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INTRODUCTION

After 28 years of extensive activities in the field of preservation and documentation of Research on Armenian Architecture, we are proud to continue our heritage in the next millennium.

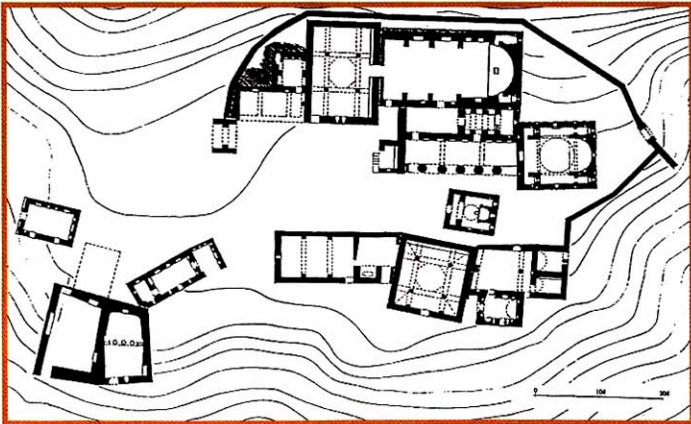
RAA and its members have developed a massive volume of work. They have organized over 90 field trips and scientific expeditions to Western Armenia, Cilicia, Iran, Georgia, Nakhijevan, Azerbaijan, Nagorno Gharabagh and other regions outside of the Republic of Armenia. The results of these trips are over 130,000 photos, slides, other historical and architectural documents, surveys and as built plans, archived in our main depository. This impressive archive is extremely valuable and unique, because a large number of monuments surveyed and documented by RAA is now in total ruins and can only be remembered through our archival information.

Innumerable churches, castles, houses and monasteries were surveyed, measured, and graphically recreated to document architectural history. This makes the RAA documents an invaluable surviving testimony. Some monuments were restored and saved from natural and man made perils in Iran, Syria and Armenia; and more are scheduled for restoration. RAA has published several books and articles regarding Armenian Architecture and has continuously generated or participated on academic symposia dealing with Armenian artistic issues.

Thus RAA has helped in the process of raising the total level of information throughout the world regarding Armenian Architecture. These include the monographic series of “Documents of Armenian Architecture”, among which the volumes dedicated to “St. Stepanos,” “St. Tadeus” and the “Churches of New Djulfa” are of adamant importance. Since 1997 RAA has started a new series of publications, of which three monumental volumes have already been published. These include the “The Armenian Lapidary Inscriptions of Boon-Aghvank,” “the State Policy of Georgia and the Monuments of Armenian Culture” and “Armenian Monuments within the formerly occupied Azerbaijani territories.”

