

Author:
Fuad Akhundov

Translation from the Old Armenian language
Associate Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences of Georgia

by Academician Zaza Aleksidze

Additional translation from the Old Armenian language

by Telman Gasimov and Elshad Alili

Compiled by Rizvan Huseynov

Consultant: Elbrus Mammadov

Designer:
Orkhan Badalov

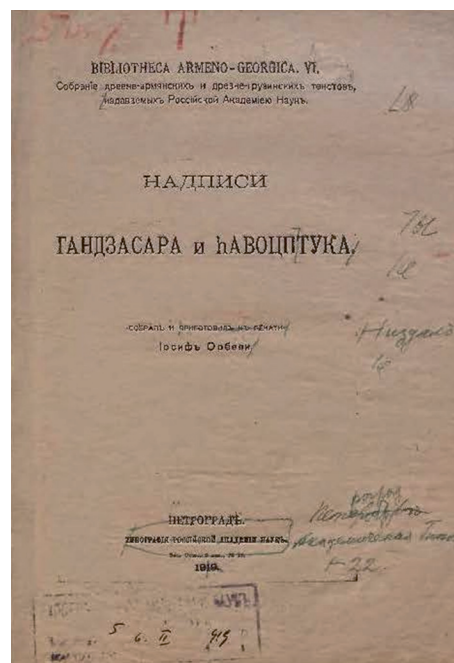
Executive Secretary:
Emin Alakbarov

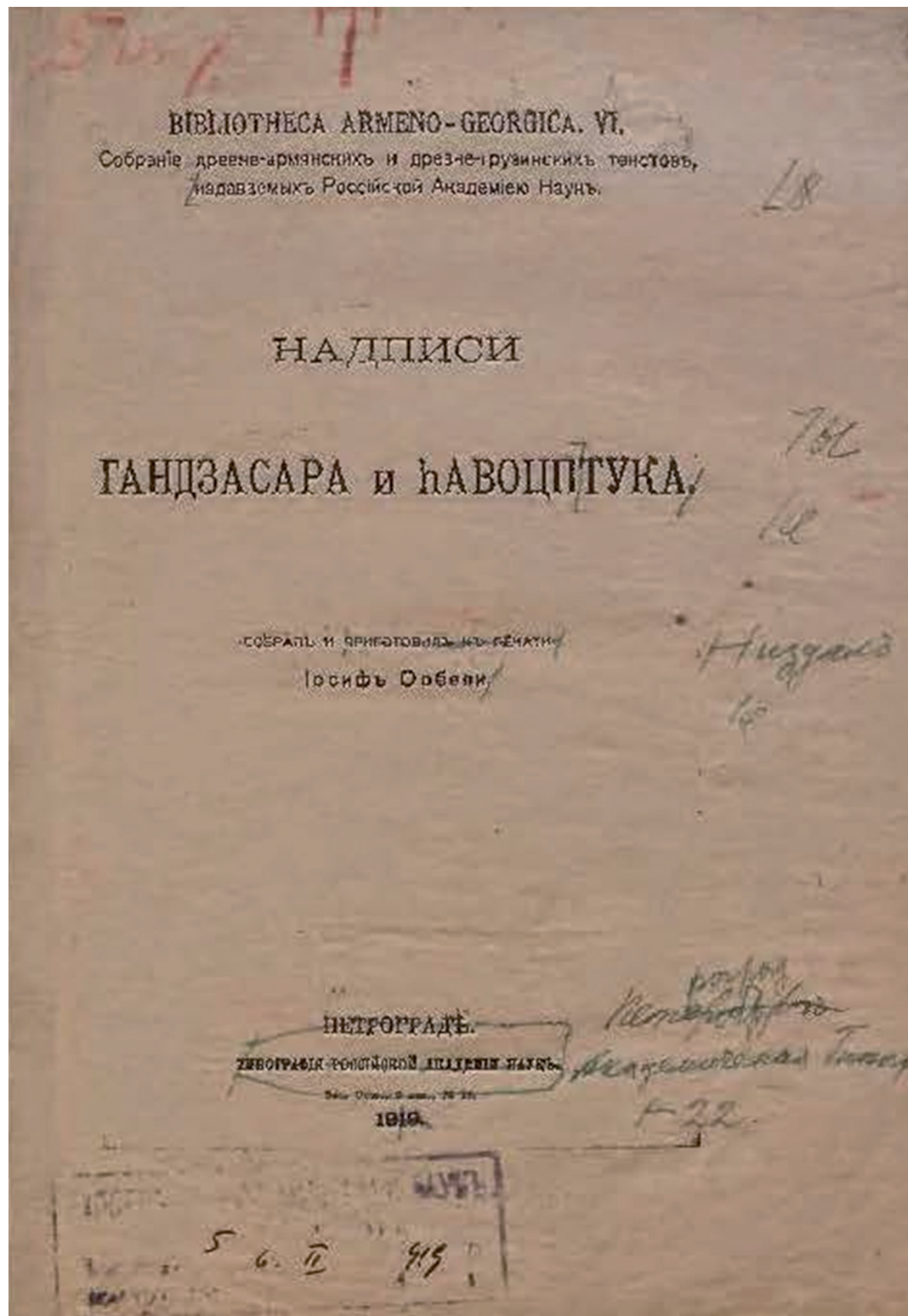
Makeup:
Kamala Aliyeva

Proof-reader:
Vuqar Quliyev

Centre for the History of the Caucasus under the Institute
of Social and Political Studies
Azer-Globe

ON THE REASONS FOR DISAPPEARANCE OF JOSEPH ORBELI'S BOOK





Orbeli's *Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk* was published in 1919 in Petrograd. The author very convincingly proved that Albanian monuments on the territory of Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh were destroyed or armenianised. Even the title of his research indicates that it is about the inscriptions of the Gandzasar Monastery built by the Albanian king Hasan Jalal.

WHY I DECIDED TO DISCOVER THIS BOOK...

The title of this brochure reflects an extremely important topic discussed below to fill in the gaps made up by Armenian historians, ethnographers, clergy, etc. using every trick to falsify the history of the South Caucasus in order to armenianise the Albanian churches. One of the obstacles to this flood of lies was Joseph Orbeli's book *Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk* published in Petrograd in 1919, in which the author very convincingly proved that the Albanian monuments in the territory of Azerbaijani Nagorny Karabakh were destroyed or armenianised. Even the title of Orbeli's research indicates that it is about the inscriptions of the Gandzasar monastery built by Albanian king Hasan Jalal.

Unfortunately, there was a paradox: Orbeli refused to distribute the book and expressed his desire to withdraw all the copies printed. This is not a mere allegation since Orbeli set out his request in the letter addressed to the St. Petersburg Academy. Incidentally, this evidence is still reserved in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences. In fact, it was this memo that prompted me to find the book.

I would like to underline that this unusual move by Orbeli was quite surprising and puzzling. After all, writing and publishing such a fundamental scientific paper was not an easy task, which required tremendous efforts and scrupulous labour. Nevertheless, the scientist decided to cancel his own plans...

In order to find the truth, it was necessary to find Orbeli's book, which would shed light onto the details hitherto unknown and would uncover the explicit forgery of the Armenians. Finally, I succeeded in 2011 by delivering a copy of this scientific work from St. Petersburg to Baku.

It is noteworthy that when the Armenians learned about my discovery, they created an uproar in media and on-line networks by publishing various articles on this issue. They first claimed that Orbeli's book had never existed. Then they wrote that a water-flood in Petrograd wiped away the typefaces of the book, which was thus never published. To illustrate the situation, I hereby provide a single quote from the article *Why did Azerbaijani pseudo scholars shut up?*, published on November 13, 2012 in the popular and widely quoted Armenian socio-political newspaper *Голос Армении*:

"The withdrawal and disposal of the book by its author is yet another heavily spread lie. Neither Orbeli nor anyone else did destroy the book. F. Akhundov, a high-ranking impostor from the Ilham Aliyev Administration, could not find Orbeli's book *Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk* simply because it never existed... In fact, Akhundov's "finding" is nothing more than a copy of the future book's galley proofs given to Orbeli for verification and proofreading, which is clearly visible in Akhundov's copy. However, a flood that took place in 1919 in Petrograd affected the printing house, hopelessly spoiling many typefaces including the Armenian ones. The publication of the book had to be postponed until 1922."

Armenians claimed that Orbeli's book had never existed. Then they wrote that a water-flood in Petrograd wiped away the typefaces of the book, which was thus never published.

A quote from the *Голос Армении* published on November 13, 2012:
*"Neither Orbeli nor anyone else did destroy the book. F. Akhundov, a high-ranking impostor from the Ilham Aliyev Administration, could not find Orbeli's book *Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk* simply because it never existed..."*



The Gandzasar monastery

It is quite easy to refute these unreasonable statements thanks to facts and historical evidence. In 1935, the Full Fellow of the USSR Academy of Sciences, V. Alekseyev, and the Head of the East Sector of the Hermitage, Professor A. Yakubovsky, wrote an official memo about the promotion of Joseph Orbeli to the full fellowship of the Academy of Sciences:

“... The major epigraphical works of Orbeli include Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk, Inscriptions of Mrenai Marmashen, Inscriptions of Bagaran and Shirakavan, Inscriptions of the City of Ani. The last work, which was completed both scientifically and technically, was made up of 12 print sheets and 25 tables of inscriptions with a translation and extensive historical commentary. Unfortunately, it was not released only because the typefaces were affected by flooding in 1924, while the set of inscriptions handwritten by Orbeli was destroyed by mistake in the printing house of the Academy of Sciences.” (From Joseph Orbeli. A Collection of Documents and Materials. Yerevan, 2013).

First, this extremely laconic fragment of text clearly shows that the book was published. And it is in our hands today: in printed and sealed cover with author's handwritten notes. To further persuade our opponents, we suggest them to look at the image of the original again.

Secondly, I want to draw attention to two points related to the flood in Petrograd. If this natural disaster really happened in 1919 and damaged the typefaces, I am sure that both Alekseyev and Yakubovsky would certainly mention this fact in the above memo. They probably would have written that the Inscriptions of the City of Ani suffered the fate of the Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk, adding that the latter was still published. The

Russian scientists, however, particularly mention the book, which we are interested in, as one of the Orbeli's published works.

As we can see, the Armenian version of the story falls apart. Had the printing house indeed been flooded, making Orbeli's work useless for publication, the scientific circles would have definitely discussed these events. But there is no evidence supporting these absurd statements. Further, the Armenians claim that the publication of the book had to be postponed until 1922. This is a contradictory statement. I would advise Armenians to open G. Grigorian's book *Sketches on the History of Syunik in the 9th-15th centuries*, published in 1990 in Yerevan, and read the following footnote:

“Orbeli, J. A. *Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk*. Petrograd, 1919.”

Again, it is evident that all the legends invented by Armenians are doomed to failure.

