

ISSN 1829-2003

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ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՇԱՐՏԱՐԱԴԵՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ՈՒՄՈՒՄԼԱՍՏԻՐՈՂ ԳԻՒՆԱԳՐԱՍ
RESEARCH ON ARMENIAN ARCHITECTURE

VARDZK

№ 4 2011



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MAY - OCTOBER 2011

**ԳԼԽԱՎՈՐ ԽՄԲԱԳԻՐ
ՍԱՄԿԵԼ ԿԱՐԱՊԵՏՅԱՆ**

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ԷՄՄԱ ԱԲՐԱԴՅԱՆՅԱՆ**

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RESEARCH ON ARMENIAN
ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION
Engaged in informational Activity

ՎԿԱՅԱԿԱՆ N 03Ա089223

ՏՐԿԱԾ 13.10.2010

Certificate No. 03Ա089223
Given 13.10.2010

**ՀԱՄԱՐԻ ԹՈՂԱՐԿԱՆ ՊԱՏԱՍԽԱՆԱՏՈՒ
ՍԱՄԿԵԼ ԿԱՐԱՊԵՏՅԱՆ**

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SAMVEL KARAPETIAN

ՏՊԱԳՐԿԵԼ Է

«ՏԻԳՐԱՆ ՄԵԾ» ՀՐԱՏԱՐԱԿՓԱՏԱՆԸ

Printed by
TIGRAN METZ Publishing House

ՏՊԱԶԱՆԱԿԸ 1000

Number of copies: 1000

ԵՐԵՎԱՆ, ԲԱԴՐԱՄՅԱՆ 24/4

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<http://www.armenianarchitecture.am>

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

by Raffi Kortoshian

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

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

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

1

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

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

(in Turkish)

Akdamar Kilisesi.

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



Board No. 1

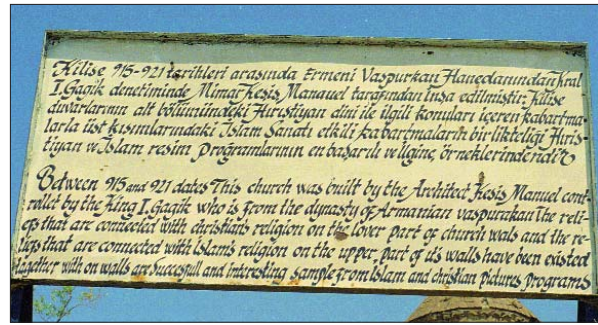
(in English)

Akdamar Church.

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

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

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



Boards No. 2 & No. 3

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

(in Turkish)

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

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

(in English)

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

2

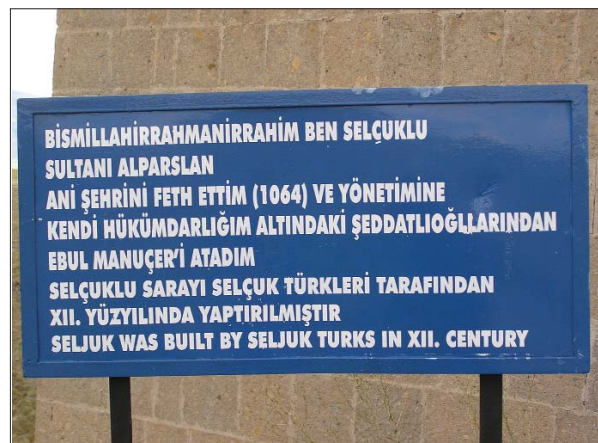
Board No. 4 (photo by S. Karapetian)

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

(in Turkish)

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

Selçuklu sarayı Selçuk Türkleri tarafından XII yüzyıllında yaptırılmıştır.



Board No. 4

(in English)

Seljuk was built by Seljuk Turks in XII century.

