English)

Fortress

The fortress was built in 825 B.C. by the Urartian king Sardur 1. Urartu had ...theadan impressive level of civilization in the region between 900-600 B.C. The fortress was called Tuşba and it was the capital city for about hundred years there are 12 cravt chanbers an openair teple and in scriptions in cuneiform script within the fortress was used also by Selçuk and Ottoman from their time date several mosgues are surviving in the fortress and in the old town.

Transl. from Turkish: Castle of Van

It was built in 850 B.C. by King of Urartu Sarduri I. In 900 to 600 B.C., Urartians boasted a high level of civilisation in the region. At that time, the stronghold of Van was called Tushpa: it was the capital of Urartians for 100 years. It retains 12 cut-in-rock tombs, an open-air heathen temple and cuneiform inscriptions. After Urartians, the castle was used by Seljuks and Ottomans. Both the fortress and the old city preserve a great number of mosques dating from this period.

Note: The text says that after the fall of the Urartian State, the castle was used by Seljuks and Ottomans, but it omits the time-span between the fall of Urartu and the establishment of Seljuk rule. Below follow facts which bridge the gap deliberately created by the authors of the board.



Board No. 9

After the collapse of the Urartian State, the stronghold alternately belonged to the Armenian kingdom of Armina (Hayk, Armenia, until 520 B.C.); the Achaemenid State (between 520 and 330 B.C.), and the Armenian kingdom of the Orontids (from 330 to 202 B.C.). From 202 until 189 B.C., it was under the Seleucids' reign,²⁹ after which it shifted into the possession of the Artashessids (189 B.C. to 1 A.D.); the Armenian kingdom of the Arshakids (66 to 428),³⁰ and finally, the Arab Caliphate (8th century).³¹ Van was the centre of the Rshtunies' princely family until the revolt against the Arab domination in Armenia (it lasted from 774 until 775), after which it became the residence of the Artzrunies.

From 908 until 1016, Van was the capital of the Armenian kingdom of Vaspurakan.³² In 1016 King Senecherim yielded up the castle to the Byzantians: “465 (1016). King Senecherim of Vaspurakan surrendered Van to Greek (i.e. Byzantine) King Vasil, taking Suvaz instead and going there with his five sons.”³³ Later the Seljuks took possession of the fortress.

As for the numerous mosques of the castle and old city, mentioned in the information board, it should be pointed out that both the former and the latter also used to have a great number of churches some of which are still preserved. In 1891 the fortress had a mosque and a church, there also existing another 7 churches and 6 mosques within the ramparts of the old city.³⁴

²⁹ ՀԺՊ, h. 1, էջ 435, 438-439, 444, 446, 501, 504, 508, 516, 521, 526:

³⁰ ՀԱՀ, h. 2, էջ 107-108, 140:

³¹ ՀԺՊ, h. 2, էջ 362-365:

³² ՀԱՀ, h. 2, էջ 76:

³³ Դիւան հայոց պատմութեան, զիբր ժ, կազմ. Արամանց Գ., Թիֆլիս, 1912, էջ 123:

³⁴ V. Cuinet, La Turquie d'Asie, Géographie administrative, Paris, 1891, t. I, p. 693.

²⁸ Ibid.

10

In the late 1990s, Abughamrents Church of Ani had an information board (No. 10, photo by Zaven Sargissian) with the following texts:

(in Turkish)

Polatoğlu kilisesi (Abughamrents). Horasandan gelen Pahlavli byelerbeyi Abulamir tarafından yapılmıştır.

(in English)

The church Polatoğlu of Abughamrents. It was built in 994 A.D. by Pavlavli king Abulamir who was come from Horasan.

Transl. from Turkish: Polatoghlu Church (Abughamrents)

Built in 994 by Pahlavid Prince of Princes Abul-Amir from Khorasan.

Note: The year of the construction of the church and its founder's name are wrong.

A donation inscription of 994, carved on the entrance tympanum of the church, suggests that it must have been completed prior to this year.³⁵ Most presumably, it was erected in 980³⁶ by Armenian Prince Abughamer. Later, in 1040, his family sepulchre was built in the north of the church, its construction inscription stating the following: “In the year 489 (1040), I, Armenian Governor Apelgharip, the son and grandson of Armenian Princes Grigor and Apughamer respectively, despite my being ignored by my father due to my young age, built this sepulchre for my father Grigor and my brother Hamze and Hrimavoeda out of love of my parent, and constructed two chambers here dedicated to Sts. Stepanos and Grigor...” (the Armenian original reads: «Ի վին ՆՉԹ (1040), ես Ապղղարիպ հայոց մարզպան որդի Գրիգորի և ոռն Ապուղամրի հայոց իշխանաց, էպէտ և անտես էի ի հարբէ իմմէ, յազազս կրտսերութեան այլ հարկեցայ ի ծնաւորական սիրոյն և շինեցի զայս հանգրստարան հար իմոյ Գրիգորի և եղբարն իմոյ Համզէի և Հրիմաւոէդայի և շինեցի սենեակ Բ (2), սուրբ Ստեփաննոսի և սուրբ Գրիգորի...»)³⁷

As it is obvious that the information board of the church aims at misleading readers, we find it expedient to present Abughamer's family genealogy in full detail.

According to early records, the Armenian princely family of the Pahlavunies, who lived in medieval Armenia, descended from two family branches of the



Board No. 10

Parthian Arshakids, namely, the Surenian Pahlaviks and the Karenian Pahlaviks. After the fall of the Parthian Arshakids and the establishment of the new dynasty of the Sassanids, the Karenian Pahlaviks attempted to move to Armenia from Persia, but they were massacred on their way to their destination. Perozamat, who had survived the carnage, ran away to Middle Asia. In the late 3rd century, his son Kamsar came to Armenia, where he received estates in Yeraskhadzor and Shirak from King Trdat II and became the founder of the Armenian family branch of the Kamsarakans.

No reference is made to the Kamsarakan Pahlavunies (Pahlavids) after the first half of the 9th century, and it is only from the 10th century onwards that their descendants are mentioned. Prince Artak, who was Abughamer's father, is considered to be the ancestor of one of the principal branches of the Pahlavunies' new family.³⁸

11

In 2008 an information board (No. 11, photo by S. Karapetian) could be seen near the entrance to Kechor Castle with the following text in Turkish:

Keçivan Kalesi

M.Ö.650-M.S.16 yılları arasında, Kafkaslardan gelerek Aras boylarına yerleşen Saka Türkleri'nin hükümdarı Alp-Er Tunga'nın yaylaklarından olduğu rivayet edilen bu kalenin adı, çeşitli cenk hikayelerinde geçmektedir.

Arsaklılar döneminde, Artageyra adıyla da anılan Keçivan Kalesi, M.S.5 yılında Romalılara bağlanmıştır.

M.S.618 yıllarında, Kars bölgesinde adı bilinen bu tek şehir, Oğuzlar'dan Kamsarakan beyleri'nin malikhanesi olmuştur.

35 Անի-1050, հեղ.-կազմ.՝ Վարապետյան Ս., Երևան, 2011, էջ 77:

36 Բաամաջեան Կ. Յ., Անիի անցեալն ու ներկան, «Բազմավէպ», սեպտեմբեր, 1923, էջ 264:

37 Չարվանց Ս., Ճանապարհորդութիւն ի Մեծն Հայաստան, մասն Բ, Տիփսիս, 1853, էջ13:

38 ՀՄՀ, հ. 9, Երևան, 1983, էջ 98-99:



Board No. 11

Abbasi halifesi El Mustansır Billah hükmünde iken, Moğol Hulağu Han'ın Harapetli-İbüşehir, Karakoyunlu Karayusuf tarafından Mamur edilmiş, Timur tarafından tekrar yapılmıştır.

1579'da Osmanlılar'ın eline geçerek onarılan Keçivan Kalesi 1828 Türk-Rus savaşlarında kuşatılarak topraklarla yıkılmıştır.

Tek kapılı şehir ile anılan Keçivan Adı 1960 sonunda Tunçkaya olarak değiştirildi.

Transl.: Castle of Kechivan

[The site of] this fort is said to have been one of the pastures of Alper Tunga, the leader of Saka Turks (Iskit) who came from Caucasia and took up living in the Arax valleys between 650 B.C. and 16 A.D. It is mentioned in different heroic fairy tales.

It was also called 'Artageira' in the Arshaklies' times, and shifted into Roman rule in the 5th century.

In 618 A.D. it (namely, Kechror - translator) was the only city throughout the district of Kars the name of which was known. At that time, it belonged to the princes Kamsarakan descending from the Oghuz.

Under Caliph Abbasi El-Mustanser Billah, it was destroyed by Mongol Khan Hulaghu. Later Kara Yusuf of the Kara Koyunlu [tribe] renovated it, and Timur reconstructed it.

In 1579 the castle shifted into the Ottomans' rule and underwent repairs. During the Russo-Turkish war of 1828, it was sieged by the Russians and ruined by guns.

The name of 'Kechivan,' which is mentioned as a city with only a single gate, was changed into Tunçkaya in 1960.

Note: The first part of the text is but nonsense. The Sak (the Iskit), inhabiting the steppes of Middle Asia, never found their way to the Armenian Highland, this

being substantiated by information found in the Dictionary of the State Inspectorate of the Turkish Language: "The Iskit—a tribe which emigrated from Middle Asia to South Russia before the Common Era and founded an empire there."³⁹

The board mentions 'Artageira' as another designation of the castle (it is also called Artagera and Artogerassa by foreign historians, and Artagers or Artagerits by Armenian chroniclers), which is far from truthfulness. The name of Artagerits is used to mark another fortress situated very close to that of Kechror.⁴⁰ This is attested by the colophon of an *Ashkharatsuyts* (a geographical work) of 1656, which mentions Kechror as a separate place: "...the district of Gabeghenits and the castle of Kaput also called Artagerits—the town of Kechror is situated there together with the cut-in-rock monastery of Tzarakar, where Archimandrite Khachatur Kecharetsi's grave is found..."⁴¹

As for the statement that the castle belonged to the Kamsarakans, it is true, but they did not descend from the Turkish tribe of the Oghuz and lived even before their origin:⁴² this is certified by the Dictionary of the State Inspectorate of the Turkish Language.⁴³

12

In 2007 the ramparts of the castle of Baberd bore an information board (No. 12, photo by S. Karapetian) with the following texts:

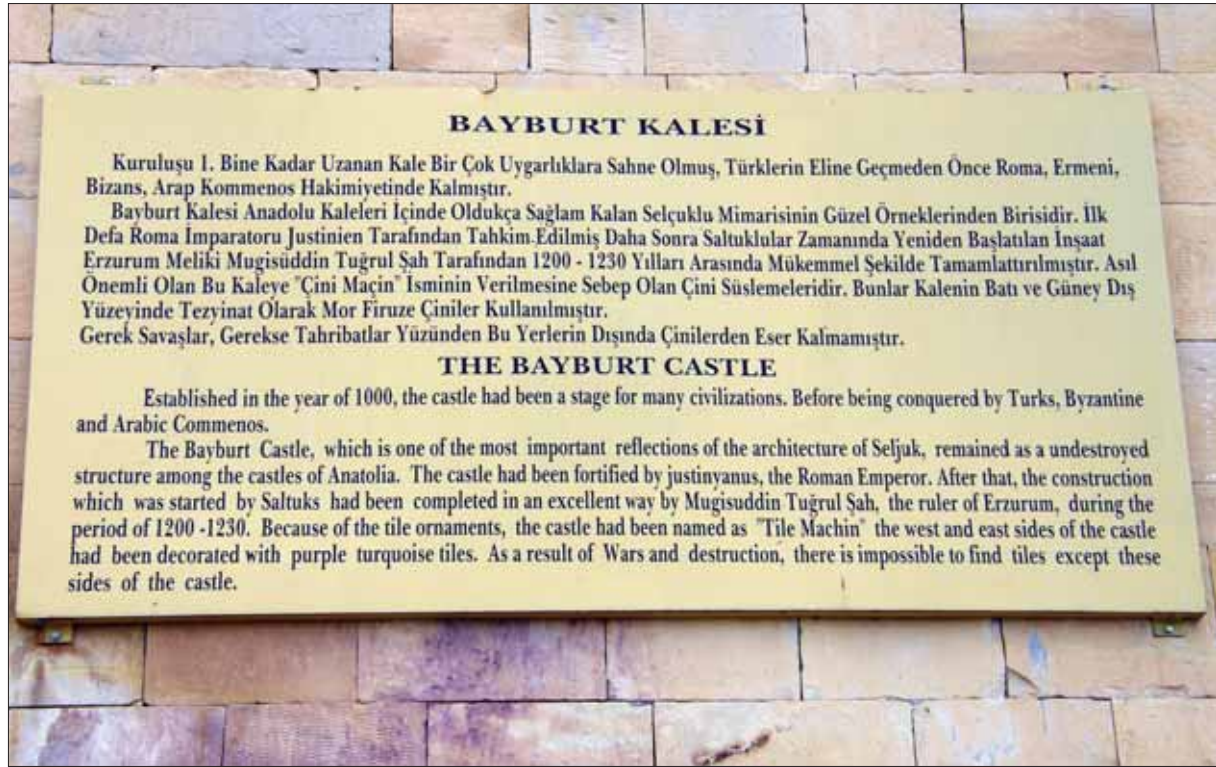
39 www.tdk.gov.tr İskit: Milattan önce Orta Asya'dan Güney Rusya'ya göç ederek burada imparatorluk kuran kavim.

40 Յովհաննեսյան Մ., Հայաստանի բերդերը, Վենետիկ, 1970, էջ 669-674:

41 Յուդակ ձեռագրաց Դադեան Խաչիկ վարդապետի, մասն Ա, կազմ. Թովման Յ., Վաղարշապատ, 1898, էջ 77:

42 The Kamsarakans' Armenian princely family (3rd to 8th centuries) descends from the Karenians' Parthian family, which was subjected to a massacre by the Persian Sassanids in the mid-3rd century. Perzomat's son Kamsar, who had had an escape from the slaughter, found refuge in Armenia. In 321 Armenian King Trdat the Great presented them with the districts of Shirak and Yerashkadzor (later renamed Arsharunik), which had been forming part of the royal estates, and promoted them to senior ministers (Քամարյանի Կ. Յ., idem, p. 263). 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 (ՀԱՆ, h. 5, Երևան, 1979, էջ 215). For further information on the Kamsarakans' Armenian princely family, see the works by 5th-century Armenian historiographers (Վաղար Փարպեցի, Հայոց պատմություն. Թուրք Վահան Մամիկոնյանին, Երևան, 1982: Եղիշեի Վարդանանց պատմությունը, ծանոթ. Ե. Տեր-Մինասյանի, Երևան, 1958, էջ 71, 91, 106, 171).

43 www.tdk.gov.tr "The Oghuz: a Turkish tribe which lived in Khorezm in the 11th century, but later emigrated westward. They are considered the ancestors of Turkomans, Azeries, the Gagavuz and the Turks of Turkey" (the original reads: "Oğuz: XI. yüzyıllı da Harezmi bölgesinde toplu olarak yaşayan ve daha sonra batılıya doğru göç ederek bugünkü Türkmen, Azeri, Gagavuz ve Türkiye Türklerinin aslınlı oluşturulan büyük bir Türk boyu").



Board No. 12

(in Turkish)

Bayburt Kalesi

Kuruluşu 1. bine kadar uzanan kale bir çok uygarlıklara sahne olmuş, Türklerin eline geçmeden önce Roma, Ermeni, Bizans, Arap kommenos hakimiyetinde kalmıştır.

Bayburt Kalesi Anadolu kaleleri içinde oldukça sağlam kalan Selçuklu mimarisinin güzel örneklerinden birisidir. İlk defa Roma İmparatoru Justinien tarafından tahkim edilmiş, daha sonra Saltuklular zamanında yeniden başlatılan inşaat Erzurum Meliki Muğisüddin Tuğrul Şah tarafından 1200-1230 yılları arasında mükemmel şekilde tamamlattırılmıştır. Asıl önemli olan bu kaleye "Çini Maçın" isminin verilmesine sebep olan çini süslemelerdir. Bunlar kalenin batı ve güney dış yüzeyinde tezyinat olarak mor firuze çiniler kullanılmıştır.

Gerek savaşlar, gerekse tahribatlar yüzünden bu yerlerin dışında çinilerden eser kalmamıştır.

(in English)

The Bayburt castle

Established in the year of 1000, the castle had been a stage for many civilizations. Before being conquered by Turks, Byzantine and Arabic commenos.

The Bayburt castle, which is one of the most important reflections of the architecture of Seljuk, remained as a undestroyed structure among the castles of Anatolia. The castle had been fortified by Justinianus, the Roma emperor. After that, the construction which was

started by Saltuks had been completed in an excellent way by Muğisüddin Tuğrul Şah, the ruler of Erzurum, during the period of 1200-1230. Because of the tile ornaments, the castle had been named as "Tile Machin" the west and east sides of the castle had been decorated with purple turquoise tiles. As a result of wars and destruction, there is impossible to find tiles except these sides of the castle.

Transl. from Turkish: Castle of Baberd

Founded in 1000, it became witness to many civilisations. Before its conquest by Turks, it was dominated by Rome, Armenians, Byzantians and Arabs. Amidst the castles of Anatolia, it is one of the well-preserved fine specimens of Seljuk architecture. It was first fortified by Roman Emperor Justinian. Later, under the Saltuklu, construction activity started here and was wonderfully completed in 1200 to 1230, in the days of Melik of Erzurum Muğisüddin Tughrul Shah.

The stronghold was called Chini Machin, this name deriving from the stone tiles decorating it: the violet and sky-blue Dutch tiles were used for the embellishment of the western and northern sections of its exterior ramparts. Due to wars and devastation, no glazed tiles are preserved in other parts of the castle.

Note: The year 1000, found in the text, is incorrect, for the castle is first mentioned by 5th-century Armenian historian Moses Khorenatsy: "Now when Smbat, son of Biurat, heard the sad news about Sanatruk and the distressing news of the slaughter of his sons, he took his two daughters, Smbatanoysh and Smbatuhi,

and settled them in Bayberd, leaving valiant men in charge of the castle.”⁴⁴ The father of Armenian historiography also adds that this happened in the seventh year of the reign of Darius the Last (336 to 330 B.C.).⁴⁵

H. Manandian writes that the events mentioned by Khorenatsy must have taken place in the 1st century A.D.⁴⁶; therefore, according to this historiographer, the castle existed as early as the Orontids’ times (330 B.C. to 202 B.C.), while H. Manandian traces it back to the period of the Armenian kingdom of the Arshakids (66 A.D. to 428 A.D.).

As for its renovation by Justinian the Great, Byzantine historian Procopius of Caesarea reports that

it was carried out in the 6th century:⁴⁷ thus, the author of the board text contradicts himself by speaking about the overhaul by the Byzantine emperor in the 6th century and at the same time tracing the foundation of the castle back to 1000.

Indeed, the Turkish text of the board also mentions the Armenians among the owners of the castle, but this information is concealed in the English one. Given the fact that the Armenians erected it in their native land, this board should first and foremost mention them as the founders of the monument and only then refer to the different nations which held it under their sway in the course of centuries.

⁴⁴ **Moses Khorenats'i**. *History of the Armenians*. Translation and Commentary on the Literary Sources by Robert W. Thomson. Harvard University Press, 1978; second printing USA, 1980, pp. 179-180.

⁴⁵ *Idem*, p. 178.

⁴⁶ **Յովհաննէսեան Մ.**, *idem*, p. 22.

⁴⁷ **Յովհաննէսեան Մ.**, *idem*, p. 23.

THE “ACCIDENTAL” FIRES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

by Samvel Karapetian

The history of Western Armenia, encompassing the period between 1894 and 1923, represents a series of successive slaughters, destruction, and finally, genocide, through which the Turkish authorities managed to firmly annex (the lands of) Western Armenia that had been suffering under their yoke for four centuries, ever struggling for freedom and independence.

Specialists engaged in the study of issues relating to the genocide of the Armenians in Turkey point out that World War I was just a golden opportunity for the Turkish powers to settle the “Armenian question,” which they perceived as “cleansing” their state of its Armenian citizens.

It is as clear as day that between 1915 and 1918, the Turks took advantage of the ongoing war in order to exterminate more than two million Armenians first in Western Armenia, then in Eastern Armenia and in the territories reaching Baku. In this way, they destroyed the Armenians’ dream of restoring Armenian statehood in Western Armenia; moreover, they even contributed to the annexation of certain Armenian regions to the second, newly-established Turkish state called “Azerbaijan.”

It is also commonly known that during 1894 to 1896 and in 1909, the Turkish authorities had already tested genocide as an effective way of keeping conquered lands within their state borders: they committed it in quite a peaceful period, when there was no world war with all its chaos and tumult.

In 1915, when the Turkish authorities were perpetrating the genocide of the Armenians, they were convinced of their success in building a homeland for themselves in such a way as they had already committed massacres with impunity. At this point a question arises: what unpunished actions gave the Turks the boldness of committing the Hamidian massacres and the slaughters of Cilician Armenians, which raged for three years, and that in peaceful times?

Indeed, the answer may be found on every page of the completely bloody history of the penetration of Turkish tribes into the homelands of other nations, accompanied with everyday crimes and barbarities. However, we would like to draw attention to the state programmes elaborated prior to the perpetration of massacres in Western Armenia and aimed at suppressing and subduing the conquered natives of the land before their final extermination.

The events which took place in the Ottoman Empire from 1870 until 1880 show that in order to keep the conquered peoples in almost slavish obedience, the state found it important to hinder their economic and cultural development. In the Armenian-inhabited places of the empire, this was carried out through periodical conflagrations as a result of which, the fruits of their own citizens’ hard work of many decades, gained through difficulties and even sacrifices, were reduced to ashes within just several hours simply because they were regarded as “unfaithful” to the state. In this way, they made their Armenian subjects focus all their attention to, and spend all their time and energy on, earning their daily bread and eking out a bare existence.

Now let us pass on to the discussion of the true, i.e. mean, nature of the so-called “accidental” fires which are comparatively “milder” manifestations of the premeditated crimes of the Turkish authorities. Despite the abundance of the existing eloquent facts, to our mind, so far they have not been studied, analysed, interpreted and evaluated properly, whereas in the 1870s, it was by means of these very fires that the Turkish powers attempted to settle a number of political problems.

