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RESEARCH ON ARMENIAN ARCHITECTURE

VARDZK

№7

2012



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2012

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ՍԱՍԿԵԼ ԿԱՐԱՊԵՏՅԱՆ

Editor-in-chief
SAMVEL KARAPETIAN

ԽՄԲԱԳՐԱԿԱԶՄ
ԷՄՄԱ ԱԲՐԱԿԱՄՅԱՆ

ԽՄԲԱԳԻՐ Editor
EMMA ABRAHAMIAN

ՀԱՍՄԻԿ ՀՈԿՀԱՆՆԻՍՅԱՆ
ԽՄԲԱԳԻՐ-ՄՐԱԳՐԻԳ

Proof-reader (Armenian text)
HASMİK HOVHANNISSIAN

ԳԱՅԱՆԵ ՄՈԿԱՍԻՅԱՆ

ԹՄՐԳՄԱՆԻԳ Translator
GAYANE MOVSISSIAN

ԱՐՄԵՆ ԳԵՎՈՐԳՅԱՆ

ԴԱՍՄԿԱՐԳՔԱՅԻՆ ՓԵՎԱԿՈՐՈՂ
Designer
ARMEN GEVORGIAN
LIANA HOVHANNISSIAN-
KORTOSHIAN

ԼՈՍՏԿԱՎԱՆ ԳՈՐԾՈՒՆԵՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ԻՐԱԿԱՆԱՅՄՈՂ
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ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՂ ՀԻՄՆԱԴՐԱՄ
RESEARCH ON ARMENIAN
ARCHITECTURE FOUNDATION
Engaged in informational Activity

ՎԿԱՅԱԿԱՆ N 03U089223

ՏՐԿԱԾ 13.10.2010

Certificate No. 03U089223
Given 13.10.2010

ՀԱՍՄԱՐԻ ԹՈՂԱՐԿԱՆ
ՊԱՏԱՍԽԱՆԱՏՈՒ
ՍԱՍԿԵԼ ԿԱՐԱՊԵՏՅԱՆ

Responsible for this issue
SAMVEL KARAPETIAN

ԵՐԵՎԱՆ, ԲԱԴՐԱՄՅԱՆ 24/4
24/4 Baghramian Ave., Yerevan, RA

<http://www.armenianarchitecture.am>

<http://www.raa.am>

f RAA Armenia

✉ raayer@sci.am

☎ 010 52 15 25

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A NEWLY-FOUND CROSS-STONE (910) FRAGMENT IN KHOTAKERATS MONASTERY

by Raffi Kortoshian

In 2010 the monastery of Khotakerats or Karkop, situated near Khachik Village, Vayots Dzor Region, Republic of Armenia, was in process of restoration, having completely changed into a building yard. Regretfully, different architectural fragments and pieces of funerary monuments were scattered there, consigned to total neglect. Among them especially noteworthy was the lower fragment of a dated cross-stone (910) engraved with a two-line clearly intelligible inscription:

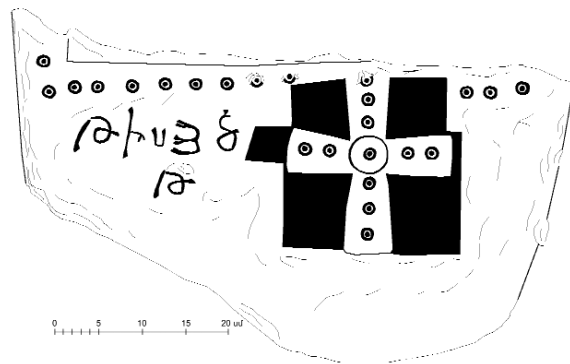
ԹԻ(Ն)Ս 3ԾԹ:

Transl.: *In the year 359 (910).*



In fact, this is one of the oldest clearly-dated khachkars preserved throughout the Republic of Armenia: prior to its discovery, the earliest cross-stone¹ known to scientific circles was the one (876) in Hortun Village Site (Ararat Region), which is only 34 years its senior.

It is noteworthy that the cross-stone fragment of Khotakerats Monastery and its oldest monument, Sourb Astvatzatzin Church, date back to the same year.²



- 1 **Կարապետյան Ս.**, Ամենահին թվագրությամբ նորահայտ խաչքարը [S. Karapetian, “The Earliest-Dated Newly-Revealed Cross-Stone”], «Արարատ» [Ararat] (a district newspaper), no. 151, 20 December 1986, 3; *ibid.*, «Էջմիածին» [Echmiatzin], nos. 5-6 (1987), 80-81.
- 2 Sourb Astvatzatzin Church of Khotakerats Monastery was erected in 910 by princess of Siunik Shushan in the site of a church that had been built by her husband, Prince Ashot of Siunik (it was destroyed by a severe earthquake in the late 800s). **Ստեփանոս Օրբելյան**, Սյունիքի պատմություն [Stepanos Orbelian, History of Siunik] (Yerevan, 1986), 214-216.

NEW RAA PROJECTS

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



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



NOTIFICATION

The year 2013 marks the 800th anniversary of the foundation of the renowned monastery of Teger (1213 to 2013), Aragatzotn Region, Republic of Armenia. In commemoration of this, RAA Foundation is planning to dedicate one of the forthcoming "Vardzk" issues of 2013 to this monastic complex, which, regretful as it is, has not been properly studied so far.



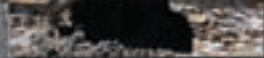
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

RAA Foundation extends its deepest gratitude to **Mr. Arthur Seredian** (Harutiun Sarhadian, the younger son of Sirak Sarhadian, an outstanding political, public, cultural and educational figure from Van, Western Armenia) for his donation of an IPAD2 4G.

OBITUARY

We regret to inform our readers about the death of our senior friend, master **SEPUH SAGHATELIAN**, a man of great patriotic feelings, who died at the age of 92 on 27 February 2012 in his birthplace Akhalkspha.





This brief research into the monuments, and particularly, cathedral of Mren is first and foremost an **SOS** to the proper international bodies, primarily UNESCO, to urgently draw their attention to the issue of the preservation or, better to say, salvation of this pearl of architecture consigned to total annihilation. For already many decades, the watch base of Turkish border-guarding forces, stationed in the neighbourhood of the ghost city, has been giving entry permit to only the inhabitants of the adjacent villages who visit it simply for searching for gold there. Unlike them, architects, culturologists and tourists are absolutely denied access to the ghost city



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ARMENIAN
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YEREVAN
2012