As for the unknowledgeable readers, I would recommend *Несчастья невских берегов. Из истории петербургских наводнений* (*Misfortunes of the Neva banks. From the history of floods in St. Petersburg*), a book written by the oceanographer Kim Pomeranets, who mentions the following:

“One can find enough noteworthy evidence about almost all the floods. We will indicate the most interesting ones in chronological order. It is clear that the most detailed descriptions refer to the extreme events of flooding. Memorial signs in various parts of the city, i.e. memorial plaques and marks on the walls of buildings with an indication of the height of the rising water, remind us of two catastrophic floods that occurred in St. Petersburg on November 7, 1824 (421 cm) and on September 23, 1924 (380 cm). Inscriptions about the floods can also be found on the stelae near the Blue Bridge on the Isaakievskaya Square (1824, 1903, 1924, 1955, 1967) and on memorial plaques under the arch of the Nevsky Gates of the Peter and Paul Fortress (1752, 1777, 1788, 1824, 1924, 1975).”

In fact, the Armenian side urged us to publish the book and the results of our findings in the media and online. However, we decided not to rush with preliminary conclusions and after nearly two years of research together with prominent foreign Armenists, linguists, and historians, completed the study of the inscriptions of the Karabakh temples.

Summing up, I especially want to draw your attention to the fact that, while searching for the above-mentioned book, I came to the categorical conclusion that the sword of Damocles was hanging over J. Orbeli. Apparently, he was forced to withdraw all the printed copies of his work under the threat of losing his career or even death. How else can one explain this unexplainable act, when a man who has spent many years on serious research suddenly takes such an eccentric decision?! There is only one evident conclusion: Joseph Orbeli was under a strong pressure or, perhaps, was threatened...

In fact, the Armenian side urged us to publish the book and the results of our findings in the media and online. However, we decided not to rush with preliminary conclusions and after nearly two years of research together with prominent foreign Armenists, linguists, and historians, completed the study of the inscriptions of the Karabakh temples.

WHAT MADE J. ORBELI TO WITHDRAW AND TO DESTROY THE ENTIRE SET OF PRINTED BOOKS

So, what happened? What was the reason for such an extraordinary act? Why did Orbeli's work not become a scientific property? Numerous attempts by researchers to find a reasonable answer to these questions led to the thought that there was something in the scientific work that did not fit into the concept of Armenian history and even contradicted it.

Analysing the shocking act of the scientist, we can identify several reasons that could explain his act.

Firstly, Orbeli caught the Armenian Church red-handed by indicating the fact of the distortion of the Gandzasar inscriptions.

In the foreword to his Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk, Orbeli expresses his disagreement with the translation and interpretation of the Gandzasar's inscriptions made in the middle - the end of the 19th century by M. Barkhudariants and others:

“When I was copying the inscriptions, I had the latest, albeit not always the best edition of the Khachen inscriptions published by Bishop Makar (Barkhudariants), and if I disagree with him over their reading, I do this consciously...” (Ibid, p. 3)

He underlines that he tried to correct “the errors in sometimes very large old publications, trying to keep the text as it is...” (Ibid, p. 3)

Curiously, Orbeli complains and is surprised that none of his predecessors sent by the Armenian Church to “study” the inscriptions did not “see” or describe them. It is known that Orbeli collected more than thousand in-

scriptions in Khachen, a large number of which he described for the first time. We can thus draw the following conclusion: the Armenian Church selectively collected the inscriptions of Albanian monasteries and deliberately sifted those that contradicted its interests and ideology.

Secondly, the book was published not in the appropriate time and place. For two years, the territory of Karabakh, which is host to both Gandzasar and Havotsptuk, as well as the territories of Zangazur and Nakhchivan had been a scene of a bloody war unleashed by the Armenian Republic in 1918 to occupy these lands. By the way, Georgia suffered the same fate, when Yerevan demanded the

provinces of Borchaly and Akhalkalaki.

Before we understand the essence of Orbeli's act, it is necessary to reconsider the key events that took place between 1917 and 1920 in the Russian Empire: the state collapsed and the new states of Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Ararat (Armenia) were declared as republics in the Caucasus. Armenia (Ararat Republic) led by the Dashnaks put forward territorial claims to Azerbaijan and Georgia. On May 29, 1918, according to the decision of the National Council of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (ADR), the city of Erivan and adjacent Azerbaijani lands (9,000 sq. meters) were transferred to Armenians. In 1918-1920, Armenia launched military operations against Azerbaijan trying to seize Nakhchivan, Zangazur, and Karabakh. Similar operations to seize the territories of Akhalkalaki and Borchaly began in December 1918 in Georgia. The confrontation of the Dashnak Armenia with Turkey began in September-November 1920.

Apparently, the puppet regime of the Ararat Republic, used by the En-

The book was published not in the appropriate time and place. For two years, the territory of Karabakh, which is host to both Gandzasar and Havotsptuk, as well as the territories of Zangazur and Nakhchivan had been a scene of a bloody war unleashed by the Armenian Republic in 1918 to occupy these lands. By the way, Georgia suffered the same fate, when Yerevan demanded the provinces of Borchaly and Akhalkalaki.



The Gandzasar monastery

tente and the Soviet Russia as a lever against the neighbouring countries and peoples, had an aggressive nature. As a result, the Dashnak Armenia lost the war but committed mass slaughter of the Azerbaijani, Muslim population in various regions of the South Caucasus.

Given the historical background provided above, it becomes clear that the inscriptions carved on the walls of Gandzasar were contrary to Armenian historiography. The conclusions of Orbeli and his opinion expressed in other publications indicating that the churches and lands of Karabakh are part of the heritage of the Caucasian Albania certainly contradicted the contrived Armenian historical concept.

Thirdly, Orbeli understood that the process of Armenianization had caused the complete destruction of historical evidence and a unique library, hence urging the rewrite of the history of the region.

In the middle of the 19th century, after the beginning of the Armenianization of the Albanian churches, the archive of medieval historical documents and the library of Albanian patriarchs in Gandzasar became victims of a tragic fate. Manuscripts, decrees, documents and other valuable items were taken to Echmiadzin. However, on the way to Echmiadzin, according to the notes of Sargis Jalalian (Hasan Jalalov (Dzhalaridze), a priest from the clan of the Albanian princes, who collected the Khachen inscriptions used in Orbeli's work), the archive of the Albanian patriarchs of Gandzasar was inexplicably lost, and possibly stolen (!). Later, Jalalian restored and recorded some of the medieval documents from memory (!) although most of them had disappeared irretrievably.

This shows that the available evidence is not the originals but Armenian copies, which contain many textual falsifications and changes. A. Papazian wrote the following about the miserable plight of the Gandzasar archives:

“During his journey to Artsakh, Archbishop Sargis Jalalian took this and

a number of other (originals or copies of?) decrees from the Gandzasar Catholicosate. Interestingly, according to Jalalian's own testimonies, his set included the decrees (letters) of the Armenian kings as well. These decrees disappeared from his library during his trip to Russia. Fearing that the decrees in Persian might suffer the same fate, he translated them (by the number 15) into Armenian and placed them as an appendix to the second volume of his work *Journey to the Greater Armenia* published in 1858 (p. 480-501). The Persian copies of these decrees, probably made by Sargis Jalalian, are currently available as part of the collection of Persian documents of Matenadaran." (Papazian, A. D. *Persian documents of Matenadaran (PDM). Decrees. Issue I, 15th-16th centuries, Yerevan, 1956, p. 198.*)

The facts fabricated by Armenians and the events of the past did not match the results of Orbeli's research. His objective work exposed the forgery and amendments made to original historical documents.

In other words, the centuries-old archive of the Gandzasar Albanian patriarchy almost completely disappeared, and what is now preserved is merely Armenian copies and translations of the decrees of the Azerbaijani rulers, whom A. Papazian, like all Soviet scientists, persistently called 'Persian' although they were of Turkic origin.

The facts fabricated by Armenians and the events of the past did not match the results of Orbeli's research. His objective

work exposed the forgery and amendments made to original historical documents.

Finally, the denial of authorship on Gandzasar's inscriptions promised Orbeli a rapid promotion in his career. Either way, Orbeli was forbidden to study the inscriptions of Gandzasar and recommended what to do next. This is the same manipulative approach applied in the Armenian historiography today. American scientist of Armenian origin and expert on the history of Armenia and Caucasian Albania, Robert H. Hewsen, has received similar recommendations:

"In Yerevan, I was urged, even somewhat impatiently, not to bother trying to conduct researches in the West, and we would better serve Armenia if we simply re-publish the works of the Armenian Academy of Sciences in other languages. One researcher in Yerevan begged me to translate into English his book, which refutes Azerbaijan's claims to Karabakh. He was very surprised when I told him that my own work did not permit me to accept what he thought to be an important initiative."

I think Hewsen's short remark clearly explains how the Armenian historical science works. Hence the comments are unnecessary.

These are the reasons why the Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk was withdrawn and why the results of the scientific research were forgotten for many years to come.

Fortunately, today we know the fate of Joseph Orbeli's scientific work, which for many years has been considered lost. The historical publication (including author's notes) found in St. Petersburg is valuable because it illustrates the destruction and Armenianization of the heritage of the Albanian kingdom in the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh. Fortunately, the Armenians failed to bury Orbeli's invaluable work, which is an indictment revealing deliberate Armenian falsifications.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that numerous Albanian temples and other historical and architectural monuments were available in ancient times on the Azerbaijani lands of Nagorno-Karabakh currently occupied by Armenians and on the territory of the present Republic of Armenia. This material evidence showed that these lands had been inhabited since ancient times by the peoples of Caucasian Albania including ethnic groups speaking in Caucasian and Turkic languages. Unfortunately, we have to admit that these ancient Albanian temples are completely Armenianised or destroyed.

Abundant factual evidence based on valuable archival documents on the heritage of the Caucasian Albania has been collected as part of the re-

searches conducted by Azerbaijani and foreign scientists. There is also a huge number of undeniable evidence about its present miserable conditions in the occupied Azerbaijani lands and in Armenia.

Perhaps the Gandzasar monastery has suffered the most serious fraud and destruction. It is located in the region of Kalbajar (Azerbaijan) currently occupied by Armenia. For many centuries, the Gandzasar monastery was a residence of the patriarchs of the Albanian Church. At the beginning of the 19th century, after the abolition of the Albanian Autocephalous Church, all its property including the churches, books, archives, and flock were transferred to Echmiadzin or destroyed. The process of Armenianization of the spiritual heritage of Gandzasar began in the same period and continued up until the end of the 20th century, during the Armenian occupation of Azerbaijani lands. By the way, we have a large number of screenshots that confirm this glaring fact.