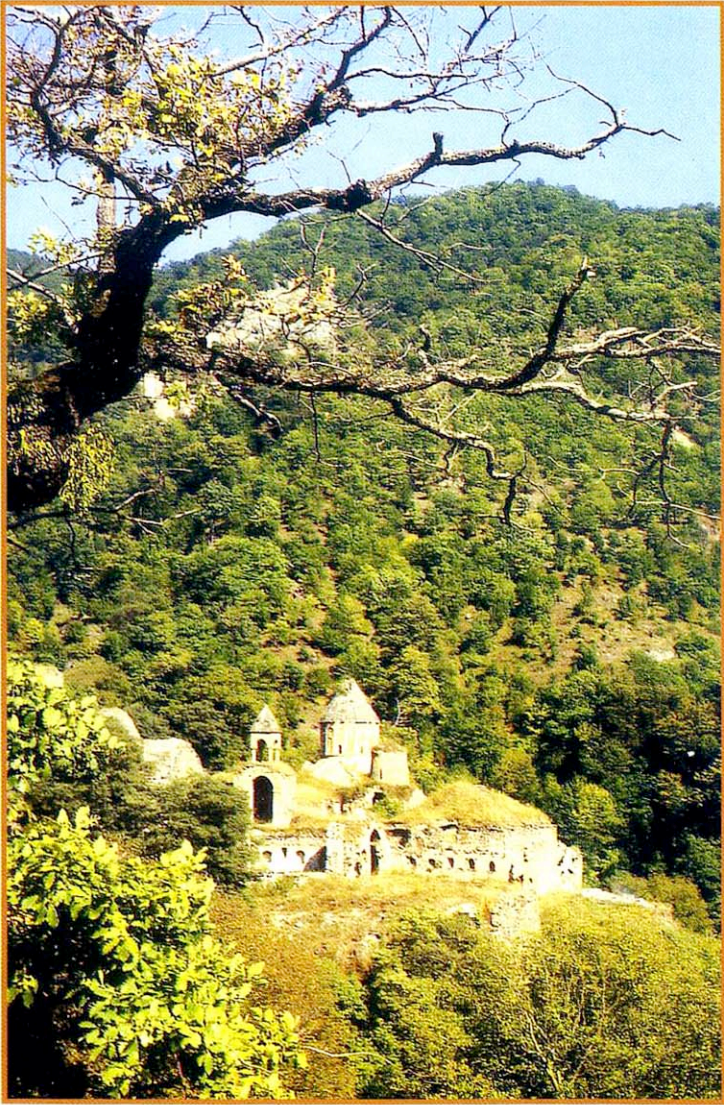
Currently RAA is involved in a number of restoration projects in Iran, Armenia and the Diaspora at large, and is in process of publishing other immensely valuable information regarding the Armenian Architecture.

We look forward to increase our community involvement and the preservation of the Armenian architectural heritage at large.





Dahdi Vank (St. Dad Monastery) 1214, in Karvajar region
Restoration which has been assigned to RAA by the Republic of Kharabagh



St. Dad Monastery 1214

THE HEART OF RAA

While through the last three decades many individuals from all over the world have been instrumental in helping RAA in its moral and scientific goals, we can only mention a few at this time.

Dr. Armen Haghazarian and his wife Margrit, founders of the RAA, have not only contributed a tremendous amount of financial and professional expertise to RAA, but have also inspired all the other members to join hands and to accomplish something deemed impossible. Dr. Haghazarian and Margrit are both architects which graduated from Aachen, Germany with a long history of professional and academic endeavors. They have both dedicated their considerable talents in specializing in Armenian Architecture and in researching the many facets of Armenian artistic expressions.

Prof. Vazgen Barseghian, one of the very first supporters of the group, continuously worked for the common goal and made the publication of the unique microfilm series a possibility.

Other life long friends of RAA include Shahen Haroutunian, currently the chair of RAA USA, Prof. Dieter Wickman, chair of RAA Germany, and Samuel Karapetian, chair of RAA Armenia. A large number of internationally renowned scholars serve as academic advisors to RAA.



Khachkar, in Karvajar region

PROGRAMS AND GOALS

It is of adamant importance to preserve the archival documents that have been collected so painstakingly over three decades. Among these, it is essential to digitize the photographic surveys to avoid time-related decay of slides, photos and other documents. In this respect RAA/ USA Board members have made a special contribution and were fortunate to receive a generous grant by Soros Foundation through Open Society Institute, Assistance foundation of Armenia, to start this long and arduous process. We look forward to make this impressive data bank available to all scholars and researchers throughout the world in the near future.

A number of books related to Armenian Architecture are either completed and ready to be published or they are being finalized for publication. This is a further important step in providing the essential tools of research and documentation to the public at large. The preservation and restoration of actual Armenian monuments is also a further goal of RAA and is being implemented vigorously in our current plans of action.

The further collection of architectural testimonies is an essential part of preserving our historical heritage. In this respect, RAA is continuing its field trips, data collection endeavors and scientific research programs. Currently, RAA is trying to reach out to the next generation of younger scholars by encouraging them to pursue a career in the study of Armenian Architecture.



