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article

“Main Monuments of Arts‘akh”

in

MONUMENTS AND IDENTITIES IN THE CAUCASUS

***Karabagh, Nakhichevan and Azerbaijan in Contemporary
Geopolitical Conflict***

Edited by

Igor DORFMANN-LAZAREV and Haroutioun KHATCHADOURIAN

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Main Monuments of Arts‘akh

Patrick Donabédian

The ensembles and monuments presented here are arranged in two groups: those that have passed under Azerbaijani control in November 2020 and those that have remained in the Armenian zone. As the chronological classification of the monuments remains uncertain owing to the hypothetical or imprecise nature of several dates, it has been decided that, within these two groups, the monuments would be arranged geographically, from north to south.

1. The monuments under Azerbaijani control

1.1. *Hořekavank‘ hermitage, also known as Gěłkhovank‘ or Uřekavank‘ (13th century)*

Location until September 2020: Republic of Arts‘akh, Martakert district, near the village of T‘alish. Present status: uncertain.

Medieval location: Arts‘akh or Khach‘en province, Metskołmank‘ canton.

According to a legendary tradition, this hermitage was founded in the early days of Christianity in the Eastern Regions of Armenia and in the former kingdom of Caucasian Albania. It is said to contain the first burial place of St Elisæus (Elishē or, in the local dialect, Elisha), the legendary disciple of St Thaddæus, who was presented as the evangeliser of Caucasian Albania, before King Vach‘agan III the Pious would transfer his remains, at the end of the 5th or beginning of the 6th centuries, to the nearby monastery of St Elisæus.¹ A cross was also allegedly placed here by Mesrop Mashtots‘ at the beginning of the 5th century.

The surviving church buildings date mainly from the 13th century. Despite their apparent modesty, they are of great interest. Located on the slope of a

1. The sources of this tradition are analysed in A. Hakobyan’s chapter in this volume.

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[fig. 5.1]

wooded mountain, they are built, as is often the case here, in rustic masonry, with roughly squared limestone blocks, except for the important elements such as the doors and the windows, which are made of regularly cut stones. If one does not take into account the princely residence that was added to it at a later date, the hermitage is reduced to three small juxtaposed units: a tiny church, a narthex that is only slightly larger, and a bell tower attached to the latter.

An inscription states that the church was (re-?)built in 1279. It is a small nave with a rectangular apse (a frequent feature in Arts‘akh), covered by a barrel vault under a two-pitch roof. The apse is, as it should be traditionally, slightly narrower than the nave, and the floor of the apse is higher than that of the nave. The fact that the platform of the apse protrudes significantly into the nave is explained by the presence of the

martyrium of St Elisæus and the reliquary of the Cross of Mashtots‘ under the apse. The concomitance of two facts is worth noting: the martyrial function of the church and the rectangular interior outline of its apse. Shahen Mkrtch‘yan wants to see in this the confirmation of an early Christian stratum in the history of the monument. It should also be noted that the orientation of the church differs slightly from that of the narthex, a possible sign of an earlier foundation. As for the presence of three windows in the apse, it can be seen as a sign of Chalcedonian influence or Chalcedonian confession.

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[fig. 5.2]

To the west of the church, the narthex, *gawit‘* (or *zhamatun*), built shortly after the church, in 1284, is a square-plan room whose vault is supported by two pairs of crossed arches. The use of such a sophisticated form is surprising in a building of such modest a size; it is perhaps linked to the importance of the relics kept underneath the church. In accordance with the monastic norm in Armenia, the narthex is wider than the church, but being aligned with the north wall of the church, it only projects—strongly—to the south. The current state of the remains and the apparent absence of other buildings to the north or the south of the church do not allow us to understand the reason for this peculiar offset of the narthex. The narthex contains numerous graves marked by tombstones. As the inscriptions indicate, both structures were erected by the same builder, named Yovhannēs.

Against the western door of the narthex stood a high bell tower, probably two-storeyed. All that remains are the two strong side walls topped by an arch, which protrude from the façade. It is generally agreed that it dates from the 17th century. Here again, we can observe an atypical, simplified formula, quite different from the porch-bell tower with a tetrapod surmounted by a rotunda, which was common from the 17th century onwards, even if it shares with it a position adjacent to the narthex. Many *khach‘k‘ars* of great interest are preserved in and around the buildings.

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[fig. 5.3]

About 60 m northwest of the hermitage are the remains of one of the residences of the Giulistan *Meliks* (princes) Beglarian. This large fortified complex of the second half of the 18th century, of elongated rectangular shape, had a series of rooms arranged in a row on the two long sides—north and south—of the courtyard. Numerous quadrangular niches, some of them large, were carved into their walls, as well as fireplaces. The two main rooms in the southwestern part, now without their roofs, are of particular interest: these large square rooms were each covered with a vault on four corner squinches, with a central skylight. This roofing evokes the wooden vaults of Armenian peasant houses known as *gëlkhatun* and their transposition into the monumental stone architecture of medieval Armenian monasteries, including those of Arts‘akh, in particular the narthexes, i.e. *gawit‘* (or *zhamatun*). As the work of Artak Ghulyan shows,² such rooms, often in rows of two or three, were found in many of the *Meliks‘* palaces of Arts‘akh and Siunik‘.

2. A. Ghulyan, *Արցախի և Սյունիքի մելիքական ապարանքները* (The Palaces of the Meliks of Arts‘akh and Siunik‘), Yerevan, 2001.

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[fig. 5.4]

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1.2. Handaberd monastery (late 12th to 13th centuries)

Location until September 2020: Republic of Arts‘akh, Nor-Shahumyan province.
 Since November 2020: Republic of Azerbaijan, Kalbadjar district (Kəlbəcər).
 Medieval location: Arts‘akh or Khach‘en province, Verin Khach‘en or Tsar canton.

The remains of this small monastery are located on a green plateau south of the Měraw (Mřav) Mountains, less than one kilometre east of the Handaberd fortress. Almost unknown until then, the complex was excavated, analysed and consolidated in 2004–2006 by an archaeological mission led by H. Petrosyan, then inspected again in 2018 by the foundation *Research on Armenian Architecture* (RAA) and its director, the late Samvel Karapetyan.

As an inscription attests, this modest, but peculiar, complex, which is very damaged, was built in 1276 at the initiative of Archdeacon Dawit‘ and perhaps with his own hands—evidently with very limited means—during the turmoil of the Mongol domination, probably to serve the spiritual needs of the occupants of the nearby fortress. It is built of barely squared blocks, the inner face of the walls being originally covered with plaster. Its forms are irregular, the orientation is clearly off-axis and the plans are distorted on a north-west to south-east axis. The roofs were covered with tiles. According to the archaeological data, the monastery was built on the site of an earlier church.

The compact main group consists of a very small single-nave church flanked by two chapels, not on either side of its apse but (roughly) aligned on its west façade. All three were barrel-vaulted and had, as is often the case in Arts‘akh, an internally rectangular apse. They were preceded on the west side by an almost square narthex, wide enough to give access to the three sanctuaries. A third chapel adjoins the north wall of the narthex, in its western part. The inner face of the narthex walls is pierced by several large flat-bottomed niches. The superstructure of this building has collapsed, but what remains of it allows us to envisage a roofing similar to that of the library of Sanahin (1063 and 13th century), with a central skylight on a square base inscribed diagonally in the square of the peripheral walls. As in several other monuments of Arts‘akh, for example at Hořekavank‘ (*supra*), one is astonished by the combination of the roughness of form and the sophistication of design. As for the principle of the low cupola with a skylight, it has been said that this is a characteristic of many Armenian monastic buildings, which may go back to the vernacular wooden architecture of the houses. It may

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[fig. 5.5]

[p. 109]

[fig. 5.6]

also come from the ancient tradition of memorial architecture with a skylight at the centre of the dome, as in the Pantheon of Rome and in the Anastasis rotunda of Jerusalem. The absence of burial places in a building type that is supposed to possess an important funerary function is surprising.

There are also several other unusual features, such as the shape of the porch-bell tower attached to the west façade of the narthex. Originally surmounted by a second level probably topped by a tetrapod lantern, the lower room, which is the only

one preserved, is a laterally stretched space, open not to the west, but to the north. Given its position against the west façade, it can be assumed that, as in Khat‘ravank‘, the bell tower was added in the 17th or 18th century. Indeed, the type of porch-bell tower added to the west façade of churches or their narthexes does not appear until the renaissance of the 17th century. Moreover, the major disruptions to the various masonries of the ensemble, with numerous inserted *khach‘k‘ars*, make it likely that a restoration took place during this late period.

An isolated chapel about ten metres northwest of the main group is also unusual. Its composition in the form of a monoconch cross inscribed within a rectangular perimeter is reminiscent of a type of domed chapel that was

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[fig. 5.7]

common in medieval Armenia. However, there is no trace of a dome and the *ædicula* was certainly covered by a two-slope roof.

Numerous 12th–13th century *khach‘k‘ars* are, at least partly, preserved. Several of them are of great interest. On one of them, damaged, dated 1194, the usual shoots that start from the foot of the cross, to show that it is indeed a tree of life, are replaced here by two large trees each bearing four birds; a ninth bird is housed in the centre of the wide ring formed by a very original meander (H. Petrosyan compares it to a labyrinth) that fills the usual medallion under the cross. On several other fragments of *khach‘k‘ars*, at the foot of the cross, the deceased is depicted as a horseman hunting. Common in Arts‘akh, this old iconography of Sasanian origin reflects, as H. Petrosyan explains, the importance of the services that Armenian princes, reputed to be excellent horsemen, had to render within the Mongol armies in order to ensure, often at the cost of their own lives, the safeguarding of their domains and whoever lived there.

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[fig. 5.8]

1.2. Dadivank‘ monastery, also known as Khut‘avank‘ (late 12th–13th centuries)

Location until September 2020: Republic of Arts‘akh, Nor-Shahumyan province, about 25 km north-east of the capital Karvachai/Kalbadjar.

Since November 2020: Republic of Azerbaijan, Kalbadjar district (Kəlbəcər).

Medieval location: Arts‘akh or Khach‘ën province, Verin Khach‘ën or Tsar canton.

The monastery of St Dad (*Surb Dadi* or *Dadē*) or Dadivank‘, also called Khut‘avank‘, is located on a flat area overlooking the left bank of the river Tërtu/T‘art‘ar/Terter. It is named after a legendary disciple of the apostle Thaddæus, who was supposed to have come to evangelise Arts‘akh as early as the first century ad, and to have been martyred and buried on the site of the monastery. The date of the actual foundation of Dadivank‘ is unknown. It was destroyed

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[fig. 5.9]

by the Seljuk Turks in 1145–1146 and rebuilt from the end of the 12th century onwards, with most of its buildings dating from the 13th century. It was then an episcopal seat and the religious centre of the principality of Upper Khach‘ën. The complex was the subject of a major excavation and restoration campaign from 1997 to 2011.

Dadivank‘ is one of the largest conventual complexes in medieval Armenia. Its twenty or so preserved buildings give a fairly complete picture of the organisation of

an Armenian monastery. Three functional groups correspond to the main spheres of monastic life: a) the worship group to the north (in yellow on the general plan, fig. 5.9), with two churches, two chapels, two narthexes, a campanile and a gallery; b) the group of monastic activities to the south (refectory, kitchen, chapter house, library and scriptorium [hypothetic functions]); c) the residential group to the south-west (with, in particular, a two-storey hostelry), completed with an oil press and a cellar.

In the northern part of the worship group, a large and wide single-nave church, curiously, it seems, unfinished (or designed to be covered in wood?),

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[fig. 5.10]

includes, in its eastern part, a funerary and memorial area comprising a pit, a stela and a tomb. These could be part of the (early Christian?) remains of the martyrdom of St Dad. At a short distance to the south-east, the main church, *kat'olikē*, although modest in plan, is the dominant structure of the complex. The long inscription engraved on its south façade indicates that it was built in 1214 by Princess Arzu khat'un in memory of her husband Vakhtang and her sons Hasan and Grigor, who “died prematurely”. The church has a dome on an inscribed cross and a compact plan. Its lower half has rather squat proportions, counterbalanced by the height of the large 14-sided drum supporting a pyramidal dome.

The church is the only one to be clad in carefully hewn blocks and is enlivened, especially at the level of the drum, by the contrast between its brick-coloured masonry and the blind colonnade-arcade carved in white stone. At the top of the south and east façades, two pairs of figures are sculpted in low relief on either side of the church model. They may represent the saintly dedicatee of the monastery and Prince Vakhtang on the east side; and the latter's sons on the south side. The princes, who died before the construction, are haloed, but unlike the saint, whose head is entirely surrounded by a large nimbus, each of the princes is depicted with a small disc behind his head. They wear a high headdress typical of high-ranking nobles during the Georgian period. While

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[fig. 5.11]

the two princes on the south façade are shown full-height, wearing a long cloak tight around the waist, on the east façade the figures are shown in bust form; but it is possible that these sculptures have been deprived of their lower parts as a result of reworking. The bust of the saint, whose image is simplified, may have been sculpted anew on this occasion. Inside, among the paintings that partially covered the walls, two scenes stand out: the Enthronement of St Nicholas in the south and the Stoning of St Stephen in the north. These paintings, dated by inscription to 1297 and restored in 2014–2015 by Christine Lamoureux and Ara Zarian, distinguish themselves by their high quality—in particular, by the finesse of the design and the expressiveness of the faces. It is interesting to note that they are accompanied by captions in Armenian at a time when, in north-eastern Armenia, the inscriptions on the paintings are often made in Georgian and sometimes in Greek. This reflects the attachment of an obviously miaphysite monastic community—and certainly of the local princes—to the Armenian Christological tradition and Armenian language.

To the south of the worship group, a chapel with a dome over an inscribed cross, with rustic masonry and a tile roof, is isolated in the courtyard. Its high, slightly tapered cone-shaped drum is built mainly of brick. Although it is

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[fig. 5.12]

[p. 116]
[fig. 5.13]

undated, it houses a *khach‘k‘ar* whose inscription states that it was erected in 1182 by Prince Hasan, son of Vakhtang—who became a monk and a member of the brotherhood. The narthex in front of the large single-nave church was built, as an inscription indicates, in 1224 by the superior Grigoris III. Its width supersedes its length. The structure of the narthex allows us to range it within the category most common in Armenia at the time: four pillars support the dome with a central skylight, but it is distinguished by the slightly ogee shape of its arches. At the western end of the gallery that extends in front of the door of the main church stands a campanile whose modest appearance enhances the splendour of the two *khach‘k‘ars* that it housed until recently. Sculptures of exceptional refinement and virtuosity, they are dated to 1283 and are among the most beautiful *khach‘k‘ars* to be found in Armenia. After the cession of the territory to Azerbaijan, out fear of destruction or amputation, these two masterpieces were transferred to Ēdjmiatsin.³

3. On the systematic destruction of *khach‘k‘ars* by Azerbaijani authorities, see A. Ayvazyan’s Chapter 11 (sections 7–9) and H. Khatchadourian’s chapter (sections 2.2, 3.3 and 3.4); on the underlying national ideology of destruction and alteration of monuments, see I. Dorfmann-Lazarev’s chapter (section 7.2) in this volume.

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[fig. 5. 14]

Further south, in the centre of the second group, a large hall with a square plan is referred to as a *tachar* (= palace, hall, temple) in its construction inscription of 1211. It is believed that it was actually founded slightly earlier and then remodelled, and that it corresponded to a chapter house. It has the same structure as the large narthex, with a truncated dome reposing on four columns. Its orientation is the same as that of the domed chapel, slightly deviated to the south-east if compared with the other buildings, which may indicate that the

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[fig. 5.15]

two buildings were erected at the same time, at a relatively early date, towards the end of the 12th century.

1.4. *Vank‘asar chapel (probably 7th century)*

Location until September 2020: Republic of Arts‘akh, Askeran province.

Since November 2020: Republic of Azerbaijan, Ağdam district.

Medieval location: Arts‘akh province, Mets Ařank‘ canton.

The chapel stands on the top of the hill overlooking the site of the ancient and medieval city of Tigranakert/Tigranocerta. It is a composition with a dome over a triconch free cross, the four arms having a rectangular outer contour. It fits harmoniously into the numerous group of cruciform chapels in Armenia (about fifty buildings indexed), the great majority of which date from the 7th century. It is particularly close to the triconch chapels of K‘arashamb and Alap‘ars (Aylaber, Republic of Armenia). It bore

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[fig. 5.16]

numerous masons’ marks with Armenian letters (now erased), several of which are also present at Sisian (Siunik‘, 670–680s). It is therefore generally agreed that it dates back to the 7th century.