Thus, one of the available records states: “...the Turkish papers expressed alarm declaring that the province of Van, which was inhabited by 250,000 Armenians at that time, could pose a serious danger in case of war due to its being located close to the Russian border, and called upon the Government to take measures to prevent it. The first result of these publications was the fire that broke out at the market of Van in December 1876, inflicting large material losses on the Armenians.”¹

On the eve of the Russo-Turkish war, more details were reported concerning this “preventive” measure: “On the night of 1 December, the Armenian citizens suddenly noticed flames at the market and rushed there to extinguish the fire. However, the Turkish and partly Kurdish mob, which had gathered from the adjacent villages and the quarter of Shamiram, together with some disguised Turkish soldiers, blocked their way with pole-axes, hatchets and knives. While the fire kept spreading from different directions, the throng was busy breaking

¹ Պանտիկեան Կ., Տեր, կեցո, դու զհայս (Ապրումներ), «Վարազ», 1969, հունվար, № 63-64, էջ 51-52:

the shops open with axes, stealing whatever they found and carrying everything away, loaded on beasts of burden waiting for them specially for this purpose, to hiding-places in the nearby quarters that had been selected beforehand. Bishop Yermia and Poghos V. Melikian, who happened to be in the city at that time, were formally allowed to walk through the streets of the burnt market in the shroud of night, accompanied with a group of policemen and Armenians. In the meantime, the plunder and shooting continued without any obstacles and could have caused greater losses if Timurzate Hasan Bey had not stopped the crowd with a sword, as part of the market was his family estate, and another section belonged to different mosques: the private Armenians or the Armenian churches hardly owned one third of it. Very little of the market was saved at the same night, and the following day, mixed committees were set up to expose the acts of plunder through search—this was just a part of the well-known Turkish jugglery...”²

The following record dwells on the losses caused by the fire: “In the ‘70s, Van lived a very active life and had brisk trade, with its market being daily supplied with new commodities. However, on 1 December 1876, a conflagration burst out at the market, and about 1,000 shops were reduced to ashes, putting the people into despair. The famous shops went bankrupt, while the petty shopkeepers left it. In this way, the trade of Van entered a stalemate...”³

According to military historian A. Kolyubakin, in the aftermath of this fire, the Armenian merchants lost 4/5s of their property.⁴

A telegraph dating from 20 December 1876 says: “...Highly-honoured Nazif Effendi and Khachatur Khan Effendi, who have been appointed to investigate the formidable conflagration of 1 December, will reach Van in a few days. The latter has not arrived yet, but the former is already here, although he has not assumed his office yet. Apparently, the investigation of that case has been postponed, for the Mutasarifat of Van has been separated from Karin and become a Governorate so that its newly-elected Governor is to attend to the information available for this case...”⁵

The authorities set up an investigating committee with the only aim of concealing what had truly happened. At first Markos Aghabekians was appointed to inquire into the case, but soon he was replaced by

Mkrtich Aghatonian, an agent of the Sublime Porte: “...Aghatonian, whom the Porte had sent to investigate the fire of 1 December 1876, was eager to please the Turkish Government so that he prepared a report justifying the actions of the Turkish crowd and soldiers and even charging the Armenians with the plunder of shops. It was signed by only the Turkish members of the Enquiry Commission, while the Armenians refused to do so. Aghabekian did his utmost to oppose to that falsified report, declaring that it was unjust and biased, but the Sublime Porte accepted it: he was dismissed from his post, whereas Aghatonian was repaid by being appointed to it.”⁶

Attempts were also made to represent the conflagration of Van as simply an accident or the consequence of a conflict between certain suspicious elements.⁷ However, its being premeditated was as clear as day, and it is not by accident that A. Kolyubakin directly states: “The destruction of the market of Van by Turkish soldiers.”⁸

Studying the facts and circumstances relating to this fire, Yer. Ter-Mkrtchian came to the following conclusion: “The burning of the Armenian shops in Van was planned beforehand, and the order specifying its time and hour had been received from high-ranking officials...”⁹

British academic, jurist and historian James Bryce writes the following regarding this event: “...the burning and plunder of the bazaar at Van in 1877 was the work, according to the uncontradicted narrative that reached this country, not so much of Kurds as of Turkish soldiers. Why, it may be asked, do the Armenians not rise in rebellion against these outrages, as their forefathers did against the Seleucids or the Parthians? Partly because they are unarmed, partly because the population is thin, with Tatars, Kurds, and Ottomans scattered among them, but mainly because ages of slavery have broken the spirit of the nation, because there is no one to lead them, no means of combined action, no such prospect of sympathy or support from European powers... The same causes, it will be argued, unfit them for independence or self-government.”¹⁰

In the same year (1876), the Government burnt the Armenian quarter of Sivri-Hisar: “...seven hundred (700) Armenian houses have fallen prey to fire in the town. ...when the Mayor learnt that a fire had broken out in the Armenian quarter, he ordered not to under-

2 **Երանյան Հ.**, Յուշարձան, Աղեքսանդրիա, հատոր Ա, 1929, էջ 93-94:

3 **Շերուկ**, Վանի մահանգը ներկայումս, «Սուրճ», 1904, № 8, էջ 21: Also see **Երիցեան Ա.**, Ֆելիտոն (Բարեգործութիւնը հայոց մէջ), «Արձագանք», 1882, № 17, 13 յունիսի, էջ 264-265.

4 **Колюбакин А.**, Материалы для военного-статистического обозрения Азиатской Турции, том III, часть I, Тифлис, 1891, с. 325:

5 **Փրոտոզայան Մ.**, Նամակ Թուրքիայից, «Մշակ», 1877, № 23, էջ 3-4 (excerpted from the “Manzumei Efkyar” paper).

6 «Մշակ», 1877, № 46, էջ 3:

7 **Երանյան Հ.**, idem, p. 100.

8 **Колюбакин А.**, ibid. (the original reads: “...разгром турецкими солдатами базара в Ване...”).

9 **Տեր-Մկրտչեան Ե.**, Գանձեր Վասպուրականի, հ. առաջին, Պոսթոն, 1966, էջ 518:

10 Transcaucasia and Ararat by **James Bryce**, London, 1896, pp. 344-345.

take anything and let the gjaurs exposed to flames so that they might not even have a sitting place. In this way, thousands of Armenians were left with the ashes of their houses, stripped of Governmental aid...”¹¹

A year after the burning of the market of Van, that of the town of Chemeskatzag was set on fire. A record of 1886 states the following with this respect: “It has quite a splendid market which has not fully recovered from the widespread fire of 1877 yet and does not have active commerce.”¹² Chemeskatzag also faced a fire in the 1890s, its circumstances remaining as obscure as those of the previous one: “...the fire of the 1890s, which broke out at night and the causes of which still remain unspecified.”¹³

On 27 July 1884 and 26 July 1887, the Turkish powers again used the method of fire to settle their problems in Zeitun: in the first case, over 1,000 houses were burnt, while in the second, only 100 of the 2,000 buildings escaped the flames.¹⁴

In Arabkir the authorities entrusted the “work” to robbers whom they had provided with “arms” beforehand: “They had been given highly inflammable substances and tools with which they set the plundered and emptied houses on fire. The buildings of Arabkir were mostly of stone and mortar, which made them very difficult to burn so that special efforts were made to kindle a fire inside the houses (in this way, all the buildings that would not catch fire were burnt down). ...Thus, within several days, the 2,000 Armenian dwellings of Arabkir were reduced to ashes. Today the beautiful and prospering Armenian quarters of the city represent a distressing heap of ruins, including those of the Terpetierants’s, Kolanjants’s, Yekaniants’s and other splendid, expensive mansions and more than 1,000 large, multi-storey and very fine-looking buildings. The conflagration thoroughly devoured the Mother Church of the city, as well as the large and small markets the booths of which mostly belonged to the Armenians. The flames spared only those houses which were close to the Government residence or the Turkish quarters, or those which were rented by Turks (they number between 150 and 300). However, the plunder and fire seemed insufficient to destroy the Armenians of Arabkir: it was necessary to launch a formidable, long-lasting massacre to exterminate at least the males of the nation. During the plunder and burning, the crowd of robbers also mercilessly hit, injured and killed all men they came across. The

slaughter continued not only in the houses and streets, but also in the gardens, gorges and other impregnable places where the multitude of Armenians had taken refuge. Several days proved insufficient to find all the Armenians from their houses and hiding-places and slaughter them so that it was necessary to go on with the carnage for ten days. Special efforts were made to kill those boasting renown in the city thanks to their knowledge and fortune. In many families, several males or a few brothers were killed together, while several others lost all their male members without exception. In the aftermath of this harrowing massacre, which lasted for ten days, most of the male representatives of the Armenian nation were exterminated.”¹⁵ “It was only in fifteen days’ time that the merciful Imperial Government condescended to terminate the carnage and burning, but even after this, they did not cease looking for surviving Armenians in every single street and house to imprison them. They arrested anyone above 15 and under 60 they came across, and in this way, between 400 and 500 Armenians were thrown into the prison of Arabkir...”¹⁶

Another record reports what took place in the town of Akn on 3 September 1896: “The attack was launched from a place called Ver Tagh (i.e. Upper Quarter - translator). Everywhere the air was pierced with infernal cries and screams; the harrowing voices and the wails of those put to sword upset even the most hard-hearted, making everybody weep. The scene, however, was not confined to this—the flames of the houses which had been robbed of their wealth and splendeur by means of highly inflammable substances stifled all these voices. The fire gradually abated; the voices faded away and a deadly silence came to reign over the ruins of that beautiful quarter—a silence which was broken only by the screams of the ruthless savage mob and its cheerful cries. Hundreds of men and women, daughters-in-law and youths were buried beneath those ruins. If any of them even managed to escape the flames of the fire, they were sure to be killed under the blows of whips and axes. Eventually, within several hours, the Upper Quarter was levelled with the ground with its 800 houses and all its inhabitants.”¹⁷

The following passage describes what happened in the city of Kharberd in 1896: “The fine-looking quarter of Kharberd City, which catches your eye as soon as you leave Tash-Gabu, was totally pillaged, after which some 8 to 10 houses were set on fire by means of oil, and the entire quarter was reduced to ashes, the fire lasting 6 hours...”¹⁸

11 «Մեղու Հայաստանի», 1876, № 39, 9 հոկտեմբերի, էջ 3: Also see Պատմագիրք Սիվրի-Հիսարիի հայոց, Պէյրոս, 1965, էջ 115-116.

12 **Նաթանեան Մ.**, Չմշկածագ, «Մասիս», 1886, № 3815, մարտ 29, էջ 819:

13 **Գասպարեան Հ.**, Չմշկածագ եւ իր գիւղերը, 1969, էջ 85:

14 **Պողոսյան Հ.**, Ձեյբունի պատմությունը, Երևան, 1969, էջ 302-303:

15 «Գրոշակ», 1896, № 7, էջ 54-55:

16 «Հնչակ», 1897, № 2, էջ 14:

17 «Գրոշակ», 1896, № 26, էջ 195:

18 «Գրոշակ», 1896, № 1, էջ 6:

To summarise, we would like to point out that from the 1870s onward, for over half a century, the Turkish authorities consistently pursued the plan of destroying the Armenian nation economically. At first they realised this through secretly-kindled fires which were

later made in broad daylight, without any concealment. They stopped it parallel with the termination of the genocide of the Armenians perpetrated in their own homeland.¹⁹

¹⁹ In the 1990s, the Turkish army burnt away more than 400 Kurdish villages in Turkey: this shows that the Turkish powers still apply their well-tested method of destroying other nations' places by fire even nowadays.

THE PANTHEON OF MAHLAM

by Emma Abrahamian

“Martyrs...

“Least of all do those great deceased belong to their parties and themselves: they entirely pertain to their race and history.

“Due to the way of life they choose, they work and sacrifice themselves under the banner of this or that party. By suffering martyrdom, they get nationalised, shifting into the sacred possession of the entire nation. There are no party-affiliated martyrs and heroes: there exist and will ever exist only heroism and martyrdom for the nation’s sake, which are perpetual.”

Garegin Nzhdeh

One of the most remarkable pages of the history of Armenian national liberation movement is devoted to arms-carrying groups which were formed in the ‘90s of the 19th century. Imbued with the idea of the liberation of their homeland, the members of these detachments selflessly committed themselves to the difficult and most important mission of transporting arms to *Yerkir*—this is how they gently and tenderly called their occupied Motherland. Unfortunately, the names of many of the members of these groups are not even known, their remains being scattered throughout their sacred Homeland without any memorial stones, without anything to perpetuate their memory.

With this respect, perhaps, the only exception is a pantheon of nine tombstones located at the eastern extremity of the cemetery of Mahlam Village (it remained inhabited by the Armenians until 1946) in the historical district of Zarehavan (later renamed Salmast with larger territorial coverage). These memorial stones, which are stylistically identical and bear the same date, are arranged in a single row, within an equal distance of each other, extending from the north southwards. Beneath them repose nine Armenian fighters for freedom who suffered martyrdom: Khacho M. Harutiunian and Harutiun Khachoyan from Moks; Nakho Ghazarian and Harutiun Abrahamian Pokhonian, two inseparable friends from Vozm (“He was Nakho’s childhood friend, and they had joined revolutionaries together”¹); Harik Abgarian from Shatakh; Gabriel (pseudonym: Mnjo) Muradian from Kaghbi Village, Shatakh; Galust Guloyan from Norduz, one of the participants of the

operation of Khanasor; Stepan Petrossian from Khizan, and Avetis Ohanessian from Hazari Village, Chemeshkatzag District.

So, who were these martyrs and what episode of the Armenian liberation struggle made the cemetery of Mahlam a place of eternal repose for them?

These fighters for freedom were members of leader Pokhik’s² arms-carrying group, which was formed in Salmast in 1897. In the summer of 1898, they reached Van, but “...Teroyan was no longer there, having been



Pokhik's group in 1898

killed at the fighting of Kurubash so that it was now difficult to keep the armed group in Van. At that time despair and discouragement reigned there. Pokhik had to leave the city and return to Salmast with 10 members of the group.”³ The hard, long-lasting journey made the leader of the fighters tired and sick so that he proved unable to continue his way and stayed in Ghalasar Village. The others reached Mahlam and “...entered the house of one of the local people. Learning about it, the peasants who feared lest the owner of the village, Assistant Judge Hajji Khan, might hear about it, demanded that the guests leave at once. The members of the group, who were still hungry, tired and unwell after their difficult and perilous journey, asked them for permission to stay there for a couple of days to have some rest and recover from the way. They moved away towards the gardens of the village to take shelter in a wine press. However, a few blockheads were not satisfied with this: led by Agha Zako, they went to the

1 Ասլան Մտեփանեանի յուշերը, գրի առաւ Հայկ Աճեմեան, Թեհրան, 1966:

2 Pokhik (Ohan Ohanian or Vahram Hovhannissian, 1873, Sak Village, Shatakh - 1904) participated in the fighting of Derik in the spring of 1896 and the operation of Khanasor on 25 July 1897.

3 Ռուբէն, Հայ յեղափոխականի սը յիշատակները, հ. Բ, Թեհրան, 1982, էջ 49:

Judge of Khoy and Salmast, Zargham-ü-Mülk, and asked him to imprison the Armenian dare-devils and punish them severely. The latter immediately sent a whole company of troops with two guns under the leadership of the traitors, and Hajji Khan, with 300 Kurdish soldiers joining them from the neighbouring [village of] Soma. The mob which had received strict instructions encircled the garden where the Armenians had found refuge and immediately launched shooting and bombardment. This took place at sunrise, on 13/25 October (Tuesday). The poor arms-carriers, who did not want to harm the local Armenians with any daring action, fearing lest the latter should suffer if they put up any resistance against the Government, went out to meet these troops and declared that they had never had any reason to do anything against the Persian authorities; that the arms they had could serve only for their self-defence against bandits, and that there was no crime about bearing arms, for it was not banned in Persia. Nevertheless, if the authorities suspected them of anything, they were ready to give up their rifles and surrender. This was the very formidable moment when Oriental barbarity clashed with the self-denial of patriotic soldiers... Up to that day no cases of killing or executing Armenians and Christians in general had been known in Persia, but this time, in response to the heroes' generosity, the troops started slaughtering them, Hajji Khan immediately having their heads cut off and sent to Zargham..."⁴

The terrible news immediately spread. The Vicar of Salmast, Archimandrite Khachik Dadian,⁵ "...demanded that Zargham return their heads, but the latter answered that he had given them to the Turkish authorities. In fact, however, he had had their faces photographed and then buried their heads in one of the streets of Kyohna-Shahar Village so that Archimandrite Khachik got back only their corpses and interred them in the graveyard of Mahlam."⁶

Archimandrite Kh. Dadian continued protesting together with the Primate of Atropatene Diocese, Bishop

Sahak Ayvatian,⁷ thanks to which, in two weeks' time, the martyrs' heads were returned and re-buried in the cemetery of Mahlam: "Indeed, after all these events, there were acts of protest and intercession on different occasions and in different places: Archimandrite Khachik Dadian, the Primate of Atropatene, Bishop Ayvatian, as well as the English and Russian Consuls applied to Emir Nizam and Sadrazam: the Archimandrite was permitted to return to his place of office, while Hajji Khan was dismissed from his post. No other noteworthy consequences. Zargham moved to Khoy for some time, as Judge of Salmast and Khoy... Through the intercession of English Consul General Woot, the heads of the 9 martyrs, who had been killed by the Persian and Kurdish soldiers, were returned to the Armenians, and on 30 October, the mournful ceremony of their re-interment was held..."⁸

After this event, group leader Pokhik was unjustly expelled from the Armenian Revolutionary Federation Party, but a short time later, he was admitted back and continued the transportation of arms with a newly-established group.⁹

As the history of Armenian liberation struggle shows, treachery has never remained unpunished, and the case of Mahlam could not have been an exception. Without waiting for any order from the party, Yeprem

Consequently, they went directly to Zargham and asked him to either drive the fidayis away from their village or imprison them. Only 3 of the 8 soldiers who had taken refuge in the gardens of Mahlam had rifles. At dawn the Persian sarbazes came and encircled them. It was banned to fight against Persians in Persia so that our fidayis decided to move away without any resistance, their aim being to ascend the [nearby] mountain. While they were on their way, one of them was killed, and the others entered a tower where the Persians killed or injured one or two of them (although our fighters did not show any resistance against them), arresting the rest. The poor soldiers thought that they would not be killed and would be released by bribe, as it had always been the case by that time. They, however, were mistaken: all of them were murdered, their heads being cut off and carried to Dilman, where it was declared that they had been killed during fighting" (Ռուս-քէն, Հայ յեղափոխականի մը յիշատակները, Կ. Ք. Թեհրան, 1982, էջ 49).

4 «Դրօշակ», 1898, № 11, էջ 96-97: Ruben Ter-Minassian writes the following about this tragic event in his memoirs: "The inhabitants of Mahlam held a consultation and decided not to allow the group of Pokhik into their village. They suggested that the soldiers should not enter there, but the latter were exhausted, with their feet swollen, so that they were unable to go anywhere (and where were they to go?): they found refuge in the gardens outside the village, in the open air, while Pokhik, who was seriously ill, was taken to Ghalasar to undergo treatment. The "most influential" of the inhabitants of Mahlam went to the representative of the [Armenian Revolutionary] Federation, Samson, to tell him what had happened and ask him to make the soldiers move away from the village: otherwise, they would go and report them to Zargham and the Government. Samson tried to persuade them to wait at least for a couple of days, but the representatives of the peasants thought that he merely wanted to gain time for the fighters to gradually gain footing and enter the village.

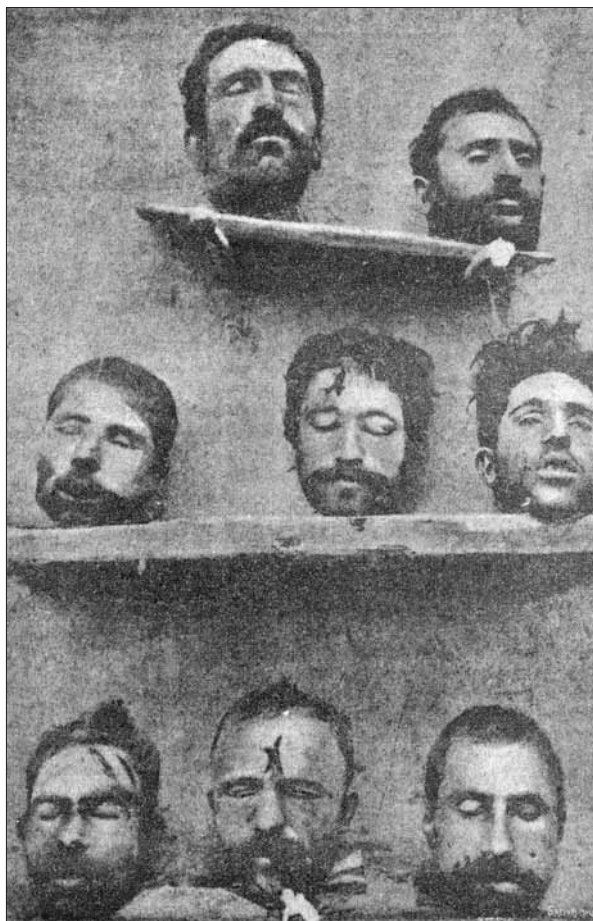
5 On 8 June 1898, Senior Archimandrite Khachik Dadian was appointed Vicar of Salmast Diocese and held office until November 1899 (ՀԱԴ, ֆ. 319, ց. 1, գ. 179, ք. 2 շրջ. և 15).

6 «Դրօշակ», 1898, № 11, էջ 97: Most presumably, we owe the photograph of the nine martyrs buried in Mahlam to Archimandrite Khachik Dadian, who probably found the photographer and acquired this rare photo by some means or another.

7 In 1882 Sahak Ayvatian (1853 to 1924) was ordained Archimandrite in Varag Monastery by Mkrtych Khirimian. He held the office of Primate in Eudocia (1887 to 1888), Belgium (1889 to 1890) and Marseilles (1890 to 1894). In 1895 he was appointed Vicar of Atropatene Eparchy, and in 1898 he was elected Primate of the same diocese (he also led the Indo-Iranian Diocese at short intervals).

8 «Դրօշակ», 1898, № 11, էջ 97:

9 Պատմագրութիւն Հայ յեղափոխական դաշնակցութեան, Կ. Ք. Աթէնք, 1991, էջ 479:



The martyred Armenian fighters (by a Persian photographer)

Khan¹⁰ "...assembled 6 to 7 of the soldiers, including Sarbaz Khecho, Damo, Gre and others, right on the same day and attacked Mahlam in the shroud of night, ignoring the fact that the armed men of Zargham were there to defend the traitors. He entered the house¹¹ of Mughsi David, one of the organisers of the carnage of the fighters, killed him together with all the members of his family and left the village secretly. In the morning, when the door of Mughsi David remained un-

¹⁰ In the 1880s, Yeprem Khan (Yeprem Davtian - 1868, Barsum Village, Shamkhor District, Northern Artsakh - 6.5.1912, Surje Village, Iran) moved to Western Armenia and joined the hayduk groups. In 1890 he was imprisoned for his participation in S. Kukanian's heroic attempt of crossing the Russo-Turkish border and was exiled in 1892 first to Siberia and then to Sakhalin. In 1896 he managed to run away and again went to Western Armenia. Yeprem Khan took part in the operation of Khanasor in 1897, and in the Iranian Revolution between 1905 and 1911. Appreciating his military skills greatly, the authorities of Iran bestowed the title of Supreme Commander (Sardar) on him. He was killed at the battle of Surje Village, located near Hamadan City, in 1912.

¹¹ According to another source, Yeprem Khan took revenge on Agha Zako for the 9 Armenian martyrs: "...as for Agha Zako, it is only known that his faithful service was repaid with death which he shared with his wife and daughter" («Գրօշակ», 1898, № 11, էջ 97).

opened, the local people and the Persian soldiers who were in the village went to his place and became witness to the terrible scene. This murder made such a deep impression on the Sarbazes (the men of Zargham - translator) that they left Mahlam instead of staying there."¹²

Later the Persian Committee of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation decided to execute the other traitors: "The event made a great impression [on everybody]. Not only all the people of Salmast, but also the local powers were in a shock, fearing the consequences of the intercession of the English Consul. However, days and weeks passed, everything grew quiet and the everyday routine of life was resumed. Only we, those who had known the martyrs personally, their friends, could not calm down. We still saw those slaughtered before our eyes and they called for formidable revenge: revenge at least on those traitors who had organised the slaughter of nine of our comrades, men who had forsaken their homes, ignoring death and dangers, in a most impudent way... ...the information collected on the spot was submitted to the Central Committee of Persia. ...In accordance with its decision, two of the traitors, Stepan and Khus Arakel, have already been terrified. As a betrayer notorious throughout the village, the former was in certain relations with Governor of Salmast Hajji Khan and had played a great role in the tragedy. The latter was an awfully depraved craftsman who had acted as a guide for the Kurdish horsemen during it. ...One of the representatives of the Government, who had proved so cruel towards the 9 arms-carriers, Hajji Khan, was at first dismissed from his post, but he has been called back, while Zargham, Governor General of Salmast and Khoy, has been expelled only recently: he has been summoned to Tabriz for explanations."¹³

Eventually, at 6 o'clock p.m. on 3 January (according to the new calendar) 1899, "...two of the main authors of the betrayal of the nine fighters who had suffered martyrdom, namely, Stepan and Khus Arakel,"¹⁴ received a punishment fitting what they had done.