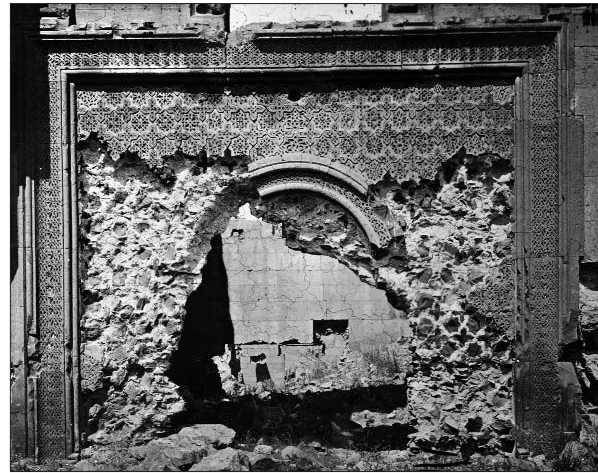
Transl. from Turkish: In the name of all-forgiving and merciful God, I, Seljuk Sultan Alp-Arslan, conquered the city of Ani in 1064 and appointed Ebul Manucher from the [family of] Sheddattle-Oghulus who are under my reign as its Governor.

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

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

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

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



Plates 1-2

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

3

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

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

(in Turkish)
Hoşab kalesi.

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

(in English)
Hoşab Fortress.

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

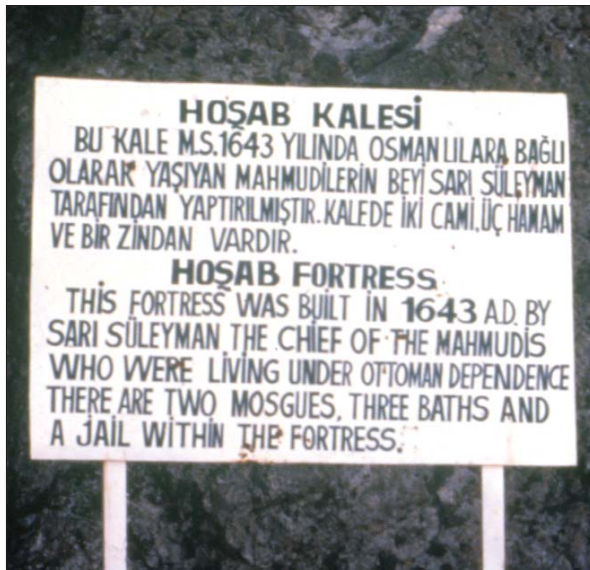
4 Հայ ժողովրդի պատմություն [History of the Armenian Nation], vol. 3 (Yerevan, 1976), 478-479.

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

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

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

8 Van Khachatur, plate no. 168.



Board No. 5

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

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

Board No. 6 (photo 2008)

(in Turkish)

Hoşap kalesi.

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



Board No. 6

(in English)

Hoşap Castle.

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

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

Note: Neither of these information boards⁹ mentions the two Armenian churches situated in the castle grounds, which were in a semi-destroyed state in the late 19th century¹⁰ (the ruins of one of them were still preserved in the early 20th century).¹¹

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

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

In the 17th century, Khoshab became the centre of the principality founded by the Mahmudies¹⁴ and still

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4

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

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



Board No. 7

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

They contain almost the same text:

(in Turkish)

Kars kalesi.

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

(in English)

Kars castle.

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

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

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



Board No. 8

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

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

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

16 Mirakhorian, 125.

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

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



Plate 3

In 929 Armenian King Abas made Kars his residence and fortified the citadel¹⁹ (he reigned until his death in 957).²⁰

In 961 King Ashot III moved the Bagratids' court from Kars to Ani,²¹ but in 963 his brother, Commander of the Armenian army Mushegh, declared himself king of Vanand and made Kars his capital,²² reigning there until 984. He was succeeded by his son Abas,²³ who reigned from 984 until 1028,²⁴ and by his grandson, King of Kars Gagik (1029 to 1064), who yielded up the city to the Byzantians in 1064.²⁵

¹⁹ Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 5, 342.

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

²¹ Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 1, 407.

²² Ibid., vol. 5, 342.

²³ Ajarian, vol. 3 (Yerevan, 1946), 462.

²⁴ Ibid., vol. 1, 4.

²⁵ Ibid., 435.

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

²⁶ Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 5, 342.

²⁷ A. Ye., "Kars Fortress Town," *Ardzagank*, no. 4, March 1890, 4.