The chapel had been badly damaged before the 1970s and was almost entirely rebuilt in Soviet Azerbaijan without, however, any concern for authenticity. The choice of extreme sobriety, reflected in the absence of portals, window arches and cornices, the marked slope of the roofs, their covering with white stone slabs and several other deformations (notably the interior vaults covered with flat slabs), as well as the abrasion of the cross decoration carved on the door tympanum, give the chapel a “lunar” appearance, far removed from what it must have originally been.

Its position at the top of a hill, although relatively atypical in Armenia, can at the same time be seen as emblematic, since it marks the easternmost end of the Armenian plateau, beyond which the lowlands extend down to the Caspian Sea. In this respect, it is similar to another cruciform (an inscribed cross) chapel, probably dating from the 10th to the 11th centuries: St Sergius of Gag, formerly on the border of the provinces of Gugark‘ and Utik‘, now in the Kazakh/Gazakh (Qazax) district of Azerbaijan; it, too, is placed on a summit from which it dominates the north-eastern edge of the Armenian plateau.⁴

4. See above, part 1, chap. 5, pp. 77–78. The historical geography of these easternmost fringes of the Armenian plateau at the beginning of the second millennium is discussed in I. Dorfmann-Lazarev, ‘Concerning Four Kings from the Land of “Deep Ravines, Dense Forests and Dark Thickets”’, in Ph. M. Forness et al. (eds), *The Good Christian Ruler in the First Millennium: Views from the Wider Mediterranean World in Conversation*, Berlin, 2021, pp. 254–262, 268–280.

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[fig. 5.17]

1.5. Shushi, church of St John the Baptist (Surb Yovhannēs Mëkërtich‘), also known as Kanach‘ Zham (‘Green Church’, 1818 and 1847)

Location until September 2020: Republic of Arts‘akh, Shushi district.

Since November 2020: Republic of Azerbaijan, Şuşa district.

Medieval location: Arts‘akh or Khach‘en province, Mius Haband canton
(in modern times: Martuni or Varand).

In November 2020, after the end of the war, the building suffered severe damage, including the intentional destruction of the dome and the lantern of the bell tower. This condition is confirmed by satellite views taken on 10 April 2021 and released by *Caucasus Heritage Watch*.

The church of St John the Baptist, also known as Kanach‘ Zham (“Green Church”), because of the original colour of its dome, was built, according to the dedicatory inscription, in 1818, to replace a wooden church, in the upper town, about one kilometre northwest of the future cathedral. It differs from

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[fig. 5.18]

the churches of the region by its length, certain particularities of its plan, of its forms (the dome, the apse, the porch) and by the appearance of its façades.

The façades of St John the Baptist display that type of falsely rustic masonry which was also used at that time in the construction of certain buildings in Shushi. Some of it reappears a few decades later on the side walls of the bell tower of the Holy Saviour Cathedral. This bond is made of white limestone rubble, irregularly hewn, except on the outside, embedded in a very apparent mortar (recently brightened up with brown colour), the whole regulated by a few horizontal courses. In strong contrast to the predominant ‘rustic’ masonry, larger blocks, carefully cut, mark the door and the window frames, as well as the very visible corner quoins, with alternating headers and stretchers.

The composition of the church, with a dome over a monoconch free cross, based on the pre-Arab heritage, reveals a series of strong peculiarities: the two lateral arms of the cross are short, unlike the western arm, which is quite long; the latter is divided into two long bays, stretched laterally, each covered by a groined vault. The apse, with its two sacristies below the ground level, can fully show its rounded outline on the outside; it has three windows, contrary to the tradition which in principle imposes only one. We should also note that the windows are set quite far apart, perhaps to avoid an association with the triple fenestration of Chalcedonian sanctuaries. (The outline and the fenestration

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would be reproduced a few decades later on the Holy Saviour Cathedral). Supported by a drum which was cylindrical inside and outside, the dome had a hemispherical stone dome until about 1960; later damaged, the dome was temporarily covered by the Armenian authorities in the late 1990s with a metal cone.

As an inscription indicates, in 1847 a two-storey porch-bell tower was added in front of the west façade of the church. Its forms are also very original. The first level is an oblong vestibule which occupies the entire height of the west arm of the church. The second level is an octagonal drum pierced by four large arched openings; the pyramidal dome that rests on it thus has eight faces, the four axial ones of which are indented in their lower part by the arches of the openings. This porch is preceded on the west side by a stoop with low side walls. All these features: the structure, the corner quoins, the longitudinal layout of the whole, the notched cap of the bell tower, the staircase, were certainly intended to give the building an unusual appearance, with a (Russo)-European character.

1.6. Shushi, Holy Saviour Cathedral, also known as Łazanch‘ets‘ots‘ (1868–1887)

Shushi cathedral, the city’s icon and main sanctuary, was built in the centre of the upper town between 1868 and 1887. Dedicated to the Holy Saviour (Saviour of All = Amenap‘ĕrich‘), it is also called Łazanch‘ets‘ots‘ (Ghazanch‘ets‘ots‘)—after the locality from which the majority of the neighbourhood’s inhabitants came. This church of slender proportions, built of carefully cut white limestone, is both faithful to the Armenian tradition and highly innovative. It is also one of the most remarkable monuments of the modern period in Armenia. It is one of the largest as well, at 42 m high and 35 m long. It replaced an earlier, more modest church, mentioned in 1820. It is the work of the architects Avetis Yaramishents‘ and Simeon Tĕr-Hakobiants‘. Badly damaged during the 20th century, it was carefully restored by the Armenian authorities in the late 1990s, with the roofs covered in metal.

Together with the Cathedral of St Thaddæus (*Surb T‘adĕos*) in Artaz (1811–1820—the present-day North-West Iran), it is one of the few sanctuaries of the

Armenian Church whose authors and designers allowed themselves, if not to reproduce faithfully, at least to be inspired by the Ēdjmiašin Cathedral’s original plan, linked to the Vision of St Gregory the Illuminator: a dome on four pillars in the centre of a cube enlarged by four conches. In Shushi, the four pillars that support the drum of the dome are in the centre of a fairly elongated rectangle, flanked on its north, west and south sides with pentagonal projecting vestibules, a metamorphosis of the conches, separated from the nave by low walls. To the east, the rounded apse constitutes the fourth conch, flanked

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[fig. 5.19]

by two sacristy-chapels. The architects chose the umbrella-shaped dome, a popular device in Armenia since the Middle Ages, here particularly tapered and preceded by a high drum, to emphasise the verticality of Shushi cathedral. He also applied the same pleated roofing to the roofs of the three “porch-conches”.

While respecting it, the architect thus reinterpreted the tradition in a very innovative way: by endowing the cathedral with slender proportions, high windows and, above all, three large bays that open each of the three “porch-conches” widely to the outside. In harmony with these triple openings, as on the neighbouring church of St John the Baptist, three windows were pierced in the apse.

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[fig. 5.20]

The bell tower, built in 1858 a few metres to the west, when the previous church had not yet been replaced by the present cathedral, echoes it, nevertheless (by anticipation), by the sharpness of its umbrella-like cap. Its structure combines two principles inherited from tradition: the 13th-century campanile as an isolated tower and the two- or three-storey porch-bell tower, leaning against the west façade of the church, omnipresent from the 17th century onwards and freely reinterpreted in 1847 in the neighbouring church of St John the Baptist. However, the structure created in Shushi Cathedral is different in that it places two eight-arched rotundas above a first level of high quadrangular volume (we saw a first example of this *supra*, in 1683, in the porch-bell tower of Ts‘ėřna in Nakhichevan) crossed by a barrel-vaulted passage (also already present in the porch-bell tower of St John the Baptist). The bell tower has another very original feature: above the corners of its first level, four angels are carved, for the first time in Armenia, in the round—i.e. in a completely open volume.

Intentionally and severely damaged twice by Azerbaijani shellfire on 8 October during the 2020 war, the cathedral was further degraded by large-scale graffiti with black paint in the aftermath of the capture of the city by Azerbaijani forces, around 10 November 2020. One of the angels on the bell tower was also broken. In early May 2021, the cathedral was stripped of its umbrella dome

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[fig. 5.21]

and covered with scaffolding, reportedly as part of a restoration campaign. According to journalist Joshua Kucera (*Eurasianet*, 7 May 2021), the objective cited by the Azerbaijani authorities is to return the church to the “authentic appearance” it had before it was “altered by Armenians in the 1990s”. In fact, the Holy Saviour’s appearance after its restoration in the 1990s was consistent with that shown in the pre-World War I photographs—except that the new roofing was metallic. The official revisionism of the Baku authorities suggested that the Armenian shrines of Shushi, duly “rectified by the ongoing restorations” (= deprived of their Armenian marks), would be attributed to the recently revived “Church of Caucasian Albania”. But several

television reports and press articles published in Azerbaijan in 2021 show that the objective is quite different. Apparently, it has been decided to “offer” the Armenian sanctuaries of Shushi to the diocese of Baku of the Russian Orthodox Church.

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[fig. 5.22]

1.7. Church of Varazgom (probably 10th century)

Location until September 2020: K‘ashat‘al district, a short distance north of Tsitseřnavank‘, about 15 km northwest of Berdzor/Lach‘in.

Since November 2020: Republic of Azerbaijan, Lach‘in district (Laçın).

Medieval location: Siunik‘ province, Ałahesch canton.

The ruins of the small church in Varazgom indicate that it was a domed cross composition, possibly a semi-inscribed triconch one, since the apse (with a horseshoe-shaped inner contour) formed a straight chevet with its two sacristy-chapels (also with a horseshoe-shaped apsidiole). It was built of grey basalt blocks that were fairly well cut on the outside, but plastered on the inside. Miraculously, the drum is almost completely preserved.

One uncertainty and one originality must be noted. 1) The southern arm, which has been largely destroyed, seems to have had a rectangular outline, not only on the outside but also on the inside. Nevertheless, by symmetry with the northern arm, whose interior contour is rounded, Jean-Michel Thierry suggests that there was also a conch to the south; this is possible since at St Stephen’s in Lėmbat (Aragatsotėn, Republic of Armenia), the side arms of the cruciform chapel of the 7th century have, on the ground, a rectangular interior contour,

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[fig. 5.23]

but thanks to squinches placed in the corners at mid-height, they are transformed into a conch in their upper part. 2) The building is almost devoid of a western arm, which is reduced (if not owing to a restoration-amputation) to a small projection on the west façade. The same almost complete absence of a western arm can be observed in Saint Sergius of Gag, a chapel with a dome on a (semi-?) inscribed monoconch cross, in the north-western part of the province of Utik‘, on the eastern border of the province of Gugark‘.⁵

The existence of a similar plan, triconch, without a western arm, can be noted in two other Armenian monuments. One is at the western end of historical Armenia, in the present-day province of Erzincan (Turkey), in the undated,

5. See above, part 1, chap. 5, pp. 77–79.

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[fig. 5.24]

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[fig. 5.25]

but admittedly pre-Arab, chapel of Vaslı (Boğaziçi). The other is on the territory of the Republic of Armenia, in the monastery of Makaravank‘, in a chapel built in 1198. According to J.-M. Thierry, this unusual composition could have its origin in the triconch martyrial churches erected by Emperor Justinian (6th century).

Several features suggest for the Varazgom church a date around the 10th century: the use of pendentives (two of which include a squinch) to provide a circular base for the drum, the cylindrical shape of the drum, both inside and outside, and the presence of carved heads in the pendentives, such as those of the ‘four living creatures’ (cf. Ezekiel 1:5–14, interpreted as symbols of the evangelists) in the churches of Gēndevank‘, Kars and Sanahin, as well as, in the 11th century, Kūmbet Kilisesi near Kars. The same dating hypothesis (10th century) is applicable to St Sergius of Gag.

1.8. Tsitsernavank‘ Basilica (probably 4th–7th centuries, later alterations)

Location until September 2020: Republic of Arts‘akh, K‘ashat‘al district, about 12 km north-west of Berdzor/Lach‘in, not far from the southeastern border of the Republic of Armenia.

Since November 2020: Republic of Azerbaijan, Lach‘in district (Laçın).

Medieval location: Siunik‘ province (Syunia), Ałahech canton.

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[fig. 5.26]

The church is undated, but is attested from the 9th century onwards. It is well preserved thanks to several restorations, notably in the 11th century, in 1779 and in 2000–2001. A monastery was built around it in the Middle Ages (Tsitsernavank‘ = The Swallows Monastery), whose enclosure, to which a refectory is attached, was restored in 1613 and, again, recently.

The church belongs to the group of three-nave basilicas of the first Christian centuries in Armenia, of which ca ten subsist. With a few exceptions in the 10th–11th centuries, the three-nave basilica almost disappeared from Armenian architecture at the end of the 6th century, to reappear only in the 17th century. One of its characteristics is that the central nave is about twice as wide as the aisles. The nave ends in an apse at the east end, as it should; it is quite deep and, according to recent surveys, has a semi-circular interior outline, and not the horseshoe shape that was claimed in several publications until the recent years. On the other hand, its triumphal arch has a shape vaguely reminding of a horseshoe. This horseshoe shape (and often also pointed) can be observed on several other arches in the basilica, especially on the arches of the two rows of four pillars that delimit the three naves. Like most representatives of the type, the basilica of Tsitsernavank‘ has a rectilinear chevet encompassing the apse and the two sacristies; the latter are trapezoidal and flat-bottomed: they do not

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[fig. 5.27]

yet have the small apse that is typical of chapel-sacristies and that appeared in Armenia at the beginning of the 7th century.

In accordance with the “Hellenistic”, or “Western”, type of basilicas (Ashtarak, Ereroyk‘ [Yereruyk‘], several cases in Georgia), the high central nave, topped by a two-slope roof, rises above the aisles, each covered by a pent roof. The upper part of the two gutter walls of the main nave has the only preserved example of a clerestory in Armenia, in a very modest version: on each side, two small windows are open under the roof. The basilica of Tsitsernavank‘ has a unique feature related to the height of its central nave: a triple-arched tribune above the apse. While the apse is without window—a very rare occurrence—the tribune is illuminated by a double window. This creates an unusual and powerful effect at the eastern end of the basilica: the light from

the double window spreads into the church through the triple arcade of the tribune. It is questionable whether or not this is an evidence of Chalcedonian orientation of the sponsors. As in Syria and Georgia, as well as in Ereroyk¹, special attention is paid to the south façade, where three doors are open, while the west façade has no door.

The lower third of the building (six to eight courses) is built of grey basalt blocks, while the upper part of the walls is of beige limestone. In the latest restoration, the gaps in the masonry, vault and roof were filled in and a denticulated

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[fig. 5.28]

cornice was recreated, all in white stone in order to allow, in accordance with the principle of anastylosis, to distinguish the elements added later from the earlier elements. As in a number of Armenian monuments, mainly early Christian (Tekor and Ēdjmiatsin Cathedral in particular), the masonry of the walls shows the use of horizontally placed wooden beams, halfway up, certainly intended to improve the anti-seismic resistance of the building.

A series of clues seem to reveal major alterations and suggest that the construction went through several stages, which are difficult to date. The archaeological and architectural investigations carried out in 1997–1999 under the supervision of Hakob Simonyan led Aleksan Hakobyan to link the first basalt block courses bound with clay mortar—an archaic feature—to an original building, dating, admittedly, from as early as the 4th century. The present planimetric structure, including the apse and the sacristies, dates back to this first building campaign, although it was intended to have a wooden roof and not a stone vault. The second stage would have included the upper part of the building, made of limestone blocks bound with lime mortar (a general construction rule in Armenia from the 4th century onwards), rows of separately standing pillars with a section initially square-shaped, a tribune above the apse and, perhaps, also a vaulted stone structure with two-storey roof. At a third stage, a

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[fig. 5.29]

weakening of the northern part of the construction would have led architects to widen the pillars of the northern row and to double the pointed and horseshoe-shaped arches above them. This was followed by the addition of seven pilasters leaning against the northern wall and surmounted by six horseshoe-shaped arches; the major part of the vault would then have been (re?)built. Armen Kazaryan, on the other hand, proposes to date the bulk of the basilica to the second half of the 7th or even the beginning of the 8th century. These complex questions require a thorough examination and, for the time being, the answer remains unclear. Finally, the 1779 restoration would have involved, on top of the addition of a lantern on the roof ridge, an attempt at reinforcing the pillars of the southern row with rough walls, which were dismantled during the recent work.