The available records contain information regarding only one of these nine martyred Armenians, Nakho Ghazarian Amirbekiants. He was born in Vozm Village, Moks District, Vaspurakan Province, in 1858. At first he held membership of Armenakan Party, but

¹² Ռուբին, Հայ յեղափոխականի մը յիշատակները, Ի. Բ. Թեհրան, 1982, էջ 49:

¹³ «Գրօշակ», 1899, № 3, էջ 41-42:

¹⁴ «Գրօշակ», 1899, № 2, էջ 18: As reported by another source, after the murder of their accomplice, the scared traitors ran away from the village, but this did not help them escape vengeance. Thus, one of them "...was soon killed, whereas the other, who had fled to Russia, was murdered only in 1905" (Ռուբին, idem, vol. 2, p. 49).

later he joined the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and became member of Nikol Duman's group of hayduks. Nakho Ghazarian participated in numerous fights, including the operation of Khanasor. Avetis Aaronian perpetuated his memory in one of his Armenian-language short stories entitled *The Armenian* («Խայր»): "...it was a peasant's face on which hard life had put its imprint of stiffness... he was a young man, but looked like one who had lived through many experiences: below his thick moustache his thick lips were seen tightly pressed together, imparting an expression of persistence to his face. His eyes were small, but ardent and full of energy... The village of O. used to have a lot of Armenian inhabitants, but all of them abandoned it: this one proved unwilling to beg, like a crane which has fallen behind its flight, but preferred to stay and guard it. The local people did not know his name well: instead of calling him Nakho, some called him Mkho and others Mko, but eventually, they almost unanimously started simply calling him 'The Armenian.' It was nice and easy here; besides, he was truly an Armenian for he came from Vozm Village of Armenia."¹⁵

Aslan Amirbekian-Stepaniants, a native of Vozm who was the leader of a group of Armenian fighters, writes the following about Nakho, his uncle's son, in his memoirs: "...a stout man with a black *papakh*, dressed in some strange clothes. ...that man was hayduk, revolutionary fighter Nakho, whom later fighter Harutian from Vozm (my godfather) joined. Once Duman found refuge in the mountains of Shatakh together with his group. One day he sent Nakho to the [neighbouring] Armenian villages for bread. The latter came across a Kurd on his way, and both of them became witness to the desperate struggle between a snake and a stork. In the long run, the former wound round the latter's neck and strangled it. All of a sudden, Nakho seized the Kurd's dagger, hanging on one of his sides, and killed him stabbing him in the chest, plunging it there up to its handle. It was this real incident that was recorded by Avetis Aaronian, who wrote a fine story entitled *The Armenian* on its basis... At first he (Nakho Ghazarian - translator) held membership of Armenakan Party, but later he joined the ranks of the Armenian Revolutionary one, becoming one of the faithful soldiers of Vazgen (Tigran Teroyan). In 1896 he went to Salmast together with Vazgen's group and was admitted to Nikol Duman's large group of hayduks, participating in the fights of Boghazkyasan and Khanasor... In the autumn of 1896, Nakho took part in



The Pantheon of Mahlam (2011)

the fighting at the Pakhchians' house, which was not a very serious one..."¹⁶

Unfortunately, despite our strenuous efforts, our search for biographical data regarding the other eight martyred fighters proved fruitless. Below follow their epitaphs which contain their first and family names as well as those of their birthplaces—the only available pieces of information which we owe to Archimandrite Khachik Dadian:

¹⁶ Ասլան Ստեփանեանի յուշերը, գրի առաւ Հայկ Աճեմեան, Թեհրան, 1966: With regard to the murder of this Kurd, A. Aaronian writes that in 1896 Vardan sent Nakho "...to the village of Kezel-Dash for bread, but our fighting hindered his return to the mountain. Then he decided to go to Shatakh, but on his way there, he was captured by the *kholam* (courtier) of a Kurdish bey as a 'fedayi.' Neither Nakho's oath nor any facts could convince him that he was a simple Armenian and not a 'fedayi.' The Kurd took him to the city to consign him to the mercy of the Government, but Nakho did not let him fulfill his intention: he jumped onto him from behind, seized his two daggers hanging from his belt and stabbed him in both his sides, killing him like a dog and robbing him, after which he went back" («Դրօշակ», 1897, № 1, էջ 7. Cf. Խանասորու Վարդանի յիշատակարանը, Երևան, 1992, էջ 169, 171).

¹⁵ Վարդգ. «Խայր» (Նախօսյի յիշատակին), «Դրօշակ», 1899, № 2, էջ 29:



Աստ հանգչի ողմեցի Նախօ / Ղազարեան, նահատակեցաւ / 1898 հոկ(տեմբերի) 14-ին¹⁷:

Transl.: In this grave reposes Nakho Ghazarian from Vozm, who suffered martyrdom on 14 October 1898.



Աստ հանգչի ողմեցի Յարութիւն / Փոխանեան, նահատակեցաւ / 1898 հոկ(տեմբերի) 14-ին:

Transl.: In this grave reposes Harutiun Pokhonian from Vozm, who suffered martyrdom on 14 October 1898.



Աստ հանգչի մոկացի Խաչօ Մ. Յարութիւնեան, նահատակեցաւ / 1898 հոկ(տեմբերի) 14-ին:

Transl.: In this grave reposes Khacho M. Harutiunian from Moks, who suffered martyrdom on 14 October 1898.



Աստ հանգչի մոկեցի մեծագլուխ / Յարութիւն Խաչօեան, նահատակեցաւ / 1898 հոկ(տեմբերի) 14-ին:

Transl.: In this grave reposes big-headed Harutiun Khachoyan from Moks, who suffered martyrdom on 14 October 1898.



Աստ հանգչի նորտ(ու)զցի Գալուստ / Գուլօեան, նահատակեցաւ / 1898 հոկ(տեմբերի) 14-ին:

Transl.: In this grave reposes Galust Guloyan from Nortuz, who suffered martyrdom on 14 October 1898.



Աստ հանգչի շատախցի Յարիք / Աբգարեան, 1898 հոկ(տեմբերի) 14-ին / նահատակեցաւ:

Transl.: In this grave reposes Harik Abgarian from Shatak, who suffered martyrdom on 14 October 1898.



Աստ հանգչի շատախցի Գարրիէլ Մնջօ / Մուրատեան, 1898 հոկ(տեմբերի) 14-ին / նահատակեցաւ:

Transl.: In this grave reposes Gabriel Mnjo Muratian from Shatak, who suffered martyrdom on 14 October 1898.



Աստ հանգչի խիզ(ա)նցի Սեփան Պետրոսեան, նահատակեցաւ / 1898 հոկ(տեմբերի) 14-ին:

Transl.: In this grave reposes Sepan Petrossian from Khizan, who suffered martyrdom on 14 October 1898.



Աստ հանգչի հազարեցի Աւետիս / Օհանէսեան, 1898 հոկ(տեմբերի) 14-ին / նահատակեցաւ:

Transl.: In this grave reposes Avetis Ohanessian from Hazar, who suffered martyrdom on 14 October 1898.

17 On 21 June 1930, Hayk Ajemian, a philologist from Van, visited the cemetery of Mahlam, where he photographed and copied the epitaphs of the eight martyrs from Vaspurakan (see Վասպուրական. Վան-Վասպուրականի ապրիլեան հերոսամարտի տասնհինգամեակի առթիւ. 1915-1930, կազմ. Աճեմյան Հ., Վենետիկ, 1930).



The upper and northern parts of the tombstone of Avetik Davtian, who reposes in the Pantheon of Mahlam (photo 2011)

Later several other Armenian fighters were buried in this Pantheon, one of them being Avetik Davtian, whose tombstone has the following epitaph:

*Թշնամեաց տեմ ընդդիմացար,
Լեռան գլուխըն բարձրացար,
Գնդակահար մարտիրոսեցար,
Սուրբ արիւնովդ կարմրեցար:*

Transl. You rose against the enemies, ascended the top of the mountain [and] were shot to death, being covered with your own blood.

On the other face of the gravestone:

*Աստ նահատակի քաջ Աւետիք
մահտեսի Դաւիթեան
1904, ի հասակի 32 տ.:*

Transl.: In this grave reposes martyr Avetik Mahtesy Davtian [who was killed] at the age of 32 in 1904.

The Pantheon of Mahlam is a place of eternal repose for a group of Armenian martyrs who lived guided by the worship of their Homeland and sacrificed their lives for the sake of this sacred value.

Once the sacred remains of the Armenian fighters who sacrificed their lives for the sake of their Homeland used to repose throughout its territory, but due to certain historical circumstances, the graves of most of them were totally destroyed by the mean enemy. With this respect, the Pantheon of Mahlam is one of those rare ones which are still preserved outside the borders of the present-day Republic of Armenia.

It would be fair and nice of at least a small part of the multitudes of Armenian believers visiting different Armenian sanctuaries—for instance, the monastery of Thaddeus the Apostle—to include this sacred place in the sites of their annual pilgrimages.

THE HERMITAGE OF ST. GREGORY OF NAREK

by Ashot Hakobian

May it be recited to the ears of all generations,
and may it be preached to all peoples.
May it be inscribed on the doors of the mind
and imprinted on the threshold of the senses.
...And although I shall die in the way of all mortals,
may I be deemed to live
through the continued existence of this book.

St. Gregory of Narek
Book of Prayer. Speaking with God from the Depth of Heart,
Prayer 88, B

The renowned Armenian archimandrite, poet, philosopher and musician of the 10th century, Gregory of Narek (known as Grigor Narekatsy), was born in 951 in the family of Khosrov Andzevatsy. Together with his elder brother Hovhannes, he received education in Narek Monastery, Vaspurakan Province, Armenia Maior, his teacher being its Prior Anania Narekatsy, his mother's uncle. After the Father Superior had yielded up his spirit to God, Hovhannes replaced him, and Grigor was ordained as a celibate priest, becoming a teacher for hermits. In 977 carrying out King Gurgen Artzruny's order, he wrote *An Interpretation of the Song of Songs*; in 983 he put down the history of the foundation and building of Aparanits Sourb Khach Monastery of Khizan at the request of Bishop Stepanos of Moks. Gregory of Narek is also the author of a number of odes, pieces of preaching and poetic writings, but the masterpiece of his creative activity is his Prayer Book, *Matyan Voghbergutyun* (Book of Lamentation), which was completed in 1002. He died after his brother's departure from earthly life, in 1003, and was buried close to the eastern wall of St. Sandukht Church of Narek Monastery. Later a domed sepulchre was erected over his grave, which became a famous site of pilgrimage.¹ Gregory of Narek is one of those saints of the Armenian Apostolic Church who have their special feast days: his memory is celebrated at the festival of the Holy Translators, when commemoration ceremonies are also held for the inventor of the Armenian alphabet, Mesrop Mashtots, 5th-century historiographers Yeghishe and Movses Khorenatsi, as well as philosophers David *Anhaght* (the *Invincible*) and Nerses Shnorhali.

¹ Վարդ սրբոց, Բեյրութ, 1975, էջ 591-595:

There exist two legends connected with the name of St. Gregory of Narek.²

The cut-in-rock complex where the prominent saint lived in total seclusion for many years was later named after him: Narekatsy's Hermitage. It is situated amidst the rocks of the east-facing mountain branch of the northern slopes of the mountain chain of Rshtunik, on the southern shore of Lake Van, 2.6 kms north-west of the historical Armenian village of Narek (nowadays renamed Yemishlik), 1.2 km north-west of another historical Armenian village, Paykhner, which is at present called Baghlama. It is in the heart of a porous perpendicular rock (geographical coordinates: N 38°18' 24.13," E 42°54' 03.27") of lime deposit, at an altitude of about 2,100 metres above sea level.

The hermitage was visited by a number of prominent pilgrims—Father Nerses Sargissian,³ Khrimian Hayrik,⁴ Garegin Servandztiants,⁵ Gevorg Sherents,⁶ Yervand Lalayan,⁷ Hayk Ajemian,⁸ Raffi⁹ and Vardan of Khanasor¹⁰—who left some records about it.

² The first legend is as follows: when malignant gossip about St. Gregory acquired larger scale, the bishops, archimandrites, princes and village heads gathered to discuss his behaviour. He was sent for to appear before court. When the delegates went to the saint, he met them in a high mood and started treating them. It was Friday, a fast day, but he treated them to roast doves as if he did not know what day it was. When the guests refused helping themselves to the dish saying that it was Friday, Gregory apologised and ordered the doves to fly away to their swarm. They obeyed, and the amazed delegates knelt before him, asking for his pardon: this put an end to the case against St. Gregory (Վարդ սրբոց, էջ 593-594). According to the second legend, once, while praying in his Hermitage, Narekatsy saw the Holy Virgin, with infant Jesus in her arms, on Arter Island of Lake Van. This vision encouraged the saint to descend from his secluded place and go towards the Holy Mother of God walking over the waters of the lake. When he reached her, she gave the child to him and said: "Take your Lord." Narekatsy tells his reader about this vision in his *Poem of Birth* (*Tagh Tzenendian* in Armenian) and in the 12th and 27th chapters of his Prayer-Book (**Մարգիստան Ն.**, Տեղագրութիւնք ի Փոքր եւ Մեծ Հայս, Վեներտիկ, 1864, էջ 253).

³ **Մարգիստան Ն.**, idem, p. 253.

⁴ Հրատիրակ Արարատեան, յօրինեալ ի ափս Հայկականս ի Սկրոյէ Խրոմեան Վանեցոյ, Կ. Պոլիս, 1850, էջ 95:

⁵ Վարդ, Նարեկի վանքը, «Արարս», 1898, Ա, էջ 82:

⁶ Շերենց Գ., Սրբավայրեր, Թիֆլիս, 1902, էջ 127-129:

⁷ **Լալայան Ե.**, Վասպուրական. Նշանավոր վանքեր. Նարեկայ վանք, «Ազգագրական Հանդես», գիրք XXI, 1911, էջ 41-42:

⁸ **Աճառեան Հ.**, Հայրենի յիշատակներ, Ա. Գեալի Նարեկայ վանքը, Էջմիածին, 1918, էջ 10-12:

⁹ **Րաֆֆի**, Կայծեր, Երկերի ժողովածու, հ. V, Երևան, 1963, էջ 314-315:

¹⁰ Խանասորու Վարդանի հիշատակարանը, Երևան, 1992, էջ 66:



The Hermitage of St. Grigor Narekatsy, with the mountain range separating Moks from Rshtunik in the distance (photo 2011)



A general view of the Hermitage of St. Grigor Narekatsy from the east (photo 2007)

In October 2010 and August 2011, the members of Research on Armenian Architecture (RAA) Foundation visited the Hermitage of Narekatsy and studied it from a professional point of view. It is located in the central part of perpendicular rocks (where their height reaches its maximum, i.e. 24 metres) which extend from the north southward at a length of about 125 metres. The northern half of the rock abounds in large and small natural cavities (its southern half does not have such natural hollows), with large masses of rock lying beneath

now inhabited by Kurds so that at present only its dried up bed can be seen.

“...A splendid view opens up [from the Hermitage]: the islands of Arter and Aghtamar protrude in the blue waters of the lake, with Mount Artos rising slightly north-east. Right opposite it, the city of Van extends, while a little south-east Mount Varag [is seen] with its peaks of Astghkaber [Astghik Castle] and Galilia, which shine in the variegated light of the dawn every morning.”¹²



The scene in front of the Hermitage of St. Grigor Narekatsy with the islands of Arter and Aghtamar (photo 2010)



A view of Narek Village (with Mount Artos in the distance) opening from the Hermitage (photo 2010)

this part. Farther southward, the height of the rock gradually diminishes so that it terminates in a slanting stony slope. A waterfall used to exist at its southern extremity, within about 40 metres of the cut-in-rock complex, Yer. Lalayan stating the following about it: “A little far from the cavern, on its southern side, a waterfall cascades from the rock elevation to slightly disturb the boundless serenity of these caves.”¹¹ Later the water of this cascade was conveyed through a canal for the irrigation of the gardens of the village of Paykhner

We find it expedient to make some comments on this description which was written more than a century ago: since 1951¹³ the famous monastery of Narek, boasting an ancient history, has disappeared from this scene, and its domes, which were in such great harmony with its surroundings, have been replaced by the pointed white minaret of a mosque erected in the 1970s in the Kurdish village of Yemishlik.

The first topographer to provide a brief description of Narekatsy’s Hermitage is N. Sargissian: “The struc-

¹¹ Լալայեան Ե., idem, p. 41. This waterfall was also described by H. Ajemian: “...whence we gazed at the cool and clear cascade falling down the top of the rock, its sweet water, the drops of which resembled pearls, merging into the salty water of the sea” (Աճումնան Է., idem, p. 10).

¹² Լալայեան Ե., idem, p. 41.

¹³ Narek Monastery was destroyed in 1951 on the order of the Province Municipality. Information substantiating this statement can be found in the official website of Gyavash District: www.gevas.gov.tr/default_B1.aspx?content=1027.

ture is divided in two floors, lower and upper, which have nine rooms together, five on the first one, and four on the second. These storeys overlook the sea [viz. Lake Van], each of them having a window-shaped opening. It has a single entrance door through which it is slightly difficult to go into, and out of, the rock. Via the first entrance one can have access to the lower floor through the doors opening from a room into another. One of these chambers has a round hollow which is about a kangun deep. It remains obscure whether it is a font or was used for some other purpose. One can easily ascend to the upper floor from the lower one: similarly, it has four rooms which communicate with each other through doors opening into one another. One of them is a small chapel with an altar stone: the saint is said to have held divine service here.”¹⁴

There also exist several other brief descriptions of the Hermitage handed down to us by visitors of the subsequent periods, but a more detailed one is provided by Yer. Lalayan: “These caves are arranged on one another and form three floors. The lower one is quite easy of access. In order to ascend towards the middle one, you need to pass through extremely narrow paths, and to overcome the ascent of the third one, you should take off your shoes and climb up the already worn out stone steps with the utmost care. Nevertheless, very few succeed in ascending to the third floor. The cave chambers of the lower floor are not so very remarkable. Upon climbing up the second one, we first find ourselves in a hall which has a length of about 3 metres, a width of 2 metres and a height of 1.1/2 (1.5) metre. From this hall, a door-like opening leads to another cave of 2 metres which is square. On the western side of the latter, there is an arched pit which has a height of 1.1/2 metre, an equal width and a depth of a metre. A little farther, there is some space of a height of half a metre which is shaped like a bema, and where there is a two-metre-deep cavity (probably, a water reservoir used to exist here)... A door cut in the southern wall of this cave leads to another which has a length of 2 metres and a width of 1.1/2 metre. Another sizeable hole, looking like a sanctuary, can be seen in its western wall: it has a height of a metre, an equal depth and a width of 0.70 metre. In front of it, a pit, shaped like a *tonir*, can be seen, with its opening overlooking the east. A stone stairway of five steps leads from this middle floor to the first hall of the upper, i.e. third, storey, which has a length of 3 metres, a width of 2 metres and a height of 1.1/3 metre. This hall has two east-facing openings one of which is large and the other smaller. Its floor has two quadrangular holes which open into the second hall of the middle floor. One of its corners has a *tonir*-shaped cavity, with niches in its walls. A door

cut in the northern wall opens into another cave with an arch-shaped roof which has a length of 2 metres, a width of 1.1/2 metre and a height of 3 metres. On the eastern side, there is a semi-circular sanctuary with a one-metre-high bema: apparently, it was the general prayer hall of the anchorites dwelling in this Hermitage. Near the sanctuary, there is an east-looking opening through which ample light is let in. A door, opening from the northern wall of this main cave, leads into a small cave which is hardly 1.1/2 metre long and a metre wide, with an altar-stone on its eastern side, and some small pits on its floor. It is traditionally believed that this is the place where St. Gregory of Narek generally prayed to God, these small pits having supposedly formed as a result of his countless genuflections.”¹⁵

The description offered by Vardan of Khanasor is much briefer, but of great interest: “There were special places for putting feet while ascending to the cavern. Quite an extensive and beautiful cavern was cut into the mountain with comfortable and regular rooms each of which had clean and neatly-hewn walls, a ceiling and a floor. It consisted of two floors. The three lower rooms had *tonirs* for baking bread, and the upper one retained a *khachkar* (*cross-stone*) and an altar-stone: it was evident that it had been used as a praying place, but in what times? Who knows? This was St. Grigor Narekatsy’s cavern... Local people called it Narekatsy’s Praying Place...”¹⁶

There also exist other descriptions of this cut-in-rock hermitage, but they do not add anything essential to the aforementioned information.¹⁷ It is noteworthy

¹⁵ Լալայան Ե., idem, pp. 41-42.

¹⁶ Խանասորի Վարդանի հիշատակարանը, p. 66.

¹⁷ Khrimian Hayrik (Catholicos of All Armenians Mkrtich Khrimian) wrote the following after his visit to the Hermitage of Narekatsy: “Close to this village, in its north-west, there is a rocky mountain containing six caves, three upper and three lower ones. One of them has an altar: this was Narekatsy’s prayer place...” (Հրապարակ Արարատեան, idem, p. 95).

G. Servandziantz describes the cut-in-rock complex in the following way: “Apart from Narekatsy’s sepulchre, there is another holy, sacred place where his memory is alive—it is his prayer place, his Hermitage, the place of his spiritual flights, situated north of the monastery, within half an hour’s distance. It represents a double-floor rock of nine caves with only a single way leading upwards: a straight wall of stone and several tiny niches for hands and feet to put there while climbing up” (Վարդ., idem, p. 82).

G. Sherents writes: “...Hundreds of believers devoutly go on pilgrimage to the sacred site lying on the slope of the rocky mountain, above the village of Paykhner-Gomer, sometimes climbing up, sometimes slipping and even falling down, but resuming the ascent over and over again. It is the cave/prayer place of sworn anchorites comprising upper-floor cut-in-rock rooms, six in number, with stone altars, each of which has a cross and candlesticks. All these are the embellishment of the cavern” (Շերենց Գ., idem, pp. 127-128).

H. Ajemian’s description is brief: “The praying place consists of nine cut-in-rock cells which are connected through small openings. There is a stone altar in Narekatsy’s prayer room proper...” (Աճմեան Հ., idem, p. 11).

¹⁴ Մարգիսեան Ե., idem, p. 253.

that these records are not unanimous in mentioning the number of the cut-in-rock rooms.¹⁸

The caved complex of the Hermitage consists of three floors rising on one another. The first one occupies a smaller area than the other two, which begin in accordance with the northern edge of the first storey, extend farther southwards and end beneath the jutting arched upper section of the rock. All the floors have



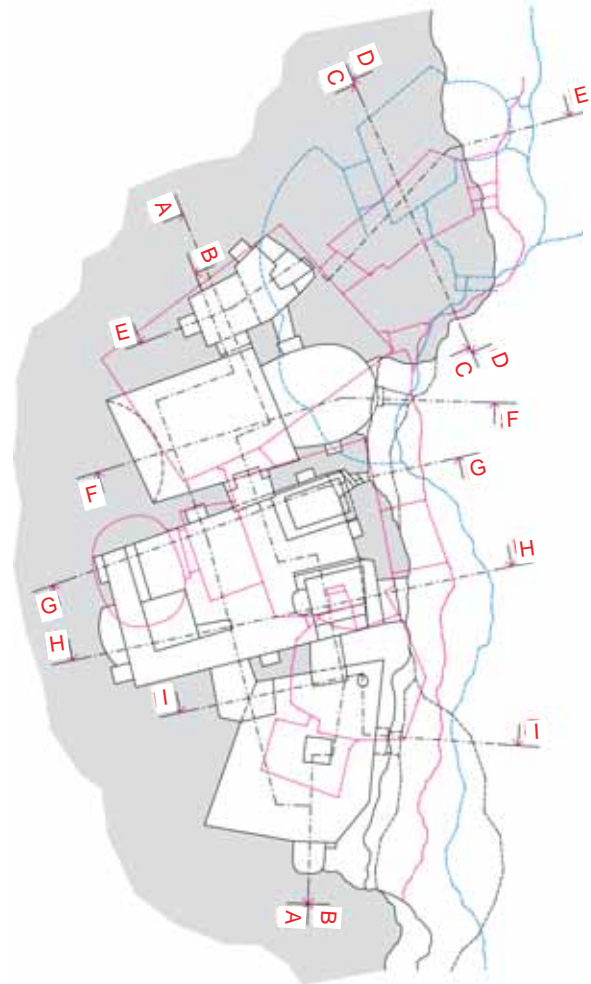
A sketch of the Hermitage Complex from the east

rooms with smoothly-finished walls and ceilings which are bare of any ornamentation. They are illuminated through the openings of the outer eastern wall which overlook Lake Van. The first floor is comparatively easier of access than the other two; besides, it has no internal connection with the upper ones. Probably, it was intended for pilgrims, while the second and third floors were for hermits, and for this reason, the visitors of the Hermitage ignore its first floor and describe it as a double-floor cut-in-rock complex.

Prose writer Raffi (Hakob Melik-Hakobian) offers the following description of the cut-in-rock complex: "But above all, the most interesting are the caves where Narekatsy used to live in seclusion. Close to the sea shore (he means Lake Van - translator), within an hour of Narek Village, another rock rises with several large and small natural caves inside it. Apart from these, nine rooms are cut into the same elevated rock: they date back to times immemorial and are arranged on two floors, five of them comprising the lower storey, and the [remaining] four the upper one. That stone-made abode of ancient Armenian troglodytes is so impregnable and so high above the ground that only a miracle-working personality like Narekatsy could have had access there. The main door opens into the first room of the lower floor, the other inner doors leading to the other chambers and eventually reaching the upper storey. Every room has a window overlooking the sea. One of the upper-storey ones resembles a small chapel with a stone altar: it was here that Narekatsy lived and it was here that he wrote his superb book" (Րաֆֆի, idem, pp. 314-315).

¹⁸ Khrimian Hayrik and G. Sherents describe the complex as consisting of 6 rooms, 3 upper- and 3 lower-floor ones: they did not count the corridor of the 2nd floor and the Hermitage of the 3rd one. N. Sargissian, G. Servandz'tians, H. Ajemian and Raffi mention 9 rooms, 4 of which are on the upper floor and 5 on the lower one. They considered the large niche adjoining the southern multangular chamber of the lower floor as a separate room. Yer. Lalayan ignores the corridor of the 2nd floor and the southern pentagonal room of the 3rd one in his description of the complex.