Corycos Fortress, Celia, Northern Mediterranean

ESTABLISHMENT

In 1970, following several trips to the territory of historical Armenia to study the Armenian monuments, Dr. Armen Haghnazarian organized a two-day forum in Aachen, Germany to discuss further expeditions for research of Armenian architectural monuments. Many interested individuals attended the meeting from the Middle East, Europe and America. The forum unanimously underlined the urgency and importance of the subject, and it also approved the establishment of “Research on Armenian Architecture.”

MISSION

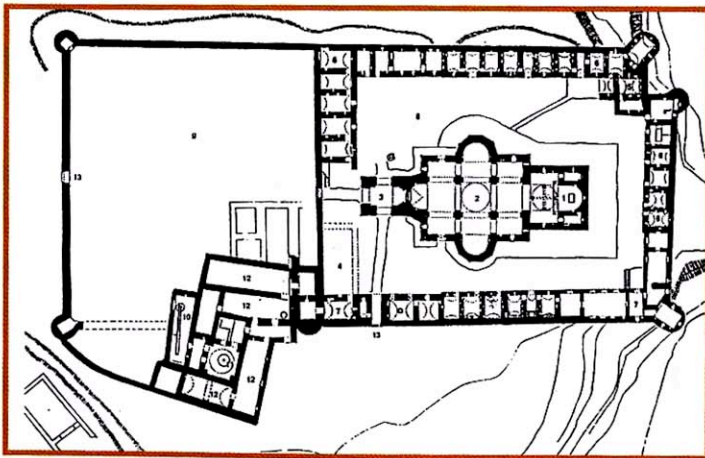
1. To conduct scientific expeditions in order to photograph, measure and document Armenian architectural monuments outside the borders of present Armenia, specifically in Western Armenia, Cilicia, Iran and Caucasus region, including Georgia, Azerbaijan and Nakhijevan areas; and to organize the collected overall information in special archives. To conduct the expeditions in the historical Diaspora, such as Middle and Far Eastern countries and the areas stretching from north of the Black Sea to Moldavia and Eastern Europe.
2. To study compiled data by RAA researchers and eventually publish and introduce them to both Armenian and non-Armenian readers.
3. To videotape the natural treasures of historical Armenia and Diaspora.
4. To assist in the restoration of Armenian architectural monuments located outside of present Armenia.

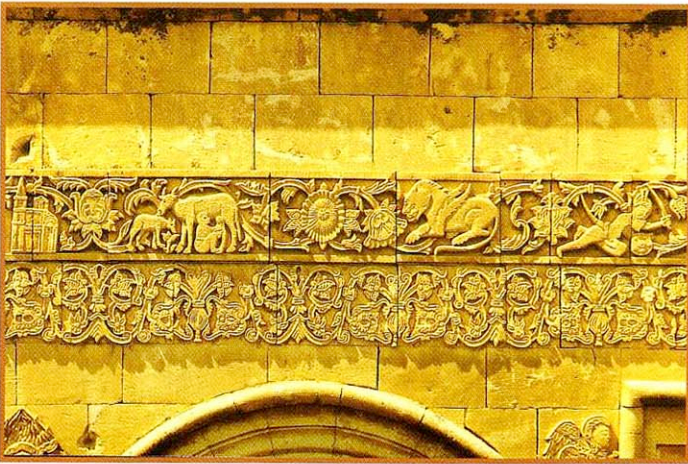
5. Centralize and digitize the holdings and archives of RAA using optical storage technology to preserve it with a high quality and long shelf life, while enabling the dissemination of information on a cost effective and timely manner, in a multimedia environment, such as Electronic Publishing on CD and Internet/www.

ORGANIZATIONAL STATUS, BRANCHES

RAA is a non profit organization officially established in Germany in 1982. In 1993 it was registered in the Matenadaran of Armenia, in Yerevan. It has also a non-profit and scientific statute in France, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Egypt, Iran and Syria.