The sober sculpted decoration of the exterior allows us to make some observations related to the dating of the church, without however providing any decisive clarification: the lintels of the south doors (basalt masonry) with their medallion with a cross pattée, and the horseshoe arches placed directly on the arched edge of the windows (limestone bond) refer to the repertoire of the 5th–6th centuries. However, the decoration of these arches, with rows of dentils, is more reminiscent of the beginning of the 7th century, and the motif was still in use in the 10th century at Goms in Vaspurakan. The capitals of the inner pillars, with their ornamentation of dentils, braids, small lattices and horizontal or wavy linear mouldings, are somewhat confusing

in their heterogeneity and clumsiness. However, a restoration is attested in the middle of the 11th century in inscriptions citing the names of the kings of Siunik‘ and the architect Geworg (George), who also designed the neighbouring monastery of Noravank‘ in Bēten in 1062. It is, perhaps, thanks to this intervention that Tsitseřnavank‘ is today the best preserved of the (partially) early Christian basilicas in Armenia.

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[fig. 5.30]

1.9. *Monastery of Gētich‘, or Gētch‘avank‘ (13th century)*

Location until September 2020: Republic of Arts‘akh, Hadrut province.

Since November 2020: Republic of Azerbaijan, Khodjavend (Xocavənd) district.

Medieval location: Arts‘akh or Khach‘en province, Mius Haband canton.

Situated near the village of Toł, on the slope of a wooded mountain, this, apparently modest, monastic complex was in fact an important ecclesiastical centre which from the 8th to the early 20th century even housed an episcopal see. The three adjoining buildings that form its worship core were probably erected during the main building campaign in the 13th century. A second period of expansion took place in the early 18th century. It was, perhaps, at this time that the conventual buildings were (re)constructed, the remains of which are lined up against a section of the preserved enclosure at the northwestern corner of the complex. A major restoration project started a few years ago but was left incomplete because of the Azerbaijani attack in autumn 2020.

The oldest building, located to the north of the worship group, is a single-nave chapel with irregular bond. Its superstructures are destroyed. As is often the case in the single-nave buildings of Arts‘akh, especially those with a funerary

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[fig. 5.31]

function, the apse is not rounded on the inside, but is rectangular; here, such a function is confirmed by the presence of two underground vaults under the sides of the apse.

Adjacent to the previous one on the south-east side, the elegant main church was built, as the dedication inscription attests, in 1241–1246 by two bishops—the brothers Sargis and Vērtanēs, who had been driven out of Amaras by the Mongol destructions. The two vaults in the neighbouring chapel were perhaps intended for them. It is a composition with a dome over an inscribed cross, with engaged supports (a medieval variant of the “domed hall”), made with great care, of regularly cut stones. The high drum is topped by an umbrella like-dome. This form, popular in Armenia from the 10th century to the present day, has here a simplified, strictly decorative version, which was common in the 13th–14th centuries: the architectural logic of the first examples, where the umbrella rests on the gables that unite the clustered columns marking the edges of a polygonal drum, a logic that is still present in Gandzasar (see *infra*), here gives way to the decorative simplicity of a pleated cone placed on a cylindrical drum.

To the south of the chapel and to the west of the church, the narthex (*gawit‘* or *zhamatun*), with a rustic bond, has an unusual structure, clearly linked to the fact that it must allow access to both sanctuaries. It is a rectangular room, appropriately a little wider than the main church, which is divided by a T-pillar

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[fig. 5.32]

into two unequal parts: a main nave, barrel vaulted on a transverse arch, flanked on the north by a very narrow nave, also covered by a small barrel, from which one can enter the funerary chapel.

Inside the narthex, a finely carved *khach‘k‘ar* stands to the right of the church door. It bears an inscription engraved in 1246 by Bishop Věrtanēs. A very similar—and, therefore, certainly contemporary—and even more richly decorated second *khach‘k‘ar* stood to the left of the door. It was transferred to the Ēdjmiatsin Patriarchate. Both have angels under the horizontal branch of the cross. But the one preserved today in Ēdjmiatsin also shows God enthroned above the cross, accompanied by the inscription “Ancient of Days” (Daniel 7:9), between two saints and the living beings. On the sides are sculpted, on the left, the donor kneeling (probably, Věrtanes) and, on the right, a nimbed bishop, perhaps Sargis, who died before 1246. On the edges are two saintly horsemen.

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[fig. 5.33]

1.10. Mokhrenis, church known as Ōkhtě Děřni (probably 6th–7th centuries)

Location until September 2020: Republic of Arts‘akh, Hadrut province, near the village of Mokhrenis.

Since November 2020: Republic of Azerbaijan, Khodjavend (Xocavənd) district.
Medieval location: Arts‘akh province, Mius Haband canton.

The ruined church known as Ōkhtě Děřni (= The Seven Doors) is located in a wooded valley. It was once part of a monastery of which only a few small vestiges remain. It has lost most of its eastern and western arms and superstructures. It is undated and is surprisingly irregular in shape and unusual in its construction. The thick walls are made of barely squared stones bound with lime mortar and more or less laid out in horizontal courses.

It was a domed church on a free tetraconch tetraniche plan, i.e. with an alternation of four conches and four diagonal niches, and with an open outer contour. This plan is part of a series of similar Armenian and Georgian compositions of the 6th–7th centuries and of later times. It is particularly reminiscent of the Georgian churches of Ninotsminda, Shuamta and Kvetera. The conches have a pronouncedly horseshoe-shaped inner contour. Their junctions with the diagonal niches, in the form of a rounded projection, served as supports for eight horseshoe arches which certainly carried a drum and a dome.

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[fig. 5.34]

The inner side of the walls was probably plastered. The only surviving sculptural decoration is a modest moulded band bearing a pair of rows of balls and dentils on the imposts of the east and west arches. Its dating is difficult, but it could go back to the pre-Arab period (6th–7th centuries). A *khach‘k‘ar* preserved near the church bears an inscription dated to 1044, in memory of the “monk Kandil”.

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[fig. 5.35, 5.36]

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[fig. 5.37]

2. Monuments remaining under Armenian administration

2.1. *Monastery of the Apostle Elisæus (Elishē/Elisha Aṙak‘eal), also known as Djërvështik (13th century)*

Location: Republic of Arts‘akh, Martakert district, not far from the villages of Tonashēn and Matalis/Mataghis.

Owing to its position, almost on the demarcation line of 2020, the ensemble is currently inaccessible.

Current status: uncertain.

Medieval location: Arts‘akh or Khach‘en province, Metskołmank‘ canton.

The complex is located on a plateau bordered to the south by a deep ravine, in a densely wooded area at the foot of Mount Mṙav (Měṙaw), on the left bank of the river Tërtu. The monastery has been attested since the early Middle

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[fig. 5.38]

Ages, notably under the name of Djërvështik [= small waterfall]. According to a legendary tradition, it houses the relics of St Elisæus, transferred here from Hoṙekavank‘ by King Vach‘agan III the Pious at the end of the 5th century (see above notice “Hoṙekavank‘”). According to an inscription, it also houses the tomb of King Vach‘agan, who died around 510. For this reason, the monastery remained a very popular place of pilgrimage until the beginning of the 20th century. Its heyday seems to have been in the second half of the 13th century, especially under the superior Simeon who died in 1298. As a matter of fact, the preserved buildings do not seem to predate this period; they have been restored many times, as shown by the numerous spolia inserted in the walls.

One of the characteristics of the ensemble is that it is made up of many small isolated units, as in Bëṙi Elts‘i (see *infra*), but on a larger scale. The ensemble is protected on its eastern, northern and western sides by a large, roughly rectangular enclosure, with the southern edge overlooking the ravine. Several monastic buildings (two-storey residence, cells, refectory, kitchen, etc.) were arranged rather loosely in the eastern part of the conventual area. The cult group occupies the central-western part; it is composed of eight buildings that are fairly rigorously oriented but are very roughly “lined up” on an imaginary north-south line. All these constructions are built following a rustic technique with partially squared grey limestone blocks, brightened up here and there, sometimes on a tympanum or around it, by ochre stones.

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[fig. 5.39]

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The “main church” is a modest building with a single nave (slightly) larger and longer than the others, barrel vaulted under a two-pitch roof. It is, as it should be, preceded on the west side by a narthex which is much wider than the church and slightly offset to the south. The inscription engraved on its tympanum states that it was

built in 1264. It has three barrel-vaulted naves, separated by two free pillars and two pillars inserted into the east wall. Thanks to these four supports, the eastern part of the middle nave of the narthex is reinforced by four arches. These strengthen the foundation of the high tetrastyle lantern added in 1323 to the roof of the narthex to serve as a bell tower.

The seven chapels that complete the group of churches also have a single nave, a rectangular exterior and a barrel vault under a two-pitch roof. They show an interesting planimetric diversity in terms of the interior shape of the apse, which is on the whole very deep. Two of these chapels, on the south side, have an ordinary apse, rounded in plan. Two others are bi-apsidal, one to the right of the main church, the other at the north end. According to J.-M. Thierry, this structure, which is also to be found elsewhere in Armenia, has a Hierosolymitan origin and a memorial character. More unusual is the rectangular shape of the apse in three of the chapels of St Elisæus, which, admittedly, also served as mausoleums. This form is very rare in the rest of the country, except in the case of mausoleums. In medieval Arts‘akh, by contrast, this solution is to be found frequently: it can be observed in many chapels with a single nave, often possessed of a funerary function. Here, one of the *ædiculæ* with a flat sanctuary, the penultimate one at the northern end, partially hypogeal, corresponds to the chapel of St Elisæus, where the relics of the saint were probably preserved, built in 1244 “on the primary foundations” according to the inscription on its tympanum. Nearby, another chapel with a rectilinear sanctuary, to the northeast of the main church, is the mausoleum of King Vach‘agan: the inscription on its tympanum states that the *ædicula* was (re)built in 1286 to house the royal tomb.

The rather large bi-apsidal chapel to the south of the main church, whose volume is the highest of the ensemble, is distinguished by the emphasis placed on its west façade, which has been extensively remodelled. The first mark is chromatic: the stones that form the tympanum of the door and the arch that surmounts it are ochre. The second is sculptural: in addition to the crosses crudely engraved on the lintel and the small cross plates inserted above, a small grey stone cut into a circular medallion and placed above the arch that surmounts the door catches the eye. It bears a largely eroded carved image of a saintly horseman (George, Sergius, Theodore?) who in his right hand holds a long spear (appearing behind the horse) crowned with a cross, and strikes down a no-longer identifiable being lying on the ground.

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[fig. 5.40]

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[fig. 5.41]

2.2. Monastery of the Three Youths in the Fiery Furnace (Erits‘ Mankants‘, 1691)

Current location: Republic of Arts‘akh, Martakert district, not far from the Djëraberdd fortress.

Medieval location: Arts‘akh or Khach‘en province, Verin Khach‘en canton.

This small settlement is located in a flat area hidden in the heart of a mountain densely covered with wood, on the left bank of the river Tërkhi, a tributary of the Tërtu. It was founded in 1691 by Bishop Simeon, who had broken away from the Catholicossate of Gandzasar in order to establish here an autonomous see. Simeon was supported in this endeavour by the Persian Shah Suleiman I, who wished to

weaken the Gandzasar Catholicos, known for his Russophile orientation. This date appears on the dedicatory inscription of the church; it also refers, probably approximately, to the two other partially preserved monastic buildings, a dwelling with a round room to the south-east and a refectory (?) to the north. A restoration work has recently been undertaken in the church.

The church has the form of an inscribed cross with a dome reposing on four free supports. One of the peculiarities of the structure is that the dome is

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[fig. 5.42]

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[fig. 5.43]

strongly offset to the west, because the eastern part, which includes the apse flanked by two-storey sacristies and the bay in front of it, is much longer than the almost atrophied western bay. At a certain, no-longer determinable, date, the eastern pair of drum supports was significantly strengthened and widened. Cylindrical on the inside, the drum is octagonal on the outside; it bears a dome whose shape is close to the umbrella, in the version elaborated in the 13th century for the Great Mosque of Divriği (1243) and, closer to Arts‘akh, for the campanile of the monastery of Hałbat (1245): its eight sides are long, pointed triangular panels with a very weak median fold. During the late 17th–18th centuries, such a kind of “flattened umbrella” appeared on several monuments in Nakhichevan.

Another peculiarity of this church concerns the stonework and reflects the taste for bi- and polychromatic effects in Armenian religious architecture of the modern period: while the interior is built with perfectly cut beige limestone blocks, the exterior juxtaposes irregular grey basalt blocks partially squared for the main part of the façades, and well-cut beige stones for the corners, the frames of the doors and the windows and the areas around them, as well as for the upper parts, the gables and the drum. There is a transition from dark to light from the bottom to the top, but the roofs and the dome are in turn covered with dark grey stone.

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The decoration is relatively sober, but powerful, as the contrast between the beige stones and the grey background emphasises the important elements. The tympanum of the south door, bearing the dedicatory inscription, is surrounded by a row of stalactites. On the gables of each façade, the central window’s frame is surmounted by a cross drawn in the interlacing of two large intertwined rods known as a “Seljuk chain”. The arms of these crosses have a stylised leaf at the end with side points in the form of a “curved beak”, which was particularly popular in the late 17th century throughout Armenia. The interior of the church is also plain, but neat, with an unusual treatment of the face of the apse elevation (*bem* in Armenian)—which bears not a sculpted (or painted, in the 17th century) decoration, but an inscription in a frame decorated with a chain. Around the apse, the triumphal arch is underlined by twisted columns topped by a twisted arch. On the inner wall of the drum, pairs of columns are connected by a horizontal torus.

2.3. *Khat‘ravank‘ monastery, also known as Khada(ri)vank‘ (late 12th–13th centuries)*

Current location: Republic of Arts‘akh, Martakert district, a few kilometres west of Vałuhas village.

Medieval location: Arts‘akh or Khach‘en province, Verin Khach‘en canton.

The remains of this badly damaged and overgrown complex are located on a flat, wooded area on the right bank of the river Tėrtu. The monastery is dedicated to a legendary preacher named Khad, or Khat, a supposed disciple of the Apostle Thaddæus. The monastery, which was probably founded in ancient times, was destroyed in the 12th century, first by an earthquake (1139), then by Seljuk Turks (1143). It was rebuilt between the end of the 12th and the first third of the 13th century. Four buildings have been partially preserved: a “*zhamatun*-church” and its annexes, a campanile-mausoleum (?) and two secular buildings: probably a library-*scriptorium* and the abbot’s dwelling. The buildings are mainly erected following a rustic technique, using roughly squared stones, as is frequent in Arts‘akh, except for some important parts such as certain corner quoins, door and window frames, or the supports and the base of the dome. Numerous *khach‘k‘ars* are embedded in the walls. A restoration had been carried out in 1691, shortly before the monastery was abandoned.

Our knowledge of the rather complex architectural history of the monastery has improved significantly since the investigations, especially epigraphic investigations, carried out on the site, notably in 2005–2011, by S. Karapetyan

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[fig. 5.44]

and his collaborators from the foundation *Research on Armenian Architecture*. The first stage in the revival of the complex concerned two modest chapels (each called “church” in the inscriptions), each with a single nave and, as often is the case in Arts‘akh, a rectangular apse. They were oriented roughly along the same north-south axis, at a distance of 7 to 8 meters from each other. The first, to the north, was erected in 1182 by Seda, daughter of Desum, the second,

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to the south, in 1204, by the superior, Bishop John/Yovhannēs, son of Princess Dop and brother of the local prince Hasan.

Probably shortly afterwards, the same Bishop John built a church linking the two chapels, according to an inscription, now lost, which was engraved “on the small sacristy to the left” and dedicated to Saint Procopius. However, the composite building that now unites the chapels is not an ordinary church. Additional information about it is provided by an inscription engraved on a room leaning against the north wall (in its western part), of this building. This epigraph states that Princess Dop, sister of Zak‘arē and Iwanē—two Armenian princes of renown during that time—built the “narthex [*gawit‘*] of this church” in addition to the small room in question (called “chapel”) built in 1225. The formula seems ambiguous in view of the complex structure of the large and long building to which it obviously refers; but actually, it becomes understandable when the layout of the spaces is analysed.

The western part of this building, which has a regular plan despite the spatial constraints, does indeed have the attributes of a *gawit‘*: it is a large rectangular space covered, at its approximate centre, by a dome without a drum and with a central skylight. The dome is made up of eight curved sections whose

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[fig. 5.46]

octagonal base is supported by four free supports (except for the south-east pillar, which is attached to the adjoining chapel) and by four triangular pendentives. This system of support and these forms are clearly reminiscent of the narthex (1224) and the chapter house (1211) of Dadivank‘, which are chronologically and geographically

very close. It is likely that the same masons worked here and there for the same princely family. As for the eastern part of the hall, it resembles a church, albeit without a western arm. It is a modest single nave that has retained its central bay, followed to the east by an apse with an altar elevation and flanked to the north-east by the “small sacristy of St Procopius”.

