

# ՎԱՐԴԶԻ



ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՃԱՐՏԱՐԱԳԵՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆ ԸՐԱՌՄԱՆԱՍԻՐՈՂ ՀԻՄՆԱԴՐԱՄ  
RESEARCH ON ARMENIAN ARCHITECTURE

## VARDZK

№7

2012





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**ՍԱՍԿԵԼ ԿԱՐԱՊԵՏՅԱՆ**

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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**

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## THE SECOND “GENOCIDE” OF AGULIS

by Samvel Karapetian

Since the 1988 deportation of the native Armenian population of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhijevan, the Armenians have been denied access to the region. For this reason, for about ten years, until 1998, it was almost impossible to procure any trustworthy information concerning the Armenian historical monuments situated there.

Indeed, during all this period, we could have only a gloomy foreboding regarding the state of Nakhijevan’s Armenian cultural heritage given the anti-Armenian propaganda unfolded by the Azerbaijani authorities and the numerous cases of encroachment against the local Armenian monuments, especially those of the Christian period.

In 1998 some photographs taken from the Iranian bank of the Arax exposed the destruction of the medieval Armenian cemetery of Old Jugha with bulldozers, and the public at large learnt about the acts of vandalism ongoing in Nakhijevan.

The storm of protest reached even the UNESCO, but the vandals did not stop their work: the photos of 2003 revealed that all the standing cross-stones of the site, amounting to several thousand, had been levelled to the ground.

In the summer of 2005, after having been denied access to Nakhijevan for several times in the preceding years, Scottish researcher Stephen Sim was finally permitted to enter the region. However, his work in its territory hardly lasted for three days (on the third day, the local authorities arrested and deported him), but even that short period was enough for him to reveal that the Azeris’ vandalistic acts had not been confined to only the cemetery of Jugha. Stephen Sim did not find any Armenian monument in the sites he managed to visit:

thus, for instance, he exposed the total annihilation of Abrakunis’ renowned monastery of Sourb Karapet (Holy Forerunner) and the church of Shorot Village.