RAA USA was established in February 1996, and registered with the Department of Treasury as a 501(c) 3 tax-exempt organization on January 1999.





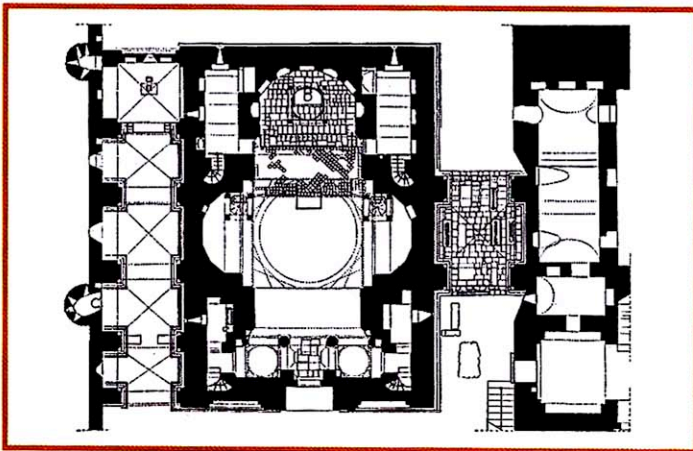
St. Tadeus Monastery, 10th century, North-West Iran

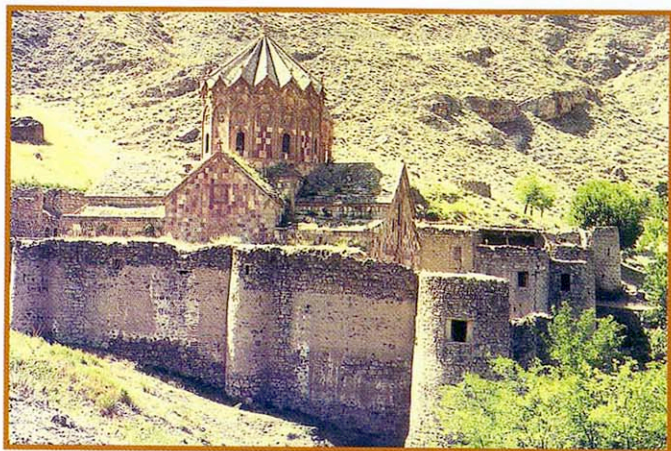
FINANCIAL STATUS

The financial means of the organization are based on individual contributions. All members of the organization work on a voluntary basis. Only the immediate expenses of the expeditions are paid, therefore the overhead cost almost does not exist.

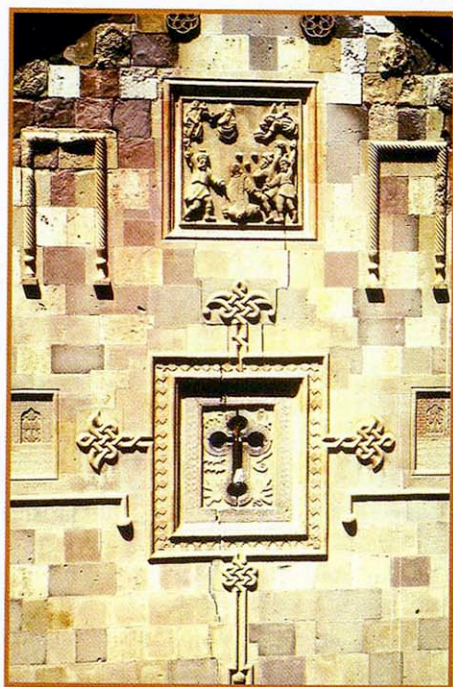
The late Prof. Vazgen Barseghian of Troy, New York had provided his moral and financial support from 1970 through 1980. He had also encouraged the scientific expeditions throughout those years. The result of these expeditions was compiled in seven volume microfiche albums.