It is probably to be understood from the inscription of 1225 that it was Princess Dop who commissioned the building of the *gawit* and who also partially rebuilt the western part of the church which had been built by her son, Bishop John. The new building was integrated into the three small shrines already present. It should be noted that the “church part” of the edifice has more or less the same orientation as the two side-chapels, slightly deviating to the north-east. By its planimetric awkwardness, this ecclesiastic group contrasts sharply with the better designed narthex. The result, as J.-M. Thierry had noted, is the fusion of a church and a narthex into a single space, a phenomenon reminiscent of the “*zhamatun*-churches” of a number of convents in Vaspurakan.

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[fig. 5.47]

The sculpted decoration of the ensemble is very modest. Inside, the attention is mainly focused on the four supports of the dome of the narthex, which have a varied configuration and capitals with strong horizontal linear mouldings, similar to those of the Dadivank chapter house. They rest on high bases with a square section each, whose upper angles are cut into three leaves with concave lobes similar to the stalactites' main motif. Three of these bases also have a rather prominent relief decoration: an ox's head and an interlacing pattern representing, it seems, two snakes in the south-east, a lion's head in the south-west and an unidentifiable head in the north-west (of a ram, according to M. Hasratyan). J.-M. Thierry assumed a “mistaken figuration” of the ‘four living creatures’ (cf. Ezekiel 1:5–14) customarily symbolising the evangelists. Hasratyan is more inclined to recognise in them protective symbols, a hypothesis that seems plausible in view of the probable image of the snakes.

Adjacent to the chapel of Dop, near the north-western end of the “*zhamatun*-church”, are the remains of a turriform building that probably belongs to the

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typology of multifunctional buildings, which was quite frequent in Armenia in the 13th–14th centuries and which combined, notably, a mausoleum, a chapel and a bell tower. This high and rather shallow building had probably three levels, of which only two are partially preserved. The first level, vaulted with a pointed barrel vault, was used as a passageway from one courtyard to the other; the second level is an arched niche with a flat eastern wall, designed to house two *khach'k'ars*, of which only the bases are preserved; the third level probably housed the bell. Such a structure is partly reminiscent of the campanile of the hermitage of the Holy Mother of God (Spitakawor Astuatsatsin) in the province of Vayots' Dzor (1321). According to S. Karapetyan, relying on an inscription whose provenance is uncertain, it could be the mausoleum of a certain Petros, erected in 1215 by his wife Shushik and their son Hasan.

2.4. Gandzasar monastery (13th century)

Present location: Republic of Arts‘akh, Martakert district, near the village of Vank‘.

Medieval location: Arts‘akh or Khach‘en province, Mets A‘rank‘ canton.

The monastery stands on a high plateau in the midst of forested mountains, on the left bank of the river Khach‘enaget. Mentioned in the 10th and then 12th centuries as an episcopal seat and as the pantheon of the princes of Khach‘en, the complex as we see it today is datable mainly to the 13th century, the time when the church and its narthex in the centre of the quadrangular enclosure were built. From the 14th to the beginning of the 19th century, Gandzasar was the seat of the “Catholicos of Caucasian Albania”, a title which already long before had largely lost its ethnic connotation and which possessed a regional meaning.⁶ Several restorations are attested from the 16th century to the present day; the enclosure and the monastic buildings lining its northern and eastern walls date mainly from the 17th century (cells, refectory) and 19th to late 20th centuries (bishop’s residence and seminary). From the end of the 17th to the beginning of the 19th century, the Gandzasar catholicoi were at the forefront

6. Already the Armenian Catholicos John of Draskhanakert (ca 848–929), who was personally acquainted with Arts‘akh and former Caucasian Albania, specifies that his contemporary Albanian princes recognised themselves as belonging to the same “people” (*zhotovurd*) as the Armenians; see Yovhannēs Draskhanakertts‘i, ‘Պատմութիւն հայոց’ [History of the Armenians], chapter 44, ed. G. Tēr-Vardanean, in *Մատենադարան հայոց* [Library of Armenian Literature], vol. 11/1 (Tenth Century; Historiography), Antelias, 2010, p. 492. Further on the question of the Caucasian Albanians’ identity, see I. Dorfmann-Lazarev’s chapter in this volume (sections 1, 8–10).

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[fig. 5.48.]

of the movement of liberation of Armenia from Persian and Ottoman domination through union first with Georgia then with Russia.

Gandzasar is a classic example of an almost obligatory core of medieval Armenian monasteries: the combination of the main church and the narthex attached to its west façade. The unusually long construction period of these two elements (almost fifty years in total) undoubtedly reflects the complexity of the conditions created by the Mongol invasion (as well as by the unrest that had preceded it) and the subsequent occupation. Indeed, the inscriptions attest that the church of St John the Baptist (*Surb Yovhannēs Mēkērtich*) was built between 1216 and 1238 by Prince Hasan Djalal-Dawla (an Armenian prince, despite his Arab-Persian first name and surname⁷ common in Arts‘akh), and

7. Prince’s first name: Hasan = ‘beautiful’ in Arabic; his nickname: Djalāl-Dawla = ‘glory of the dynasty’ in Arabic (*ǧalāl al-dawla*; with omission in Armenian of the Arabic article ‘al-’). The peculiar onomastics of the Eastern Regions of Armenia is also discussed by Dorfmann-Lazarev, ‘Concerning Four Kings’, pp. 250, 263–264; Id., ‘The *Admonitory Exhortations* of Dawit of Ganjak († 1140): The Armenian-Kurdish Contacts in the Kur Valley and the Birth of the Armenian Legal Tradition’, in I. Dorfmann-Lazarev (ed.), *Sharing Myths, Texts and Sanctuaries in the South Caucasus: Apocryphal Themes in Literatures, Arts and Cults from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages (Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha; 19)*, Leuven, 2022, pp. 285–286.

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[fig. 5.49]

then consecrated in 1240, and that, shortly afterwards, the narthex (here called *zhamatun*) was founded by the same Hasan, his wife and his son Atabak, and completed by the latter in 1261 (or 1266), after, it seems, the tragic death of his father in 1260 or 1261.

These long works resulted in an exceptional quality of the edifices. Built with great care, the church is a construction with a dome over a partitioned, inscribed cross, which reproduces a composition very common in medieval Armenian monasteries: the four supports of the drum of the dome are indivisible from the masonry of the four

angular sacristy-chapels, each with two floors. The church is clad with very regularly cut blocks. Its elegant silhouette is strongly animated, on the outside, by the pairs of dihedral niches, the fine blind colonnade-arcade of the façades and, above all, by the high and wide sixteen-sided drum, punctuated by sixteen clusters of half-columns and topped by an umbrella-like dome which magnifies the verticality of the lines of the whole. A

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[fig. 5.50]

brilliant creation of Armenian medieval architecture, the umbrella finds here one of its most outstanding manifestations; in Arts‘akh it is also present at Gëtic‘ and, later, at Shushi and, in a slightly modified form, at *Erits‘ Mankants‘*.

The carved decoration is unusually abundant and of great variety and quality—both in human and animal figures and in the elaborate plant and geometric ornamentation. The human figures are concentrated on the drum and on the west gable. On the latter is carved one of the rare Armenian monumental representations of Christ on the cross. The treatment, however, is sufficiently hieratic and stylised, so that the image may not directly be associated with the human sufferings of Jesus Christ whom Armenian iconography generally prefers to show in his divine glory. There are numerous portraits of donors, certainly members of the Djalalian dynasty. On the west gable, two of them are kneeling on either side of Christ, wearing the headgear of the nobility used during the Georgian period. One is struck by the clearly almond-shaped eyes of Christ, the angels and the princes, a sign perhaps of the political choice of the latter to swear allegiance to the Mongols. On the south side of the drum, princesses or princes—who were probably deceased at the time of construction—wear a nimbus. On the western sides of the drum, two bearded and moustached

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[fig. 5.51]

donors—presumably Hasan and his father Vakhtang—are depicted in a pose that is unexpected in this context: they are seated cross-legged (the bent legs are barely outlined), carrying a model of a church as an offering on a tray held above their heads. The meticulousness with which the sculpture is executed makes it possible to distinguish a church with a dome on an inscribed cross on

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[fig. 5.52]

the right and a rotunda with an umbrella dome on the left. Inside the church, the figurative sculpture is manifested in the four heads of the ‘living creatures’ (or symbols of the evangelists) carved in the centre of the upper edge of the pendentives, at the foot of the drum. Their small size is compensated by their rather strong projection.

The façades are enriched by an arcade whose enlarged central portion is surmounted by a high cross; this solution, of Georgian inspiration, as were the hanging festoons above the squinches that crown the two eastern dihedral niches, was common at the time in Armenia. The drum, in addition to the human figures already mentioned, has very rich vegetal and geometric ornamentation inspired by that of the drum of Harich (1201), the first great Armenian sanctuary of the post-Seljuk period. Inside the church, the sculpted ornamentation is also very prominent. It also adopts models then current in Armenia, often making recourse to the Muslim repertoire (arabesques and very elaborate interlacing, stalactites, broken sticks, etc.). It adorns in particular the face of the elevation of the apse, the lower face of the steps of the corbelled staircases, the upper roll of the four central arches, the base belt of the drum and its cylindrical inner wall.

The narthex (*zhamatun*, or *gawit‘*) is, as usual, a little wider and lower than the church in front of which it is built. This type of building is mainly used

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in Armenian monasteries as a burial place for members of the clergy and the local princely dynasty. This is confirmed in Gandzasar by the numerous tombstones and their inscriptions. The building has a sophisticated type of covering, present in fourteen Armenian narthexes of the 13th century: its vault is supported by two pairs of crossed arches that rest on supports leaning against the peripheral walls; on the west side, however, these arches are supported by a pair of free columns, which allows for an extension (in this case feeble) of the building towards the west. In this respect, the narthex of Gandzasar is similar to those of Hałbat and Měshkavank‘ (13th century, Republic of Armenia). Inside, the vault that rises above the central square is carved with stalactites (*muqarnas*), of impeccable craftsmanship, also common at the time in Armenia, as well as on Seljuk monuments in Asia Minor. The four-sloped roof of the *zhamatun* and the hexastyle lantern above it were rebuilt in 1907.

On the outside, the *zhamatun* is distinguished by the considerable size of the western portal and its rich decoration. Occupying almost the entire height of the façade, the composition uses original formulas: inlaid intersecting circles on the tympanum, an intermediate frame surrounding the door and the window, the rather marked relief of two large peacocks on either side of the window and a third large frame, on the outside, consisting of a large torus whose decoration is unusual. This wide, curved band is decorated at regular intervals with alternating oval and rectangular cartouches with very elaborate floral motifs, the treatment of which is unusual for a stone sculpture. Just as in the nearby band around the door and the window, the cartouche motifs do not emerge by hollowing out the surface around them, and are not delimited by any frame as on numerous other monuments, but emerge by digging out their inner void spaces within the stone. Remarkably, such a treatment is more reminiscent of chiselling on metal or wood than of bas-relief in stone. This powerful curved band continues horizontally, this time without ornamentation, at the bottom of the walls of the building, completing the series of steps which emphasise the base of the building towering over it.

Given the high quality of all its parameters—technical, compositional and decorative—the great diversity of its processes, the originality of many of its solutions and the richness of its ornamentation, Gandzasar seems fully to deserve the characterisation given it by the Russian scholar Anatoliĭ Yakobson as “a pearl [... and] an encyclopaedia of Armenian architecture”.

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[fig. 5.56]

2.5. *St James of Mets Ařank‘ monastery or Metsařanits‘ Surb Yakobi vank‘ (Surb Yakobavank‘) (13th century)*

Current location: Martakert district, near the village of Kolatak, not far southeast of Gandzasar.

Medieval location: Arts‘akh or Khach‘en province, Metsařank‘ district.

The complex has been documented since the 9th century, but its development dates from the 13th century. It was then a large monastery inhabited by numerous monks. At one time it was also the seat of a bishop, and several catholicoi are buried here. An inscription states that the complex was restored in 1691. The general plan, which is unusual, has the approximate shape of an exceedingly long rectangle stretched from west to east and bounded by a wall. It is built following a rustic technique, with a more careful bond employed only for certain corners and the frames of the doors and the windows. Late and hasty restorations are certainly the cause of the disorders visible within the walls' masonry.

Within this rectangular perimeter, in the centre of the northern part, there are two churches of modest dimensions, with a single nave and a barrel vault under a two-sloped roof. The church of the Holy Sign (*Surb Nēshan*) is the easternmost, flanked on the north by four very small chambers, probably reliquary rooms or *martyria*. The church of the Holy Mother of God is to the northwest of the previous one, (re)built in 1212 by Khorishah, sister of the famous princes Zak‘arē and Iwanē and wife of Vakhtang II, prince of Khach‘en. It has a deep

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[fig. 5.57]

apse with a horseshoe-shaped interior. The two churches are preceded on the west side by a gallery in the former and a narthex in the latter. This longitudinal layout of the sacred buildings, arranged to the north of the complex, with a gallery common to both churches, overlooking the courtyard to the south, creates a certain kinship with the religious nucleus of the large, almost contemporary complex of Dadivank‘.

The main secular monastic buildings are located at the eastern and western ends of the rectangular area. At the western end of the courtyard, the entrance to the monastic area is through a vaulted corridor about ten metres long, placed between two buildings. An inscription indicates that the dwellings at the northeastern end were built in 1725.

Many high-quality *khach‘k‘ars* are preserved in the monastery; two of them, dated to 1223 and 1224, particularly rich, are located in the narthex.

2.6. *Bēri Elts‘i monastery (13th century)*

Current location: Republic of Arts‘akh, Martuni district, not far from the village of Hats‘i.

Medieval location: Arts‘akh or Khach‘en province, Mius Haband canton (in modern times: Varanda).

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[fig. 5.58]

The small units that make up this original ensemble are arranged on a bare hill, on its flank and at its foot. An initial pre-Arab settlement seems to be attested by the ruins of a large three-nave basilica and fragments of monuments with quadrilateral stele. However, the buildings that have been partially preserved date back to the 13th century: four chapels, a narthex (*gawit‘* or *zhamatun*) and three *khach‘k‘ar*-chapels. The façades of the chapels and of the narthex have a rustic masonry composed of imperfectly squared limestone blocks; those of the *khach‘k‘ar* monuments are more carefully built, but are very eroded. On the buildings at the top of the hill, one can also see an unusual type of bond with numerous and very thin layers of horizontally arranged limestone plates.

On the top of the hill, two single-nave chapels are almost adjacent to each other, preceded on the west by a common narthex. This narthex has a trapezoidal plan and is covered by a vault carried by two pairs of crossed arches, with a skylight in the centre, a solution widely used in Armenia in the 13th century for narthexes. A third chapel, a few metres to the west, is distinguished by its deeply horseshoe-shaped apse and its floor covered with tombstones, indicating its function as a mausoleum. An inscription engraved on its west façade names the builder, Khach‘enek.

At the foot of the hill, a fourth single-nave chapel, damaged, bears two inscriptions, one mentioning the name of the builder Shahen and the other those of the Catholicoi of Caucasian Albania, John VI and his brother Nerses III, holders of this see respectively in 1195–1235 and 1235–1262. The west

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[fig. 5.59]

façade of the chapels is striking for the abundance of the sculpted decoration and, at once, for its rustic character: on the tympanum, a cross in a checkerboard pattern, and on either side, a little higher up, two birds (peacocks?), as well as, lining the rest of the surface, numerous small *khach‘k‘ars* (or, more precisely, the stones that form the external face of the walls and are sculpted like

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[fig. 5.60]

khach‘k‘ars), all arranged with a certain irregularity which confers on the whole a particular charm. If the architects were different, the unnamed sculptor was undoubtedly one and the same in various buildings.

Finally, three monuments with *khach‘k‘ars* on the hillside belong to the category of *khach‘k‘ar*-chapels (or “walled *khach‘k‘ars*”) that appeared in Armenia in the 11th century and became common in the 13th century. But here they have singular features: they are high, unusually thick and particularly wide, each with a row of four *khach‘k‘ars*. These are placed on the upper level of an *ædicula*, in an arched niche, originally topped by a saddle-roof; several of them are very eroded. The lower register is a fairly high pedestal topped by a cornice. One of the monuments is dated to 1270 and another bears an inscription stating that it is the work of Khach‘inek (*sic*) of Ani (most likely the above mentioned Khach‘enek). As can be seen, the funerary and memorial component was particularly notable in this curious ensemble.