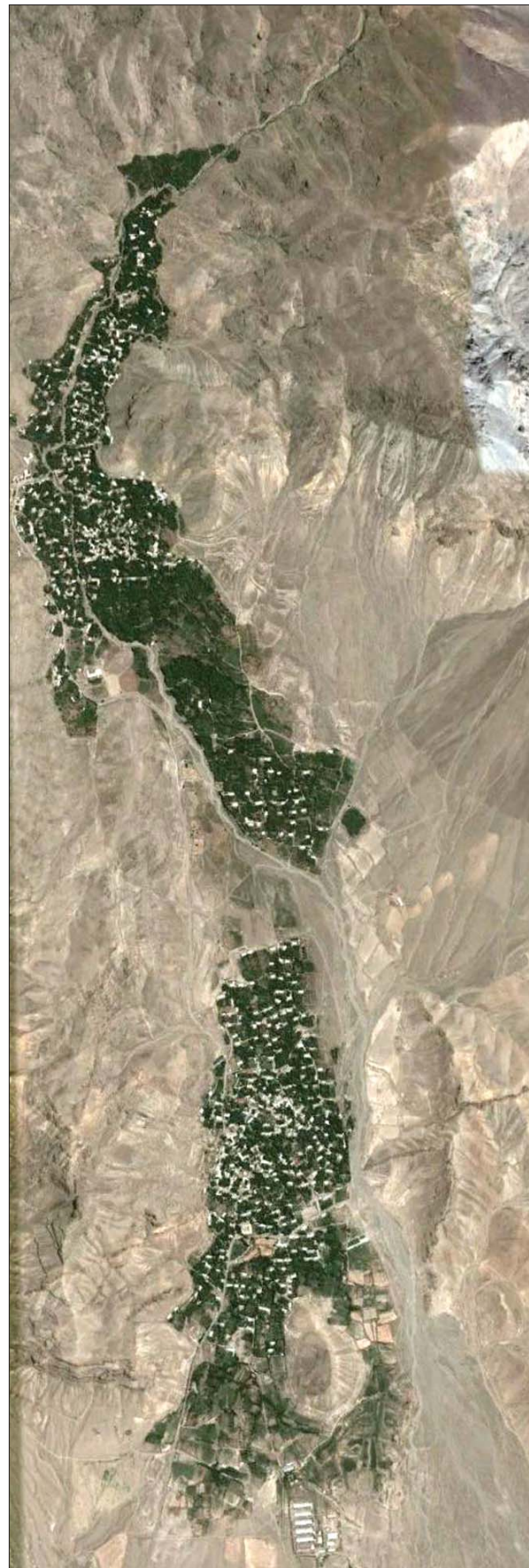
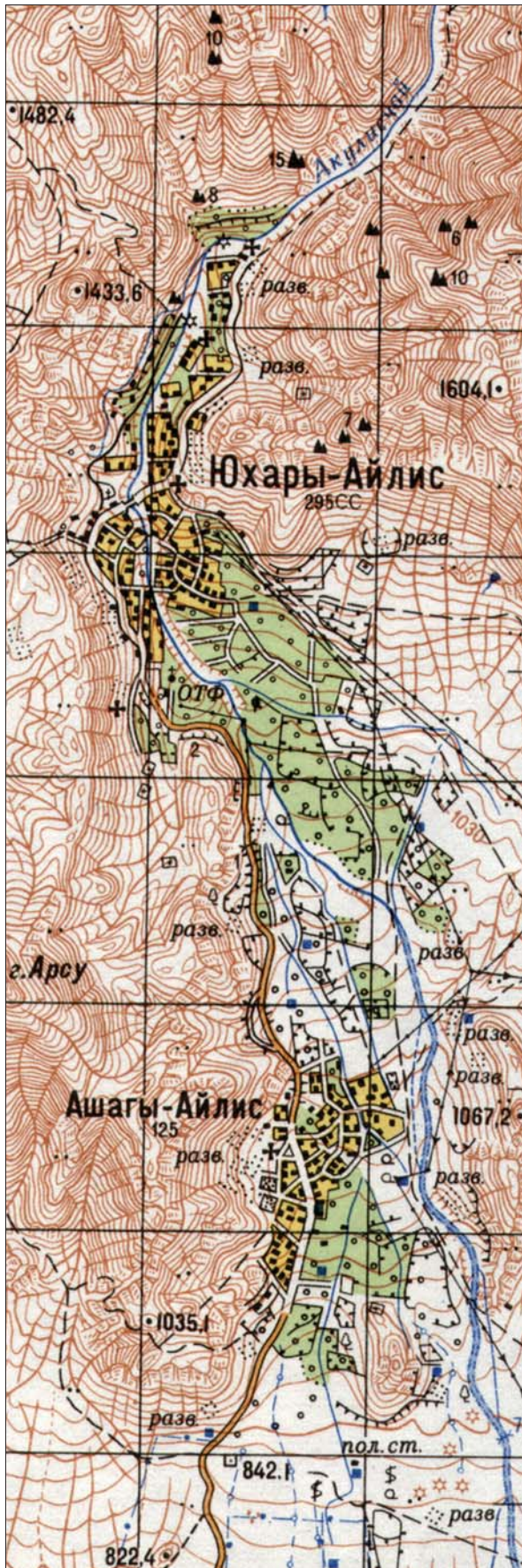
Only some months later, in December 2005, the photographs taken from the Iranian side of the river Arax exposed the unprecedented barbarities committed by the Azerbaijani soldiers: armed with heavy hammers, they had crushed the overthrown cross-stones and tombstones of the cemetery of Jugha, numbering several thousand, thus levelling the world-famous cemetery to the ground.

This tragedy confirmed that the atrocities committed against the Armenian heritage throughout the region of Nakhijevan had been premeditated at state level. Despite all the efforts of the Azerbaijani side to deny their crimes and disseminate gerrymandered information in their own support, we have indisputable evidence proving their guiltiness: a photograph taken from space on 17 July 2011 shows that besides the cemetery of Jugha, the churches of Nakhijevan City and the adjacent village of Aliapat, Abrakunis Monastery,<sup>1</sup> eight medieval monuments (a monastery and 7 churches) in Upper and Lower Agulis and several cemeteries of thousands of tombstones have been annihilated without a single vestige left.