The first storey, which rises at a height of about 7.5 metres above ground, consists of two sections: an entrance hall (1) and a church (2). The remnants of the steps leading to this floor are preserved in the eastern part of the former, but nowadays it may be entered through a collapsed part of the eastern wall of the church sanctuary. The entrance hall (1), which has an irregular plan, represents a semi-cut-in-rock cave



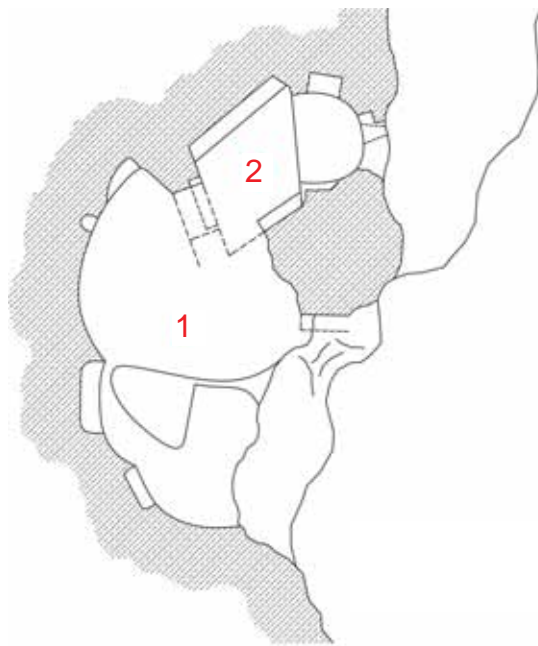
A general plan of the three-floor Hermitage Complex

(maximum dimensions: 6.10 x 3.70 metres) with a large opening in the east, its height gradually diminishing inwardly from 2.60 to 1.80 metres. Its walls preserve remnants of niches, the edge of the eastern wall retaining the upper section of a window. The church door opens from the northern wall of the entrance hall. A large triangular pit resembling a font and having a canal-shaped projection can be seen on its floor. The church (2) represents a uni-nave cut-in-rock structure (maximum dimensions: 2.80 x 2.20 metres), comprising a hall of a rhombus-like quadrangular plan, which has a longitudinal axis (extension: north-east-south-west). Its sanctuary, which almost resembles a semi-



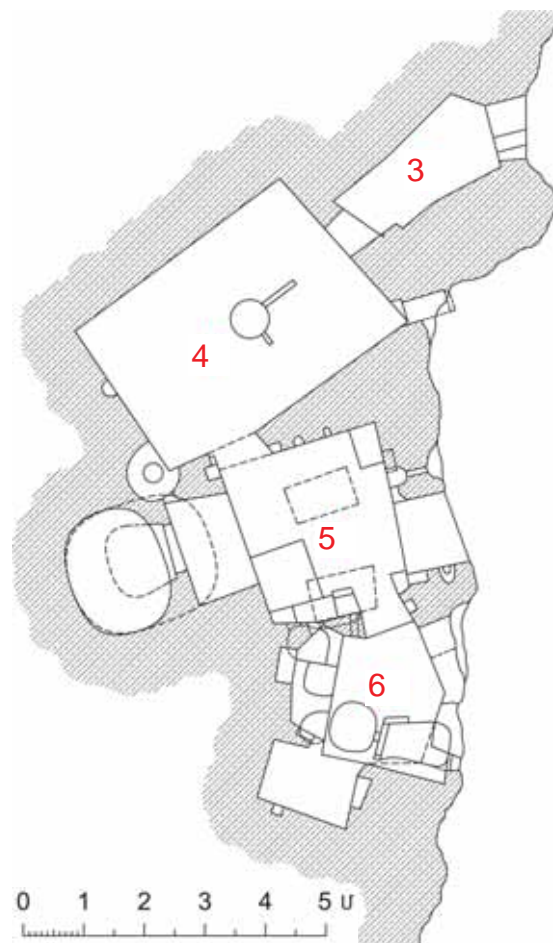
large arched recess of small depth above the door which opens from the centre of the western wall. The bema of the sanctuary rises at a height of 0.35 metre above the floor. The northern wall of the sanctuary has an arched niche, and the eastern one a window beneath which there is another recess: only some remnants of this window and niche are preserved due to the ruin of the eastern wall. At present a section of the church hall, from its south-western corner to the southern side of the door, is destroyed, and for this reason, the church and the entrance hall are perceived as forming a single whole.

The second floor, which rises at a height of about 13 metres above the ground, is quite difficult of access, its entrance opening into the perpendicular rock: it is situated above the window of the sanctuary of the church of the first floor and rises at a height of 5.40 metres. In order to reach the entrance to the second storey, one should ascend to the eastern side of the church of the first one through a narrow path stretching beneath the rock in the north of the cut-in-rock complex, then climb up the pits cut into the perpendicular rock for hands and feet. The second floor consists of a



The plan of the porch (1) and church (2) preserved on the first floor of the Hermitage

circle in plan, stretches from the east westward. There are cut-in-rock seats close to the longitudinal walls of the hall, which is covered with a flat vault beginning from slanting cornices. In the west, this vault is lower (2.41 metres) than in the east (2.64 metres). There is a



The plan of the corridor (3), large quadrangular room (4), small quadrangular chamber (5) and the multangular one (6) preserved on the second floor of the Hermitage



The corridor (3), large quadrangular (4) and small quadrangular (5) chambers located on the second floor of the Hermitage

corridor (3), a large quadrangular room (4), a small quadrangular one (5) and a multangular chamber (6). The corridor (3) is a narrow means of communication (maximum dimensions: 2.83 x 1.46 metres, height: 1.54 to 1.67 metres) which begins with the entrance opening and ends in a narrow door leading into the large quadrangular room following the corridor. Its longitudinal axis is parallel to that of the hall of the church of the first floor and has the following extension: north-east-south-west. The corridor entrance has a view of Lake Van and the island of Arter. The large quadrangular room (4), which is scantily illuminated (dimensions: 4.65 x 3.18 metres, maximum height: 2 metres), has an irregular quadrangular plan. Its longitudinal axis forms the continuation of that of the corridor. A narrow circular window, located below the ceiling, in

the south-eastern corner of the room, opens outwards, while in its south-western corner, close to the floor, a semi-circular niche extends at almost the whole height of the wall (there is a small circular pit on the floor of this recess). A *tonir*-shaped cavity (diameter: 0.64 metre, depth: 0.40 metre) is dug on the floor of this room, in its central part: like those in the *glkhatuns* of village houses, these pits were for fire, but the ceiling does not have a chimney, and a round window used to perform its function. Probably, this chamber was the refectory of the hermits. The large room communicates with the smaller quadrangular one through a door opening from the western part of the southern wall. The small quadrangular room (5) has a smooth ceiling of a height of 2.24 metres. It (dimensions: 2.95 x 2.69 metres) is amply illuminated thanks to a large door-



The small quadrangular (5) and multangular (6) chambers on the second floor of the Hermitage

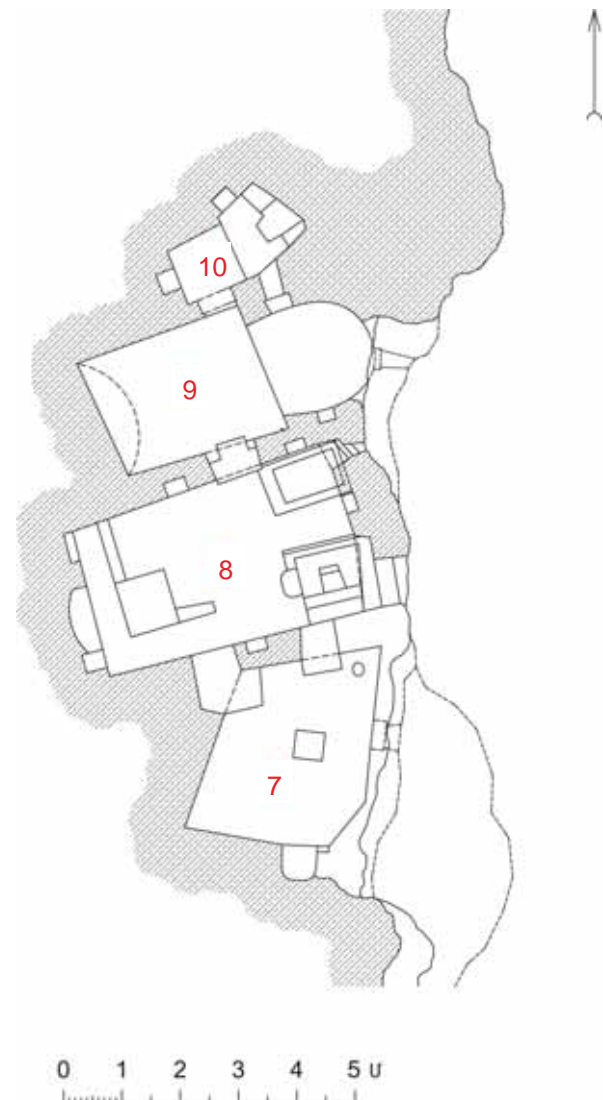
shaped opening in the southern part of the outer eastern wall (this opening extends almost at the whole height of the wall). Left of this opening, equal to the floor, there is a small semi-circular niche from which a narrow circular hole opens outwards. A large, deep and vaulted niche is dug in the shape of an apse in the western wall of the room, at a height of 0.68 metre above the floor. In the centre of its western wall, there is a hole which opens into a well (dimensions: 2.23 x 2.08 metres, maximum height: 3 metres) of round angles and a rectangular plan. In its upper section, this well is narrower than in the lower one, where it is in part beneath the apse-shaped recess (probably, it was a water basin or served as a barn). There are several other niches in the northern and eastern walls, those of the northern one being small and regular, while those of

the eastern one are larger and irregular. A small round hole in the middle section between the northern wall and the ceiling corner opens into the floor of the church of the third floor: it was probably intended for conveying the warm air of the second floor to the church. There are newly-excavated holes—the handiwork of those searching treasure there—on the floor of the room, in its south-western and north-eastern corners. The two large door-shaped openings (the northern one is rectangular, and the southern one is shaped like a table) of the level ceiling open into the third floor. The cut-in-rock stairway of the southern wall, which comprises five step holes, go up the third floor through this table-shaped opening. Probably, the rectangular hole was for carrying different things from the second storey to the third one and vice versa. A door, opening

from the eastern edge of the southern wall, leads to the multangular room (6). The western wall of this chamber (maximum dimensions: 2.76 x 2.51 metres, height: 2 metres) has an arched niche, and three pits can be seen close to the same wall, above the floor. The two openings of the wall of the north-western corner of the room connect the small quadrangular and multangular rooms. From the western part of the southern wall opens a small, room-like recess (dimensions: 1.55 x 1.14 metre) which rises at a height of 0.66 metre above the floor. In front of it, on the floor of the room, there are two pits which are connected by means of a narrow opening. One of them is circular; the other extends in length and resembles a font having a narrow circular outcome jutting from its exterior wall. Probably, the multangular chamber was the hermits' kitchen, and the room-like niche of the southern wall was used for storage purposes. The second floor of the complex served for everyday needs and was its utility section.

The third storey, which is the highest in the complex, was mainly used for religious worship. It consists of a pentagonal room (7), a quadrangular one (8), a church (9) and Narekatsy's Hermitage (10). The pentagonal room (7) has an irregular plan (maximum dimensions: 3.70 x 2.78 metres, maximum height: 2.20 metres), its floor gradually rising inward. On the floor, almost in the centre of the room, a square pit is excavated, with another, smaller oval one in its north-eastern corner. The southern wall of the room has a high recess the floor of which is lower than that of the chamber. It used to be illuminated through a window opening from its eastern wall. The outer eastern wall is ruined at all its length, from the floor to half its height, and only the upper part of the window is preserved in the centre of the large opening that appeared as a result of this destruction. The room has a gable ceiling extending from the north southward. The multangular chamber communicates with the quadrangular one through two doors opening from its north-western corner and the central part of its northern wall. The quadrangular room (8), the floor of which is lower than that of the multangular one by 0.37 metre, has a smooth ceiling of a height of 2.01 metres. There are two door-shaped openings at the eastern edge of the floor of this room (dimensions: 4.65 x 3.00 metres), the southern of which (dimensions: 1.13 x 0.70 metre) leads to the third floor via the cut-in-rock steps of the second storey. The borderline of each of these openings is dug at greater circumference on the surface of the floor. These borderlines give us grounds to presume that these openings used to have wooden shutters which were equal to the floor surface. In the western part of the floor, there is a *tonir*-shaped rectangular pit (0.96 x 0.87 metre) with two vertical canal-shaped hollows. The western wall has three niches of varying height. A

narrow window opens from the north-eastern corner of the outer eastern wall, below the ceiling, and there is a large door-shaped opening in its south-eastern corner. There are two small niches on the right and left sides of



The plan of the pentagonal room (7), quadrangular chamber (8), church (9) and Narekatsy's Hermitage (10) situated on the third floor of the complex

the door which opens from the northern wall. This door leads into a uni-nave church (maximum dimensions: 4.78 x 2.30 metres) which is lower than the quadrangular room by 0.38 metre. It (9) is the religious building of the hermits once living in these caves. Its hall has a quadrangular plan (dimensions: 2.93 x 2.30 metres, height: 2.60 metres) and a level vault. The church has an arched sanctuary of a horseshoe-shaped plan (the bema has a height of 0.45 metre) from the eastern wall of which a window opens. Each of the northern and southern walls of the sanctuary has a niche. Due to the collapse of some section of the eastern wall



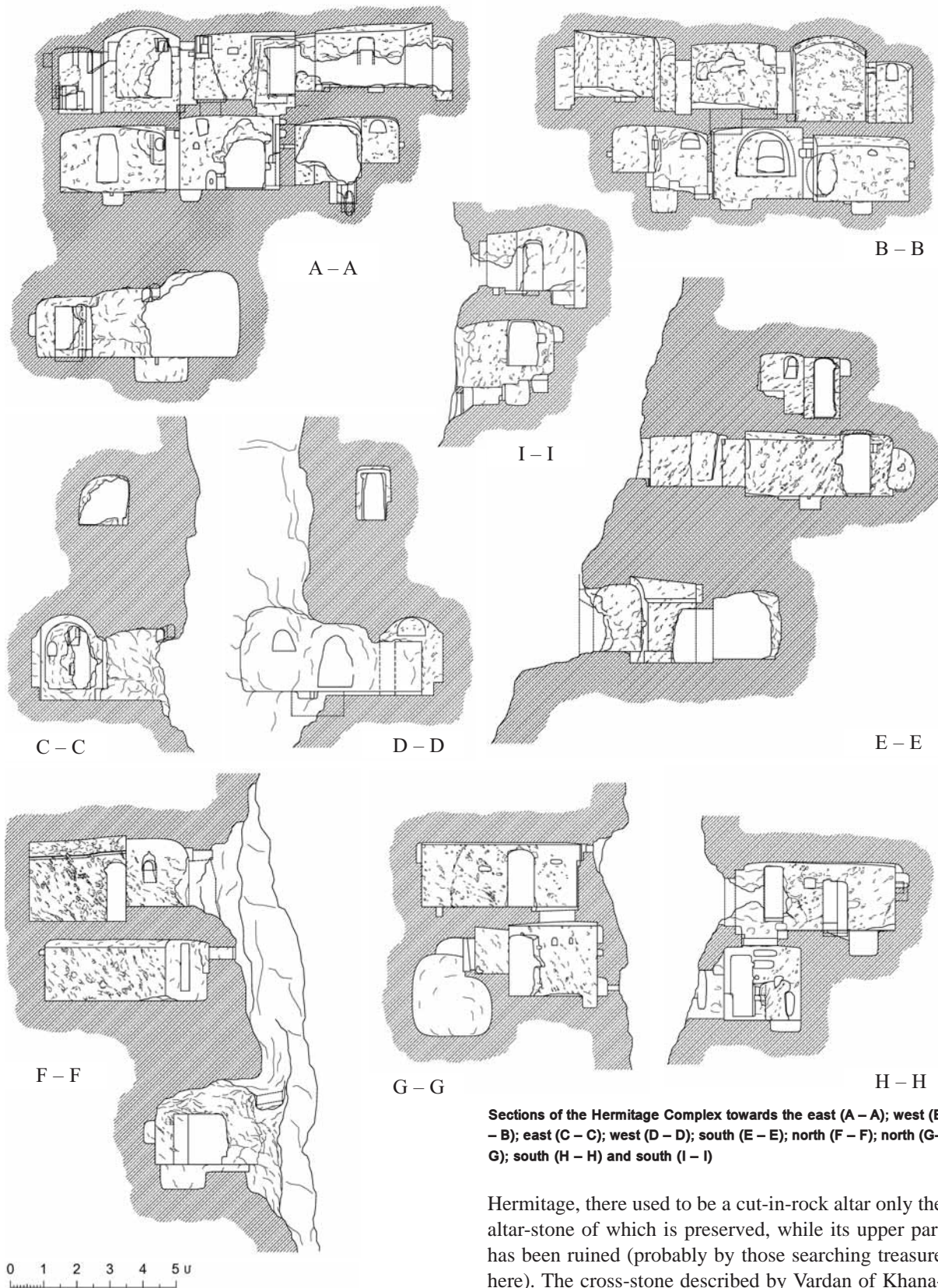
The pentagonal (7) and quadrangular (8) chambers and the church (9) on the third floor of the Hermitage



The church (9) and Narekatsy's Hermitage (10) situated on the third floor of the complex

of the sanctuary, below the window, a large opening has appeared through which ample light is let into the church. A hardly eligible two-line inscription is preserved on the left side of the door, on the northern wall of the hall: «...լըցի / ...նւստէ» (*transl.*: “... *uste*”). The walls, ceiling and sanctuary of the church were covered with plaster some remnants of which are still preserved. A door, opening from the eastern edge of the northern wall of the church hall, leads into a small chapel/praying place which is traditionally assumed to be the Hermitage of St. Gregory of Narek (10)—he spent many years here in seclusion, and it was here that he wrote his unsurpassed work, the *Book of Lamentation*.

In the east, the small prayer hall (dimensions: 1.09 x 1.07 metre, height: 1.86 metre) of the chapel has a rectangular sanctuary (dimensions: 1.47 x 1.32 m) the bema of which rises at a height of 0.14 metre above the floor. Both the prayer hall and the sanctuary have level ceilings. The latter is deviated from the prayer hall with a longitudinal axis stretching from the east westward and has the following extension: north-east-south-west. The western wall of the prayer hall has a small niche with some small holes on its floor—as legend has it, they mark the traces of Narekatsy's knees and elbows and appeared after his countless genuflexions. The northern wall of the sanctuary has an arched recess,



Sections of the Hermitage Complex towards the east (A – A); west (B – B); east (C – C); west (D – D); south (E – E); north (F – F); north (G – G); south (H – H) and south (I – I)

and the window of its southern wall opens into the northern niche of the church, thanks to which, the sanctuary of the Hermitage gets light from that of the church. Close to the eastern wall of the sanctuary of the

Hermitage, there used to be a cut-in-rock altar only the altar-stone of which is preserved, while its upper part has been ruined (probably by those searching treasure here). The cross-stone described by Vardan of Khanasor can no longer be found.¹⁹ The floor is covered with the remnants of the destroyed upper section of the altar, due to which, the pits of the floor are not visible.

¹⁹ Խանասորի Վարդանի հիշատակարանը, p. 66.

The Hermitage of Narekatsy is a sacred place of pilgrimage the value of which grows even higher thanks to its remarkable architectural features. It is a peculiar complex of medieval cut-in-rock architecture comprising sections of both everyday use and religious worship each of which is located on a distinct floor.

SOURB ASTVATZAMOR MONASTERY OF ZAREHAVAN (DERIK)

by Samvel Karapetian

Historically, Sourb Astvatzamor (Holy Mother of God) Monastery (N 38°14'117," E 044°34'781"), which dates from the Early Middle Ages, is situated in Zarehavan (later renamed Salmast with larger territorial coverage) District, Parskahayk Province, Armenia Maior. It stands on the south-facing slope of a picturesque gorge, on the right side of a tributary flowing there, a little above the Kurdish village of Derik,¹ 17 kms north-west of Salmast City, the centre of the district of the same name, at an altitude of 1,715 metres above sea level.²

The monument was preserved standing until the early 20th century, but at present it is reduced to ruins. It is also mentioned by the following names: Sourb Astvatzamayr of Zarevand, Sourb Astvatzatzin (Holy Virgin) of Derik and Arnavank (this last one derives from the identification of Derik with Arna).³

Located close to the ancient road of Aghbak-Salmast, the centuries-old monastery was a renowned pilgrimage site throughout the district of Salmast until the 1940s. Despite this, however, no topographer has ever paid any attention to it, and for this reason, at present there are absolutely no written records providing at least a brief architectural description for the once standing buildings of the monastic complex. The available sources which are very few in number mostly refer

to certain historical events which took place in the monastery between the 1880s and 1890s.

In 1889 a brave youth named Movses Michaelian took up living in the abandoned and semi-ruined monastery and embarked on its renovation by Primate of Atropatene Mkhitarian's consent: "...even the shabby cabins and the dome, which had been destroyed in the course of time, were repaired with the help of certain able people..."⁴ In 1892, however, Movses was killed in a fight against the Kurds.⁵

In 1893 mention is made of the Prior of the monastery, Archimandrite Bagrat Tavakalian, who was busy settling its financial problems.⁶

A record of 1894 states that Sourb Astvatzamor Monastery had some estates which had been ratified as its property a long time before: "...in the vicinity of the monastery, there is a village of 3 Armenian houses and a little farther, another of 10 Kurdish ones, two of which belong to it."⁷

The renovation of the monastery was delayed due to the plunder and mas-



Archimandrite Bagrat Tavakalian

1 The village, which belongs to the Ashiret of Muhammad, had a population of 35 houses as of 2012.

2 Below follow some records on the location of the monument: "...the monastery stands very far from the centre of Salmast: it lies in the gorge leading to Aghbak District, Turkey, and called Dushman Dara (i.e. Gorge of the Enemy). ...within 20 minutes of the monastery, towards the west, in a narrow gorge, the Kurdish village of Verin (Upper - translator) Derik is situated, with springs of the mineral water Jermuk running in its vicinity at a temperature of 25 to 75 degrees" («Մշակ», 1891, № 126, 7 նոյեմբեր, էջ 3); "...the Kurdish village of Derik located within half an hour of the monastery..." (Ավետոս, Ճանապարհորդական Յիշնորոթիւններս Պարսկաստանից և Տաճկաստանից (Ջուղայից մինչև Մուշ), «Արար», 1893, գիրք Ա, էջ 26); "...in this district, on the borderline of Turkey, Derik's Sourb Astvatzatzin Monastery is situated" («Արձագանք», 1893, № 9, էջ 2-3); "The road leading to the monastery first enters the Kurdish village of Nazrava (Nazar-avan) and then [leads to] it. There the Armenian-inhabited villages of Aslanik, Hakhveran, Hambanavan [and] Kyabik (Kyapik) are situated" («Նոր-Դար», 1894, № 17, էջ 2); "The road leading to the monastery began from the village of Savra" («Մշակ», 1894, № 98, 27 օգոստոս, էջ 1-2).

3 "...the cloister of the Holy Mother of God in Zarevand, which is called Derik, i.e. Small Church, in the Kurdish language" («Նոր-Դար», 1894, № 17, էջ 2).

4 «Մշակ», 1892, № 66, 13 յունիս, էջ 3: Another source states the following about the renovation of the dome and rooms of the monastery: "...several years ago, a few inhabitants of Salmast repaired the fallen cupola and built two small cabins..." («Մշակ», 1891, № 126, 7 նոյեմբեր, էջ 3).

5 «Մշակ», 1892, № 66, 13 յունիս, էջ 3:

6 A record states the following with this regard: "The Prior of Sourb Astvatzamor Cloister of Zarevand (Derik), Archimandrite Bagrat Gevorg-Tavakalian, gave us a printed report on the donations and expenditure of the monastery. We find it expedient to refer to some of the data found in it, especially taking into account the fact that some people are trying to spread the rumour that while in Tabriz, the Father Superior collected 600 tumans (1,800 roubles) and wasted it together with some Armenian teachers from Russia. It contains the family names of 49 donators who gave a total of 753 gherans: 363 gherans 90 kopecks has been spent, the remainder amounting to 383 gherans 10 kopecks in cash. If we add to this the residue of the amount got for the kissing of the Prior's hand, namely, 49 gherans 20 kopecks, we shall receive a total of 537 gherans 30 kopecks, 12 tumans of which was spent on the needs of the monastery after the printing of the report" («Տարապ», 1893, № 26, էջ 419).