2.7 Amaras monastery and mausoleum (5th and 19th centuries)

Present location: Republic of Arts‘akh, Martuni district, near the village of Machkalashēn.

Medieval location: Arts‘akh or Khach‘en province, Mius Haband canton (in modern times: Varanda).

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[fig. 5.61]

According to Armenian sources, the Amaras Monastery, a high place of the Armenian Church, was founded by Saint Gregory the Illuminator and it housed the tomb of his grandson Saint Grigoris. The latter is said to have been martyred in 338 during the evangelisation of Caucasian Albania, and his remains were brought back to Amaras for burial. In the early 5th century, Amaras is also said to have been the site of the first school in Armenia, opened by the creator of the Armenian (and Caucasian Albanian) alphabet, Mesrop Mashtots‘. This venerable traditional story turns to history when it tells of the intervention in 489 of the Caucasian Albanian king Vach‘agan the

Pious who, finding here the tomb of Saint Grigoris, had a mausoleum built over it.⁸ Indeed, under the apse of the present-day basilica of Amaras, which has been destroyed and rebuilt

8. These questions are treated in A. Hakobyan’s chapter in this volume.

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[fig. 5.62]

several times, the hypogeum that has survived to the present day is an early Christian building, and clearly corresponds to the mausoleum commissioned by Vach‘agan.

Now, Amaras is a large rectangular space with a church in the centre and numerous monastic buildings and cells arranged along the inner side of the enclosure, as is usually the case in Armenian monasteries—especially during

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[fig. 5.63]

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the modern period. The enclosure is subdivided in its eastern part into a second, narrower courtyard for the agricultural and economic activities of the brotherhood. These buildings date mainly from two reconstruction campaigns, one initiated by the local prince (*melik*) Shahnazar II at the end of the 18th century, and the other in 1858, financed by the inhabitants of Shushi.

The church of St Grigoris, rebuilt in 1858, is a three-nave basilica with a saddle-roof. The crypt under the apse is a small barrel-vaulted nave with two side staircases-vestibules (only the one on the right is accessible today), where arches and vaults are horseshoe-shaped. This is the mausoleum of the saintly dedicatee, whose dating around 489 is made very plausible by numerous clues, particularly the architectural forms and the decoration. Thus, inside the vault, the elements of sculpted ornamentation (palms, cross-band, moulded band placed immediately at the edge of an arched niche) are characteristic of early Christian monuments (5th–6th centuries).

The Amaras mausoleum has an important peculiarity: it has a short vaulted corridor on the east side, which was originally longer and which led outside. The excavations carried out in 2014 by the archaeologist H. Petrosyan showed that further east, on the surface, there was a portal from which a six-step staircase descended to the mausoleum. The mausoleum was originally semi-hypogeal and probably topped by an oratory. Petrosyan has identified two

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[fig. 5.65]

other cases of an eastern entrance in early Christian mausoleums in Arts‘akh, those of Tigranocerta and Vachaʿ, and has suggested that this solution, which is a local specificity, could be inspired by the configuration of the tomb of Christ in Jerusalem.

This scholar also assumes that the adoption of the Hierosolymitan model of the eastern entrance was a political choice of King Vach‘agan at the end of the 5th century. It should be remembered that the recent annexation of the Eastern Provinces (Արեւելից կողմանքն) of Armenia to the kingdom of Caucasian Albania enabled the Armenian Church to maintain its influence in that country. According to Petrosyan, the king of Albania, wishing to neutralise this influence, decided, within the framework of reforms relating to the cult of relics, to reinforce the independence of his Church by linking it directly to the Holy City. This new device of access from the east was one of the ways he did so. At the same time, the general structure of the mausoleum of Amaras, with its two lateral staircases-vestibules, probably linked to the

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ambulation of pilgrims, is close to that of Mesrop Mashtots‘, built at Ōshakan (Republic of Armenia) in 442–443. The latter has not only the same ambulatory arrangement, but also a fairly large rectangular niche to the east. Since its walls have been rebuilt, we do not know what could be hidden behind the eastern niche.

The Amaras Mausoleum is the oldest monument of the Christian period in the Eastern Provinces of Armenia, precisely dated and largely preserved.

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Figure 5.43. Monastery of Erits‘ Mankants‘ (1691), Arts‘akh. Interior of the church, zenithal view towards the dome. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

Figure 5.44. Khat‘ravank‘ monastery (late 12th–13th century), Arts‘akh. General plan by E. Abrahamyan, S. Karapetyan and A. Hakobyan, in Karapetyan 2012, p. 20

Figure 5.45. Khat‘ravank‘ monastery (late 12th–13th century), Arts‘akh. View from the northwest. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

Figure 5.46. Khat‘ravank‘ monastery (late 12th–13th century), Arts‘akh. Narthex (*gawit‘*), 1225. View of the interior in easterly direction. Photo: R. Kortoshyan

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Figure 5.48. Monastery of Gandzasar (1216–1261/66, 17th and 19th centuries), Arts‘akh. General plan: Ulubabyan & Hasratyan 1987, p. 59

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Figure 5.52. Monastery of Gandzasar, church of Surb Yovhannēs Mëkërtich‘ (1216–1238), Arts‘akh. Sculpted images of the donors on two west sides of the drum (west-northwest and west-southwest). Photos: Z. Sargsyan

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Figure 5.54. Monastery of Gandzasar, narthex (*gawit‘* or *zhamatun*), ca 1240–1261/1266, Arts‘akh. Internal view towards the east. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

Figure 5.55. Monastery of Gandzasar, narthex (*gawit‘* or *zhamatun*), ca 1240–1261/1266, Arts‘akh. Portal of the west façade. Photo: Z. Sargsyan

Figure 5.56. Monastery of Surb Yakob (13th century, 1691), Mets A‘rank‘, Arts‘akh. Plan by Ch. Mkrtch‘yan and S. Karapetyan, in Mkrtch‘yan 1988, p. 26, fig. 9

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Figure 5.58. Běri Elts‘i (13th century), Arts‘akh. Main group of buildings, on top of the hill. Plan after Lala Comneno *et al.*, 1988, p. 87, fig. 12

Figure 5.59. Běri Elts‘i (13th century), Arts‘akh. West chapel on top of the hill, architect Khach‘enek, West façade. Photo H.H. Khatcherian.

Figure 5.60. Běri Elts‘i (13th century), Arts‘akh. Two of the three chapel-*khach‘k‘ars*. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

Figure 5.61. Monastery of Amaras (5th and 19th centuries), Arts‘akh. General plan after Lala Comneno *et al.*, 1988, p. 101

Figure 5.62. Monastery of Amaras, Arts‘akh. Mausoleum of Surb Grigoris (489). Plan, sections and drawings, after M. Hasratyan 2000, p. 168

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Figure 5.65. Plan and longitudinal section of the mausoleum with its newly discovered eastern entrance. After H. Petrosyan 2020a, p. 226, fig. 4

Illustrations

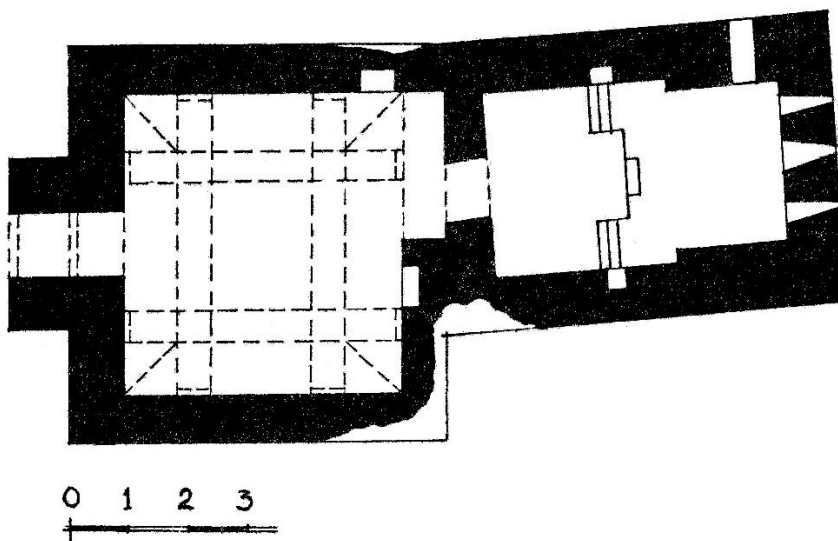


Figure 5.1. Hořekavank', hermitage (1279, 1284 and 17th century), Arts'akh.
Plan: S. Karapetyan, in: Mkrтч'yan 1988, p. 60, fig. 30



Figure 5.2. Hořekavank', hermitage (1279, 1284 and 17th century), Arts'akh.
View from the northwest. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

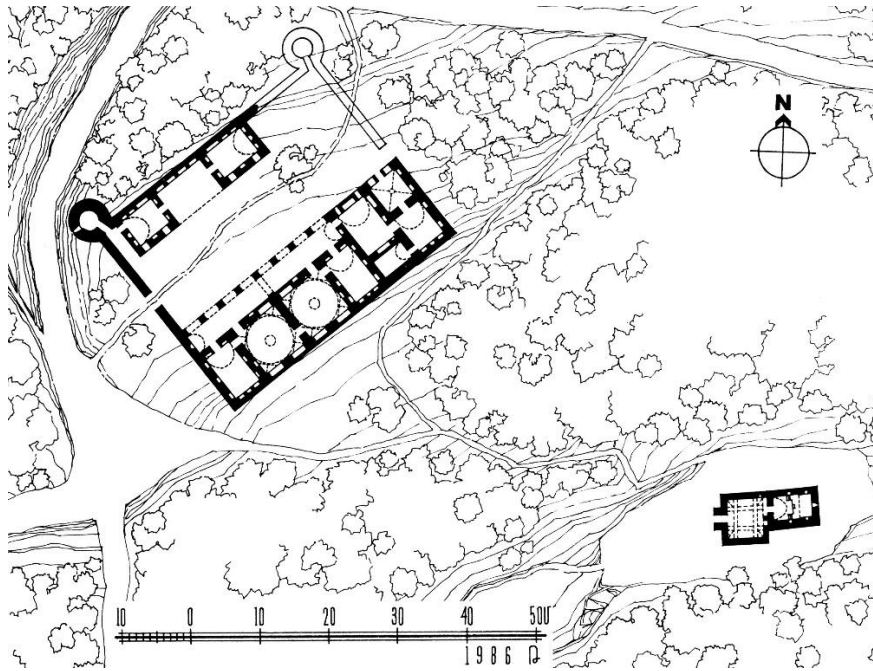


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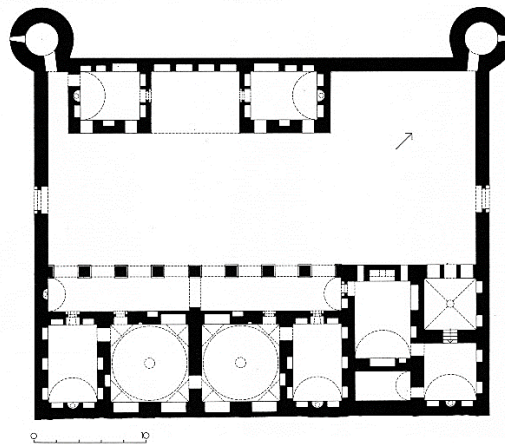
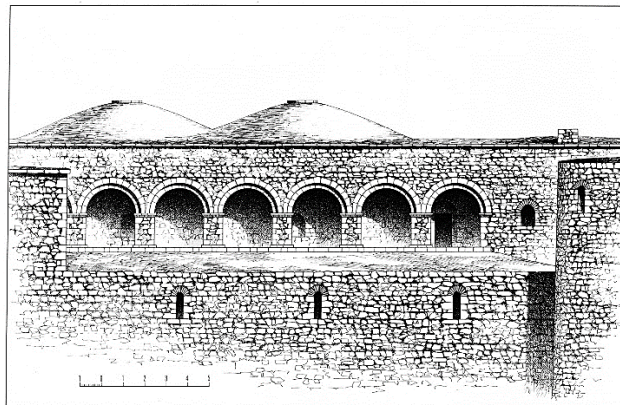


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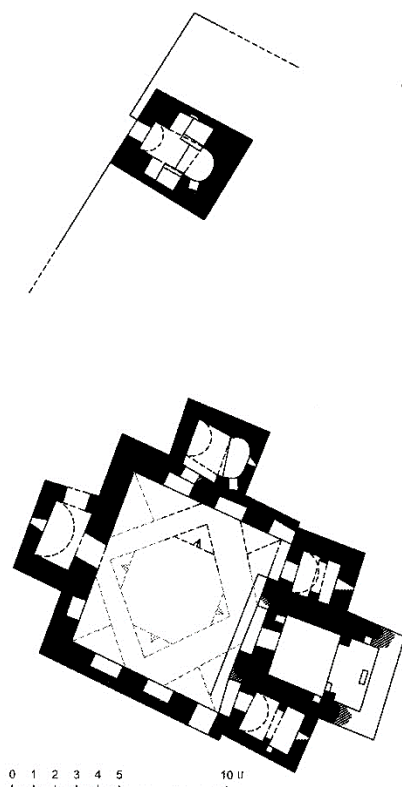


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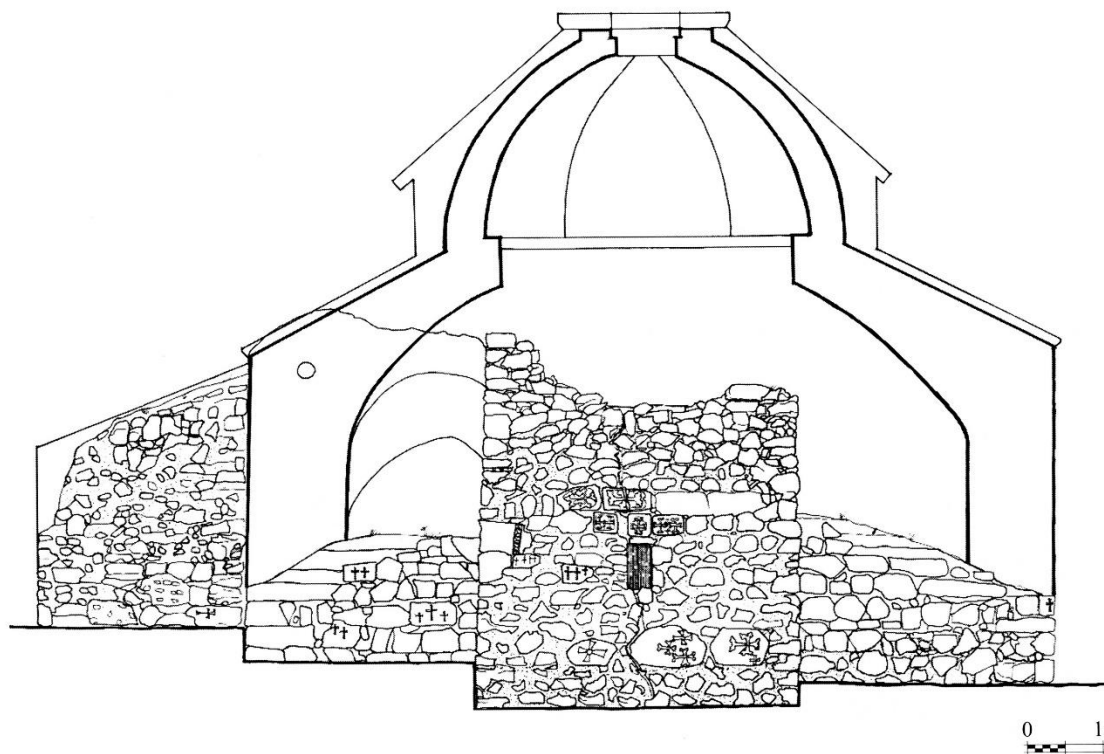


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Khach‘k‘ar (1194). Photo: H.H. Khatcherian



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Khach‘k‘ar (13th century), fragments. Photo: H. Petrosyan,
after Petrosyan et al., 2009, p. 66, fig. 72