The Gandzasar monastery

THE MAIN ALBANIAN INSCRIPTION IN GANDZASAR

This research is carried out by a group of scientists including foreign experts on the history of Armenia and Albania. In particular, the Georgian academician Zaza Aleksidze made the most accurate translation of the main inscription of the St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Gandzasar inscribed by

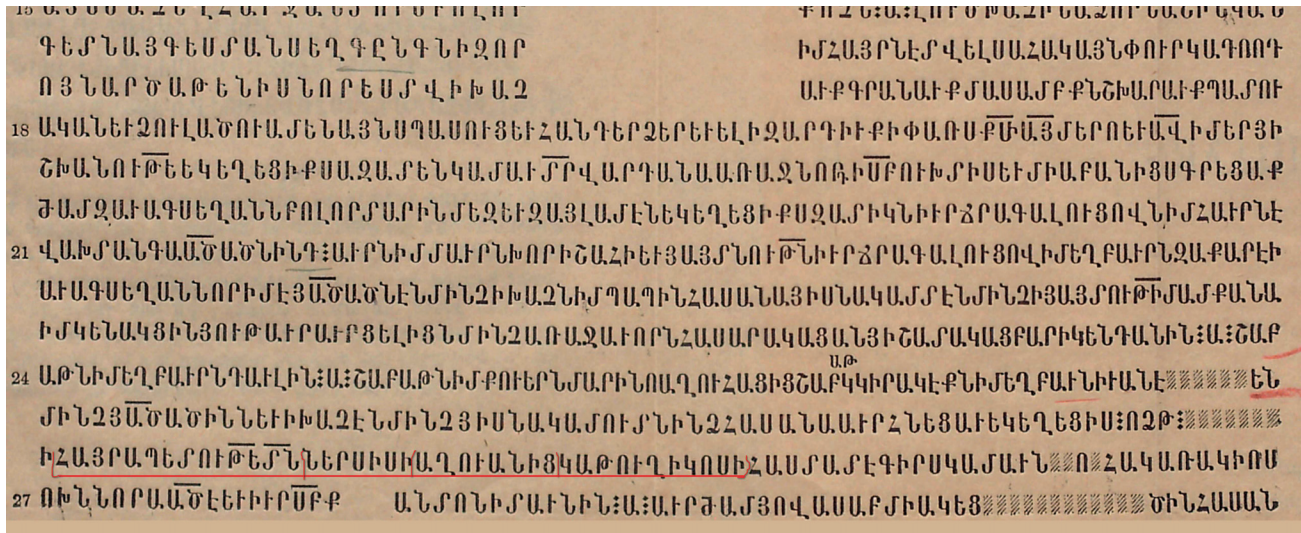


PHOTO 4
Under the patriarchate of Nerses, Catholicos of Albanians (highlighted by us). From J. Orbeli's Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk.

the order of the Albanian prince Hasan Jalal-Dawla in 1240. It was therefore possible to establish that the Albanian Catholicos had the highest patriarchal rank in the Christian world. Thus, the title of the Albanian spiritual leader is clearly translated as hayrapetuthetn nersisi aluanits katolikosi (under the patriarchate of Nerses, the Catholicos of Albanians) (see: Photo

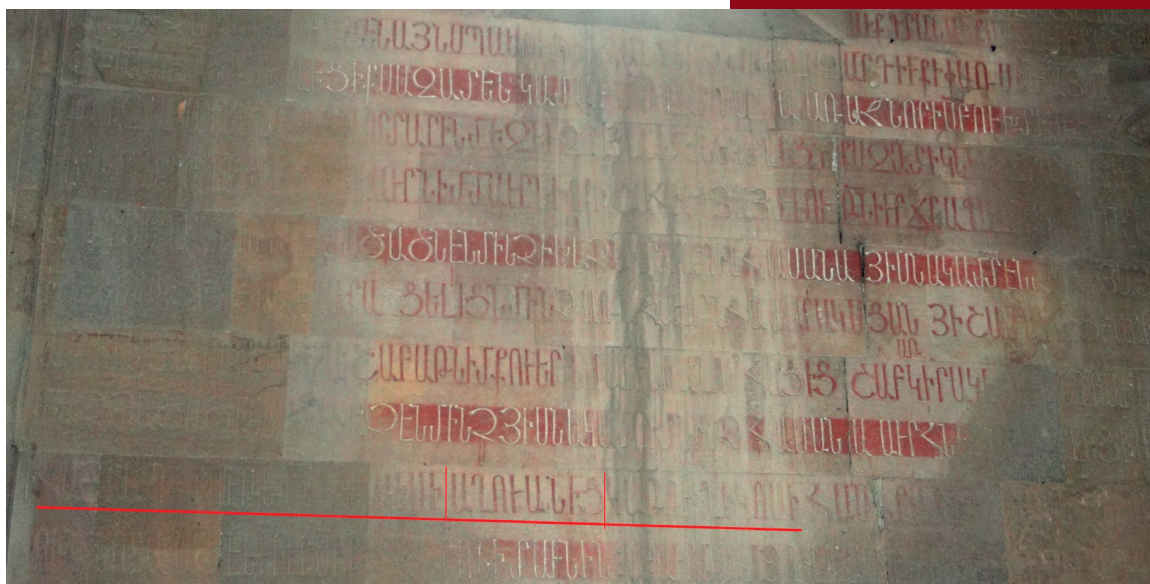
4). For the last 160 years, the Armenian side preferred not to mention the patriarchal title of the Albanian Catholicos, whereas the title of the patriarch indicated that the Albanian church was independent and was ordained by the apostles of Jesus, that is, it was an autocephalous church.

It is noteworthy that all the photographs of this main inscription are made in such a way that the above inscription is neither visible nor legible. Thus, Armenians are trying to hide the presence of this fragment, which we think was changed or completely removed by now. (Photo 4a)

The Gandzasar inscriptions refute the statements of Armenian and pro-Armenian scholars about the non-existence of Albanian people and its ethnic identity during that period. In particular, the inscriptions clearly record that these lands belonged to the Albanian people and were ruled by Albanian princes and the Albanian church.



PHOTO 4a
Armenians take all the photographs of this main inscription from such an angle that the words under the patriarchate of Nerses, the Catholicos of Albanians in the above row, which prove the church's affiliation to the Albanian heritage, are invisible.



This photo was made and published online by foreign visitors. Armenian publications deliberately do not make photos of the inscription (highlighted in red), which eventually becomes unusable.

Here are some of the inscriptions.

According to Christian tradition and law, the patriarch is the highest priest and the head of the church in the country. In other words, patriarchy is a clerical title of the highest rank in Christian churches. Russian dictionaries expand the meaning of this term as follows:

Patriarch (Greek Πατριάρχης, from the Greek πατήρ – ‘father’ and ἀρχή – ‘domination, beginning, power’) is a title of the head of the autocephalous church.

The quotes below are taken from various encyclopaedias published in the Tsarist, Soviet, and modern periods.

Patriarch is a forefather, ancestor, venerable and respected head of the family. The Old Testament patriarchs are Noah and Abraham. // Supreme head of the clergy in the state and region. (Dal, V. I. Толковый словарь живого великорусского языка: in 4 vols. St. Petersburg, 1863-1866).

The title of patriarch is given to chief bishops. (Patriarch in the Church Hierarchy // Энциклопедический словарь Брокгауза и Ефрона (vol. 82. and 4 annexes). St. Petersburg, 1890-1907).

Chairman of the supreme judicial and legislative collegium, head of the people or religious leader. (Patriarchate // Еврейская энциклопедия Брокгауза и Ефрона, St. Petersburg, 1906-1913).

A title of a clergyman who has the highest ecclesiastical authority. (Толковый словарь русского языка ed. by D. N. Ushakov, Moscow: Советская энциклопедия, OGI, State Publishing House of Foreign and National Words, 1935-1940).

Patriarch (from Ancient Greek Πατριάρχης; from πατήρ – ‘father’, ἀρχή – ‘domination, beginning, power’) is the eldest of the family, the head and the founder of smth. (Ozhegov, S. I., Shvedova, N. Y. Толковый словарь русского языка, Moscow, 1949).

A priest of the highest rank, the head of the Orthodox Church. (Yefremova, T. F. Современный словарь русского языка три в одном: орфографический, словообразовательный, морфемный... Moscow. АСТ, 2010).

The highest rank in the church hierarchy (from the Greek patriarches – from pater ‘father’ and archo ‘I rule’). (Современная энциклопедия, 2000).

In modern Orthodoxy, the highest ecclesiastical rank, usually the head of an independent (autocephalous) church. (Большой Энциклопедический словарь, 2000).

Georgian Armenologist Zaza Aleksidze made the most accurate translation of the main inscription of the St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Gandzasar inscribed by the order of the Albanian prince Hasan Jalal-Dawla in 1240.

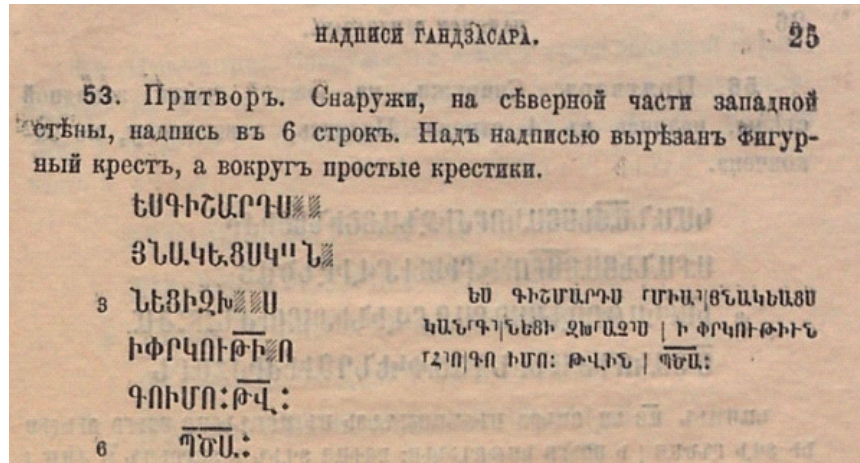
It was therefore possible to establish that the Albanian Catholicos had the highest patriarchal rank in the Christian world. Thus, the title of the Albanian spiritual leader is clearly translated as hayrapetuthetn nersisi aluanits katolikosi (under the patriarchate of Nerses, the Catholicos of Albanians)

The inscription provides a very precise translation of the title of the Albanian spiritual leader as hayrapetuthetn nersisi aluanits katolikosi (under the patriarchate of Nerses, the Catholicos of Albanians).

Armenian side preferred not to mention the patriarchal title of the Albanian Catholicos, which indicates that the Albanian church was independent and was ordained by the apostles of Jesus, that is, it was an autocephalous church.