7 «Մշակ», 1894, № 98, 27 օգոստոս, էջ 1-2:



A general view of the remnants of Sourb Astvatzamor Monastery of Zarevand from the south-east (photo 2011)

mountains? ‘Give me 100 soldiers and take responsibility [for the invasion] on you.’ Within ten days, the Pasha incited the chief of the Marzketsies of Aghbak, Sharaf—the 5 murdered Kurds had been his *rayas* (subjects - translator)—to an attack. That sinister news had already reached the innocent and courageous people of Derik: the pilgrims visited the monastery with arms, always being on their guard. Around the middle of July, there were no doubts as to the inevitability of the raid. The monastery was being spied on day and night, and for 15 days, both the roads leading to Derik were thronged with the armed Kurds of Bahri Pasha. Communication with the outer world was severed altogether—no passers-by could be seen, and for many days and nights, the monastery was under total siege. The accounts of the messengers who happened to come there were fabulous: ‘Sharaf will reach here today, in the evening, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow with 50, 100 and 500 men.’ Those in Derik, only a handful of people, were panic-stricken. The Kurds of a village called Verin (i.e. Upper - translator) Derik (it was owned by the monastery) were so terrified that they left their houses and ran away in the shroud of night, as the dangerous news had reached them, too. One of the peasants whose family belonged to the monastery together with two others fled away with these Kurds, taking his wife and children with him. Only about 35 people—4 villagers, 5 monks and 12 pilgrims, the rest being women and children—were left in Derik. Taking

into account the impending danger, Vicar Sargis kept the pilgrims there for 5 to 6 days. Given the inevitable disaster, armed guards were placed in three distinct places with a fixed watchword to protect the monastery day and night. Spies were sent to the adjacent mountains. The few people who still stayed in Derik grew more and more panic-stricken: none of them hoped for survival as they lived amidst Kurdish villages of bandits and ever active gangs, being surrounded by the immense Dushman mountains as well as deep gorges and precipices. The inhabitants of Salmast did not dare to come to their aid, while the Pasha, who was on the very borderline, was eager to see the repetition of the Bulgarian scene: he still persisted and plucked his beard, demanding the heads of the “mutineers” of Derik. In vain had those under siege focused their telescopes on the roads: there was no help. None of the Armenians of Salmast proved willing to defend their sanctuary, although everybody was aware of the coming danger. The people of Derik pinned their hopes only on themselves and decided to defend the monastery to their last breath. They actively started work with cheerful singing—they kept making mortar and carrying bricks and stones on their backs so that within two days, three minor fortifications were erected, for the small monastery had been deprived of any by that time. On the morning of 21 July, everybody was busy with his own work, although all of them were armed. All of a sudden, the guard fired a shot thus giv-

ing a [warning] signal. A group of horsemen were seen in the distance rushing past the sanctuary towards the hills on its eastern side, namely, in the direction of the small cattle belonging to the monastery and village, which was unfortunately farther than usual on that day, grazing behind the hills. For several seconds, general confusion prevailed, but soon everybody occupied their places. The enemy made an appearance—it was Sultan Hamid's Hamidie Regiment. 'We started shooting, but what should we see? The Kurds opened fire parallel with us, but what were they doing? They were showering us with bullets, having opened fire on us from the western, northern and eastern mountains simultaneously. White clouds of smoke puffed up the sky from the top of every rock and mountain. The whistle of bullets was ear-shattering, finding its echoes in the merciless mountains. From three sides, we were encircled by numerous Kurds, without knowing anything about their exact number: we had the impression of being surrounded by thousands of them. The white clouds kept rising and gradually came nearer. We fired in response to them actively. The confusion and turmoil intensified in the monastery: on the one hand, the children's cries and screams were heard, and on the other, the women were seen tearing their hair and running about in utter dismay and perplexity, some of them bringing bags of oil, cheese and flour, which they had been keeping against a rainy day, to the monastery in great hastiness. The bullets sent by the ignoble Sultan kept whistling past our heads. We looked through the telescope: the gangs of barbarians kept descending towards us from the lofty mountains in the north and disappearing in the deep gorges... The enemy was approaching. 'Carnage, formidable slaughter... women, girls...' Everybody kept whispering: confusion and panic prevailed for a short time. The horsemen kept rushing furiously from a gorge to another, and from a hill to another, disappearing in a second. They always chose our weakest side to attack the monastery: more than 100 horsemen, a total of 300 to 400, occupied the high mountains, while we were just a handful of people, 21 in number and in a low place, beneath their feet, having only four positions. Among the enemy was the faithful subject of the Sultan, namely, the Turkish centurion of the cordon of the border village of Khanik with his 50 disguised troops, who had joined the invaders through Bahri Pasha's cunning. What were we to do? To keep our positions and protect ourselves up until the death of our very last friend. A mountain-dwelling mother cried out: 'Boys, my dear ones, the cattle...!' The small trumpet of the people of Derik was blown and we sang in unison: 'Death is one everywhere...' We plucked up courage, and our panic was dispelled. The Kurds who had surrounded the cattle from afar were now showering bullets on the 16-year-

old shepherd and his younger brother of 11, who had joined him on that day just for pleasure. Each inhabitant of Derik seemed to be equal to ten ones. We shot bullets around the cattle, which was within a verst, in coolness. Now the small boys turned to this side of the hill and started running in our direction, our fire intensifying, while the barefaced villains were unable to approach them. Tears of happiness were seen... After an hour of heavy fire, they drove away the cattle, losing a Kurd, but their actual aim had not been the seizure of those several black-tailed animals—they simply wanted to divert our attention and incite us out of our positions so that they might be able to attack us, for the mounted bandits lay in ambush for us in groups and waited for a signal to attack. They were about to succeed, for two of our friends jumped out of their positions bareheaded and in sweat and rushed to the cattle which was being driven away by the enemy. We had decided not to chase them in order to avoid making a fatal mistake (these two might be followed by others) so that we talked those provoked from doing so by imploring and reproaching them. The cattle was carried away. Everybody was very happy to see the children alive. Throughout 3 hours the people of Derik had kept firing to the target... They had been defending the Armenian sanctuary, Derik, against that vast throng, as unforgettable deeds... sweet memories... are connected with it. They had been defending the honour of Armenian women and girls... The poor timid invaders were met with firm, steadfast resistance, and their advance was repelled. None of us had suffered any injury. Those who had come to take the rebels' heads proved unwilling to combat openly. The fight broke out at half past eight in the morning and ceased about half an hour past midday.

"Sultan Hamid's Hamidie Regiment was met with a proper resistance: the gang of 400 barbarians who had every advantage over us—mountains, gorges, Kurdish villages, provisions and even Turkish troops—did not dare to attack a group of common people. The following morning we spied on the nearby mountains: there was nobody there, the Kurds having gone away in shame. ...We heard that a female buffalo of the cattle had been killed: Sharaf had better present its bloody head to the infuriated Pasha instead of those of the rebel. According to the neighbouring Kurds, their besieging tribesmen had wounded not 3, but 7 people, and every effort was made to conceal this."⁹

Another record states the following about this fighting: on 21 July, Bahri Pasha of Van sent two Kurdish tribes to the monastery of Derik to destroy it and bring him the heads of those who were there in retaliation for the 5 murdered Kurds. The Kurds, 300 in number,

⁹ «Грозу», 1894, № 12, т. 5-6:

attacked the monastery, which was being defended by 20 Armenians with rifles. However, they only managed to drive away the monastic cattle, as it was far from it, although the Armenians of Derik resisted even for these animals. Realising that they could inflict no damage on the monastery, the Kurds withdrew having seized the cattle. None of the Armenians suffered any injury.¹⁰

In 1898 the Persian authorities who had studied the details of this fight rejected the allegations of the Turkish powers according to which the armed Armenian revolutionaries had turned the monastery into a castle.¹¹

The second noteworthy fight of Derik took place in the spring of 1896: "...all the experienced *hayduks* were armed with rifles. After a 10-day journey full of difficulties, at dawn the group approached Sourb Astvatzatzin Monastery of Derik, which was ruined and uninhabited. Noticing the *fidayis* entering the monastery, the Kurds of the border villages, the Mazrik, the Shekak and those of Mametan District, immediately laid siege on the elevations predominating over it, especially, Mount Spitak (White Mountain - translator). Fighting became inevitable. The armed *hayduks* occupied positions near the ramparts of the monastery and the north-eastern hills, while those

without arms entered the church. Before starting, *hayduk* Shero approached the grave of his comrade-in-arms, Chato from Kajet, kissed it and said: 'My dear Chato, if by God's will, I sacrifice my life for my homeland, I wish to repose by your side, my dear friend.' The fight broke out at sunrise: the Kurds launched a heavy attack trying to advance with savage cries and yells, but the *hayduks* resisted them heroically. The battle intensified, the Kurds advancing from every direction in large numbers. Suddenly Shero moved out of his position and started attacking, but an enemy bullet shot him dead at once (his wish was realised, and his remains were buried side by side with Chato's grave). During the fight, Manuk and Hakob from Karjkan were killed, too. The Kurdish attacks



Chato and Shero, two inseparable comrades-in-arms from Kajet Village of Shatak, who were buried in Derik Monastery (reprinted from: «Յուշամատենան Հայ Յեղափոխական Դաշնակցության պրոմ-ատլասից, հ. Ա, Լոս Անճելես, 1992)

10 «Մշակ», 1894, № 96, 23 օգոստոս, էջ 3: About a year and a half after this attack, the following was written in the Armenian press: "This year the chief of the Marzketsy, Sharaf (he attacked Derik last year with a force of 500 and had to suffer the shame of withdrawal), has launched an offensive against Kotur, which is considered a Persian borderline fortification, with about 400 of his men, having previously plundered and devastated the Armenian-inhabited village of Brnavik. The Armenians and Persians who had united [to repel the enemy], fortified themselves in this castle and decided to resist the forces of Sharaf up to their very last breath. After a fighting of 9 hours, Sharaf had to retreat in disappointment leaving three corpses for the Persian khan had armed the Armenians with Governmental rifles and even used guns. From among the Armenians, Grigor from Kotur was slightly injured..." («Գրոշակ», 1896, № 3, էջ 20).

11 After these frustrated allegations, the incursions of Atropatene began and Salmast became a theatre of base and perfidious raids launched by the Turkish authorities. For many times, it was slandered as a den of large Armenian troops and a place where a great number of arms and guns were concentrated. For so many times, investigating officials were sent to Salmast to verify all that, but every time it was only proved that all that was nothing but vain slander and groundless charges. Let us leave aside the fact that after the attack against Derik and the Armeno-Kurdish fight of '94, the circumstantial investigation carried out by Isah Khan proved that the monastery of Derik is far from being "an Armenian stronghold," as alleged by the Turkish powers, and that instead of "armed revolutionaries," it was inhabited by one or two aged guards. After informing the ambassador of Turkey about all these facts, the *Sadrizam* added: "Hopefully, from now on You will not be predisposed to believe everything You hear" («Արաբս», 1898, Ա, ութերորդ տարի, Ս. Պետերբուրգ, էջ 131-133).

grew so severe that the *hayduks* were forced into leaving their positions and strengthening themselves in the monastery. The Kurds threw highly inflammable brushwood, twigs and large blocks of stone into the monastery to set it on fire and kill those who were there. By that time, it had already grown dark, and the *fidayis* decided to break through the siege and move away. However, their leader Nikol Duman suffered from rheumatism and was unable to join them. What could they do? A brave lad, Lorto (Harutiun Hambarzumian), decided to carry him on his back. Those unarmed were to move in the middle of the group, while those with rifles were to walk on their four sides. Duman, who was sitting on Lorto's back, cried out in a loud voice: 'Boys, fire! Ahead...!' All of them opened fire at the same time. The panic-stricken Kurds ran away, and the *hayduks* broke through their circle and managed to go away. Lorto later told his friends about his successful and tireless ascent of Mount Spitak of Derik, covering a vast distance, with Duman on his back. The group reached Salmast, but instead of going to the Armenian villages, they entered that of Hin Kaghak (Kyohna Shahar), where they were given away by a Turk and arrested by the Persians,

being sent to Dilman. Duman was able to get released by bribe, while the others remained imprisoned for several months, being set free only after the fights of Van that took place in June 1896.”¹²

In the 1910s, Sourb Astvatzamor Monastery shifted into the possession of Kurdish chief Ismayil Agha (Smko). In order to redress this injustice and return the sanctuary to its proper owners, the Armenians of Salmast addressed numerous petitions to the Persian authorities, but all of them proved fruitless. In consequence of this, in 1914 the Armenians addressed a written request to the Russian Consul in Teheran demanding that the Kurds should be driven away from Derik.¹³

This document, dated 12 February 1914 and signed by 40 people from 7 villages of Salmast, particularly said: “We, the undersigned, being the representatives of the Armenians of Salmast, are applying to Your Excellency through this petition, daring to draw Your high attention to the following problem:

“The Kurdish chief of the Avdo, Ismayil Agha, who had been banished from Salmast due to his various heavy crimes and had been living in Kotur for 6 to 7 years, managed to return last year—we do not know how—and assume state service. Apart from insulting our sacred religious feelings, he has also caused large financial losses to

us. Since Ismayil Agha is in state service now, he is obliged to avoid doing anything contradicting the law. However, this year he has had the face of occupying Sourb Astvatzatin Monastery of Derik, located in Salmast, driving away the about 15 families of peaceful Kurdish farmers who had been settled there by the Armenian spiritual authorities. We have submitted a couple of petitions regarding this issue to the Russian Consul in Khoy through the highly-honoured Armenian Primate of Atropatene. However, more than 5 months have passed, and we have not received any answer yet.

“The aforementioned monastery, which has two villages, large pastures and special winter ones which are sunny, used to get large income from their use every year, whereas now it is deprived of any profit. Besides, horrified at the Avdoi living there, the Armenian people of Salmast do not dare to visit it, and their fears are not ungrounded, for Ismayil Agha has allowed his tribesmen, even in written form, to threaten them in a most insolent way. Consequently, Armenian believers do not have the courage of going to the monastery, and this has deprived it of the income it used to receive from pilgrims... This year he has caused a loss of at least 3,000 tumans to the monastery.

Thus, applying to Your Excellence, we implore that You should focus Your high attention on this humble request of Salmast Armenians and condescend to handle it properly...”¹⁴

Ten years later, in 1924 Sourb Astvatzatin of Derik is mentioned as the only monastery throughout Salmast: apart from it, the district also had 12 religious buildings, 10 of which were churches, and 2 chapels.¹⁵

Most probably, the Armenian diocese of Atropatene proved unable to manage and preserve the monastery properly, and the worst way-out was chosen as the only settlement of its problems, namely, the sale of its estates. On 19 February 1930, Senior Archimandrite Arsen Gheltjian reported the Spiritual Council of Echmiatzin about this: “Archbishop N. [Nerses] Melik-Tangian has sold the domains of Derik Monastery, including around 1,500 *artavars* of arable land, mineral springs and pastures. They have been purchased by a Kurd who has allegedly paid 500 tumans...”¹⁶

Twelve years later, on 20 February 1942, Arsen Gheltjian, who had been promoted to the rank of archbishop, prepared an extensive report which is the last available written document mentioning the monastery: “...we already know what position Nerses occupies: he is held captive by the Dashnaks thanks to a number of wrongs he has committed. I have already informed you in a report that he has sold the old embroidered curtain

12 **Մասիս**, Մեր գրիերը, «Գրօշակ», 1927, № 6, էջ 179-180: One of the members of the group was Hovhannes Avetissian, about whom the following is reported: “In 1896, before the massacres of Van, he went to Persia together with a group of members of the Dashnaksutiun (i.e. Armenian Revolutionary Party - G.M.). He remained alive after the battle of Derik, but suffered imprisonment in Salmast together with the members of the same group for a month or a month and a half...” («Գրօշակ», 1900, № 4, էջ 58). Three years later, Armenian revengers killed the leader of the Kurdish band which had launched the attack against the monastery: “...in 1899 Emir Joshri came to Salmast accompanied by his servant—it was he who had encircled Duman in the monastery of Derik in 1896. When I heard about his arrival, I let our fellows in Mahlam know about it so that they would take revenge on him: it was carried out by Darmo and several of his friends in the neighbourhood of Mahlam Village” (**Ն. Հանգոյց**, Սասնոցի յուշերը, «Հայրենիք», Պոսթըն, 1924, № 6, էջ 134). It should be pointed out, however, that there exists another conjecture regarding Emir Jamshin’s murder: according to it, he was killed not by Armenians, but by Kurds: “In recent three months, some remarkable occurrences have been observed amidst the Kurdish subjects of Persia living in the border areas: let us mention prominent chief Jafar Agha’s bloody fights against another chieftain, Mahmud Agha, and the murder of chief Emir Jamshin, living in the vicinity of Derik, by another Kurd. The first of these chieftains mentioned, Jafar Agha, went to aid Sharaf during the operation of Khanasor in ‘97 and was wounded in the forehead, but at present he has certain discrepancies with other Kurdish chiefs and for this reason, is on more peaceful terms with Armenians than ever. Emir Jamshin, who was killed, was the chief who had engaged in fighting against the men of our group leader Duman in Derik in ‘96: as is known, it was during this fighting that folk hero Shero was killed” («Գրօշակ», 1899, № 3, էջ 42).

13 **Պատրիկեան Վ.**, Հայերի բողոքը Սրնկոյի դէմ, «Հորիզոն», 1914, № 32, 11 փետրւարի, էջ 3: Also see idem, Գերիկի վանքի խնորի շուրջը, «Հորիզոն», 1914, № 109, 23 մայիսի, էջ 4.

14 **Պատրիկեան Վ.**, Եօթ գլխաւոր գիւղերի դիմումը ռուսաց դեսպանին, «Հորիզոն», 1914, № 41, 25 փետրւարի, երեքշաբթի, էջ 3-4: 15 ՀԱԳ, ֆ. 409, ց. 1, գ. 4079, ք. 1: 16 ՀԱԳ, ֆ. 409, ց. 1, գ. 4116, ք. 11:



The remnants of the church of Sourb Astvatzamor Monastery of Zarevand (Derik) from the south, south-west, south-east, north-east and north (photos 2011)

of the monastery of [St.] Tade, and passed the lands of Derik Monastery to a Kurd...¹⁷

¹⁷ Վաներագրեր հայ եկեղեցու պատմութեան, Գեորգ Չ Չորեքչեան կաթողիկոս Ամենայն հայոց (1938-1955 թթ.), գիրք 2, Երևան, 1999, էջ 145:

As already stated above, no photographs were taken of the monastic complex until the beginning, or the middle, of the 20th century, when its principal building, the church of Sourb Astvatzamor, was still preserved standing. Nor do there exist any, at least brief,



The upper part of the northern sanctuary of the church of Sourb Astvatzamor Monastery of Zarevand (Derik) and the remains of its northern vestry (photos 2011)

descriptions of the monument. A number of publications have presented the photographs of two ancient sites as allegedly showing the monastery of Derik. In fact, however, they are completely different from each other and have nothing in common with the monastery

in question (the comparison of these photographs will substantiate this statement).

The present-day vestiges of the monastic complex comprise the remnants of its church, which used to represent a central-domed tetraconch: its northern cross



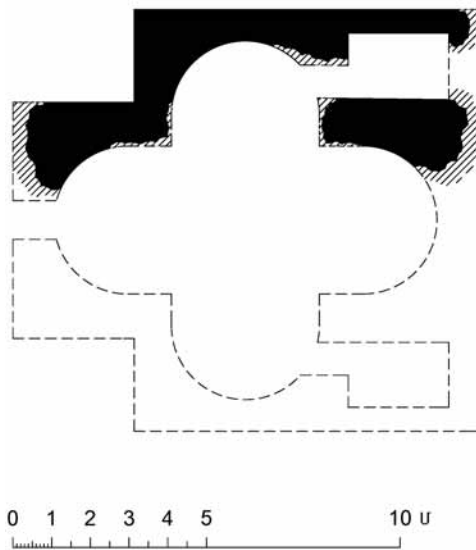
A huge fragment of the fallen dome of the church of Sourb Astvatzamor Monastery of Zarevand (Derik): photos 2011



Huge fragments of the ruined walls of the church of Sourb Astvatzamor Monastery of Zarevand (Derik): photos 2011



A visit to Sourb Astvatzamor Monastery of Zarehavan (Derik) on 7 June 2011



The plan of Sourb Astvatzamor Monastery of Zarehavan (Derik): measurement by architect Ashot Hakobian, 2011

wing with a semi-circular apse, partly the walls of its northern vestry, as well as certain meagre sections of the retaining walls of some parts. The monument was apparently destroyed through explosion as huge mass-

es of blown up walls can be seen around it, particularly on its southern side.

The church of Derik Monastery was entirely built of finely-finished stones of medium size and others slightly larger than average, combined with mortar. Most presumably, the under-dome square joined the concha by means of squinches. The study of the massive parts of the fallen tambour show that it was circular inwardly ($D = 3.60$ metres), and octahedral outwardly (indeed, it was surmounted by a pointed spire which was octahedral like the drum itself). The entrance must have opened from the western facade, but it might also have had another entrance in the south.

The church (exterior dimensions: 11.68×10.89 metres) was inwardly covered with plaster only very meagre parts of which are preserved. No traces of frescoes can be discerned on these remnants.

The other monastic buildings, namely 2 to 3 rooms and the ramparts, have been destroyed without a single vestige left.

Nor is there any trace of the sacred graves of the two heroes of the liberation of the monastery, Chato, descending from Kajet Village, Shatakh District, Van Province, and "people's hero" Shero, who was interred beside his inseparable comrade-in-arms in 1896.

THE NEWLY-UNEARTHED CITY SITE OF KARKAR IN ARTSAKH

by Gagik Sargissian & Alexan Hakobian

Karkar is the only medieval urban place in Artsakh Province of Armenia Maior, whose name is preserved in the Armenian, Arabic and Georgian sources. Chronologically, it is first mentioned by Arab geographer Ibn Khordadbeh (820 to 912), who writes the following in his work entitled *A Book of Roads and Kingdoms* («Գիրք ճանապարհների և քաղաքությունների մասին»): “Kubad (namely, Sassanid King Kavat I) built the cities of Baylakan, Barda’a (i.e. Partaw) and Kabala (i.e. Kapaghak), as well as Suddal-Labin (i.e. a brick bulwark). Anushirvan (namely, Sassanid King Khosrov I) constructed those of Shabura, *Karkara* (i.e. Karkar) and al-Bab (i.e. Derbend).”¹ The continuation of this passage contains some more interesting information: “[Anushirvan] built the city of Sughdabil (i.e. Tsurtaw) in the land of Gourzan (i.e. Virk) and erected his palace there, calling it Bab Firuz Kubad (i.e. Door of Peroz Kavat). In Armenia are situated Khoy, Sannaria (i.e. Tzanark), al-Bak (i.e. Aghbak), Kisal and Abkhaz, as well as the castle of Jardaman (i.e. Gardman or Gardaban?), Khaizan, Shaky and the city of Bab... It (i.e. Caucasia) has strongholds such as Bab Sul (i.e. Chogha Door, i.e. Gate of Chogh), Bab al-Lan (Alanats Door, i.e. Alan Gate), Bab Shaburan, Bab Lazikan, Bab Barika, Bab Samsakhi (i.e. Door of Samtskhe)...”²

Persian geographer Ibn al-Fakih (died after 903), who wrote his works in the Arabic language, states the following in his *Book on Countries* («Գիրք երկրների մասին»): “Kubad built the city of Baylakan, as well as those of Barda’a, Kabala and Sudd al-Labin... He was succeeded by his son Kisra Anushirvan, who constructed the cities of Shaburan, Maskat and *Karkara*. Then he founded al-Bab and al-Abuab.”³ The continuation of the same record says the following, combined with the information reported by al-Balazury: “He (i.e.