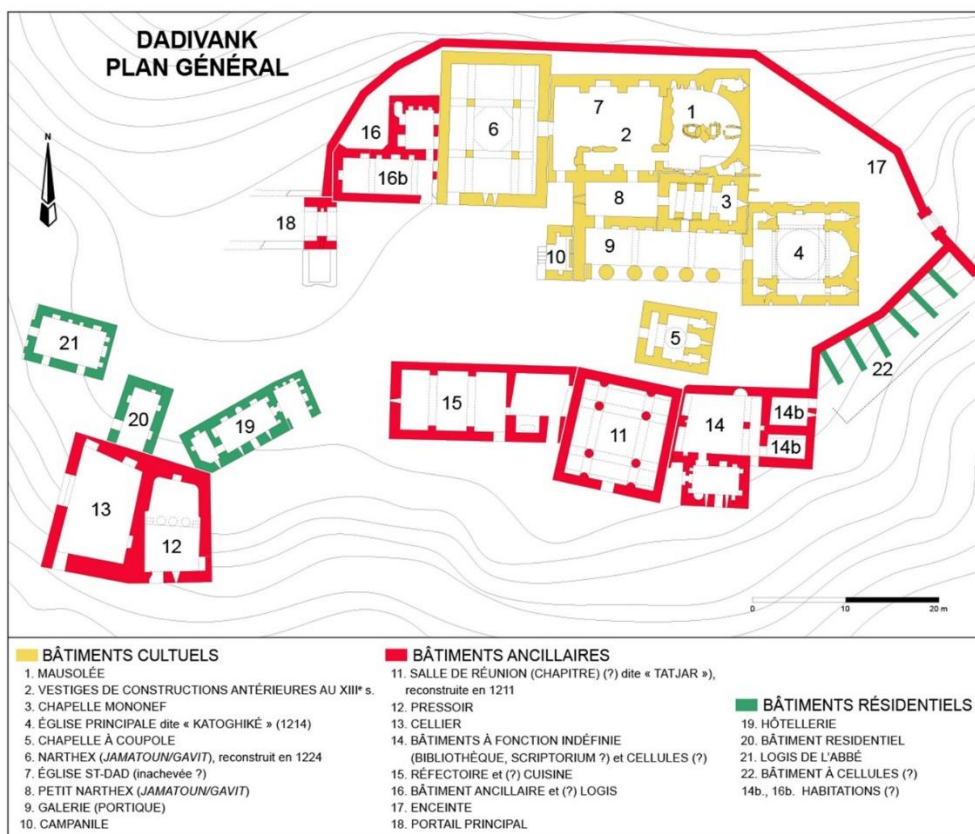


Figure 5.9. Dadivank' monastery (late 12th–13th century), Arts'akh. General plan: S. Ayvazyan, in Ayvazyan & Sargsyan 2012, p. 2, revised by Patrick Donabédian and Laurent Maggiori (LA3M, AMU, Aix-en-Provence)



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Figure 5.11. Dadivank' monastery, the main church (*kat'olikē*), 1214, Arts‘akh. General view from the northeast. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian



Figure 5.12. Dadivank' monastery, the main church (*kat'olikē*), 1214, Arts‘akh. Top of the south façade. Probably, the two deceased sons of the sponsor. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian



Figure 5.13. Dadivank' monastery, the main church (*kat'olikē*), 1214, Arts'akh. South wall, fresco depicting the enthronement of Saint Nicholas (1297). Photo: H.H. Khatcherian



Figure 5.14. Dadivank' monastery, *khach'k'ars*, 1283, Arts'akh. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

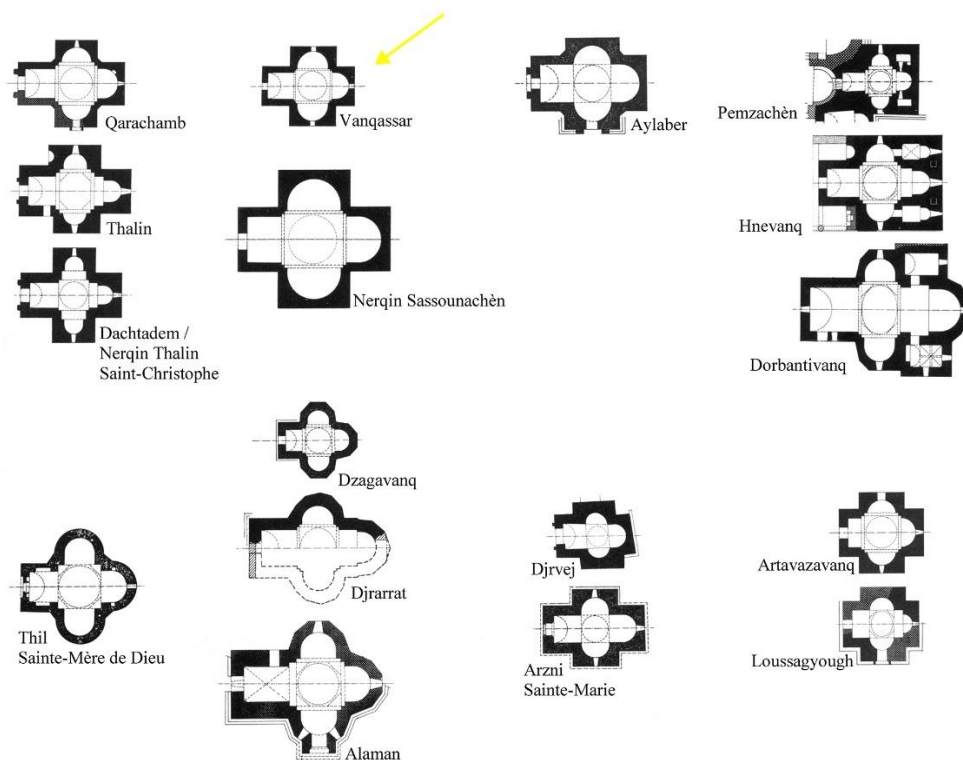


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Plate of plans, after Cuneo 1988, pp. 718–719



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Photo: S. Karapetyan

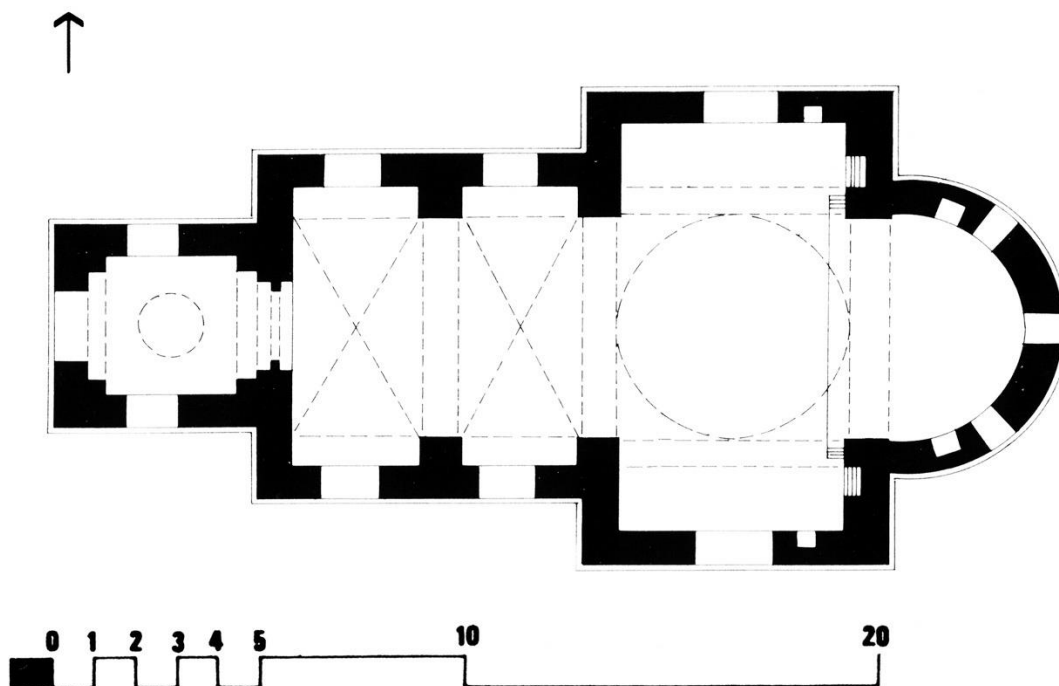


Figure 5.17. Church of Surb Yovhannēs Mēkērtich‘ (‘Kanach‘ Zham’), Shushi (1818 and 1847), Arts‘akh. Plan after Lala Comneno *et al.*, 1988, p. 107, fig. 2



Figure 5.18. Church of Surb Yovhannēs Mēkērtich‘ (‘Kanach‘ Zham’), Shushi (1818 and 1847), Arts‘akh. View from the southwest. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

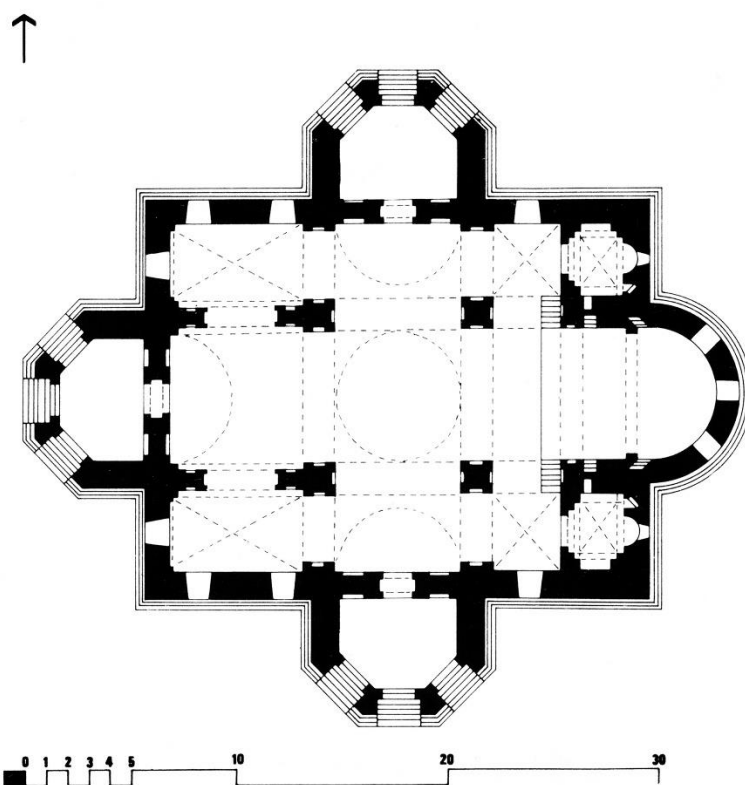


Figure 5.19. Surb Amenap'erkich' (Łazanch'ets'ots') cathedral (1868–1887), Shushi, Arts'akh. Plan after Lala Comneno *et al.*, 1988, p. 107, fig. 1



Figure 5.20. Surb Amenap'erkich' (Łazanch'ets'ots') cathedral (1868–1887) and bell tower (1858), Shushi, Arts'akh. View from the southwest. Photo: S. Karapetyan



Figure 5.21.

Shushi (Arts‘akh)

Surb Amenap‘erkich‘
(Łazanch‘ets‘ots‘)
cathedral (1868–1887)

Bell tower (1858)

One of the four sculpted angels

Photo: S. Karapetyan

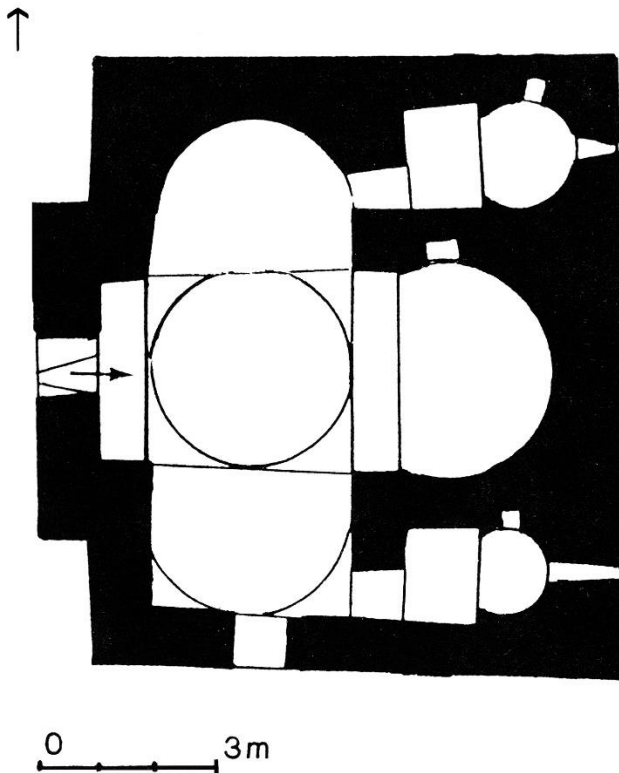


Figure 5.22.

Varazgom (Arts‘akh)

ruined church
(ca 10th–11th c.)Plan by R. Abgaryan
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in
Thierry 1991, p. 218, fig. 71



Figure 5.23. Varazgom, ruined church (ca 10th–11th century), Arts‘akh. View from the southwest. Photo: S. Karapetyan



Figure 5.24. Varazgom, ruined church (ca 10th–11th century), Arts‘akh. Heads carved within the pendentives. Photos: S. Karapetyan

Patrick Donabédian, “Main Monuments of Arts‘akh”, 2023

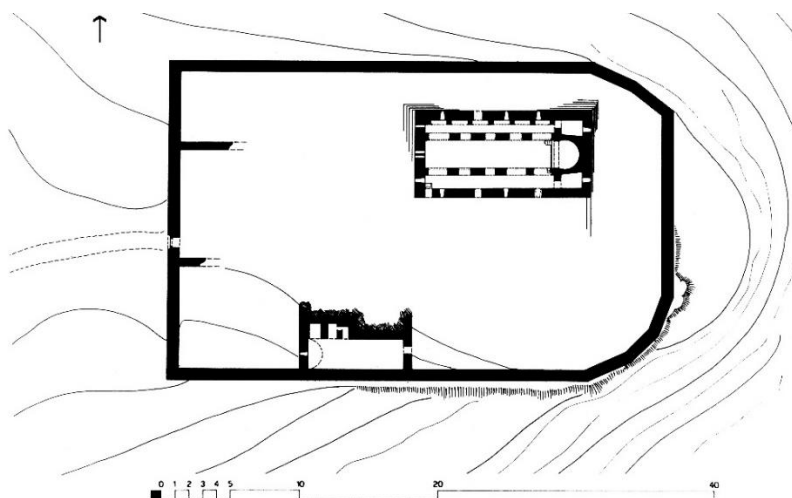


Figure 5.25. Tsitseřnavank' monastery (4th–7th centuries, later restorations), Arts‘akh. General plan after Lala Comneno *et al.*, 1988, p. 68, fig. 36

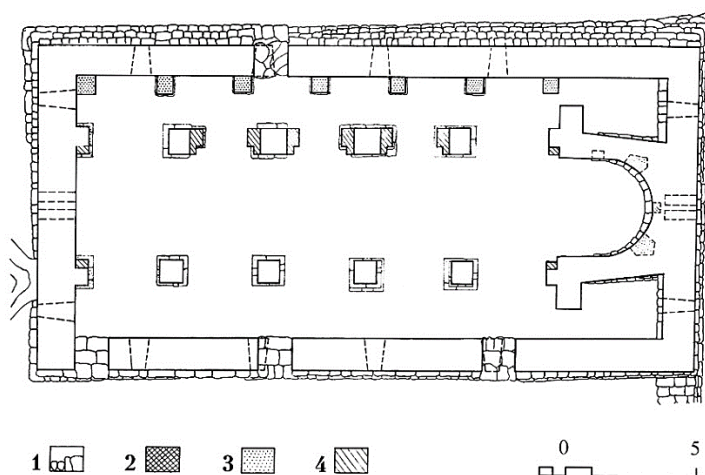


Figure 5.26. Tsitseřnavank' basilica (4th–7th centuries, later restorations), Arts‘akh. Plan with hypothetic phases of construction, after Kazaryan 2013, p. 98, fig. 2556c