Below follow the photographs of the eight monuments in Upper and Lower Agulis which no longer exist today. At this point, we involuntarily remember Victor Hugo’s well-known phrase: “The Turks have been. Destruction everywhere.” At the same time, we want to emphasize that unlike Europe, the Armenian Homeland has not got rid of the Turks yet: they *do* still continue their existence here, ever busy with what they have been perpetrating for already many centuries...

<sup>1</sup> For details regarding the destruction of these monuments, see *Vardzk*, no. 3 (2011).

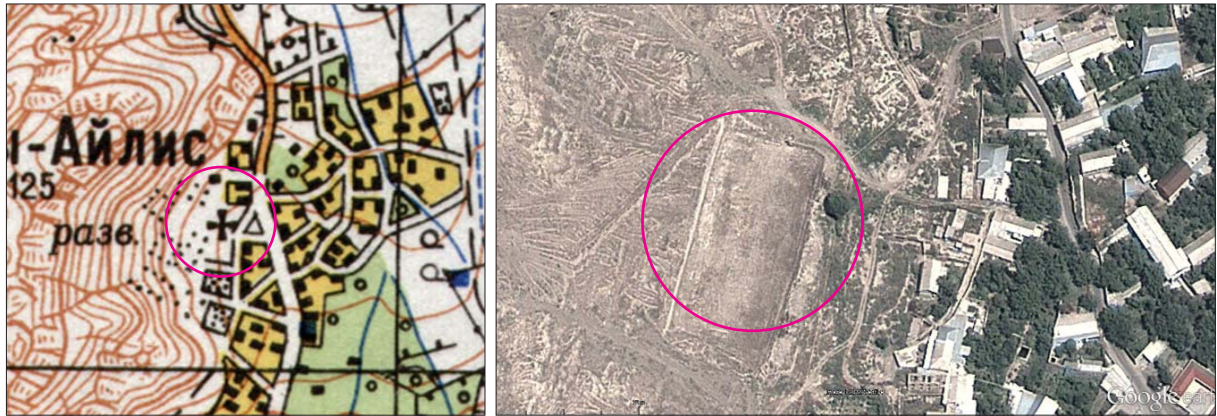




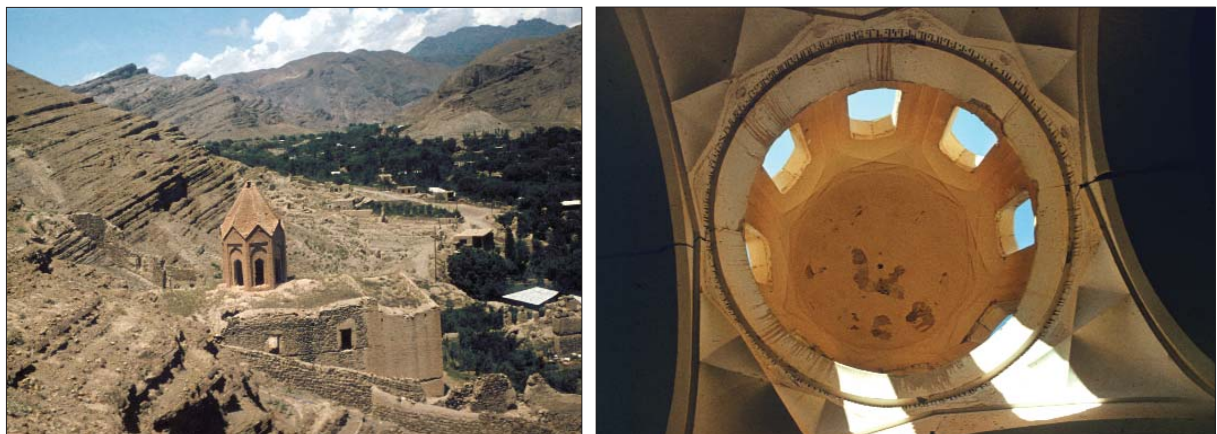
A detailed physical map of Upper and Lower Agulis and their neighbourhood according to the map (1:50,000) of the USSR General Military Headquarters (1977); a photo taken from space on 17 July 2011 (Google Earth)



Amarayin (Sourb Nshan) and St. Stepanos (Sourb Yerrordutiun) Churches of Lower Agulis