Kisra) built the gates of Shake and Dudania (i.e. Didoik) in the land of Arran (i.e. Aghvank)... He [also] constructed Durzukia (i.e. Durdzukk), which has twelve doors... in Jourzan he built a city which was called Sughdabil and inhabited it by tribes from Sughdi (i.e. Soghdiana), and the sons of the land of Fars (i.e. Parsk), making it a border troop depot. He also erected Bab al-Lan and Bab Samsakhi, as well as the castles of Jardaman and Samshulda... He conquered the entire country that was under Roman rule, developed and fortified the city of Dabil (i.e. Dvin), also building Nashava (i.e. Nakhjavan), which is one of the cities of Basfurjan (i.e. Vaspurakan). He constructed the fortress of Vays (i.e. Vayk), together with [a number of] castles in the land of Sisajan (i.e. Sisakan)—including that of Kilab and Shahabuns (i.e. Shahaponk)—and inhabited them with his valorous and sturdy Siyasijiyas.”⁴

In many instances, the information reported by Ibn al-Fakih is different from that conveyed by Ibn Khordadbeh, but it often corresponds to the data found in 9th-century historian al-Balazury’s work entitled *Conquest of Countries* («Երկրների նուստն»): Let us compare certain passages: “Then Kubad reached him (i.e. his army commander who had been chasing the Khazar) and built the city of Baylakan in Arran, together with that of Barda’a, for all his border fortifications, and Kabala against the Khazar. Then he erected a bulwark of raw brick between Sharvan and Bab al-Lan and founded three hundred and sixty cities on it... Kubad was succeeded by his son Kisra Anushirvan, who built the cities of Shaburan and Maskat, then erected al-Bab, which was named Abuab (i.e. Gates)... These places were populated by a people called al-Siyasijin. In the land of Arran, he constructed the gates of Shakan (i.e. Shaky), Kambizan (i.e. Kambejan) and Dudania... He also erected Durzukia, which consists of twelve gates... In the country of Jourzan, he built a place which was called Sughdabil, being inhabited by people from Sugh and the sons of Persia, and becoming a strongly-built township. In the same land, beyond Roum (?), he built a fortress named Bab Firuz Kubad and another called Bab Lazikan, apart from a third one, Bab Barika, which was situated on [the shore of] the sea of Tarabuzanda (i.e. Trapizon). He also erected Bab al-Lan [and] Bab Samsakhi, together with the fortress-

1 Մարտիկան աղբյուրներ, Գ (Օտար աղբյուրները Հայաստանի և հայերի մասին, 16), քարգմ. բնագրից, առաջաբանը և ծանոթագրությունները **Ս. Տեր-Ղևոնդեանի**, Եր., 2005, էջ 448 (the text has been a little proof-read by the authors). Cf. **Караулов Н.**, Сведения арабских писателей о Кавказе, Армении и Азербайджане, СМОМПК, вып. XXXII, Тифлис, 1903, с. 15.

2 Idem, pp. 448-449 & 15-16.

3 Մարտիկան աղբյուրներ, Գ, էջ 495 (the text has been a little proof-read by the authors). **Караулов Н.**, Сведения арабских писателей..., СМОМПК, вып. XXXI, Тифлис, 1902, с. 17.

4 Ibid.

es of Jardaman and Samshulda. Anushirvan... developed and fortified the city of Dabil [and] erected that of Nashava, which is in the province of Basfurjan. He built the castle of Vays with forts in the land of Sisajan, as well as the strongholds of Kilab and Shahabuns, and inhabited them with brave and strong men from the race of the Siyasijiyya.”⁵ As is clear, al-Balazuri omits only the city name of *Karkara*—probably, this is just a slip of the pen made by the scribe of the originals of the manuscripts that have come down to us.

It should be noted that the construction of the fortifications of Derbend by Khosrov Anushirvan is mentioned by Armenian historiographer Sebeos (‘40s to ‘50s of the 7th century), who particularly writes: “This Khosrov, during the time of his reign, closed the Passes of the Chor and of the Aluank...”⁶ Historian Yeghishe and Archimandrite Ghevond report that under Hazkert II (439 to 457), the defence installations of Chogh (Derbend) were erected: undoubtedly, they mean the ramparts of brick earth that were constructed prior to the construction of those of stone and mortar by Anushirvan.⁷

An important passage mentioning the city of Karkar is found in the multi-volume *Geographical Dictionary* by Arab encyclopedist Yakut al-Hamavi (first half of the 13th century), who states: “Karkar... this is a city in Arran near Baylakan, built by Anushirvan.”⁸ He also makes reference to the fortress town of the same name situated close to the bank of the Euphrates.

An anonymous Georgian author of the ‘20s of the 13th century speaks about the land of *Ghargheri* (= *Karkeri* –* *Karkar-i*), which is undoubtedly identical to the city of Karkar. In the 1200s, the Georgian army made an incursion under the leadership of Zakare *Yerkaynabazuk* (i.e. the *Long-Armed*): “...gathering within an hour, they went to Gelakun (i.e. Geghakun District), passed through Khachian (i.e. Khachen) and descended towards the land of *Ghargheris*, reaching Belaghun (i.e. Baylakan). They devastated the whole of Arez (i.e. the Yeraskh valley) and ascended up to the

gates of Gandza... And they passed from *Ghargheri* to Shankor (i.e. Shamkor) within six days... and returned triumphantly.”⁹

Finally, Kirakos Gandzaketsi mentions Karkar among the castles belonging to Prince of Nerkin (Lower) Khachen Hasan Jalal. As the historiographer reports, in 1251 he visited Mongol Khan Batu with the help of the latter’s son Sartakh, who was his friend, and won his favour, returning three of his hereditary estates (indeed, they remained under his possession but for a short time). Gandzaketsi particularly writes: “[Sartakh] took [Hasan] to his father [Batu] who honored him greatly and returned to him his patrimony, Ch’araberd, Akanay, and Karkarhn, which the Turks and Georgians previously had stripped from him. ...Jalal returned to his home joyously, but after some days being harassed by tax collectors and by Arghun, he went to Mongke-Khan.

“And Mongke-Khan ruled in the year 700 A.E. [1251].”¹⁰

This information, provided by the available primary sources, was not sufficient for researchers to ascertain the exact location of the only city mentioned in Artsakh Province by medieval historians.¹¹ The reason was the contradiction existing among these records: thus, according to Gandzaketsi, we should have started looking for Karkar within the domains of Hasan Jalal (although in fact, he just strove to make it part of his estates) in the territory of Khachen, whereas the aforementioned Georgian author and Yakut place it outside Khachen, in the direction of Baylakan, and therefore, in the area from Varanda to Dizak in South Artsakh (the border between Central and South Artsakh always extended along the tributary Vararakn and then the river Karkar).¹² In addition, the contexts of the passages by Ibn Khordadbeh and Ibn al-Fakih mention the city among others lying south of Derbend (although it is clear that this might be the result of the writing process). Besides, places and regions of the same name, which is etymologised as meaning *A Stony Place* or *A Heap of Stones* (according to Haykazian Dictionary by H. Hubschmann, B. Ulubabian et al), are

5 Մարալիան աղբիւրներ, Գ, էջ 265-266; **Балазори**, Книга завоевания стран, Пер. П. Жузе, Баку, 1927, с. 5-7.

6 The Armenian History Attributed to **Sebeos**. Translated, with notes, by R. W. Thomson. Liverpool, 1999, p. 70.

7 **Եղիշէի** Վասն Վարդանայ եւ Հայոց պատերազմին, ի լոյս ածեալ... աշխատութեանք **Յ. Տէր-Սիմանեան**, գլ. Գ, էջ 78, գլ. 2, էջ 129; Պատմութիւն **Վանդիայ մեծի վարդապետի Հայոց**, Ս. Պետերբուրգ, 1887, գլ. ԺԲ, էջ 40-41: Cf. **Акопян А.**, Албания-Алуанк в греко-латинских и древнеармянских источниках, Ереван, 1987, с. 121-122.

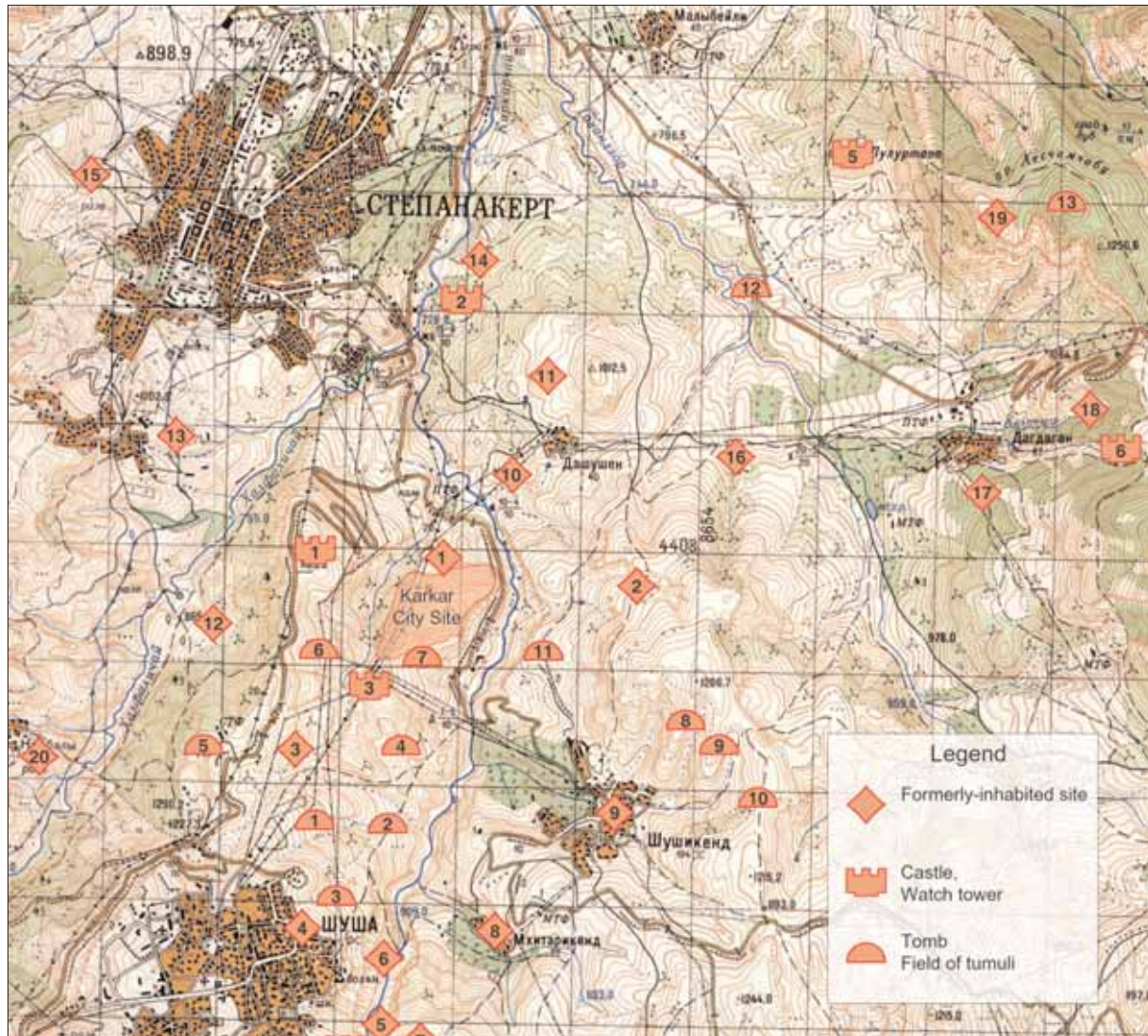
8 Մարալիան աղբիւրները Հայաստանի եւ հարեան երկրների մասին, կազմեց **Նարանդեան Հ.**, Եր., 1965, էջ 103; **Йакут ал-Хамави**, Муджам ал-булдан (Сведения об Азербайджане), пер. с арабского **З. Буниятова и П. Жузе**, Баку, 1983, с. 30.

9 **Թորոսեան Խ.**, «Թագակիրների պատմությունն ու գովարանությունը» որպէս Չարարեան Հայաստանի ու Չարարեանների պատմութեան սկզբնաղբիւր. բնագրի բարգմանութեանք եւ մեկնաբանութիւններով հանդերձ, Երեւան, 1992, էջ 398-399: Cf. История и восхваление венценосцев, пер. **К. Кекелидзе**, Тбилиси, 1954, с. 54-55.

10 **Kirakos Ganjaketsi's** History of the Armenians. Available at: <http://rbedrosian.com/>

11 Some cities (Partav, Baylakan, Khaghkhagh, Shamkor, Gardman, Gandzak, etc.) the locations of which are either known or not are mentioned in the province of Utik adjacent to Artsakh.

12 For details, see **Յակոբեան Ա.**, Պատմաաշխարհագրական եւ վիճազրագիտական հետազոտություններ (Արցախ եւ Ռուսիք), Վիեննա-Երեւան, 2009, էջ 306-313.



Archaeological monuments in the neighbourhood of Karkar City Site

Castles, Watch Posts

1. Vishki Castle
2. A fortress/habitation site named Meliken Duz
3. A tower/vantage-point named Geodesic Point
4. A fortified cave named Avani Karan
5. A castle named Pulur Tapa
6. A castle/watch post named Jelghavar

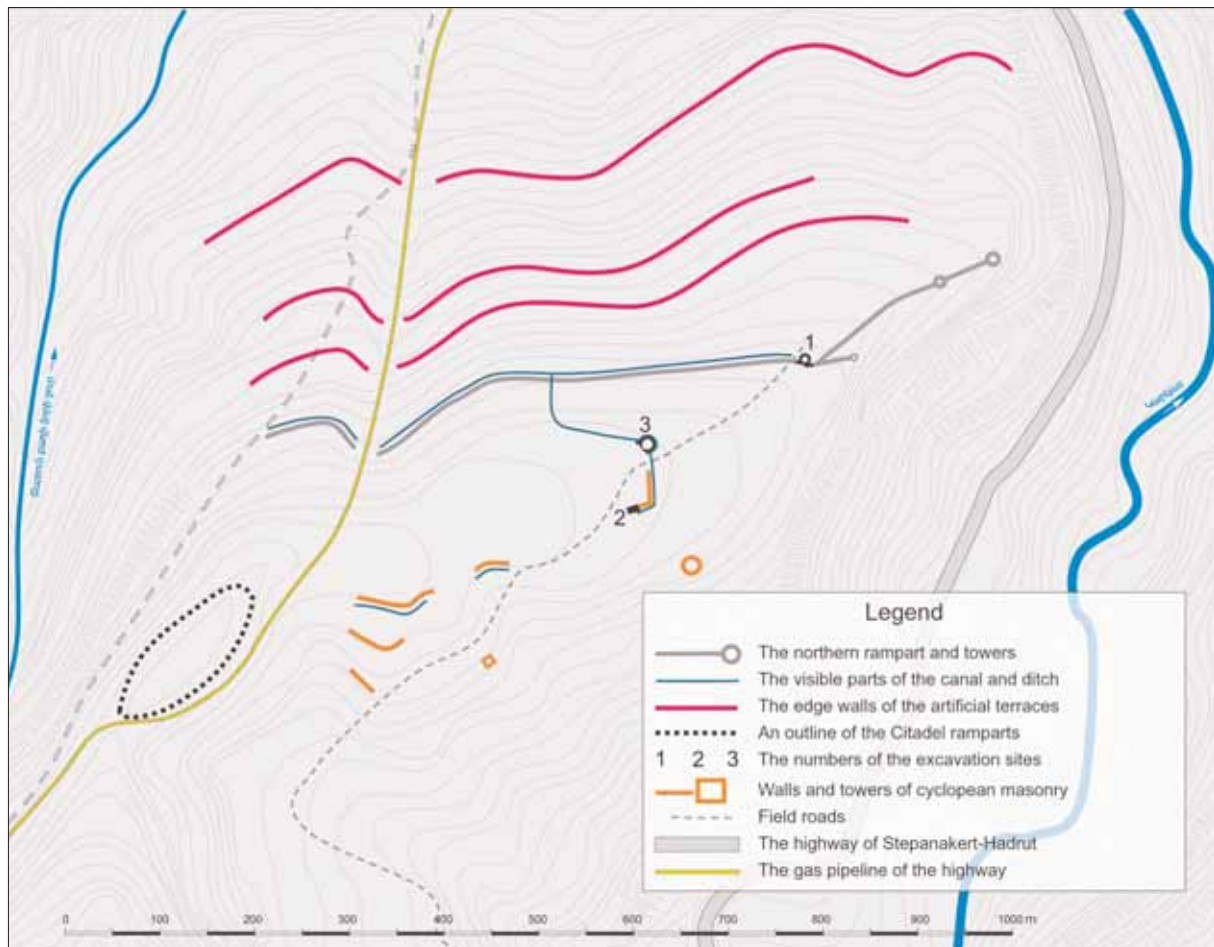
Sites of Inhabited Places

1. Kanach Khach (i.e. *Green Cross*) Village Site
2. Habitation site of Shaghot
3. Habitation site of Odakayan (i.e. *Airport*)
4. Habitation site named Shushii Seghnakh (i.e. *Fort of Shushi*)
5. Habitation site/place of refuge named Amaratner
6. Village site of Hewnot
7. Habitation site of Khachin Tap
8. Village site of Hin Mkhitarashen
9. Village site of Hin Shosh
10. Village site of Hin Dashushen
11. Village site of Bozun Tap
12. Village site of Meghoz
13. Village site of Hin Kerkezhan

14. Village site of Meliken Duz
15. Habitation site/sanctuary named Khacher (i.e. *Crosses*)
16. Village site of Buduru
17. Village site of Khachin Vogh
18. Village site of Jelghavar
19. Village site/sanctuary named Zham (i.e. *Church*)
20. Village site of Ghaybalishen

Sepulchres, Fields of Tumuli

1. A field of tumuli named Odakayan 1
2. A field of tumuli named Odakayan 2
3. A field of tumuli named Haram Jri
4. Sepulchres named Ghrrer
5. A field of tumuli named Noyan Tapan (i.e. *Noah's Ark*)
6. Sepulchres named Janshin
7. Sepulchres named Tagavoren Tegah
8. A field of tumuli named Sheghasar 1
9. A field of tumuli named Sheghasar 2
10. A field of tumuli named Kapen Glukh
11. A field of tumuli named Khachvoti Tak
12. Burial mounds named Krasni
13. Sepulchres named Zhami Sar (i.e. *Church Mountain*)



also known in several other parts of the Armenian Highland such as Eastern Cilicia and Tzopk (two fortress towns named Karkar on both banks of the Euphrates); the south of Vaspurakan (the *kaza* or small district of Karkar-Gyargyar located south of Van), as well as Mokk, Tashir, Zarevand and Kusti Parnes Districts. These places have villages named either Gyargyar or Karkar,¹³ and this has created certain confusion. S. Sargissian compares Karkar in Artsakh with the city of Karkar-Gyargyar located on the southern side of the Yeraskh in Zarevand and mentioned by Hamdallah Ghazvin: the Persian geographer of the 14th century locates it in the *tuman* of Marand (on the map of Lynch, it is the village of Gargar lying south of Jugha).¹⁴ Prior to the unearthing of the city site, all the existing viewpoints regarding its possible location were simply based on suppositions. In his unpublished

Russian map entitled *The Feudal State of Georgia in the Early 13th Century*, academician S. Yeremian places the region of *Karkar* in the district of the lakes of Algyol lying a little north of Baylakan. The authors of the *Dictionary of Toponymy of Armenia and the Adjacent Areas* (in Armenian) identify the city of Karkar (Gargar) with the village of Herher in Martuny District, Republic of Mountainous Karabakh, as the lapidary inscriptions and documents of the 17th century mention it under this name. S. Sargissian and B. Karapetian place it in the site of the fortress town of Shushi, while according to H. Petrossian, it used to be situated in its vicinity. A map drawn by Al. Hakobian contains the toponym of Karkar as fixed north of the Vararakn tributary, namely, on its bank where Khachen is situated, in the site of the future village of Kerkezhan, etc.

On 29 June 2011, while carrying out excavations and cleaning in the sacred site of St. Saribek, belonging to Karashen (Dashushen) Village of Askeran District, Republic of Mountainous Karabakh (within a programme worked out by the Tourism Department attached to the Government of the country), archaeologist Gagik Sargissian, the Head of the expedition, visited an extensive tableland on the opposite bank of the river Karkar accompanied with 70-year-old driver

¹³ See **Եփրիկեան Ս.**, Պատկերագրող բնաշխարհիկ բառարան, հ. Բ, Վենետիկ, 1907, էջ 325-326; Հայաստանի եւ յարակից շրջանների տեղանունների բառարան, հ. 3, Երևան, 1991, էջ 47-48.

¹⁴ **Хамдаллах Казвини**, Нузхат ал-кулуб (Материалы по Азербайджану), пер. с английского **З. Бунятова**, пер. с персидского **И. Петрушевского**, Баку, 1983, с. 50-51. Cf. **Մարգարեան Ս.**, Խաչէնի ամրոցները, Ստեփանակերտ, 2002, էջ 151.



The northern slope of the plateau of Karkar from the north (the city of Shushi is seen on the elevation); the same table-land from the east, from the village site of Sheghasar and from the west, i.e. from the road leading upwards to Shushi (from the stronghold of Vishki)

Vazgen Aghajanian, an inhabitant of the same place. The local people called this plateau *Tagavoren Tegh*, i.e. *King's Place*, as if in reminiscence of some remarkable historical fact. According to the driver, the vestiges of old walls were preserved there (the stones had been carried away between the 1960s and 1970s by the inhabitants of Shosh, who used them as ready building material). The result of this visit was the unclosing of the once renowned city of Karkar, which used to be of great significance in the history of Artsakh (Karabakh).

The city site which lies on the table-land called Tagavoren Tegh is situated on the upper part of a wooded mountain slope close to a military unit which is at the right extremity of the North-South Highway (it leads from the capital of NKR to Shosh and from Karmir (i.e. Red) Market to Hadrut), on the opposite side of Karashen Village, in the area between Stepanakert and Shushi. The territory now serves as a field plot for the village community of Shosh. The hill



The Citadel hill and the central quarter of the city as seen from the south, i.e. from the watch tower (the village of Karashen is seen in the distance, with the city of Stepanakert in the left corner); the Citadel from the north-east, i.e. from the central quarter, and the surviving base stones of the northern rampart

of the Citadel (geographical coordinates: N 39° 47'06.0"; E 46°46'01.5"; 1,015 metres above sea level)¹⁵ of the city site rises 2,200 metres south of Mazi Bridge of Stepanakert in a straight line (azimuth: 180°), and 2,600 metres north-east of Yelizavetapoliyan Gate of Shushi (azimuth: 30°). It extends on a large smooth table-land stretching on a cape of sedimentary rock which is visible from Stepanakert, Shushi, Shosh and Karashen. The plateau, which rises at an altitude of 950 to 1,015 metres above sea level, extends from nearly the east westward and is comparatively easy of access from the north and south. In the east, it is edged by the deep gorge (150 m) of the river Karkar, and in the west, by that of a stream called *Zarun Baghi Tzyori Joor* (it descends from the elevation of Shushi), which is traversed by perpendicular rocks. The northern slope of the table-land is covered with natural forestland, its top being planted with oak trees in the Soviet period: for this reason, a considerable part of the central quarters of the historical city is covered with a layer of wood. At present the plateau is arid.

¹⁵ The coordinates are presented according to the system of Pulkovo 1941.

The north-eastern extremity of the table-land is weathered and bare of woodland. The smooth and partly bare surface of the rock retains the foundation stones of the retaining walls of the ramparts which constituted the northern defence system of the city. These walls are preserved at a length of about 250 metres, but to the height of a single stone at best: in many parts, even this one block of stone is missing. The ramparts were erected through the application of the so-called “*ortostat*” technique, when walls are laid with stones of a width of 1.20 to 1.30 metre, placed sidelong in two layers, without mortar, with alumina and crushed stones filling their joints.

The fortified walls, the total length of which is more than 1,100 metres, run along the border of the slope which extends from the east westward and descends northward from the smooth terrain of the table-land. They stretch from the Karkar gorge to that called *Zarun Bagh*, thus completely enclosing the central quarter of the city lying in the south. At their eastern extremity, the ramparts divide in two parts, and a straight line starts extending from the circular tower (Excavation Site 1) of the main walls, descending north-eastward, i.e. towards the edge of the triangular cape overhanging the Karkar



Partial views of the ditch extending along the base of the northern rampart

gorge, where it ends in another round tower guarding the ravine. Towards the west, near the forest layer which begins from the centre of the tableland, the ramparts turn into an almost perpendicular embankment, the main stone-built part of which (if it had any) is no longer visible. In certain points, this embankment has a height of 10 to 12 metres. The edge of its upper level forms the final part of the upper terrace, while that of the lower level is the beginning section of the terrace of the lower level. It is clear that in the course of time, the walls of clay considerably slid down, but they remain impressive even today. The embankment is the comparatively better preserved part of the northern ramparts: it was built of unburnt brick which turned into a homogeneous aluminous mass in the course of time (brick earth is slightly discerned only in two small gullies). Stretching westward in a curved line for more than 400 metres, the embankment is interrupted by the cavity of the recently-laid gas pipeline of Stepanakert-Shushi, and then continues for another 400 metres, merging into the field road which stretches above the gorge of Zarun Bagh. The section of the ditch of the pipe-line clearly shows the contours of the structure of the ramparts of raw brick which were erected at the edge of the cape and had a thickness of about 2.5 to 3 metres.