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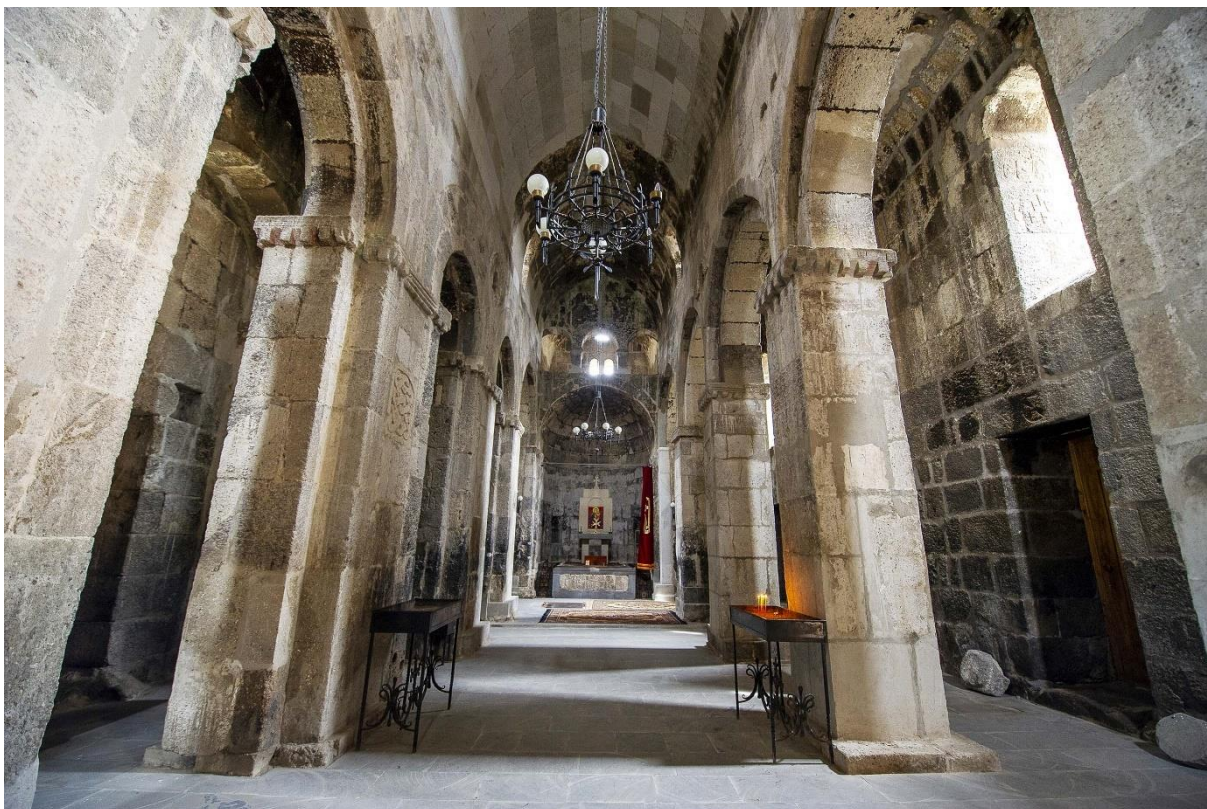


Figure 5.28. Tsitseṛnavank' basilica (4th–7th centuries, later restorations), Arts‘akh.
View of the three naves in the direction of the apse and the tribune.
Photo: H.H. Khatcherian



Figure 5.29. Tsitseṛnavank' basilica (4th–7th centuries, later restorations), Arts‘akh.
Crosses pattées in medallions on façades and walls.
Drawings after Hasratyan 2000, p. 114

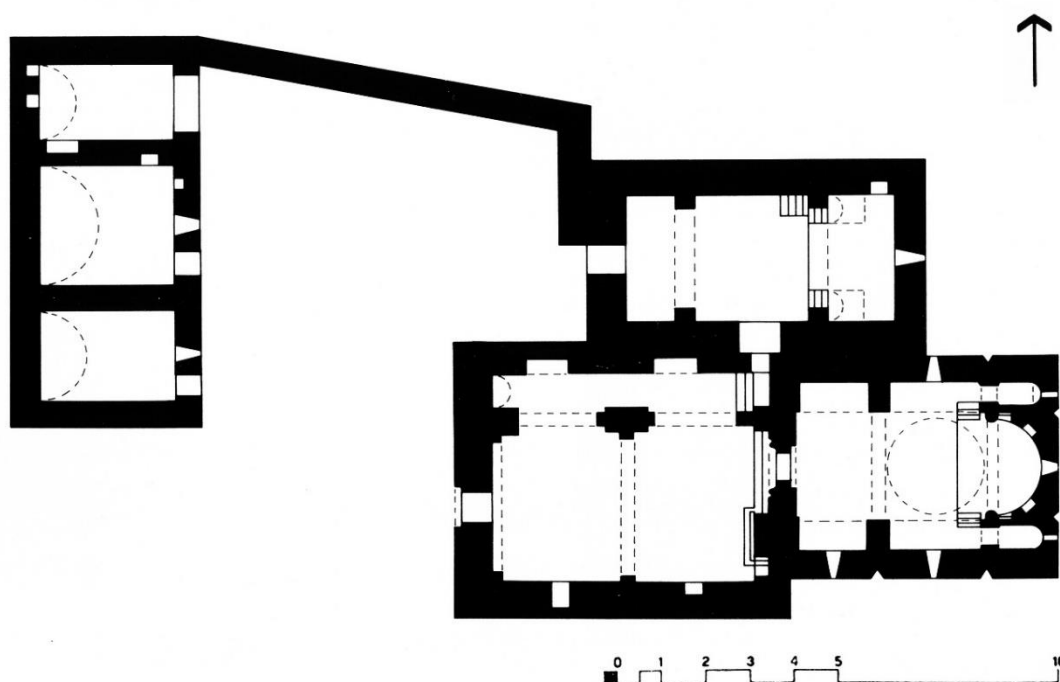


Figure 5.30. Gëtsch‘avank‘ monastery (13th century), Arts‘akh.
Plan after Lala Comneno *et al.*, 1988, p. 73, fig. 41



Figure 5.31. Gëtsch‘avank‘ monastery (13th century), Arts‘akh. Church and narthex (*gawit‘*) viewed from the south, before the restoration. Photo: Z. Sargsyan



Figure 5.32. Gëтч‘avank‘ monastery (13th century), Arts‘akh. One of the two *khach‘k‘ars* of the narthex (*gawit‘*), 1246, preserved in the Catholicossate of Ēdjmiatsin. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

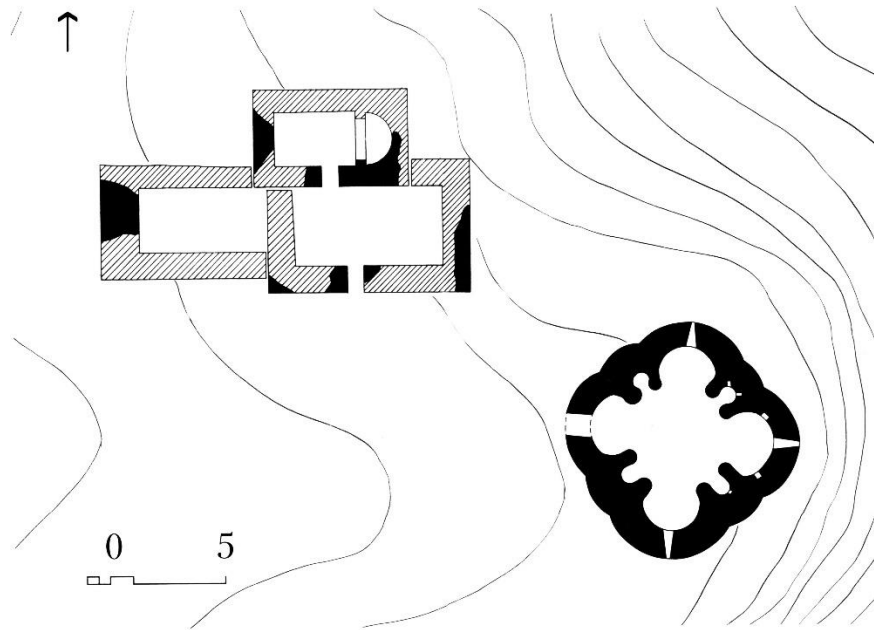


Figure 5.33. Church of the monastery of Ökhtë Dëřni, Mokhrenis (ca 6th–7th century), Arts‘akh. General plan by S. Karapetyan and A. Kazaryan, in Kazaryan 2013, p. 45, fig. 2497

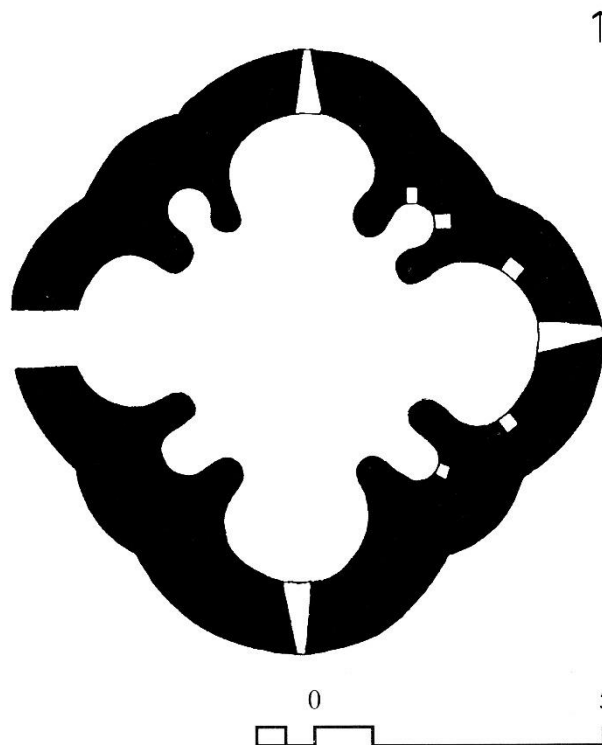


Figure 5.34. Church of Ökhtë Dëřni, Mokhrenis (ca 6th–7th century), Arts‘akh. Plan by S. Karapetyan and A. Kazaryan, in Kazaryan 2013, p. 46, fig. 2499



Figure 5.35. Church of Ökhtě Děrni, Mokhrenis (ca 6th–7th century), Arts‘akh. Internal view towards the north. Photo: S. Karapetyan



Figure 5.36. Church of Ökhtě Děrni, Mokhrenis (ca 6th–7th century), Arts‘akh. Impost of the northern corner of the apse. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian



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Plan after Lala Comneno *et al.*, 1988, p. 87, fig. 13



Figure 5.38. Monastery of Surb Elisha (13th century), Arts‘akh. Main church and four southern chapels. View from the west. Photo: S. Karapetyan



Figure 5.39. Monastery of Surb Elisha (13th century), Arts‘akh.
The chapel south of the main church.
Detail of the west façade above the door. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

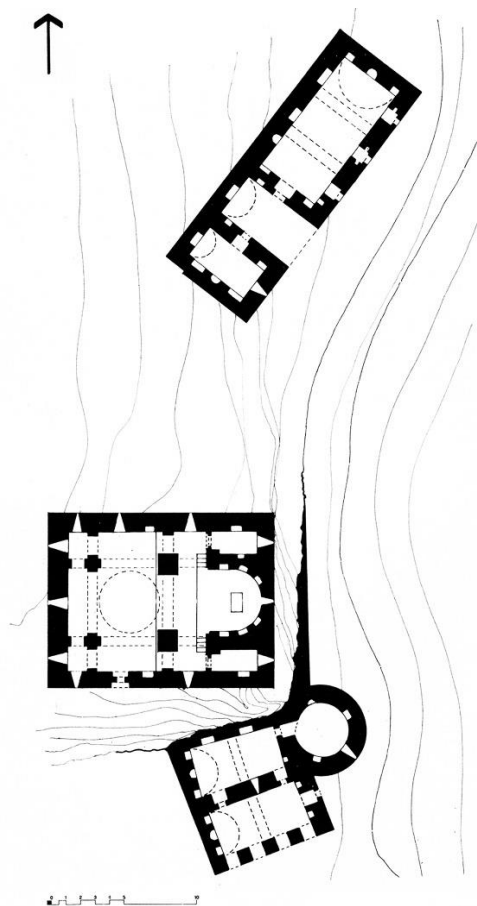


Figure 5.40.

Monastery of
Erits' Mankants'
(1691),
Arts'akh

General plan
after
Lala Comneno *et al.*,
1988, p. 72, fig. 40



Figure 5.41. Monastery of Erits' Mankants' (1691), Arts'akh.
General view from the northeast. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian



Figure 5.42.

Monastery of
Erits' Mankants'
(1691),
Arts'akh.

South façade
of the church.

Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

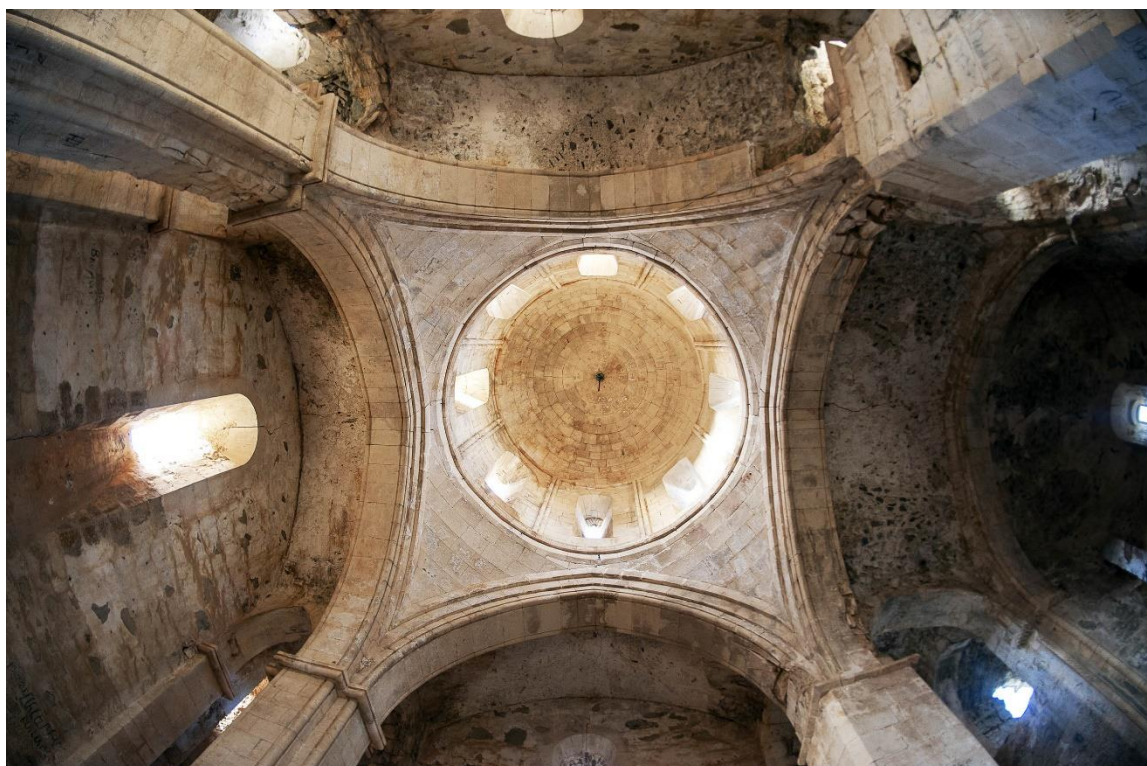


Figure 5.43. Monastery of Erits' Mankants' (1691), Arts'akh. Interior of the church, zenithal view towards the dome. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

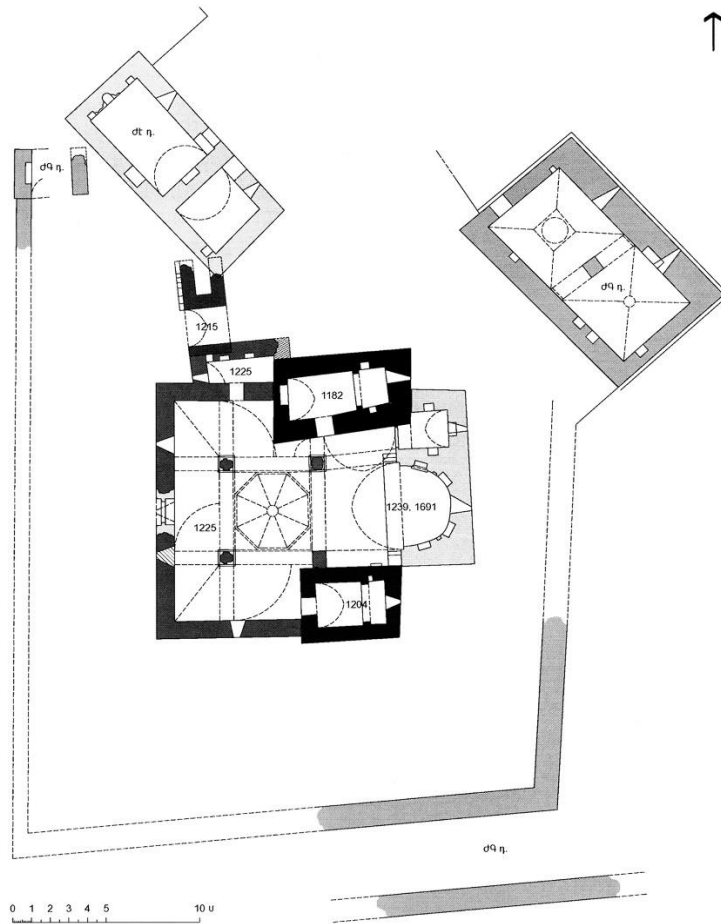


Figure 5.44.