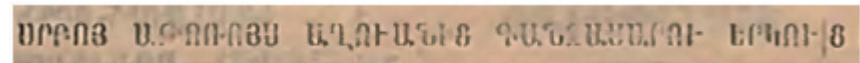
**ՍԱՐԳԻՍ | ԴԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍԻՆ ԱՂՈՒԱՆԻՑ ՈՐ
Է՛ՐՅԱԶԳԻՆ ԶԱԼԱԼ ԴՕԼԻՆ:**

Sarkis, the Catholicos of the Agvans (Azgens) Jalal Dawla // Catholicos Sarkis, who is from Albania to the people (Azgen) of Jalal Dawla (p. 33, para. 81)



Catholicos ... from Albania to the people (Azgen / Azgn) of Jalal Dawla (page 33, para. 78)

ԱՂՈՒԱՆՑԻՆ ԴՐՈՒՐՍԱՆԲՅՈՒՅԻ ԲՇՈՐՈՐՈՐԴՅՈՒՆ



Surb otsator rotsesagu avanits gandzasaru yercuts (in the holy throne of Gandzasar of the Albanian country; p. 18, para. 37)

ԱՂՈՒԱՆԻՑ ԿԹՂԿՍԻՆ

Albanian Catholicos... (p. 29, para. 64)

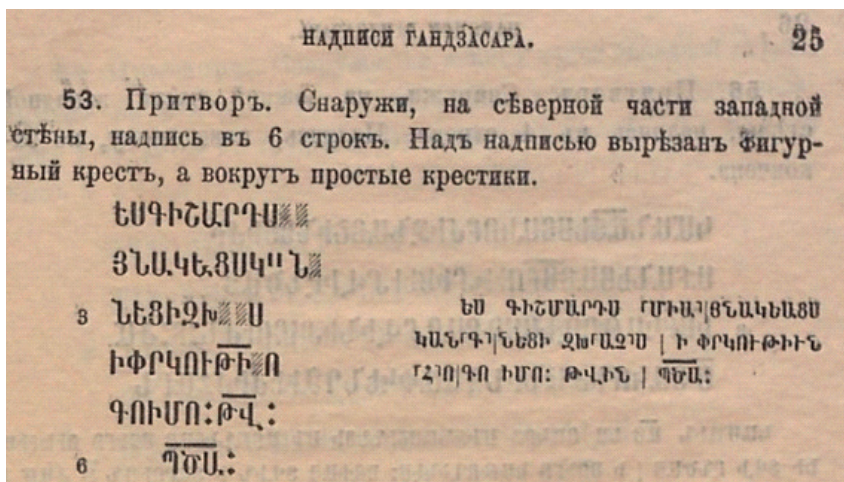
ԶԱԼԱԼ ԴՕԼԻՆ

Jalal Dawla (Albanian ruler Hasan Jalal; p. 29, para. 64)

ԱՂՈՒԱՆՑԿԹՂԿՍԻՆՈՐԷՅՍԱԶԳԵՆԶԱԼԱԼԴՕ

This is (the grave) of Hovhannes, the Catholicos of the Albanian people ... Jalal Dawla (p. 29, para. 64)

This is (the grave) of Sarkis, the Catholicos of the Albanian people ... Jalal Dawla (p. 29, para. 65)

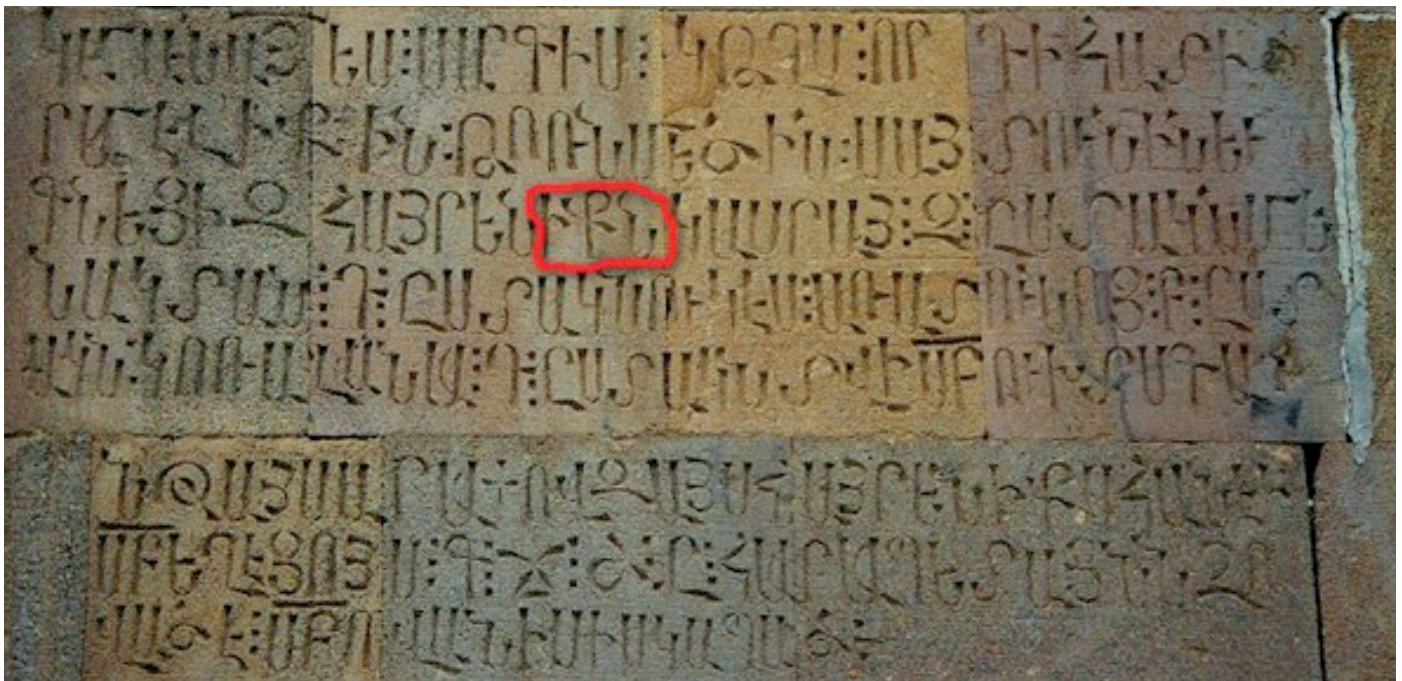


During the study of this inscription, significant differences were identified in the known six previous editions made by Armenians and some foreign scientists. It is important to fix these differences to study the political history of the region properly. It is remarkable that Armenians had little knowledge about the language of inscriptions in Gandzasar and the whole of Karabakh. Thus, after the abolition of the Albanian church in 1810-30, and the transfer of control over its temples to the authority of the Armenian church of Echmiadzin, it attracted

priests for the collection and translation of these inscriptions. We have established that the Gandzasar inscriptions were deliberately armenianised both by previous researchers of the tsarist Russia and by contemporary ones. For many centuries, this territory was the residence of Albanian Catholicos and the burial place of Albanian rulers. This is evident in the inscriptions of the Khachkars and narrative sources.

ARMENIA AND THE FALSIFICATION OF THE GANDZASAR INSCRIPTIONS

During the research, we compared the current state of the Gandzasar inscriptions with the records of Orbeli and previous researchers of the 19th century. Therefore, we selected the texts copied by J. Orbeli from the St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Gandzasar at the beginning of the 20th century for review and preliminary analysis and compared them with translations of the priests of the 19th century (S. Jalalians, O. Shahkhatunians, and M. Barkhudariants), as well as the photographs reflecting the current state of these inscriptions.



It turned out that almost half of the plates in Gandzasar were replaced, texts changed and the lacunae (erased letters) arbitrarily filled in. As a result, for example, now in one of the inscriptions the word **hairen** (homeland) became **hairenikn** (Armenian). This is a falsification recently made by Armenians through the insertion of new plates with altered and added letters (photos 1 and 1a).

Miserable condition of the main inscriptions of Gandzasar. Photo taken by foreign tourists.

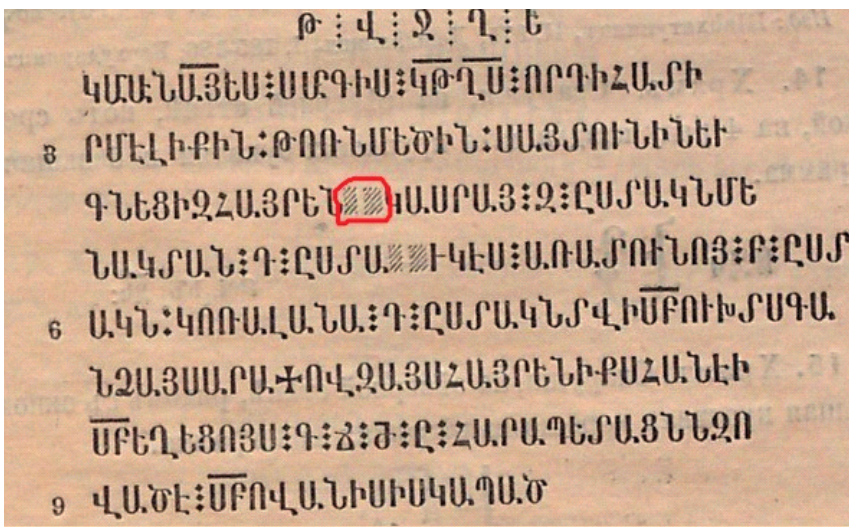


PHOTO 1
We have highlighted a lacuna (erased letters) in the inscription found in Orbeli's Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk. It can be seen that the word **hairen** (homeland) is now read as **hairenikn** (Armenian).

By the way, **hairen** has nothing to do with the word **hai** or the Hai people (now mistakenly called Armenian). The lexicon of the church language, Grabar, did not have the word **hai**. The word **hairen** was used by Albanians, Udins, Kipchaks and other peoples who used the Grabar. In fact, the Grabar is a church language, similar to Latin used by Catholics or Greek used by

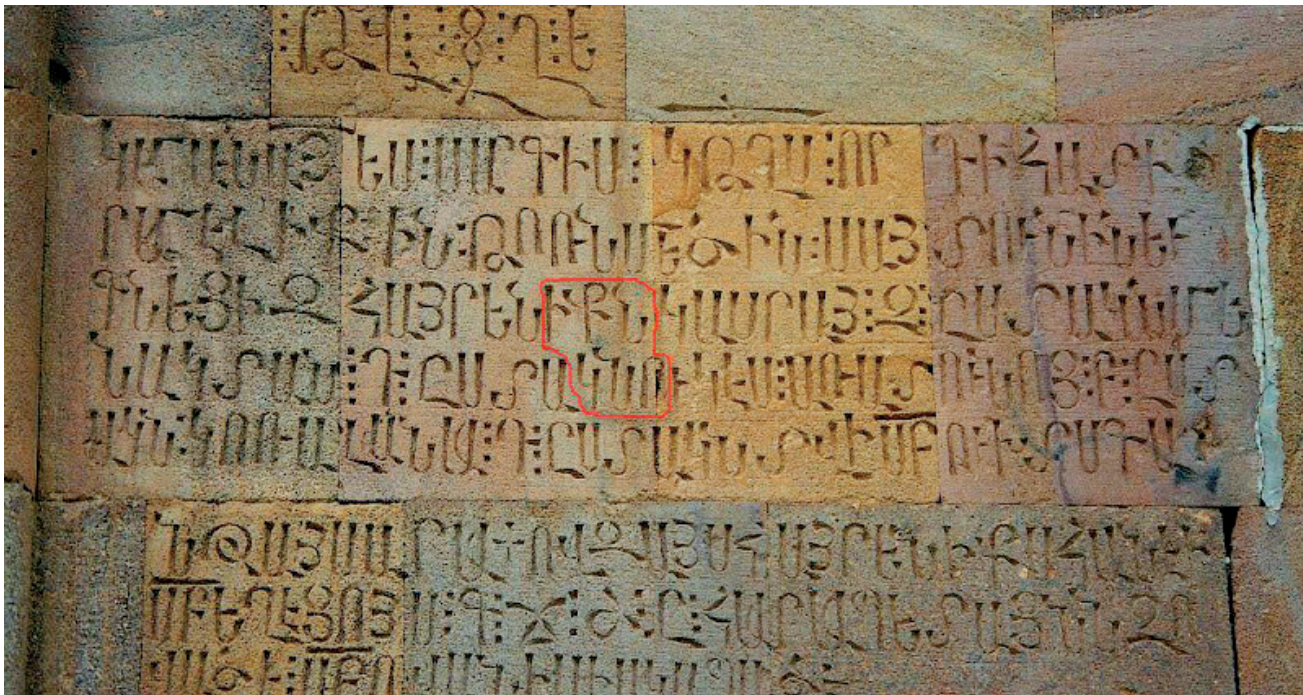
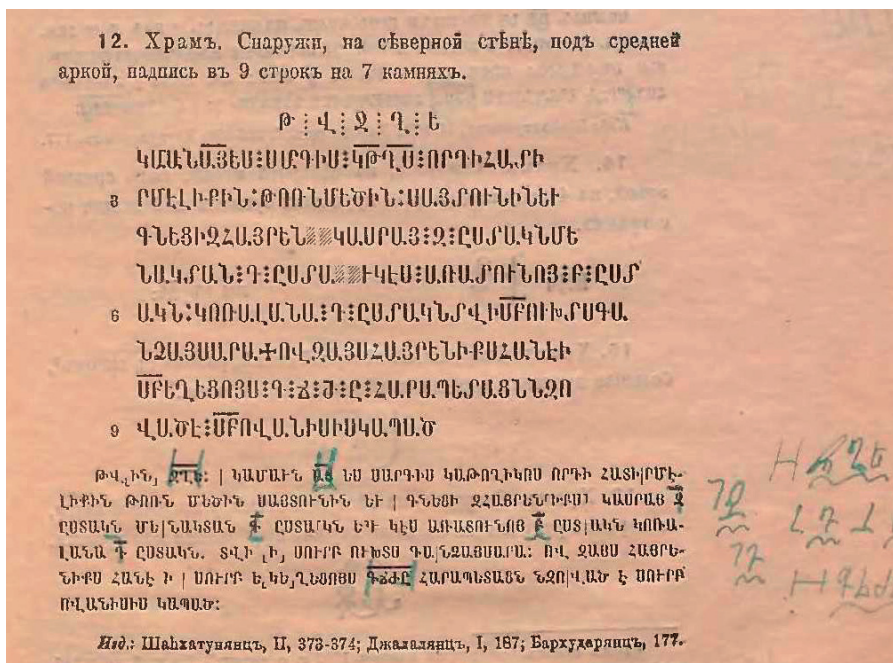