Since 1980, a group of fifteen dedicated individuals from the Armenian community of Iran, who were familiar with the activities of Dr. Armen Hagnazarian, and shared the goals of RAA, provided their financial support, which made the expeditions to Western Armenia possible. Dr. Hagnazarian and RAA/USA board members and supporters have been the major contributors of RAA. In order to carry out its future programs successfully, RAA will depend heavily on private and public contributions.





St. Stepanos Monastery, 10th century, Nachawka



SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITIONS AND PROCESS

In the territory of historical Armenia, there are plenty of architectural monuments. Amazingly, some of them are still standing or only partially destroyed. It is our duty to rescue these architectural treasures, at least on paper and digitized media. For this purpose, RAA organizes expeditions to locate these monuments, conduct measurement survey and take photographs. This is an urgent task, which cannot wait. Above all, this work will also be of great political significance in the future.

The preparation of necessary travel guides, ethnographic memoirs and references, well-drawn and accurate geographical maps, including the exact locations of Armenian monuments require thousands of professional man-hours. These are especially important since the original names of towns and monuments have been intentionally changed by some countries in the last 80 years, to create confusion and to hide the history of those monuments.

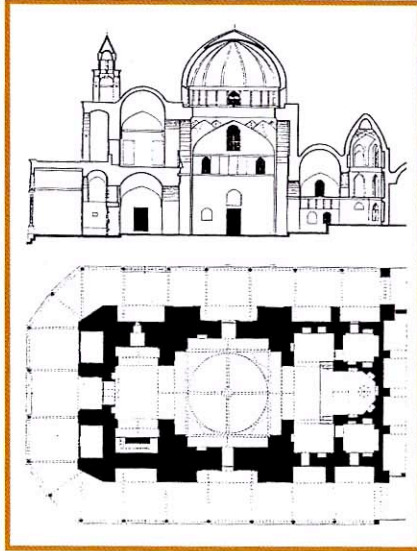
In furtherance of its goals, RAA is in constant search of finding appropriate individuals who are familiar with Armenian Architecture to identify and document Armenian monuments. These people have to work under dangerous circumstances, sometimes even risking their lives. Naturally, it is not easy to find the necessary manpower ready to take the risk without even being compensated. RAA welcomes all individuals with true dedication and commitment ready to serve this great cause.

After the completion of each expedition, the photographs are kept in archives in appropriate order along with measurement surveys of those structures.

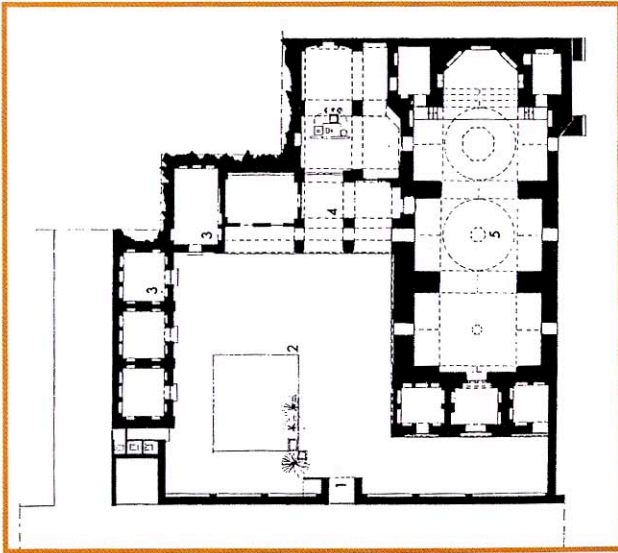
RAA continues its expeditions to rescue Armenian national treasures before they are leveled to the ground. Since 1975 RAA has performed research work in many regions despite their anti-Armenian sentiments. The tragic events in Sumgait proved once again that these activities are priceless in both cultural and political aspects.