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



Plate 4 (photo by S. Karapetian, 2007)

Ի ՈԼԳ (1184) քվիս շինեցաւ բուրջնս յիշատակ
Խաչոտիս Կանկիտատոյն. աստուած ողորմի
նմա՞ր²⁹:

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

In 1186 Georgian Queen Tamar appointed Armeni-
an Prince Zakare Zakarian Commander General of the
armed forces of her kingdom and his younger brother
Ivane Guardian (*Atabek*) of the state.³⁰ As reported by
historiographer Vardan Areveltsy and other contempo-
rary chroniclers, it was these very princes who liberat-
ed the castle of Kars in 1206.³¹ They reconstructed it
together with its towers, this being attested by the fol-
lowing Armenian inscription carved on its ramparts:

Թվիս ՈՉԳ (1234) ի քազաւորութեւ ըն-ուսուղա-
նա, յարթապակութենն Խանէի մեք Կարուց քրիստո-
նէքս շինեցաք զբրջներս ի հալալ արդեանց մե-
րոց³²:

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

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

5

Board No. 9 (photo by S. Karapetian)

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

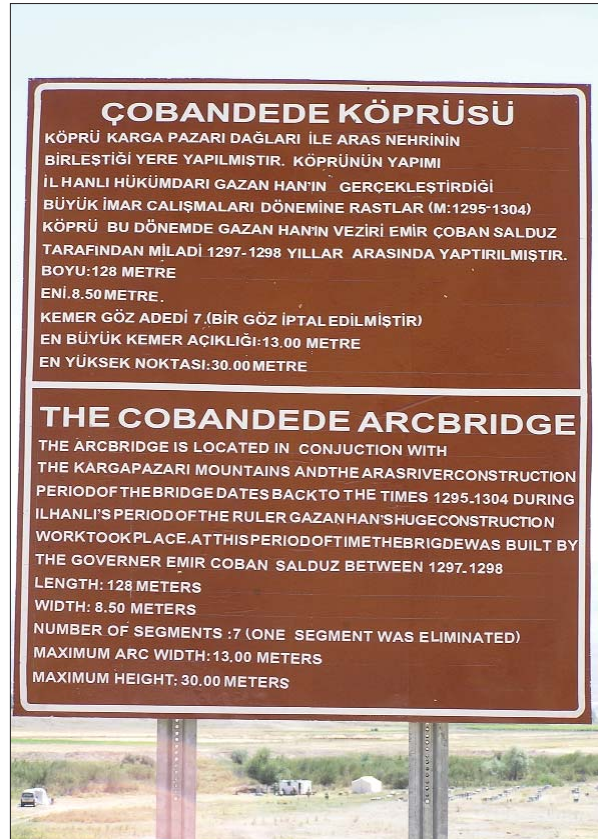
29 Орбели И., Избранные труды [H. Orbely, Selected
Works] (Yerevan, 1963), 470.

30 Harutiunian, 123.

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

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

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



Board No. 9

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

(in Turkish)

Çobandede köprüsü.

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

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

(in English)

The Cobandede Arcbridge.

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

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

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

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

As is evident, the inscription clearly states that the bridge was erected by the Armenians and renovated in 1160 with the participation of Magistros,³⁶ the monks of Sourb Astvatzatzin (Holy Virgin) Monastery³⁷ of Hasanghala and the lords of the castle of Daroink.



Plate 5

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

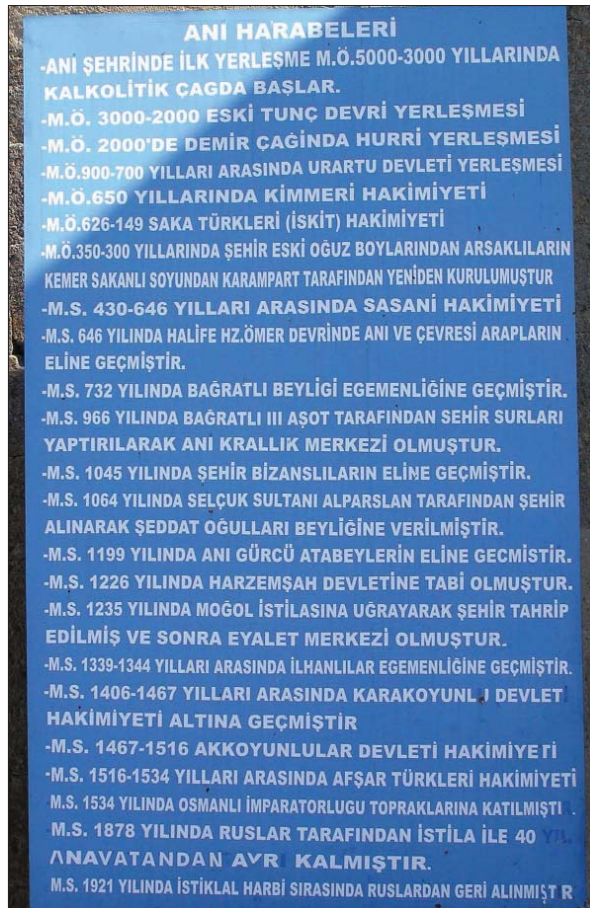
36 Grigor the *Magistros* (the *Master*), the son of Holum Vasak from the Pahlavunics' family, is also named Grigor-Martsen Pahlavuny or Bjnetsy. After his father's death, he entered into alliance with some ministers and made Gagik II King of the country in 1043. Later their relations grew inimical,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