PHOTO 1a
Fresh Armenian falsifications:
inserted letters in the Gandzasar
inscriptions (highlighted by us).
The colour of plates indicates
multiple late replacements. The
recent rough insertion of the
fourth plate with modern solution
on top is clearly visible.

Orthodox Christians. Therefore, it is ridiculous that the present-day Armenians wickedly call the Grabar as the old Armenian language trying to claim an interest in this ancient church language and culture. What is now called the Armenian (Hai) people, some 150-170 years ago spoke in dozens of different languages and did not understand each other. They were a group of different peoples and ethnises resettled by the autocracy to the Caucasus and moulded here under the sensitive leadership of the Echmiadzin Church into the present “ancient Armenian” people.

Fresh Armenian falsifications: inserted letters in the Gandzasar inscriptions (highlighted by us). The colour of plates indicates multiple late replacements. The recent rough insertion of the fourth plate with modern solution on top is clearly visible.



J. Orbeli's handwritten high-
lights of falsifications made by
Barkhudariants, Jalaliants,
Shakhhatunians

Furthermore, J. Orbeli personally pointed out other mistakes and late inserts made by the priests M. Barkhudariants, S. Jalaliants, and O. Shakhhatunians during copying and translation of the whole Christian Gregorian (Monophysite) heritage of the peoples of the region.

TURKISMS IN THE GANDZASAR INSCRIPTIONS

We discovered Turkisms during the translation of the Gandzasar inscriptions. In particular, one can see a Turkic-Arabic phrase **hatirmelikintorn(u)m eçin** (from malik to descendants to remember) in the inscription no. 12 in J. Orbeli's book. (Photos 5 and 5a).

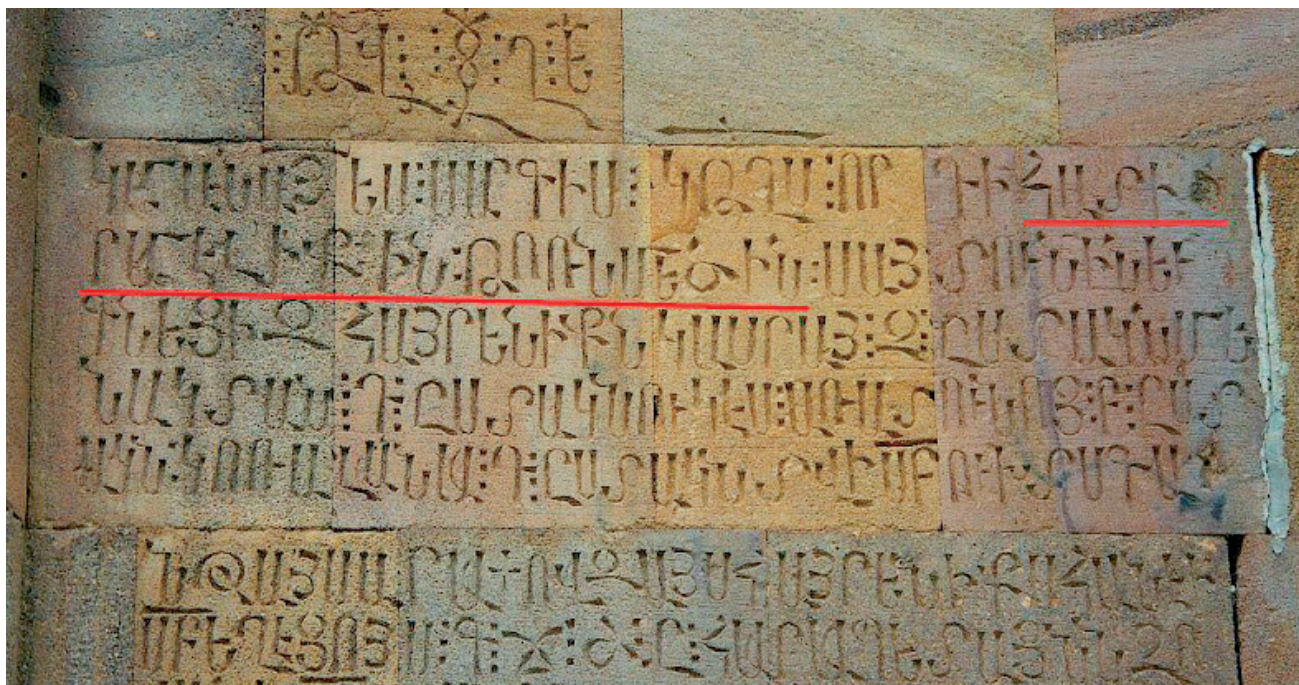


PHOTO 5
Turkic phrase **hatirmelikintorn(u)m eçin** (from malik to descendants to remember) (highlighted in red)

We also clarified that Orbeli's drawing of the inscription, its interpretation in Barkhudariants work, and the modern appearance of the text had differences. The text consists of nine lines inscribed on eight plates mounted on wall (Photo 2). After the study, it became obvious that at least half of the plates had a later origin and did not match the text given in J. Orbeli's book. However, even the old plates are not from the 13th century (the period when Albanians built the Gandzasar monastery) but, most likely, belong to the 16th-17th centuries.

As indicated in the works of Robert Mobili, a geologist and the head of the Albanian-Udi Christian community of Azerbaijan, there is conclusive evidence that many of the present plates in Gandzasar and other temples located in the territory of Karabakh are alien in nature and differ from the stone used by Albanians in the Middle Ages to build temples. For example, in his article *The Albanian Church and the Armenian falsification*, R. Mobili writes the following:

“After the abolition of the Albanian Church, Echmiadzin mounted the stone plates made of fine-crystalline dense limestone from the deposits of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenian inventory inscriptions on the walls and entrance of churches, although the construction material used in all Albanian cult structures of this region ... was a quaternary travertine from the Nij deposit unique in Caucasus. This was an inventory procedure and appropriation of property, ... its destruction ... and the installation of Armenian inscriptions dated not earlier than 1828-1836.”

The inscriptions of Gandzasar contain many Turkic words, as well as the names of rulers, their wives, clergymen, which indicate an instrumental role of Turkic culture and ethnic groups in the medieval Albanian heritage of this region. In particular, the Turkic words *altun* (gold; p. 17, para. 35), *Malikatayi* (Father Melik; p. 18, para. 37), *Khachinoatabagin* (the Khachen atabek or the ruler of Khachen; p. 19, para. 39) indicate that these lands were

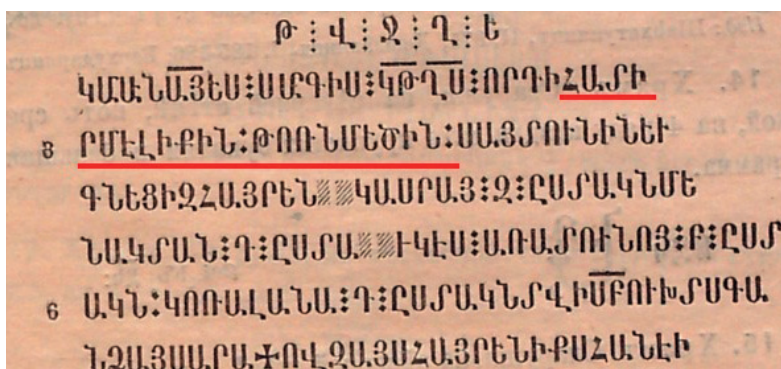


PHOTO 5a
Turkic phrase **hatirmelikintorn(u)m eçin** (from malik to descendants to remember) in Orbeli's book

under the control of atabek (ishkhanutyambatagin; p. 21, para. 43). There are also references to the names of such nobles as Ulubek (p. 23, para. 49), as well as the wives, mothers, and daughters of rulers: Mina Khatun (p. 24, para. 51), Mama Khatun (p. 24, para. 52), etc. The names of Velijan, Amirhasan, Atabag, Kochubek, Janibek, Jalalbek, Aruz (p. 12, para. 23; p. 20, para. 42; p. 21, para. 43; p. 28, para. 62) are mentioned often in the Gandzasar inscriptions.

ԵՍ ՈՒՒՆԻՖԻԿԱՍ ՈՐԳԻՒՄ ԵՆԵՂԼԻ

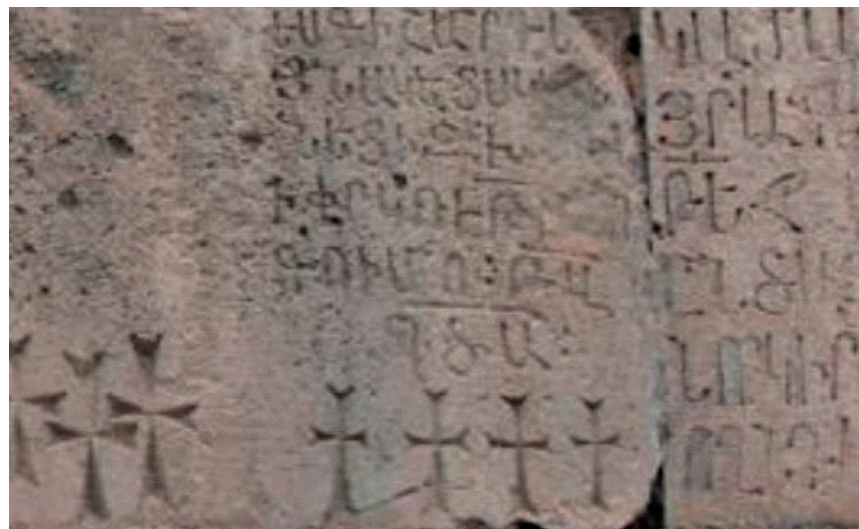
ՋԱՆԻԲԵԿԻՆ ԶՐԱՆՆԱԼԻԲԵ- ԿԻՆ ԶԱԶԻԶ ԽԱԹՈՒՆԻՆ ԴԵՐ | ԱՐՈՒԶԻՆ

Arabic names Gamar (moon; p. 18, para. 37) and Amir Hasan (p. 20, para. 42) are also mentioned. The words halal (permissible or lawful; p. 18, para. 37) and so on point to a role of the Arab-Muslim culture in the Albanian heritage of Gandzasar.