The northern ramparts, which are built of brick earth, are especially noteworthy for the fact that beneath them is found the ditch forming a remarkable part of the defence system of the city. Today it is discerned as a long trench or road of a concave section dug in a thick forest. The visible width of the ditch does not exceed 3 to 3.5 metres, and its depth is 1.5 metre, but it is evident that its original dimensions were far more impressive. The inner wall of this ditch forms the facade of the embankment, while the outer one makes up a mound of earth which stretches across the flat surface of the lower terrace. The structure of the outer wall of the ditch, the height of which reaches 2 metres in certain sections, is well seen in its destroyed and washed-away parts

which also reveal the masonry of the stone-built wall forming its basis. The ditch passes through different horizontal levels of the terrain: in order to secure the stability of water level, it is periodically interrupted in several points, being closed by means of sluices which are placed on those very points where the ditch level drastically decreases by a degree and continues stretching along the lower, horizontal line up to the next sluice. The highest point of the ditch is in its centre, whence it receives water and gradually descends towards the east and west.

The central quarter of the city extends on the terraces placed on two different levels south of the northern ramparts and on the smooth terrain lying south of them. The vestiges of numerous walls, houses (the existing pits show their contours), large buildings and removed stones can be seen there. The issue of the southern border of the quarter still remains partly obscure, for on this side, the terrain is bare and has undergone various acts of destruction in contrast to the northern one, where the rampart line and the water ditch lying in front of it are mostly preserved thanks to the natural forest cover. In the middle part of the quarter, where the tableland is horizontally narrower (130 to 150 metres), along the contours of the abruptly-declining sections of the relief on its southern side are seen sections of walls of cyclopean masonry laid with huge blocks of stone. These stones are placed stepwise at different levels of height, in three successive rows, within 10 to 30 metres of each other. In the centre of the quarter, the plateau has a width of 300 metres: here the cyclopean ramparts, which form the southern borderline of the quarter, are seen through a single preserved line, although 110 metres south-east of them, at the edge of the Karkar gorge, the retaining walls of a large stone-built tower are preserved at a diameter of 10 metres. Judging from the principles of fortification typical of those times, this tower should have belonged to the ramparts forming the southern borderline of the

city, but later it grew isolated due to the removal of the rampart stones and the turning of the rocks, which were gradually getting barer, into a quarry. Another detached, but rectangular tower, similarly erected through cyclopean masonry, can be seen in the centre of the southern borderline of the relief section. A land mass of a length of about 100 to 150 metres in the southern part of the middle of the central quarter has suffered erosion and entirely slid down, leaving a concave trace on the relief.

Thus, it may be presumed that the southern borderline of the central quarter of the city used to have a defence system of three rows of ramparts, which were laid through cyclopean masonry and comprised brick walls resting on the old Iron Age ramparts. These walls were later weathered and corroded, while the stones of the cyclopean ramparts were moved away (thus, in the mid-18th century, they were carried away to Shushi to be used in the construction of the castle ramparts of the new city). Inside Karkar, and particularly, in the area outside its southern ramparts, can be seen some sepulchres (they were thoroughly plundered in times bygone) which resemble the burial structures of the beginning of the first millennium B.C. by their structure. The city site proper, which is enclosed within the northern and southern ramparts, occupies an area of 35 to 40 hectares, the extent of which is quite impressive. It should be noted for comparison that the early medieval city of Debend had a residential area of 26 to 27 hectares; Bukhara in Middle Asia 35, Termez 20, and Penjikend 13 to 14: they were left behind by only Samarghand (65 hectares), and Merv (200 hectares).¹⁶

The Citadel (geographical coordinates: N 39° 47'32.6" E 46° 45'32.9"; 1,105 metres above sea level) of Karkar was unclosed on a hill (about 150 metres long and 60 metres wide) predominating over its surroundings with its height of 10 to 15 metres and rising at the edge of the gorge of Zarun Bagh, at the western extremity of the plateau. A detailed view of the bare surface of the hill enables one to discern a mound of earth formed by the ruins of the wall once encircling the Citadel. It runs in the horizontal line of the middle part of its slopes and encloses the hill. The top of the Citadel retains the vestiges of a large circular building of stone beneath which, within the enclosing wall, the utterly corroded remnants of another, larger one are seen. While observing this last one, you may mentally restore a multi-room complex adjoining an open court. The northern slope of the Citadel preserves—in a comparatively better condition—the remnants of the stone-

built walls of numerous structures which were partly saved from weathering and decomposition thanks to the thick forest cover.

The visual observation of the site showed that the northern ramparts, together with the water ditch at their base, are the last, i.e. fourth, and rear row of the northern fortification system of the city. The front rows were erected north of them, on the mountain slope. Man has turned this extensive wooded slope into three artificial terraces arranged stepwise and smoothed horizontally. Due to the peculiarities of the terrain, their width oscillates between 30 and 90 metres. These terraces are a sort of level “drawers” covered with earth and extending throughout the slanting northern slope of the city site, from a gorge to another, their width equaling the distance between these ravines. These “drawers” are edged with a section of earth which slopes down abruptly, almost perpendicularly, at a height of 3 to 8 metres. Every new terrace begins from the base of the previous one. No traces of stone-built structures are seen on their edges, but the clay structure of the earth where the terraces are cut, and the long, low mounds of earth partly preserved on their borderlines, allow us to presume that they used to be edged with ramparts of alumina (undressed brick). Nor does the ground retain any vestiges of buildings, but the few stones which can be seen here and there attest that this area used to be inhabited and covered with structures. Most probably, it was a suburb—or a *rabat*, as is customary to call it—of the city. It should be noted that the multi-step structure of the “drawers” located on the northern slope of the tableland is clearly seen from afar.

The three northern terraces get quite smooth a little west of the slope centre, thus opening space for the old principal road stretching up the city. A small part of the lower section of this road is clearly visible a little above the level area of today's military unit, where there is a sacred site named Kanach Khach (*Green Cross*) and consisting of two cross-stones of the High Middle Ages. Unfortunately, the builders of the gas pipeline chose the best way leading up the plateau and designed it as extending over the very historical road, in this way destroying it almost totally. Entering the central quarter of the city, this road ran along the eastern base of the Citadel and then continued in two directions: one of its branches led upwards, viz. to the elevation of Shushi, via the right side of the gorge of Zarun Bagh (the cut-in-rock parts of the road, which were used until recently, are still preserved on this slope of the ravine) and thence probably stretched to Kashatagh, Siunik and Central Armenia. The other branch went downwards, towards the bridge of Shosh

¹⁶ Кудрявцев А., Древний Дербент, Москва, 1982, с. 115-116; Белецкий А., Бентович И., Большаков О., Средневековый город Средней Азии, Ленинград, 1973, с. 6.

erected over the river Karkar, then continued to Varanda, Dizak, the bridge of Khudaperin and Persia. As might be supposed, the “new” highway of Shosh, which is dug beneath the rocks edging the plateau in the east, dates from the Late Middle Ages.

Combining the results of our archaeological research in the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh, and particularly, in the area in question, with the fact of the existence of this newly-unearthed city, we arrive at some very remarkable conclusions. It turns out that traces of man’s active influence on landscape—remnants of walls; hand-cut terraces and capes; retaining walls, vestiges of roads and canals; artificially-smoothed rock tops and summits; sites containing overground pottery of different periods; tombstones; sepulchres and funerary structures—can be seen all over the elevation of Shushi. Similar remains are also observed in Karashen, Shosh and Mkhitarishen Villages, which are located on the right bank of the river Karkar. The fields of tumuli, comprising large burial mounds, and the sites of inhabited places unclosed in the territories of these villages have something in common with the city of Karkar, which had a predominating role in this neighbourhood from a cultural standpoint, and the surroundings of which were one of the most thickly-inhabited regions in Artsakh-Karabakh. Perhaps, it is not by chance that the political and cultural old and new centres of Artsakh were always grouped around Karkar.

The defence system of Karkar is not confined to only its ramparts and embankments. It also used to have interior defence installations consisting of military bases, vantage-points and vanguard castles serving as patrol units (they were placed on its approaches). They had direct or intermediary communication with the city proper, their function being vanguard defence and rapid alarm-raising. Below we have attempted to represent some of the unclosed installations of this system.

A small fort (N 39°47’32.6,” E 46°45’32.9”; 1,105 metres above sea level), serving as a military unit, was unearthed on a two-humped hill named Vishki (at present three aerial towers are located there), on the right edge of the highway descending from Shushi to Stepanakert, on the left side of the gorge of Zarun Bagh, 1,010 metres north-west of the Citadel of Karkar in a straight line (azimuth: 300°). At the lofty top of the hill, a watch tower of large volumetric coverage is situated: it is constructed of “cyclopean” stones and has a circular plan (with a diameter of 6 to 8 metres). The middle part of the hillside is enclosed within ramparts laid with stones of smaller dimensions. The overground pottery found in this monument resembles the architec-

tural finds of Karkar, which date back to the early and medieval periods of the history of the city. The results of our excavations lead us to the presumption that the cyclopean tower of the aforementioned castle served as a vantage-point for Karkar in the Iron Age. In the medieval period, it was widened by means of a lower row of ramparts and started being used as a patrol castle.

Another stronghold, not of large dimensions, named *Meliken Duz* (it was probably the northern base of the vanguard defence line) was unclosed on a hill opposite the Ministry of Urban Planning of the NKR, on the right bank of the river Karkar, opposite Stepanakert, 2,970 metres north of the Citadel of Karkar (azimuth: 12°, geographical coordinates: N 39°48’40.3,” E 46°46’27.6”; 803 metres above sea level), on its northern approaches. The conical top rising at the eastern edge of the hill, which has an east-westward extension, preserves the ruins of a rectangular stone-built structure (dimensions: 8 to 10 metres) belonging to the Citadel, together with the hardly discernible traces of the ramparts thoroughly enclosing the hill and its base. At the summit of a massive rock, protruding out of the west-facing slope of the hill, can be seen a table-shaped projection on which three round pits are dug, being connected with each other through canals. It resembles a Zoroastrian fire altar, the overground pottery found there dating back to the same period to which the medieval finds of Karkar are attributed.

The southern approaches to the city used to be guarded by a watch tower erected at the top of the highest hill that rises 370 metres south of the Citadel (azimuth: 200°) and predominates over its neighbourhood. The retaining walls of this round tower, which has a diameter of 5 metres and is laid with large blocks of stone, can be seen here. The only tripod land-surveying point (N 39°46’54.8,” E 46°45’56.4”; 1,062 metres above sea level) of the area is placed at the summit of this hill. Possibly, the function of a vantage-point was also performed by another high hill of level surface which rises directly south of the Citadel, within 600 metres of it (azimuth: 270°). There is a small horizontal level area at its summit which bears traces of artificial smoothing. From the east, the city might have been defended by an old inhabited place (geographical coordinates: N 39°46’54.8,” E 46°45’56.5”; 1,120 metres above sea level) the site of which can be discerned in the village site of Shaghot located in a flat meadow extending on one of the elevations on the right bank of the river Karkar. The terrain where it is situated is quite fit for stationing a vanguard military unit (it is within 2,150 metres of the Citadel of Karkar in a straight line, azimuth: 80°) as there is a natural spring here, and its



The stronghold called Vishki from the north-west; the castle named Meliken Duz from the west, and the altar located in its territory

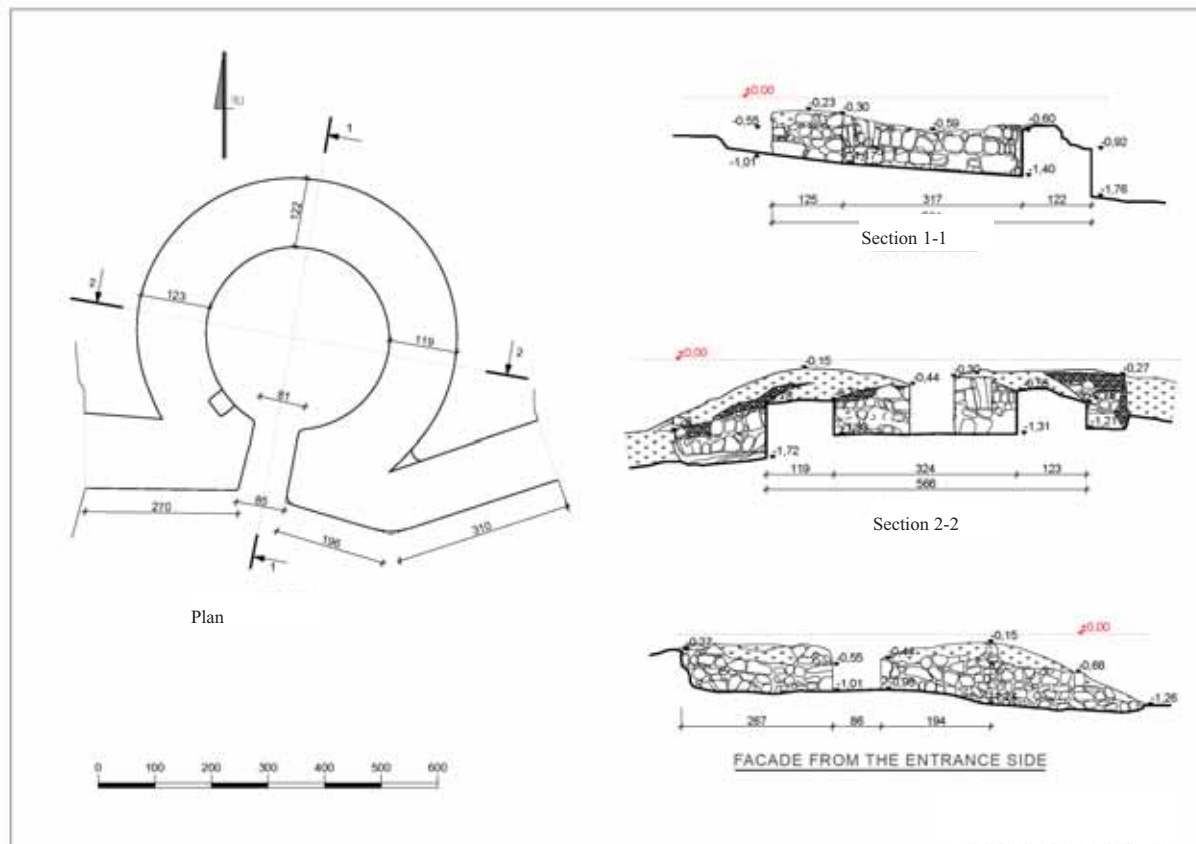
elevated position makes it possible to have a full view of the plateau where the city of Karkar lies. The ruins of the church of this village site retain a cross-stone of ornamental patterns typical of the 12th to the 13th centuries, but it may also have an earlier cultural stratum.

To sum up, we should note that the descriptions of the monuments comprising the vanguard defence system of the city do not claim comprehensiveness and complete exactness. It is clear that such a large place of great significance must have had a more complex defence system the installations of which are to be unclosed and verified in the future.

Taking into account the great importance of the unclosing of Karkar, the Tourism Department at the Government of NKR procured financial means for the implementation of small-scale excavations and studies in the site (September-October 2011). The expedition was led by archaeologist Gagik Sargissian, also comprising architect Samvel Ayvazian, young archaeologist Armen Dadian (he was to head the group in the excavation site) and workers from the nearby village of Shosh. The aim of these excavations was to find out, as much as possible, the area within the borders of which the city expanded, its stratification, chronology, the existence and strength of its cultural and building stra-

ta, the extent of the preservation of its buildings together with their structure, the density of the archaeological finds, etc. It was decided to carry out the work through exploring pits of not large dimensions in excavation sites placed within a certain distance of each other in the territory of the city site.

A circular tower seen at the north-eastern extremity of the northern ramparts of the city site was selected as Excavation Site No. 1. It was outlined as a mound of earth and stones covered with shrubs and having a slightly-contoured hollow cavity in the centre. The excavations showed that it formed part of the ramparts (it is placed at the top of the vertical corner of the rampart) and was erected parallel with their construction, sharing their design and building technique. The tower, which is round in plan (outer diameter: 566 cms, inner diameter 317 cms), thoroughly juts out of the ramparts towards the north and opens into their southern facade only through a narrow entrance of 85 cms. The walls of the ramparts and tower were laid with small blocks of the local split limestone and are preserved to a height of 120 cms. As a joining substance, well-kneaded clay was used in the masonry without any additional mixtures. The walls, which have a width of 120 cms on average, comprise stones arranged in two layers, with

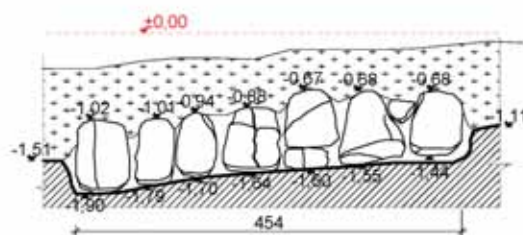
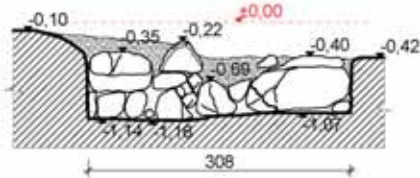
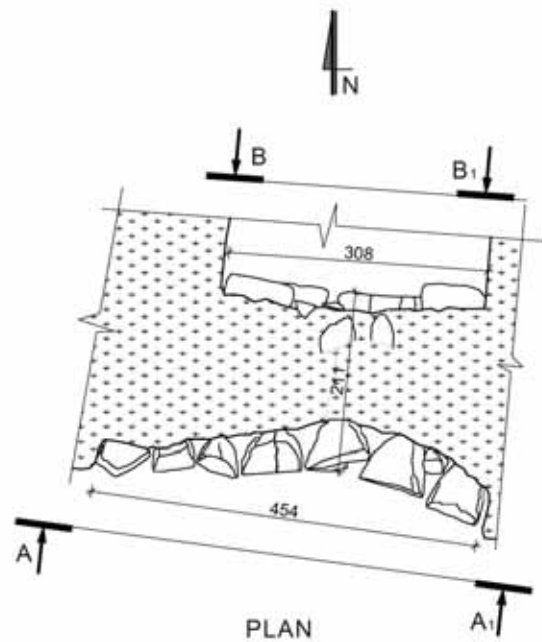


Excavation Site № 1. The circular tower of the northern ramparts after the excavations, and its measurements (by architect S. Ayvazian)

comparatively smaller crushed stones and a clay solution between them. The foundations of the building have not been excavated: it rests directly on an old humus layer of a thickness of 5 to 10 cms preserved beneath the wall stonework (under this layer of black earth, the level surface of the natural rock mass of the tableland is visible). The floor of the tower is made up of a clay layer of small tamped stones. Its interior and surroundings were covered with ruins comprising the stones of its masonry over a circumference of 2 metres. Judging from their volumetric coverage, the tower used to have a minimum height of 3 to 4 metres.

The pottery unclosed in this tower in the course of the excavations is very meagre, mostly comprising tiny fragments of the Middle Ages that are totally washed (they were probably brought here together with the clay taken from, and kneaded in, other parts of the city).¹⁷ Small pieces of glazed pottery and faience fragments, dating back to the High and Late Middle Ages, were found on the ground around the tower, outside the line of its collapse.

¹⁷ Beneath the humus layer of the soil in the wooded, unweathered parts of the city plateau, the rock base is thoroughly covered with a strong stratum of natural fine-grained clay.

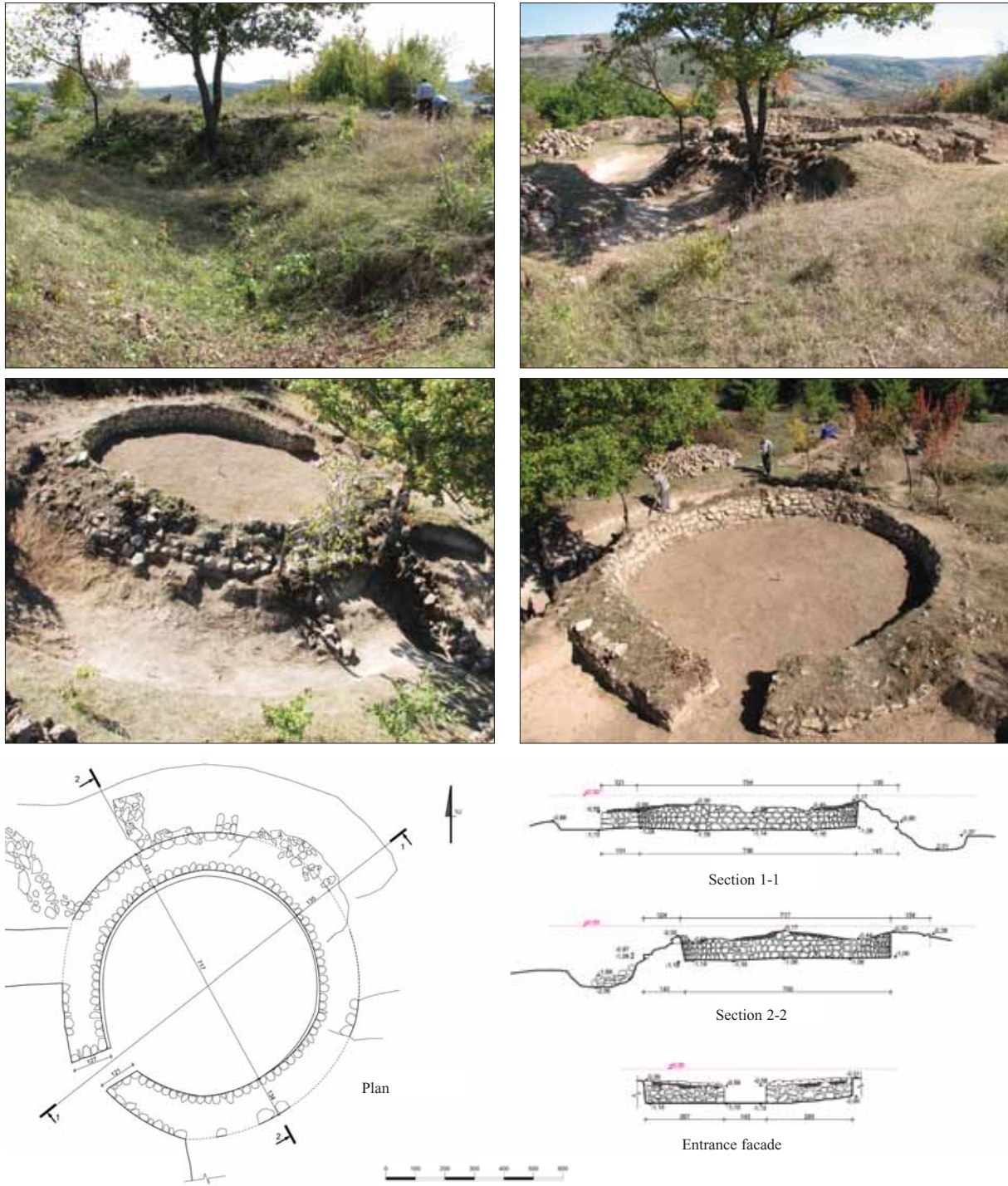
FACADE WITH AXES A-A₁FACADE WITH AXES B-B₁

PLAN

Excavation Site № 2. The outer and inner facades of the cyclopean ramparts after the excavations, and their measurements (by architect S. Ayvazian)

The second excavation site was fixed on the cyclopean wall (ramparts?) visible on the border of the south-facing slope of the tableland, in its central level section, 300 metres south-west of the first one. Parts of walls of similar structure are also seen in the south of the western part of the former city. The selection of this excavation site was motivated by the fact that the wall which is comparatively better seen at this point belongs to a large rectangular building which is partly outlined on the ground surface. A canal, preserved in the form of a long concave trench, stretches along the facade of

this building. Its beginning is seen in the west—here the facade of similar cyclopean ramparts is outlined—but then it disappears in the central part, which is corroded, together with the ramparts. Running by the wall of the excavation site, the canal makes an angle and bends towards the north, then continues for 65 to 70 metres, bypasses the round dwelling (Excavation Site No. 3), turns to the north-west, extends for about 100 metres and sharply descends down the terrace towards the water ditch which stretches along the edge of the northern ramparts. This description suggests that the



Excavation Site № 3. The circular dwelling of the central quarter before and after the excavations, and its measurements (by architect S. Ayvazian)

canal provided water for the ditch adjoining the northern ramparts.