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

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

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

40 **Tevkants**, 57-58.



Boards No. 10 & No. 11

6

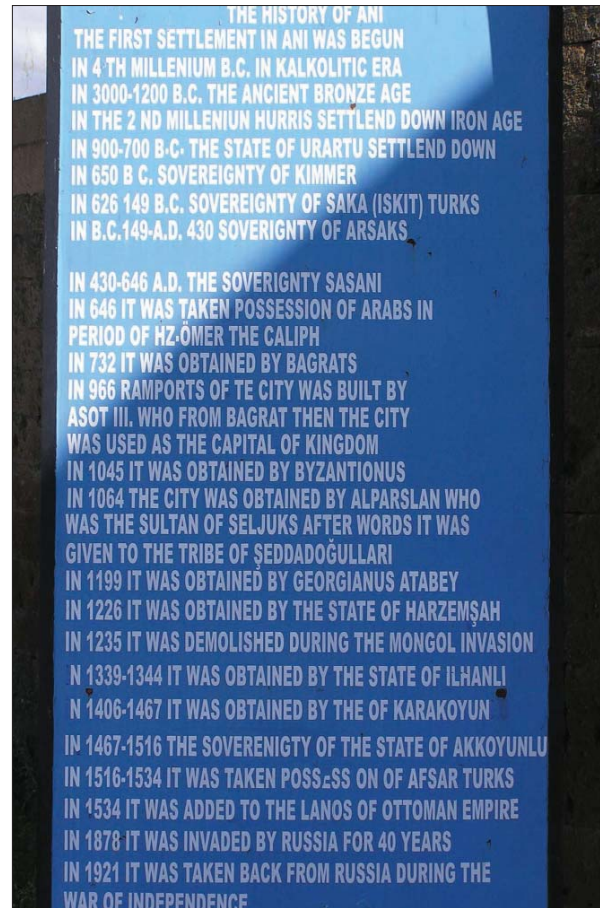
Boards No. 10 and No. 11 (photos by S. Karapetian)

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

The Turkish text reads:

Anı Harabeleri.

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



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

The English board says:

The History of Ani

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

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

Transl. from Turkish: Ruins of Ani.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In 732 the city became part of the Bagratid State.

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

In 1045 it shifted into Byzantine rule.

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

In 1199 Ani was taken by the Georgian princes.

In 1226 it was subjugated by the state of Harzemshah.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

42 Ibid., 444.

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

44 Ibid., 516, 521, 526.

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

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

In 66 the Parthians and Rome recognised the Armenian kingdom of the Arshakids, and Trdat I was declared King of Armenia, the region forming part of the Armenian kingdom⁴⁷ until its fall in 428.⁴⁸

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

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

As for the Kamsarakans' princely family, the members of which played an important role in the political life of Armenia between the 3rd and 8th centuries, they descend from the Karenians' Parthian family. In the mid-3rd century, the latter were subjected to a massacre by the Persian Sassanids, but Perzomat's son Kamsar had an escape from it and found refuge in Armenia. In 321⁵¹ Armenian King Trdat the Great presented them with the districts of Shirak and Yeraskhadzor (later renamed Arsharunik), which had been forming part of the royal estates, and promoted them to Senior Ministers. Within a short time, the Kamsarakans entered into kinship with the Mamikonians and the Arshakids and served their homeland and the Armenian nation faithfully for 5 centuries.⁵²

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

49 Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 5, 215.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

60 Soviet Armenian Encyclopedia, vol. 1, 408.

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

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

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

64 **Harutiunian**, 332, 334.

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

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

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

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

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

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



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YEREVAN – 2014