Another inscription in Turkic contains six lines made in 1402 and was found on the plate outside the church (no. 53 in Orbeli’s book). It is mounted in the wall. Makar Barkhudariants did not provide any description for this inscription. In Orbeli’s book, this inscription is deciphered only after adding as many as 13 Armenian letters to the existing 41 letters, while only 3 Turkic letters are enough to read the inscription as follows:

“Esgi şamarda oyna keç sakın (or sakın). Neçi z xaç aiplr kowti gor. Goyma o Atuv”, which is translated from Turkic as ‘Songs, dances, entertainment - dance and pass, oh dweller. Lo! How many vices the holy cross expelled. Do not let it be, Father!’ (photos 6 and 6a).

PHOTO 6
J.Orbeli: Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk.
Turkic text on the plate of the outer wall of Gandzasar



Armenian and Russian Armenologists could not translate this inscription because they either did not know the Turkic languages or did not want to focus on it.

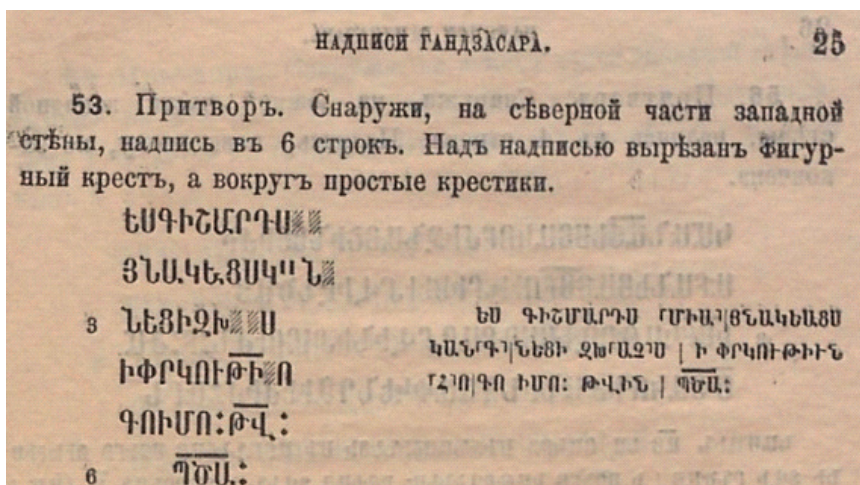


PHOTO 6a
J. Orbeli: Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk.
Turkic text in the inscription no. 53

VERDICT: J. ORBELI HAS PUSHED TOO FAR IN DEBUNKING ARMENIAN FALSIFICATIONS

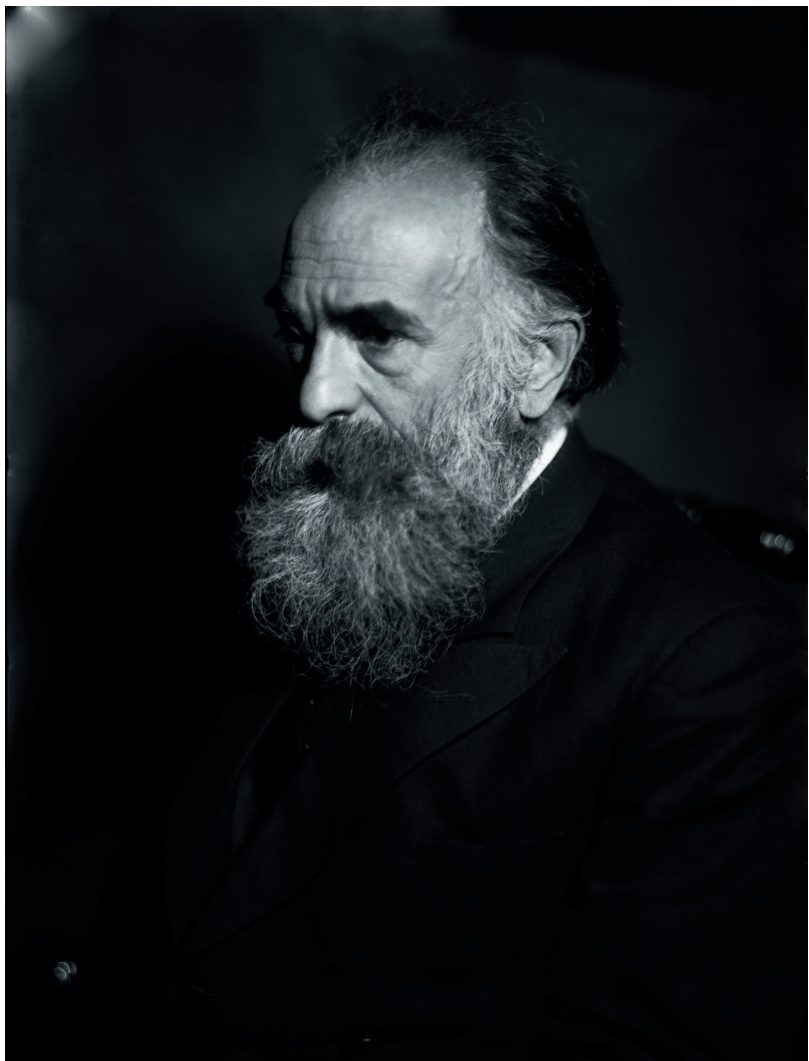
The fact that the ancient people used to write continuous scripts (*scriptio continua*) without spaces or vowels between the words or sentences (they used a symbol designating several different vowels) provided ample room for extensive distortion and falsification of the Gandzasar inscriptions during the translation by Armenians. As a result, it was possible to manipulate the meaning and translation of the text. Undoubtedly, Armenians abused the translation by providing meanings they believed to be true. Again, the practice of writing without spaces or vowels between the words was a common tradition used in many ancient writings in different countries.

The comparison of texts revealed that some translations and interpretations of priests M. Barkhudariants, S. Jalalians, and O. Shakhhatunians ordained by the Armenian Church, do not correspond to those seen and copied by Orbeli in Gandzasar and other places of Karabakh. After all, these priests were representatives of local ethnic groups and collected inscriptions in Karabakh as instructed by the Armenian Church, for Armenians could not understand the language of these texts. It is natural that their distorted inscriptions could not match the scientific studies of Orbeli and other scientists.

We can say that Orbeli experienced strong pressure, which eventually led to the destruction of the entire edition of his *Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk*. It is strange that Orbeli, who was a promising scientist in younger ages, has suddenly fell silent. He decided to cease his activities and has no longer returned to the research of the Karabakh inscriptions. Perhaps, it was his silence that earned him high posts: Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences (1924), Full Fellow of the Armenian Institute of the History of Culture (1933), Director of the State Hermitage (1934), and Full Fellow of the USSR Academy of Sciences (1935). After all, as a venerable scientist in Soviet times, he could easily visit Karabakh or organise a scientific expedition that would complete his studies on the inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk. However, he did not do this, although before, judging by his own letter amended to the surviving copy of the *Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk*, he was anxious to do this and bitterly resented the failure of publishing his work...

The study of Orbeli's book makes it possible to show the world community the entire scope of Armenian historical falsifications regarding the Christian heritage of Karabakh. Studies of Gandzasar's inscriptions will reveal interesting facts about the real history of Karabakh, and most importantly will debunk Armenian historical fiction regarding the original

It can be argued that J. Orbeli was under a strong pressure, leading to complete destruction of his work *Inscriptions of Gandzasar and Havotsptuk*.



J.Orbeli

belonging of these territories to the Armenian-Hai culture. In fact, the Armenian Church consisted of representatives of different peoples and ethnic groups (including Turkic groups), but after the arrival of Russia in the region, once a clerical term, Armenian became a term designating an ethnic group. It is similar to saying that there is a Catholic or Muslim nation (people). Thus, the very notion of terms Armenian Church, Armenian language (Grabar), etc. was distorted. Everything was attributed to the hastily created Armenian nation, which was declared a bearer of the entire Christian Gregorian (Monophysite) heritage of the peoples of the region.

RESISTING THE ATTEMPTS TO DISTORT HISTORY

Several years ago, when Armenians initiated "restoration" works at the Gandzasar Monastery, new facts of falsifications and destruction of the ancient Albanian heritage were revealed.

Thanks to the Armenian press, scientists and public figures, the objective of the feigned restoration process was a total destruction of the remains of Albanian heritage of Gandzasar.

In summer 2011, an Armenian businessman Levon Hayrapetian initiated restoration of the façade of the fence of the Gandzasar Monastery, which provoked vehement criticism by many Armenian architects, historians and public figures, since the alteration of the buildings and fences of the monastery negated the attempts of Armenians to make the complex a UN-

ESCO World Heritage Site. In other words, the so-called "restoration, fortification and facing" process was intended to destroy the old appearance of the historical monument.

A member of the Armenian Union of Architects, Manushak Titanian, was categorically against the facing of the wall, reminding the architects that the wall *does not become stronger after facing*. *"This is an absolute illiteracy, because when they are facing a weak wall, they*

weaken it even more," Titanian said.

Samvel Karapetian, an expert on Armenian architecture, told journalists that UNESCO would refuse to include the Gandzasar Monastery in its list because of a new version of the wall. Karapetian recalled similar incidents of the past. In particular, he showed photographs of the Shoshka Monastery located in the occupied Askeran district of Karabakh before and after the restoration. "The restored appearance of the monastery does not reflect the spirit of the original structure. This is not the only example. Unfortunately, there are many such buildings. And now the same thing happens with the Gandzasar Monastery," he stated.

"The Gandzasar Monastery is not included in the list of monuments protected by UNESCO, but in the future it will not be possible to include it because of the new wall," Karapetian said, reminding that the Armenians had not yet applied to UNESCO in order to enlist Gandzasar in this list, and it was still unknown when they apply.

According to Karapetian, the monastery has had a fence since its construction in the 13th century. The fence might have existed before, because there was a cult construction earlier on the same site. Back in 2011, Karapetian said that the fence of Gandzasar was restored in the 17th century, and in the 19th and early 20th centuries, it was partially restored. *"The restoration initiated in the 80s by the Department for the Protection of Monuments of Azerbaijan is not conspicuous, since it was carried out in full compliance with the old masonry,"* the Armenian expert said, appreciating the level of works carried out by Azerbaijani experts during the So-

We encourage historians to raise their voice to defend and to prevent the extinction of historical and cultural monuments of the Caucasian Albania. After all, they belong to all mankind...

viet era. Karapetian believes that "the current restoration works will make the protective wall of 2011, not of the 13th century".