16-17th century bridge at Hamshen area near North-East Turkey



St. Mary (St. Astvazazin) Monastery, 1613, New Julfa, Iran



St. George (St. Gevork) 1611, New Julfa, Iran

THE RESULT OF RAA ACTIVITIES

1. Expeditions

During the past 25 years, RAA has conducted over 125 scientific expeditions and trips to the following countries and regions under very difficult circumstances:

- a. 42 expeditions to western Armenia (Eastern Turkey) and Cilicia.
- b. 14 expeditions to various regions in Iran.
- c. 41 expeditions to Southern provinces of Georgia and Nakhijevan regions.
- d. Few expeditions to Azerbaijan along the banks of the Kura river.
- e. 40 trips to Karvajar (kelbajar) and Kashatagh (Lachin) areas.

2. Publications

The highlights of the published documents are the seven volumes of Armenian Architecture microfiche. RAA has contributed about 20 years of diligent and hard work.

Three volumes of the “Documents of Armenian Architecture” published in Italy consist of research and studies by members of RAA. The studies of “St. Stepanos” monastery was provided by Mr. Hartmut Hofrichter, the research on “St. Tadeus” monastery and the “Churches of New Julfa” was provided by Armen Haghazarian.

The following books were published since 1997 in Armenian and Russian and the latter is being published in English.

1. Armenian Lapidary Inscriptions of Boon-Aghvank
2. The State Policy of Georgia and The Monuments of Armenian Culture
3. Armenian Monuments within the formerly occupied Azerbaijan Territories

Seven members of RAA have chosen Armenian Architecture as their doctorate thesis and also contributed both morally and financially.

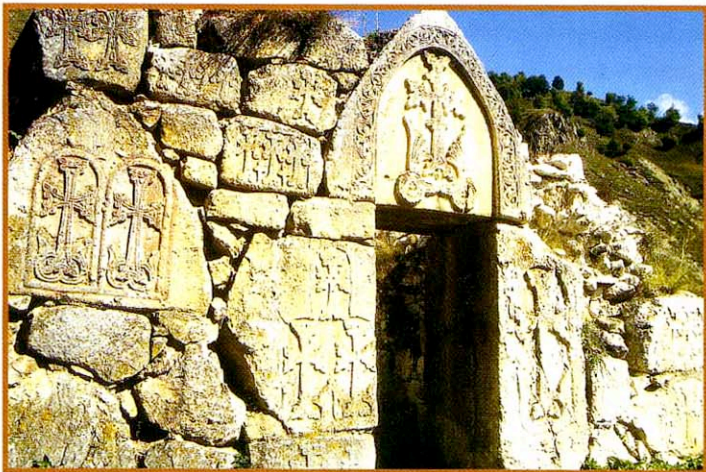
1. Hartmut Hofrichter: Das Kloster Stepanos Nachawega, In der Iranischen Provinz Aserbaidshchan
2. Armen Haghazarian: Das Armenische Taddaeus Kloster In der Provinz West Aserbaidjan In Iran
3. Hansgard Hellekemper: Burgen der Kreuzritterzeit In der Grafschaft Edessa und im Koenigreich Kleinarmenien
4. Ara J. Berkian: Armenische Wehrbau im Mittelalter
5. Gundolf Bruchhaus: Materialien zur Armenischen Architekturgeschichte der Kigi Region
6. Katherina von Loo: Motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Mittelalterlichen Arminischen Kruzsteines
7. David Gertmnjian: Middle Age Architectural School of Taron and Vaspurakan

In Yerevan, Argam Aivazian has published his 8 volume studies and research about Armenian Architecture in Nakhijevan

Samuel Karapetian has published a single volume and 10 maps of his vast collection of materials about Georgia and Azerbaijan. He also has unpublished materials that are ready for publication. Several members of RAA organization have published articles in various periodicals. They have also presented their studies and research in different scientific seminars and meetings.



Funerary monument Khachkar, 1275, near Chapney, Karvajar



Unidentified Church in Karvajar region

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