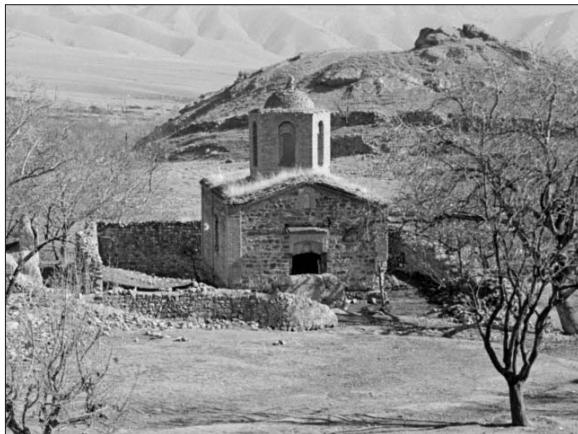


St. Hovhannes Mkrtych (John the Baptist) Church of Upper Agulis

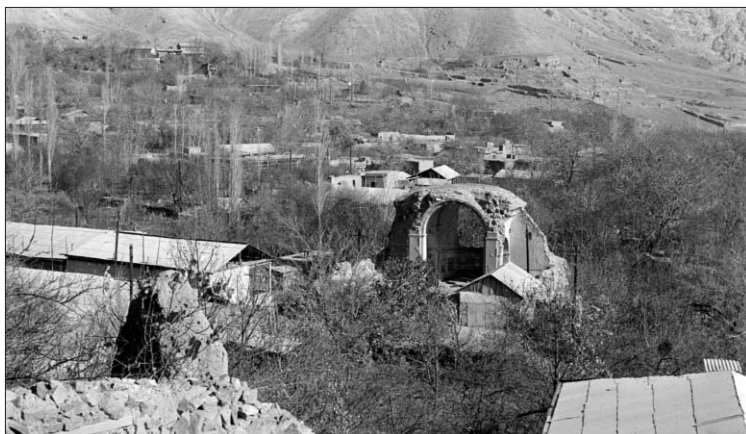




St. Hakob Hayrapet Church of Upper Agulis