Priest Grigor Markosian, who has been the pastor of the Gandzasar Monastery since 2006, openly stated the fact of concurrent destruction of *the ancient Albanian inscriptions of Gandzasar: "I was silent for a long time, but then I offered to look at the inscriptions in the porch. Half of them are gone. Many of the inscriptions are lost - the stones are broken and replaced by other stones..."* According to Markosian, UNESCO does not include Gandzasar in the World Heritage List mainly because of the lost inscriptions on the fence of the porch, which is the work of Armenians.

According to Minister of Tourism of the so-called Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, Sergey Shahverdian, the issue of including Gandzasar in the World Heritage List has been discussed with the UNESCO representatives for several years. However, the negotiations have no results, since the Gandzasar Monastery has been subjected to numerous unrecoverable alterations, hence preventing it from being a UNESCO heritage site.

The Azerbaijani side also expressed its serious concerns about the destruction of the Albanian cultural and historical heritage in the territories of Karabakh occupied by Armenia.

"Armenians do not allow UNESCO technical mission on the occupied territories of Azerbaijan," noted Gunay Efendiyeva, the First Secretary of the UNESCO National Commission for Azerbaijan, at the international conference History and Cultural Heritage of Ethnic Groups of the Caucasian Albania in the Context of Human Rights held in Baku in June 2014.

"Azerbaijan cannot protect its monuments in the occupied territories, and UNESCO cannot send a technical mission there because of Armenia's unconstructive position", Efendiyeva said.

WORLD COMMUNITY AND SCIENCE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT ARMENIANIZATION OF THE HERITAGE OF THE ALBANIAN CHURCH AND PEOPLES

We will start with the issue of ethnic background of medieval Armenian population of Karabakh and other regions claimed by modern Armenian scientists and politicians as Armenian heritage. If we analyse the topic in a wider perspective, it turns out that Armenian colonies and churches existed in the Middle Ages in the Caucasus, Asia Minor, the Near East, the Black Sea region, Ukraine, southern Russia, Eastern Europe and other regions. However, these were groups of various peoples professing the Armenian-Gregorian (Monophysite) faith. In other words, not the ancestors of present-day Armenians (Hai/Haikan), but the representatives of different peoples were called Armenians. The word "Armenian" had not an ethnic but a religious connotation. After all, no one calls Catholics, Orthodox or Muslims a nation or people, realising that this is a religious identification, not an ethnic one. Moreover, the modern Armenian people, as we call them today, evolved thanks to proselytism, i.e. the adoption of the Armenian-Gregorian faith by different peoples.

Proselytism is an attempt to convert people to another religion. The term "proselyte" (προσῆλυτος in Greek) originates from the ancient Greek language and means a new settler, or a convert in religious sense. This term was coined to define alien people or people moving from one community to another.

Therefore, it is not serious, when all the monophysite Gregorian heritage is declared Armenian (Haikan). For clarity, let us imagine that the only Muslim community is Azerbaijanis, who now claim the whole heritage of the Muslim world (Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Andalusia, etc.) as Azerbaijani. It is clear that not all Muslims are Azerbaijani, or not all Catholics are Italians, French, or all Orthodox - Russian.

In the Middle Ages, communities were divided into religious groups,

not ethnic groups, and people were called religious groups, not ethnic groups. The situation changed in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the growth of ethnic self-awareness was exported from Europe to the East. The Russian Empire played a major role in this process due to its advancement in the Crimea, the Black Sea, the Caucasus and other regions and introduced new customs according to which local ethno-confessional groups were recorded as ethnic. In particular, the Armenian ethnos was formed. It consisted of various ethnic groups united under the Armenian Church and the charter of faith.

Today, scientists from different countries, including Armenia, are exploring this topic. In particular, Armenian researchers Arthur Aghajanov (from Karabakh), Eduard Vartanov (from Rostov) and others are studying the contribution of Turkic peoples to Armenian history and heritage. It turns out that a significant part of the medieval Armenian communities of the Black Sea, the Crimea, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Asia Minor and the Near East consisted of Turkic peoples who professed Armenian Gregorianism.

Historically, Armenian settlements in Crimea became the most populous in the 13th-15th centuries. In particular, Ukrainian historians indicate that the first period of Armenian resettlement in the Crimea can be traced back to the 11th-13th centuries. Today they are known as Armenian Kypchaks since they were Turks professing the Armenian-Gregorian faith, who prayed in the Turkic language and left a huge medieval manuscript heritage in their native language.

According to historical evidence, they called themselves Ermeniler (*Armenians, not Hai*), *their language was known as Khypchak tyli (Kypchak language), Tatarcha (Tatar) or Bizim til* (our language), but in everyday life and even during the church service, they used the Turkic language exclusively. *Crimean Turks (such as Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks, and Karaites), the long-established residents of the peninsula, were called in Turkic as khardesh (brother) or din airy khardeshi (brother of other faith)*. So, these migrants, Armenian-Kypchaks, spoke the Turkic language, identified themselves with local Turks but professed the Armenian Gregorianism.

Turkic peoples have also inhabited the Eastern Europe and the Caucasus since ancient times. Some of them adopted Orthodox Christianity and Monophysitism. They were native speakers of the Turkic language, bearers of Turkic adats (customs), Turkic folklore and adhered to Christianity only in their church life. Traces of Christian Turks can be found in the Golden Horde cities along the Volga River and the Issyk-Kul in Kyrgyzstan. In the territory of historical Azerbaijan, the Kypchak monastery Khypchakvank (Kypchakovang) has been subordinate to the Albanian Apostolic Church since the 9th century.

In the South Caucasus, one of the most significant hubs of Christian Turks was the medieval Khachen Princedom in Karabakh represented by one of its brightest rulers in the 13th century, Hasan-Jalal Dawla. Since ancient times, the Turkic ethnic component has played a key role in the Caucasian Albania and the Albanian Autocephalous Church, which united the peoples of the Caucasus and neighbouring regions. This was followed by a period of the weakening and withdrawal from the political scene of the state formations of the Caucasian Albania and the Albanian Church, which, under the influence of the Armenian church of Echmiadzin, underwent total Armenianisation and destruction. This process has even intensified after the arrival of the tsarist Russia in the Caucasus, when the property, temples, laity and books of the Albanian Church were transferred to Echmiadzin. Thus, a modern Armenian historical concept was created on the ruins of Albanian culture, history and faith.

However, the people representing Albanian culture, faith and self-consciousness continue to struggle for the preservation of Albanian heritage. They have high expectations of Azerbaijan, which carefully preserves and restores the heritage of the ancient Caucasian Albania and Albanian Church.

In June 2016, Eduard Vartanov (Russia), Arthur Aghajanov (Ukraine)

and a group of activists from the Movement for the Restoration of the Albanian Autocephalous Church and the Heritage of the Christian Turks distributed a petition through a public petitions website Avaaz.org entitled **"Appeal to international organisations: Save the heritage of the Albanian Autocephalous Church and the Turkic Christians."**

Below is the text of this widely publicised petition calling upon the world community and international organisations: "Numerous communities of Christian Cumans (Armenian Kypchaks) have lived along the Don River as well as in the Crimea, Ukraine and the Eastern Europe for centuries. They played an instrumental role in commercial, cultural and historical life of these regions. But we completely forgot that they could preserve their spiritual connection with the Church of Caucasian Albania ever since they were baptised. During the 19th century, the Armenian Church of Echmiadzin, as well as the Armenian public figures close to the Russian Imperial Court did everything to re-subordinate them to Echmiadzin and thus severed Armenian Kypchaks' spiritual connection with the church of Caucasian Albania. During the first years of the Soviet authority in the Don, the Stalinist regime represented by Anastas Mikoyan carried out a total extermination of the Don intellectual elite - the last custodians of the memory about "Albanian baptism" of their Turkic-Kipchak ancestors.

The Hajiyeve brothers, the leaders of the national enclave on the Don, were arrested in 1925-26. They were shot because they and their supporters rejected Mikoyan's initiative to establish "Little Armenia" on the Don with the introduction of the "Yerevan language" in their daily lives and work in local institutions, which was alien to the Don Armenians. In addition to the Hajiyevs and their relatives, hundreds of like-minded people were shot and died in concentration camps. Only decades later, some of these victims were rehabilitated - those who had close relatives who kept the memory of innocent prisoners.

In his older years, Mikoyan defined the Stalin period as follows: "All of us were scoundrels." This was an attempt of the old party boss to cover his bloody tracks left since his term in office. "All of us" is far from admitting personal guilt in the Hajiyeve case. To this day, the work of Anastas Mikoyan lives and continues to "gently" suppress the ethnic self-awareness of the indigenous Armenians of the Don, along with the memory of their roots and the Kypchak heritage of their ancestors.

Thanks to propaganda in the media and schools, they are trying to plant a language culture alien to the Don Armenians, called "the correct Armenian language". However, the resistance of the indigenous Don Armenians is not broken. We continue to restrain the linguistic onslaught and are therefore interested in attracting interest in scientific research both of our Turkic roots, and of our spiritual connection with the Albanian autocephalous church. Two years later we will commemorate anniversary date, when our pagan ancestors settled in Ani and in Shirak (in present-day Armenia) nine centuries ago. The date when the Albanian autocephalous church accepted them in Armenia to the fold of the Christian civilization, when no "Echmiadzin" existed in the South Caucasus yet.

Also, on behalf of a group of Karabakh Christian Turks who are descendants of the Karabakh Albanians, we appeal to the international community to save the remnants of our Albanian spiritual, cultural, historical, and architectural heritage from Armenianisation. We, Karabakh Christians and Armenians (haikans, hays) are different peoples with different cultures, spiritual values and attitude. Many Karabakh Christians are ethnically different from the Armenian people. During the last two centuries, we were violently subordinated to the Armenian Church of Echmiadzin, deprived of ethnic identity, temples and recorded as ethnic "Armenians". But after all, from the beginning of the century, the Karabakh Christians submitted to the Albanian Autocephalous Church, which was abolished at the beginning of the 19th century, and all of its heritage was transferred to the Armenian church of Echmiadzin. We call on the Russian scientific community, as well as the UN, UNESCO and other international organisations to support the preservation of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Ani-Crimean-Don Arme-

nians, as well as the Karabakh Armenians, who are still faithful to the Albanian Church. We thank everybody who contributes to the idea of the revival of the Albanian Church, its churches and its spiritual heritage.

Please join this petition and help save the heritage of the Albanian Autocephalous Church and its peoples from total Armenianisation."

Eduard Vartanov (Russia)

Arthur Aghajanov (Ukraine)

and a group of activists from the Movement

for the Restoration of the Albanian Autocephalous Church

and the Heritage of Christian Turks

Thanks to this petition, it was possible to bring attention to the problem of Armenianisation of the heritage of the Albanian Church and the peoples of Caucasian Albania. As a result, E. Vartanov and A. Agajanov published a series of publications, articles and a new book, in which little-known facts from the history of Turkic Christians, both Albanian and Armenian-Gregorian denomination, were made public. These publications attracted the attention of Russian, Ukrainian and Kazakh scientists who expressed their opinions and made scientific reviews of Vartanov's and Aghajanov's studies.