A 3-metre-long and 1-metre-wide sluice was placed close to the inner north-facing facade of the cyclopean wall, being lowered into the soil up to a depth of a metre. It mainly yielded finds of the Late Iron Age (7th to 6th centuries B.C.) such as ornamented shining pot-

tery, sardion beads, stone mangles and millstones. While cleaning the outer facade of the same ramparts, we also unearthed fragments of coloured clay vessels of the Late Antique Period and others dating from the Middle Ages (apart from finds of the Iron Age). This cyclopean wall, which has a width of 2.1 metres and consists of two layers, is built with “tailed” blocks of

rock broken into large pieces to approximately resemble cubes. The space between the two layers is filled with crushed stones and alumina.¹⁸ The wall, which is preserved to the height of a single stone at this point, rests on the natural soil (alumina). All the stones of its outer facade have slid a metre down the sloping side of the ruined canal, with the exception of a single one the outer edge of which was fortified by another stone.

The third excavation site was set 60 metres north of the second one, where the aforementioned canal makes an angle and encloses a large round dwelling situated at one of the corners of a residential complex outlined there. This abode was completely shrouded in trees and bushes and was almost invisible. It is not exactly circular in plan (outer diameter: 7.54 to 7.17 metres). Its walls, which rest directly on the natural soil, are preserved to a height of 0.9 metre and have a thickness of 1.21 to 1.35 metre. They are laid with undressed split stones of average size, according to the same building technique which was applied in the ramparts and circular tower of the first excavation site. The dwelling has a single entrance opening towards the south-east, where a building of 3 to 4 adjoining rooms is outlined in the form of hollow pits. In the south and west, this circular structure is adjoined by walls of brick earth, this creating the impression that it is the angular round room-tower of a large residential complex of many chambers. We cleaned a one-metre section of the clay wall abutting on the round structure. This wall is made up of a homogeneous mass of sand and clay, and the lines of the masonry of unburnt brick are not visible here. Unlike the first excavation site, we did not come across fallen stones in this round abode, the interior of which was filled with homogeneous alumina: this suggests that above the unclosed part, its walls were laid with unburnt brick and it was covered with a conical wooden roof of straw leaning on the central pillar. Excavations were also conducted in a part of the canal stretching along the facade of the circular dwelling. Here it is dug beneath the 0 level of the abode, 120 to 130 cms out of the exterior facade of its walls, and is completely in the natural soil (alumina) with its concave section which almost forms a semi-circle. The canal, which has a depth of 0.6 to 0.8 metre, and a width of 1.20 to 1.50 metre, was differentiated during the excavations by the unnaturally rust-coloured and comparatively hard structure of its surface. Opposite the point where the northern clay wall joins the round dwelling, it gets sharply deeper up to a level of 1.3

metre and is half closed by a slanting stone-built wall, which resembles a sluice or a bridge pier. Unfortunately, the lack of financial means hindered us from completing the excavations of the canal, but we hope to resume them soon.

The work carried out in this excavation site yielded only an early glazed specimen and 3 to 4 insignificant fragments of pottery tracing back to the Early Middle Ages. It is noteworthy that the excavations conducted in the second and third sites, located within 60 metres of each other, on the same canal, unclosed two completely different cultural strata (it should be stressed that both of them comprise only a single layer) encompassing more than a millennium. In order to find an explanation to this unusual fact, further long-term regular excavations are to be carried out in these sites.

To summarise, we should point out that our excavations and studies proved the existence of the city site of Karkar, attesting that it has at least two building layers: an early one dating back to the Late Iron Age, i.e. the times of Biainele-Urartu covering the period between the 7th and 6th centuries B.C., and a later stratum attributed to the Early Middle Ages and tracing back to the times of the Arshakids and the Sassanids (3rd to 6th centuries A.D.). The latter is dated not so much on the basis of the analysis of the unclosed pottery, which comprises very few specimens, as on that of the peculiarities of the building technique of the structures which is marked with the total absence of mortar typical of the High Middle Ages. These two building layers are observed in just a single stratum in each of the various excavation sites throughout the former city, while the materials found outside the scope of the excavations, particularly, the specimens of over-ground pottery in the vicinity of the first excavation site and in the trench of the gas pipeline, are more varied and comprise artefacts typical of the period between the 7th century B.C. and the 12th to 13th centuries A.D., this proving that life continued in the city incessantly until the High Middle Ages.

Thus, as already stated at the beginning of the article, Arabic sources attribute the construction of Karkar to the Sassanid period, namely, to Khosrov Anushirvan (531 to 579). Perhaps, the time-span should not be disputed, but we cannot accept the viewpoint that it was founded by this king, for a number of monuments attributed to him, particularly, the stone ramparts of Derbend and the bridge of Khudaperin (they are mostly preserved), were erected with mortar. Instead, well-known are the buildings of brick earth constructed by Khosrov's predecessors, and the northern ramparts of the city site with their ditch have close resemblance to them. Mention should be made of the clay ramparts of Derbend erected by Hazkert II (dimensions of the

¹⁸ All the castles in Armenia which have a cultural stratum of the Iron Age (Shamiram, Tzaghkahovit, Geghadir, Horom, Kurtan, Tzovinar, Ljashen, etc.) have walls (ramparts) of the same cyclopean masonry.

blocks of brick earth: 40-43 x 40-43 x 10-12) and the city site of Toprakh-kala near the township of Beliji, situated 18 to 20 kms south of these fortified walls (length of walls: 950 to 1,150 metres): it is considered as a parallel of the city of Shahrastan-e Yezdigerd built in the "land of Chol (Chogha)" and mentioned in the Chronology of the Assyrian city of Karka de-bet-Selokh.¹⁹ According to the results of the archaeological excavations conducted in the 20th century, brick earth was also used even in the construction of the ramparts of Baylakan and Partaw (Barda'a) Cities built by King of Kings Kavut I (488 to 496, 498 to 531): this is attested by numerous Arabic sources, including the aforementioned ones.²⁰ The same building technique is also manifest in the monuments of Eastern Iran (Newshapuh-Nisa, etc.) and the centre of the Sassanids' reign in Mesopotamia, which may be ascribed to the early Sassanid period.²¹

However, city ramparts of brick earth having ditches are often mentioned in Armenia in the Late Antique and Early Middle Ages (the first vivid example of the use of mortar is the royal sepulchre of Aghtsk built in the 360s). This technique was entirely used in the construction of the Armenian capital of Dvin, which came to replace Artashat, under Khosrov Kotak II (330 to 339): archaeologists provide a detailed description of the water ditch running in front of its ramparts of brick earth.²² According to Movses Khorenatsi, the city of Metzurn (Metzuin), founded by Armenian King Sanatruk in the 2nd century A.D, similarly had ramparts of brick earth with a ditch in front of them.²³

The careful study of the existing sources leads us to the presumption that the early medieval structures of

Karkar might be attributed not to any Sassanid king or the Armenian monarchs of the 3rd to 4th centuries, but to the princes of Siunik who acted on the latter's orders. As attested by the *Zoranamak*, representing the situation in the country as of the '30s of the 4th century, they were in charge of the defence of the "Eastern Gate" of Armenia Maior, namely, its defence from the side of Atropatene. According to the same source, the protection of this part of the country was also vested in the princely family of the Gerezjuny, viz. the principality of Gorozu (* G(o)r(o)zjuny),²⁴ which was under the command of the prince of Siunik, and the members of which lived in South Artsakh in the Early Middle Ages, their domains extending from the Yeraskh to the river line of Vararakh-Karkar.²⁵ The *Gahnamak* (named Nersissian or False Gahnamak with the names of 167 royal and princely dynasties) mentioned in the work by Mesrop Vayotsdzoretsi in 967 speaks about this noble family calling them *the Gorozuak*.²⁶

As is known, after the ruin of the Arshakid Kingdom of Armenia Maior in 428 and the establishment of Governorates (*Marzpanutium* in Armenian) in Transcaucasia, Persian kings periodically entrusted the princes of Siunik with the defence of the Caucasian borderline, and especially, its eastern side (the part of Chogh-Derbend - Baghasakan Kingdom), endowing them with the rights of Governors or Vitaxas.²⁷ Apropos of this, on the western side of the Caucasian borderline, the same function was performed by the Vitaxas of Gugark as early as the Arshakid kings' times and with the involvement of the armed forces of the Georgian kingdom, from the centre of Tsurtaw-Sughdabil. The defence of the central part of the border was probably carried out by the Governors or Princes of Gardmank with the involvement of the military forces of the kingdom of Aghvank from the centre of Gardman-Jardman.²⁸ As already stated above, Arab historiogra-

¹⁹ Hoffmann G., *Auszüge aus Syrischen Akten Persischer Märtyrer*, Leipzig, 1880, p. 50; Гаджиев М., К вопросу о местоположении сасанидского города Шахристан-и Йездигерд, – "Древние и средневековые археологические памятники Дагестана", Махачкала, 1980, с. 111-118; idem, Торпах-кала – сасанидский город-крепость на границе албанов и хонов, – <http://www.caucasian-albania.net/?p=32> (2007. Երևանում տեղի ունեցած արդամագիտական միջազգային գիտաժողովի նիւթեր); Кудрявцев А., Древний Дербент, с. 83-86.

²⁰ Тревер К., Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании, IV в. до н. э. – VII в. н. э., Москва-Ленинград, 1959, с. 265-267.

²¹ Юсупов Х., Сходства в фортификации Старой Нисы и Игдыкала, – "Ниса – древний очаг развития мировой культуры". Материалы международной научной конференции. 5-7 декабря 2007 г., Ашгабад, 2007, с. 319-320.

²² Ղաֆարբեկյան Կ., Գուլին քաղաքը և նրա պեղումները, հ. Ա, Երևան, 1952, էջ 28-30:

²³ Մովսիսի Խորենացու Պատմությունը Հայոց, աշխատութեանը Մ. Արեղեան և Ս. Յարութիւնեան, Տիփլիս, 1913, գլ. Բ. 14, էջ 160 (the father of Armenian historiography refers to the city as 'Mzbin'). Cf. Ջարեան Ա., Ալեքսանդրի հին և միջնադարեան Հայաստանի քաղաքաշինութեան պատմութեան, Երևան, 1986, էջ 47-49.

²⁴ Адонц Н., Армения в эпоху Юстиниана. Политическое состояние на основе нахарарского строя, СПб., 1908, с. 251.

²⁵ Cf. Յակոբեան Ա., Պատմաաշխարհագրական և վիճակագրագիտական հետազոտություններ, էջ 281-283, 413-415; idem, «Գահնամակ ազատաց և տանուտրանց հայոց», հետազոտություն և բնագիր, «Մերձատր և Միջին Արևելքի երկրներ և ժողովուրդներ», հ. XXVIII, Երևան, 2011, էջ 62.

²⁶ Адонц Н., Армения в эпоху Юстиниана, с. 259. An attempt has been made to show that the princely family of Gorozu was mentioned in the last part of the Gahnamak made up by Sahak Partev (the Parthian): unfortunately, it is missing from the snippet (12th century) of this rare document which has come down to us by chance (see Յակոբեան Ա., «Գահնամակ ազատաց և տանուտրանց հայոց», էջ 62).

²⁷ Cf. Бархударян С., Страницы из истории Арцаха и армяно-албанских отношений, научн. редакторы: Акопян А. и Асатрян К., Ереван, 2011, с. 126-130.

²⁸ It was due to this function that in 428 Gardmank-Utik was incorporated into the Governorate (as well as Kingdom) of Aghvank, in contrast to Artsakh, which became part of them only in 450 to 451.

phers attribute the foundation of both Sughdabil and Jardaman to the same monarch, Anushirvan, but in both cases, they deviate from the historical reality by at least a century, for Armenian and Georgian authors mention Gardman and Tsurtav in the 5th century. Thus, 10th-century historian Movses Dasxuranci (also known as Kaghankatvatsi), whose account of the construction of Gardman is mixed with legends, reports that it was founded by Prince Vardan the Brave of Gardman, who was also named Mihranian: "...Vard begat Vardan the Brave (K'a j), who built the fortress of Gardman in three years." "...Vardan K'a j ('the Brave') who believed in Christ—it was not he who built the fortress of Gardman..."²⁹ He was one of the participants of the meeting of Aghven convened in the early 6th century by the last Arshakid king of Aghvank, Vachagan *Barepash* (the *Pious*, 485 to 523):³⁰ "...Vardan the Brave, lord of Gardman..."³¹ It should also be pointed out that Dasxuranci attributes the construction of Partaw to King of Aghvank Vache II (451 to 461/462) and Kavats' uncle Peroz: "A great town Perozapat was built by Vacē by order of Peroz, king of Persia, and is now called Partaw."³²

However, he copied an Armenian-language work conventionally entitled *History of 684*, in which Partaw is mentioned by the name of Peroz-Kavats for 7 times: it means *Kavats the Winner*, as translated from Persian, and shows that the Arabic legend on the real founder of Partaw-Barda'a is in fact trustworthy.³³

For the matter under discussion, it is also important to evaluate properly the Arab authors' aforementioned accounts of the construction of castles by Sassanid kings in Siunik ("Sisajan," as mentioned in the original). We have at our disposal al-Balazuri's remarkable account of Kilab, which was located in the vicinity of one of these fortresses, i.e. Gorozu: according to it, it gave refuge to Emir Musafir al-Kassab, who had revolted against the caliphate in Baylakan in the mid-8th century.³⁴ As for the next castle, "Shahabuns," some interesting information, mixed with a legend, is reported about it by Stepanos Orbelian: "The castle of Shahaponk built by a Persian named Shahap, and the

gorge of Shahaponits called after him: he had come to the patriarchs of Siunik due to an emigration."³⁵

Thus, most probably, the city of Karkar was built (reconstructed) in the very axis of the eastern and north-eastern defensive directions of Armenia Maior; therefore, between the 4th and 6th centuries, namely before the foundation of Partaw in the early 6th century, it might have served as a military base securing the operations led by the princes of Siunik from the interior of the country, and by the *Gorožjunies*³⁶ of South Artsakh, who were their inferiors in this matter (their operations were directed to these strategic sides). At the same time, being situated on the borderline between the southern and central districts of Artsakh, on the ancient highway of North to South connecting them with each other,³⁷ Karkar was also to serve as one of the most important commercial and economic centres of the region for many centuries.

The analysis of the available sources, the results of the archaeological excavations conducted in the city site and the studies carried out in its neighbourhood show that at least its early medieval infrastructure was quite typical of an urban place with all the specific features characteristic of cities, including:

- i. its location on a most convenient road which was easy of access and lay in a zone of transition from a plain to foothills;
- ii. the large area it used to occupy;
- iii. the existence of large monuments (or their traces);
- iv. its Citadel which is situated on an isolated elevation: it is well-defended and predominates over its surroundings;
- v. the main road entering the city which is remarkable for the construction activity carried out there;

35 Մտեփաննոսի Միմեաց եպիսկոպոսի Պատմութիւն տանն Միսական, Մոսկվա, 1861, գլ. Բ, էջ 8:

36 Indeed, it is this family which is mentioned as the Gargaratsik by Moses Khorenats'i as the last of the four principalities descending from Patriarchs Arran, Sisak and Hayk of the "great and renowned" north-eastern governorship of Armenia Maior ("...from the river Araxes as far as the fortress called Hnarakert"). **Moses Khorenats'i**. History of the Armenians. Translation and Commentary on the Literary Sources by Robert W. Thomson. Harvard University Press, 1978; second printing USA, 1980, pp. 139-140. This name derives from an error found in one of the early manuscripts of Armenian historian Agathangelos in which the Vitaxa of the *Gugaratsi* is called as that of the *Gargaratsi* (see Համարեան Յ., Գագարացիք, թէ՞ Գարգարացիք, «ՀԱ», 1910, էջ 242; Акоюн А., Албания-Алуанк, с. 65). Now it becomes clear that this renaming is also due to the existence of the city of Karkar (*Gargar* in everyday speech) in the domains of the princes of *Gorožu*.

37 It was due to this position that the princes of Khachen made certain claims on Karkar, as is seen from Kirakos Gandzaketsy's account of the negotiations between Hasan Jalal and the Mongols (see footnote 10).

29 The History of the Caucasian Albanians by **Movsēs Dasxuranci**. Translated by C. J. F. Dowsett. London, 1961, pp. 108, 225.

30 Cf. **Յակոբեան Ա.**, Պատմաաշխարհագրական եւ վիճազրագիտական հետազոտութիւններ, էջ 187-188.

31 The History of the Caucasian Albanians by **Movsēs Dasxuranci**, p. 54.

32 Idem, p. 25.

33 The legend relating to "Peroza pat," which dates from a later period, may, perhaps, be considered the result of the folk etymology of the name of "Peroz-Kavats" on the basis of the association of that of "Vagharsha-pat" (cf. **Акоюн А.**, Албания-Алуанк, с. 123).

34 Միսական արքիւնդ, Գ, էջ 280: Cf. footnotes 4 & 5.



The sacred site of Kanach Khach (Green Cross) at the base of Karkar City Site

- vi. the residential quarters extending outside its main ramparts (called *shahastan* or *rabat*);
- vii. a multi-layer defence system;
- viii. a structure requiring a high, i.e. state, level of inner organisation and order of society, i.e. the irrigation network with a canal and a ditch in front of the ramparts;
- ix. a great number of extensive fields of tumuli with several thousand burial structures (according to certain calculations);
- x. satellite castles/inhabited places in the vicinity of the city, etc.

Most presumably, Karkar had a municipal status as early as the 7th to 6th centuries B.C., for a considerable part of the aforementioned features had already formed in the Iron Age of Van Kingdom.³⁸ As attested by archaeological finds, life continued there in the Achaemenid and Hellenistic Periods as well. In the Early Middle Ages, namely, in the times of the late Arshakids and Sassanids, it was reconstructed, expanded and fortified by Persian King of the 6th century



Vazgen Aghajanian, the inhabitant of Karashen who led the archaeologists to the site of Karkar: he is at the northern ramparts of the city site

Khosrov Anushirvan. It was at that time that its northern ramparts were erected together with the water ditch, the multi-room residential complex in the heart of the city (Excavation Site No. 3), etc. Moreover, it is beyond doubt that the masters of the Early Middle Ages used the already formed municipal infrastructure, expanding and adapting it so that it might fit the new problems and requirements of the place (thus, the ditch of the northern ramparts, which was fed by the canal dating from the Iron Age, was probably supplemented with a new branch to provide water).

³⁸ The extensive fields of tumuli, unclosed not far from the city, date from the same period. The excavations conducted in two of them, namely, in the tombs of the fields of Sheghasar, Shosh, and Odakayan, Shushi, have unclosed archaeological finds synchronous with the early stratum of Karkar. See Պետրոսյան Հ., Մախարեան Վ., Հնագիտական պեղումներ Արցախում, «ՀՀ-ում 1989-90 թթ. դաշտային հնագիտական աշխատանքների արդյունքներին նուիրում գիտական մատաչրջան», գեկուցումների թեգիսներ, Երեւան, 1991; Կնգիւրարեան Ն., Տիտանեան Մ., Շուշիի երկաթեդարեան դամբարանները, «Շուշիի Հայոց քաղաքակրթութեան օրրան» (Շուշիի ազատագրման 15-րդ տարեդարձին նուիրում գիտաժողովի նիւթեր), Երեւան, 2007.

THE DISTORTION OF MONUMENTS IN OUR DAYS

by Samvel Karapetian

It is common knowledge that in the Soviet years, restoration of historical monuments was carried out under the supervision of the Main Department for the Preservation and Use of Monuments attached to the Council of Ministers. First and foremost, every monument subject to restoration was circumstantially measured, after which a restoration project was worked out on the basis of the measurement data and the studies of other materials relating to it. As a rule, the project was to be submitted to the Scientific Council and was implemented only if it had been ratified and approved.

Since the 1990s, the process of monument restoration unfolded in the Republic of Armenia has been marked with various deviations from, and violation of, scientific norms so that after the completion of work, sometimes monuments are described as having undergone reconstruction rather than restoration.

It is evident that these highly undesirable facts are the consequence of the weakening of the leverage of control of the proper state bodies involved in this field, as well as the self-willed approaches of certain establishments and private individuals to the preservation of monuments of material culture.

Indeed, it is very regrettable and, why not, even strange that this distortion of monuments takes place as a result of the eagerness of preserving them. In general, it is out of the noblest considerations that people make investments for the sake of retaining the relics handed down by their ancestors, and the financial means allocated for their preservation are in fact selfless, disinterested donations; therefore, we might only express deep regret at the facts that the restoration of this or that monument, initiated out of deep patriotism, is actually carried out not in compliance with the existing scientific principles generally applied in this

sphere, but in accordance with certain individuals' own perception of what is beautiful.

In the last two decades, tens of historical monuments have been not restored, but rebuilt in the Republic of Armenia, in Artsakh and Javakhk, without the control and approbation of Scientific Councils (in other words, without any restoration projects), and without the supervision of any architect. All the monuments which have undergone "restoration" in this way have been irretrievably deprived of their historical, architectural and artistic features or at least most of them.

There have been some worse cases of self-action, when this or that ancient monument was simply levelled with the ground—because it was not in the "benefactor's" taste—being replaced by a completely different one: indeed, all this is done out of "patriotic" considerations.

Of course, it is to be regretted that even in such cases when insolent ignorance actually spreads ruin and devastation, the action is represented to the public at large as charity.

For many years, these cases were not treated with due attention, but the hot discussions¹ that burst out in connection with the revetment of the ramparts of Gandzasar Monastery in Artsakh in 2011 proved a turning point in the general atmosphere of indifference to such questions.

The monuments needing restoration are mostly places of Christian worship—churches, chapels and monasteries which are generally treated with special care and attention; therefore, it is this type of monuments that mostly suffer various distortions.

The next two pages show a number of monuments which have been completely changed and irretrievably distorted as a result of their desirable restoration.

¹ For details, see **Կարապետյան Ս.**, «Գանձասարի շրջապարսպի երեսապատման և հարակից հարցերի մասին», «Հայոց աշխարհ», 2011, № 160-162 (7-9 սեպտեմբերի):



Merena Village, Javakhk. Kotratz Church from the north-west (1988) and after its self-willed "restoration" (2001)



Mesmna Village, Martuny District, Artsakh. Shoshkavank (1651) from the west (photos by S. Karapetian, 1980) and the completely new church erected in its site in 1999 after its total destruction (photo by R. Kortoshian, 2011)



Metzshen Village, Berdadzor Sub-District, Shushi District, Artsakh. The church (1658) of Parin Pizh Monastery from the south-west (1989) and after its "restoration" (2009)



Vank Village, Martakert District, Artsakh. A general view of Gandzasar Monastery from the north-west (late 19th century); a partial view of the monastic rooms of undressed stone (1980) and the same abodes during their restoration in accordance with their original stonework (1999); views of the self-willed revetment of the monastic ramparts with finely-finished stone, something that is very far from their primary masonry (photos by Areg Balayan, 2011)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Foundation expresses its gratitude to Dr. Ara Ghazarian, Curator of the Armenian Cultural Foundation of Boston, who has enriched its library with a large number of works relating to Armenian Studies (books, journals, etc.) some of which are difficult to find even in Armenia.

Our thanks are also due to Hovhannes Panchoyan, an inhabitant of Tzeghaltbila Village, Akhaltskha, Georgia, for his donation of some Armenological works to our library through Luiza Mosoyan.

RAA Foundation is grateful to the editorial offices of the Patmabanasirakan, Aniv and Aramazd journals for providing its library with a copy of each of their issues.

NEW RAA PROJECTS

In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Great Armenian Genocide of 1915, RAA plans to complete its decades-long research in Western Armenia in 2015 and present the history of its over 70 districts in 36 volumes. We shall start this series of publications in token of our deepest respect of the memory of the innocent victims of the Genocide.



The members of RAA are also preparing a series of publications on the history and material culture of the towns and villages of Artsakh.



Gagik Sargissian & Alexan Hakobian
**THE NEWLY-UNEARTHED CITY SITE OF
 KARKAR IN ARTSAKH**
 p. 43



Samvel Karapetian
**THE DISTORTION OF
 MONUMENTS IN OUR DAYS**
 p. 60

PREPARED FOR
 PUBLICATION
 AND PUBLISHED WITH THE
 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
 OF THE MINISTRY
 OF CULTURE OF THE
 REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA



ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ
 ԵՐԱՐԱՐԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
 ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՂ
 ԳԻՄՆԱՐԴԱՄ
 RESEARCH ON
 ARMENIAN
 ARCHITECTURE
 ԵՐԵՎԱՆ - YEREVAN
 2012

THIS IS NOT THE FLOOR OF A BATH-HOUSE
 BUT THAT OF SIS. PETER & PAUL CHURCH