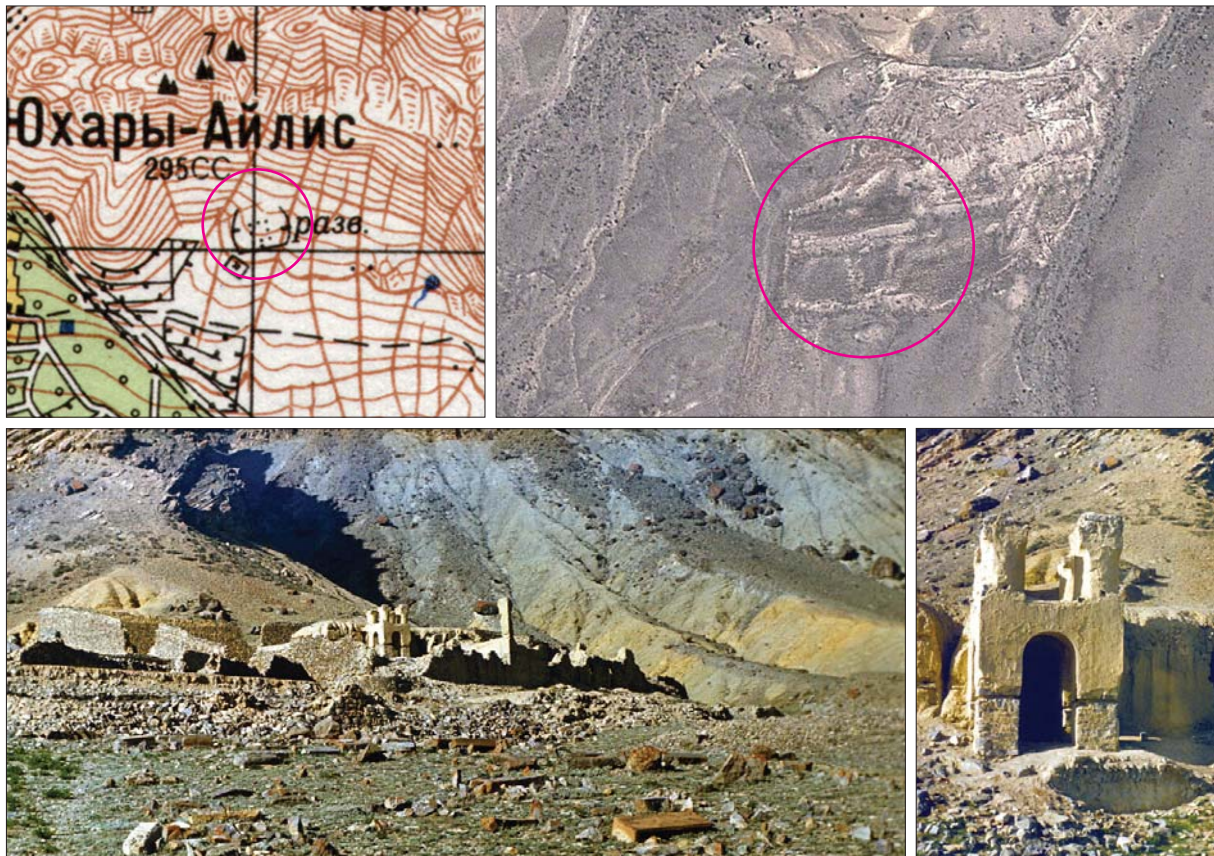


St. Shmavon Church of Upper Agulis

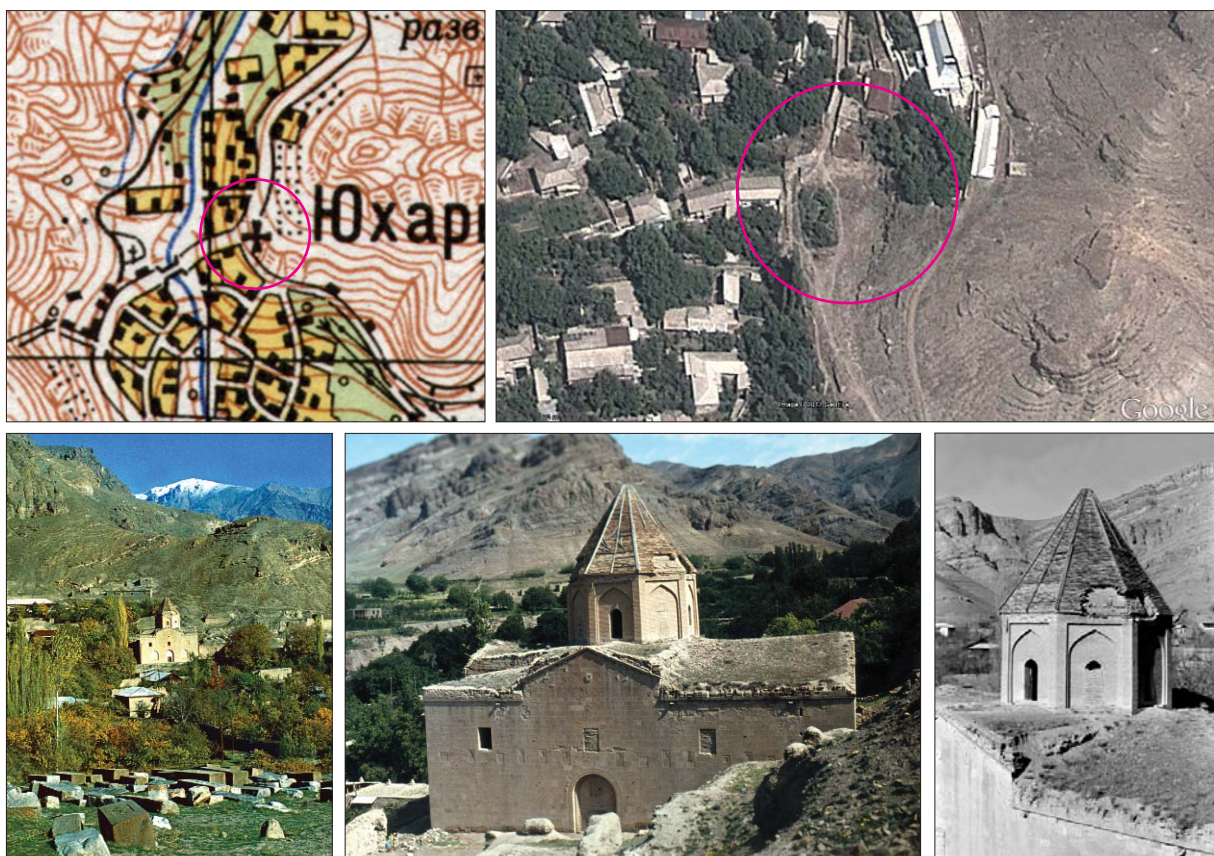




Upper Agulis. Metz Anapat Sourb Astvatzatzni (Great Cloister of the Holy Virgin)