Vartanov draws attention of the world scientific community, UNESCO and other international organisations to the problems of preserving the heritage of the Albanian church and Christian Turks. **He suggests celebrating in 2018 the 900th anniversary of the baptism of the Kypchaks in Ani and Shirak by the Albanian church in Gandzasar. In 1118, a part of the Kypchaks adopted Armenian Gregorianism but preserved their original Turkic heritage. Vartanov believes that such a unique continuity of traditions should be included in UNESCO's programs for the preservation of endangered ethnic groups.**

Many centuries ago, the Albanian Apostolic Church, whose spiritual leader resides in the Gandzasar Monastery in Karabakh, baptised the Kypchaks in Ani and Shirak. Local culture, heritage and temples have nothing to do with the Armenian Church, which at that time was far from these places, in Cilicia. Albanian baptism, adopted by the Kypchaks in Shirak and Ani, is now mistakenly considered Armenian. Then they moved to other regions, including the Crimea, the Don and the Black Sea region, where the Kypchaks could preserve their ethnic culture and heritage for many centuries. Today, one can still find the Kypchak khachkar of c. 12th century in Rostov-on-Don. It was brought from Shirak (Turkey) by Kypchak Christians.

Eduard Vartanov writes the following about this: "This Kypchak khachkar, which depicts the **Aghvank cross** is an evidence of the adoption of Christianity by the Kypchaks in Ani and Shirak. The following is a brief history of the event. As a relic, this khachkar, among other khachkars, accompanied the ancestors of the Don Armenians during their movement from Ani to the Crimea, and then to the Don. In tsarist times, it decorated the interior of the main cathedral church in Nakhchivan-on-Don.

The creators have made sure that their descendants could read its content in an understandable language by reformatting the wheel into a cross, as an evidence of the conversion of pagan Kypchaks into Christianity. For greater clarity, the authors have included extra details such as genital allusions making the image as a metric testimony of the birth of a new Christian faith among the Kypchaks.

The wheel icon is an explicit trademark of the Kypchaks, who had been known in Eurasia by their tents mounted on wheels. Over the past centuries, the details of the wheel (axis, rim, spokes, and hub) have not changed at all. Nor has changed its meaning in the vocabulary of the Don Nakhichevanites: *կոպիակ* in Armenian, *qypchaq* in Latin, *köpçak* in Turkic, and *кѣпчак, копчак, кпчак* in Russian. In other words, the word that the Don Nakhichevanites use for a wheel is the same as it sounded in the 12th century: **КРЧАК – КОПЧАК – КЫПЧАК."**

E. Vartanov encourages the world scientific community to come and ex-

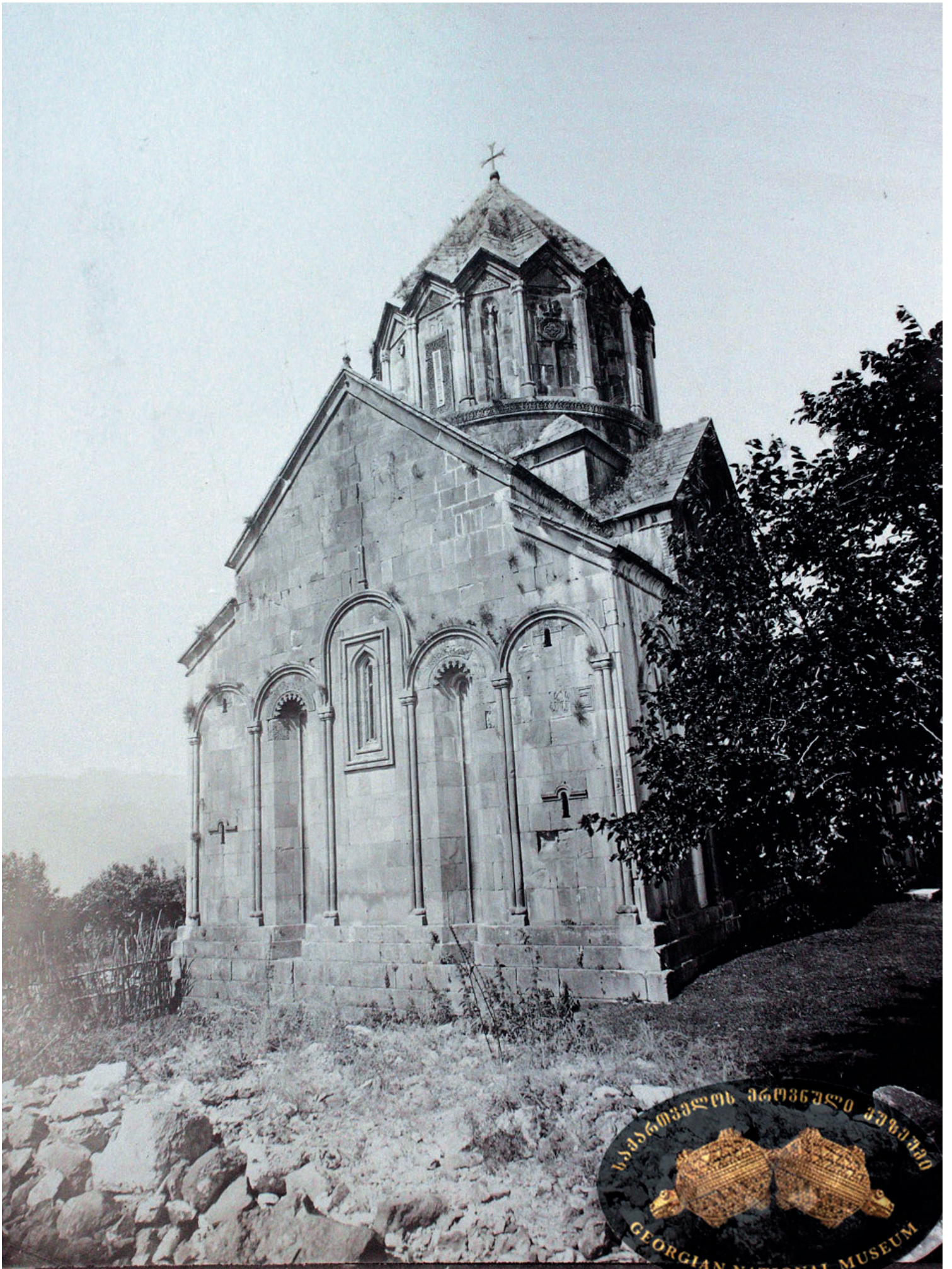
plore this Kypchak khachkar and other relics. The representatives of UNESCO, Russian scientists and the international working group Searching for the Sun established under the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Studies of Spiritual Traditions and Interreligious Dialogue have already shown interest to this topic. The working group includes scientists from Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Azerbaijan and other countries.

**PHOTOS OF THE GANDZASAR
MONASTERY MADE BY THE PIONEER
OF THE RUSSIAN PHOTOGRAPHY
DMITRY YERMAKOV. THE BEGINNING
OF THE 20TH CENTURY.
(NATIONAL MUSEUM OF GEORGIA)**



18913 Гандзасарский монастырь близъ Алагеза. 890.

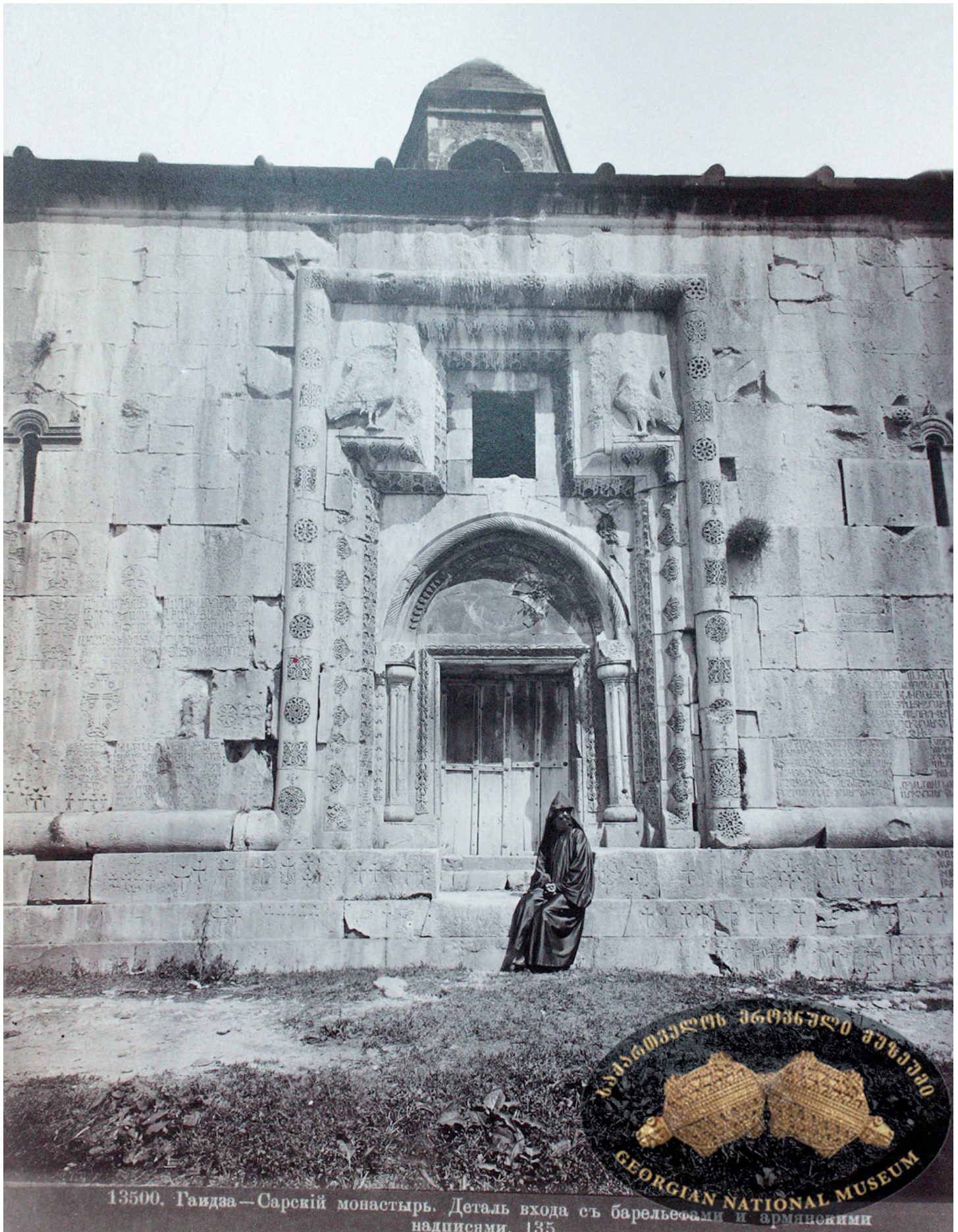




13498. Гаидза.—Сарскій монастырь Шушинскаго уѣзда съ сѣв.-вост. стороны. 133.



№7292 *Кახетія. Ганзасарскій монастырь.* 53



13500. Гаида — Сарский монастырь. Деталь входа с барельефами и армянскими надписями. 135

NOTES

NOTES