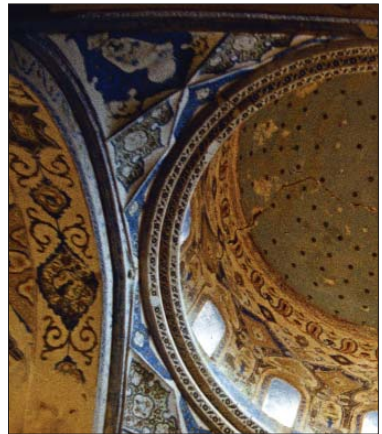
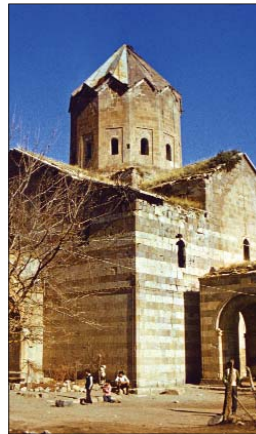
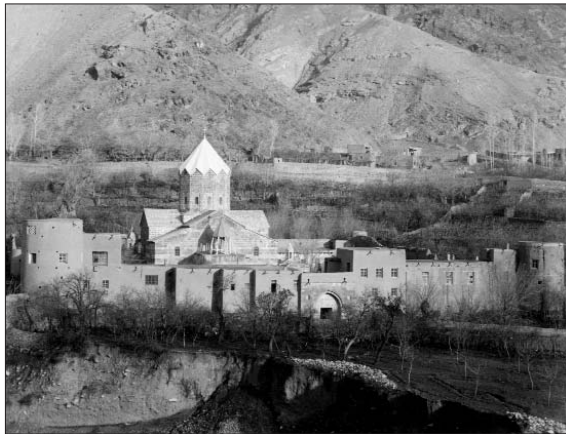
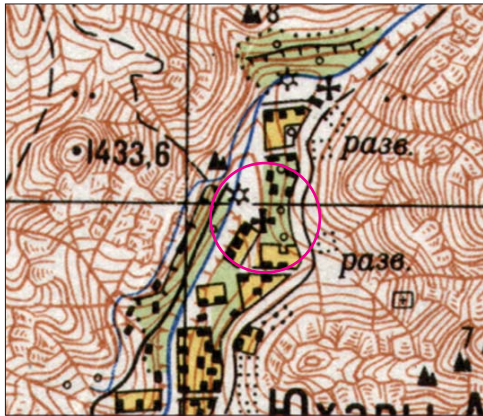


St. Christopher Church of Upper Agulis

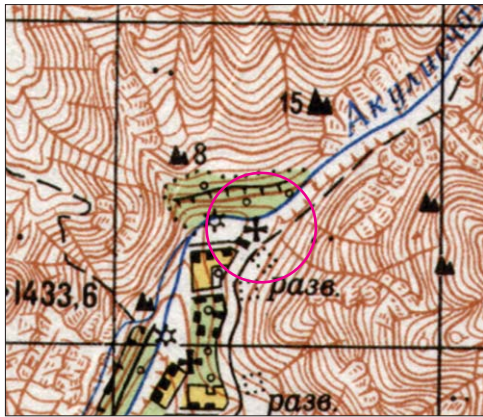




St. Tovma Monastery of Upper Agulis



St. Stepanos Church of Upper Agulis





# 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

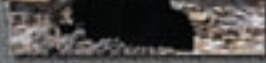
RAA Foundation extends its deepest gratitude to **Mr. Arthur Seredian** (Harutiun Sarhadian, the younger son of Sirak Sarhadian, an outstanding political, public, cultural and educational figure from Van, Western Armenia) for his donation of an IPAD2 4G.

## 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 Akhalktskha.







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



RESEARCH ON  
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