Khat' ravank' monastery
(late 12th–13th century),
Arts'akh

General plan
by
E. Abrahamyan,
S. Karapetyan
and A. Hakobyan,
in
Karapetyan 2012, p. 20



Figure 5.45. Khat' ravank' monastery (late 12th–13th century), Arts'akh.
View from the northwest. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian



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Figure 5.47. Khat'ravank' monastery (late 12th–13th century), Arts'akh. Church-narthex (*gawit'*), 1225. Heads carved at the bottom of the pillars. Photos: H.H. Khatcherian

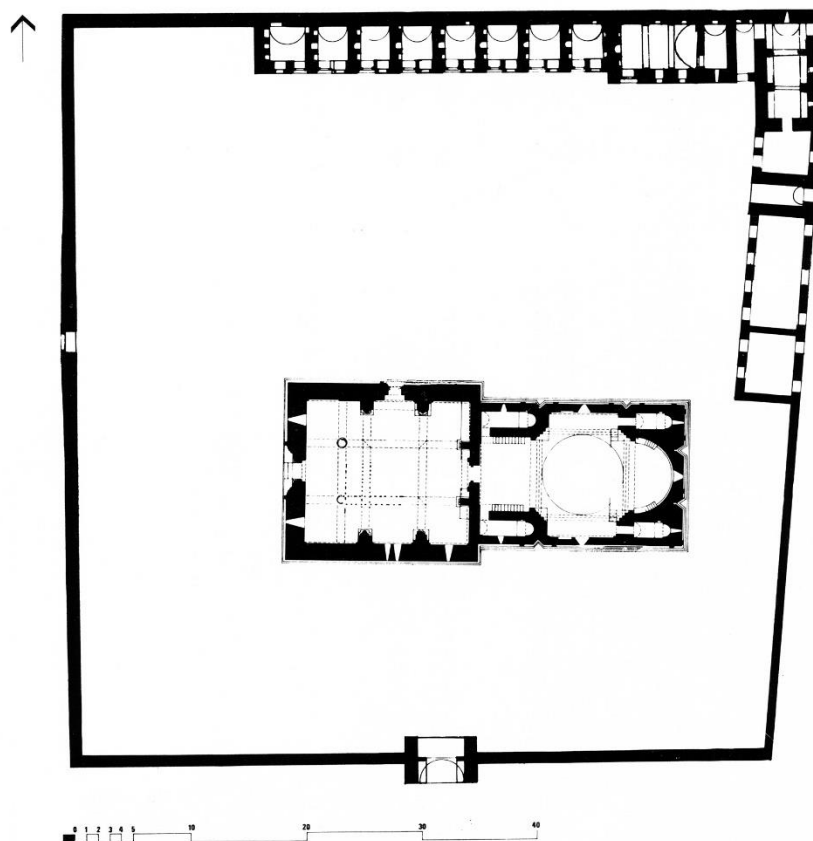


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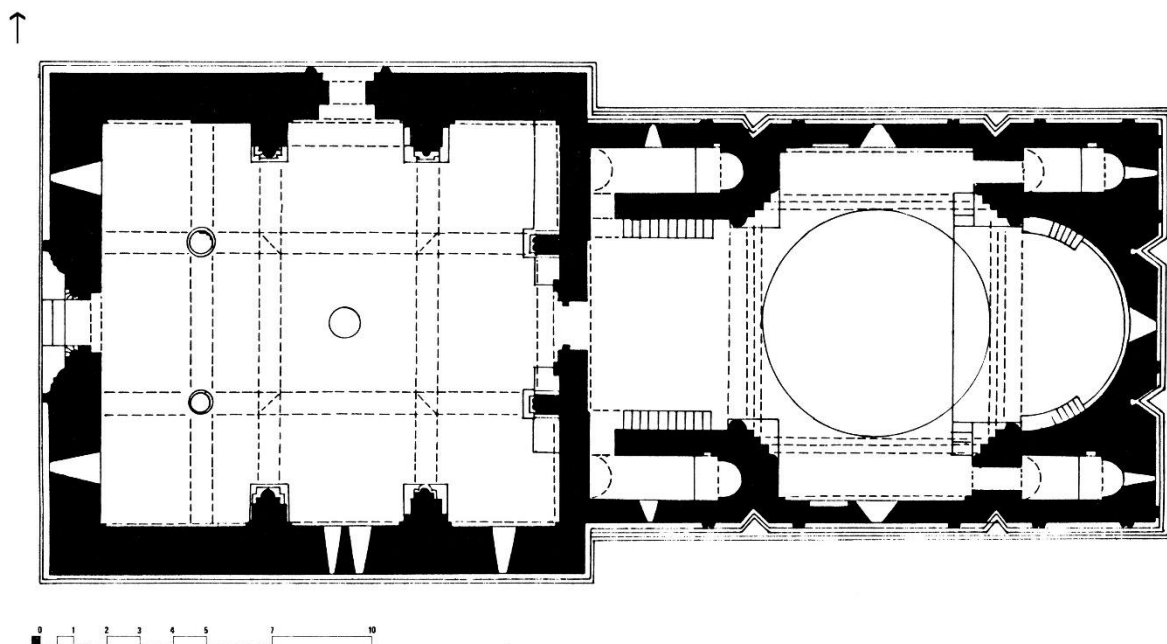


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Figure 5.50. Monastery of Gandzasar (1216–1261/66), Arts‘akh. Central core: the church and the narthex (*gawit'*) viewed from the south-southeast.
Photo: H.H. Khatcherian



Figure 5.51.

Monastery of Gandzasar.
Church of
Surb Yovhannēs Mëkërtich'
(1216–1238),
Arts‘akh.

Gable of the west façade.

Photo: H.H. Khatcherian



Figure 5.52. Monastery of Gandzasar, church of Surb Yovhannēs Mēkērtich' (1216–1238), Arts'akh. Sculpted images of the donors on two west sides of the drum (west-northwest and west-southwest). Photos: Z. Sargsyan

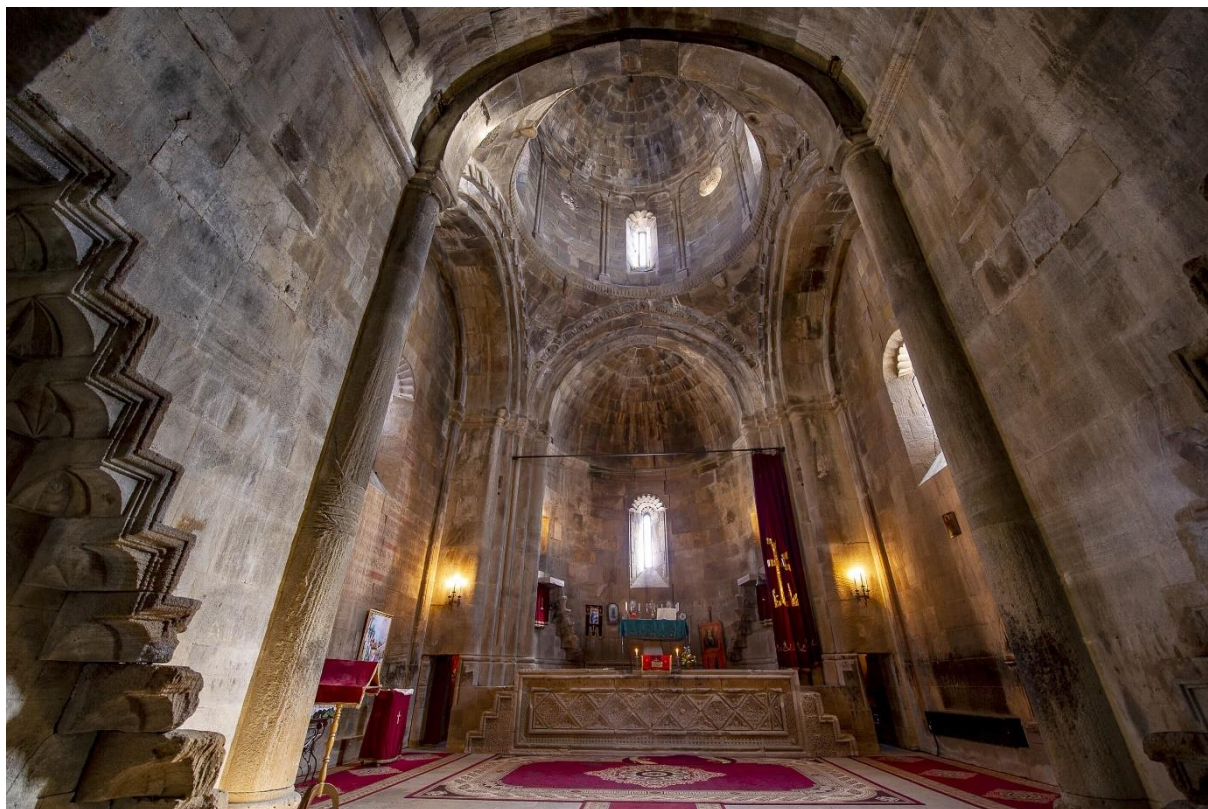


Figure 5.53. Monastery of Gandzasar, church of Surb Yovhannēs Mēkērtich' (1216–1238), Arts'akh. Internal view towards the apse. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian



Figure 5.54. Monastery of Gandzasar, narthex (*gawit' or zhamatun*), ca 1240–1261/1266, Arts‘akh. Internal view towards the east. Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

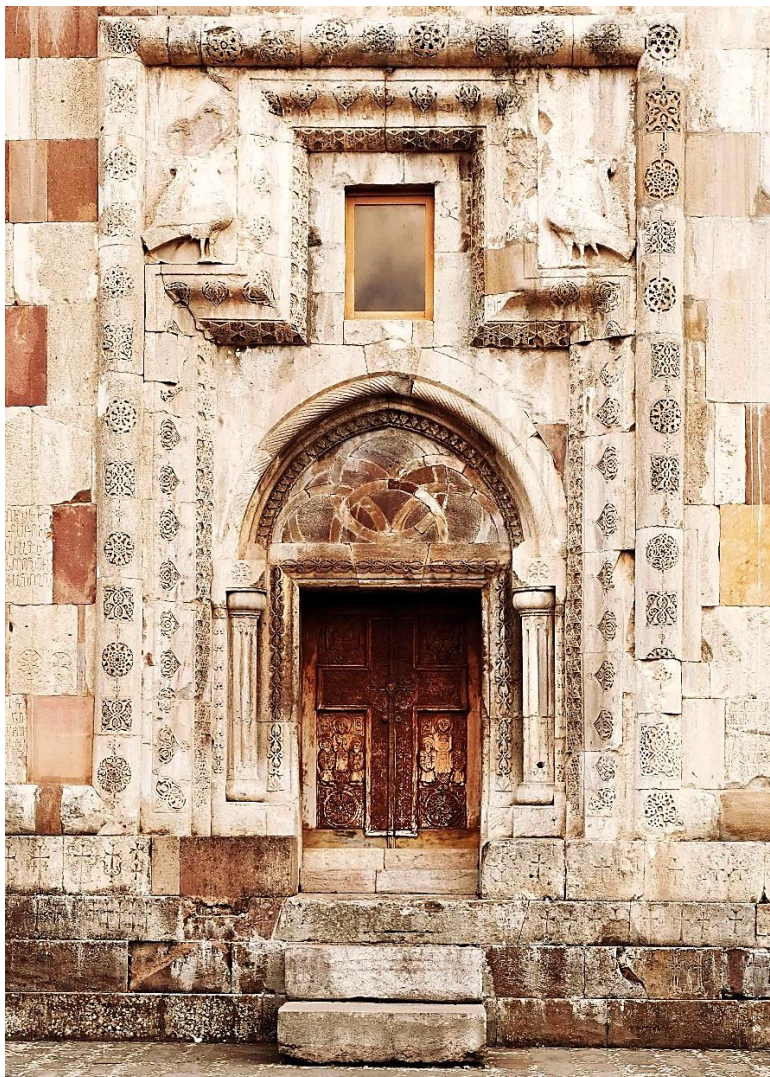


Figure 5.55.

Monastery of Gandzasar, narthex (*gawit' or zhamatun*), ca 1240–1261/1266, Arts‘akh.

Portal of the west façade.

Photo: Z. Sargsyan

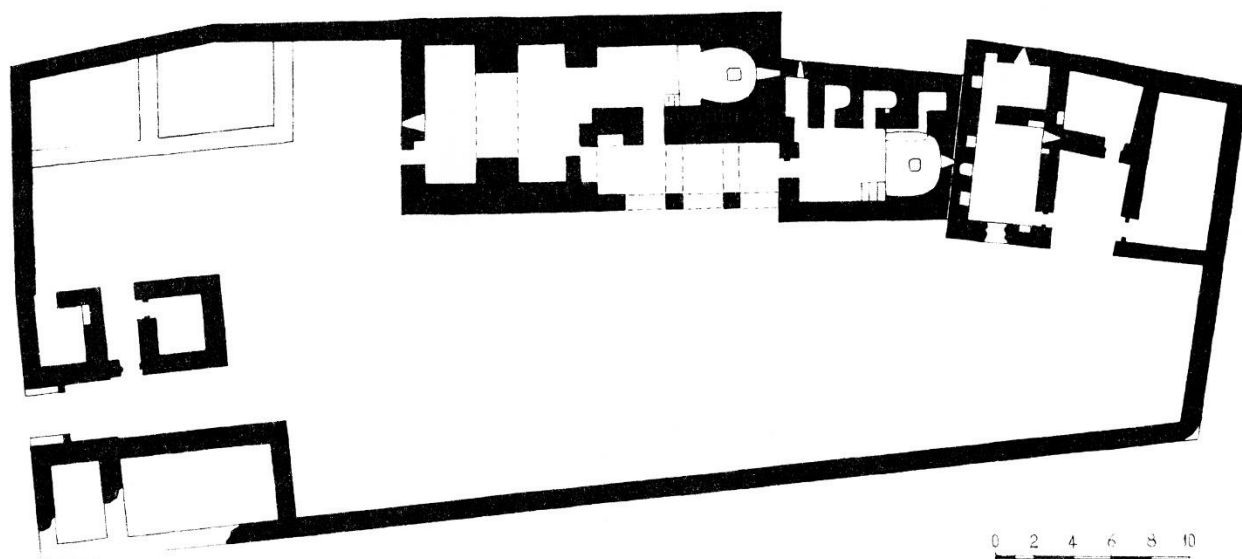


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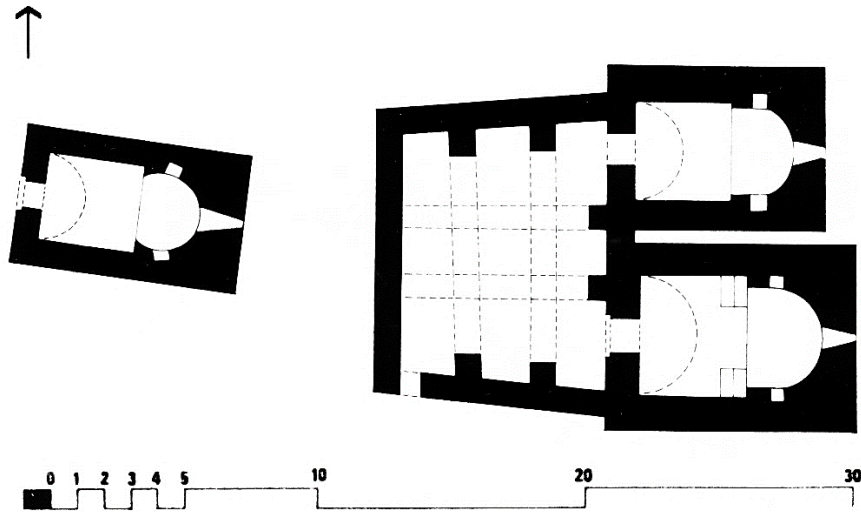


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Figure 5.59. Bëri Elts'i (13th century), Arts'akh. West chapel on top of the hill, architect Khach'enek, West façade. Photo H.H. Khatcherian.



Figure 5.60. Běri Elts'i (13th century), Arts'akh. Two of the three chapel-khach'k'ars.
Photo: H.H. Khatcherian

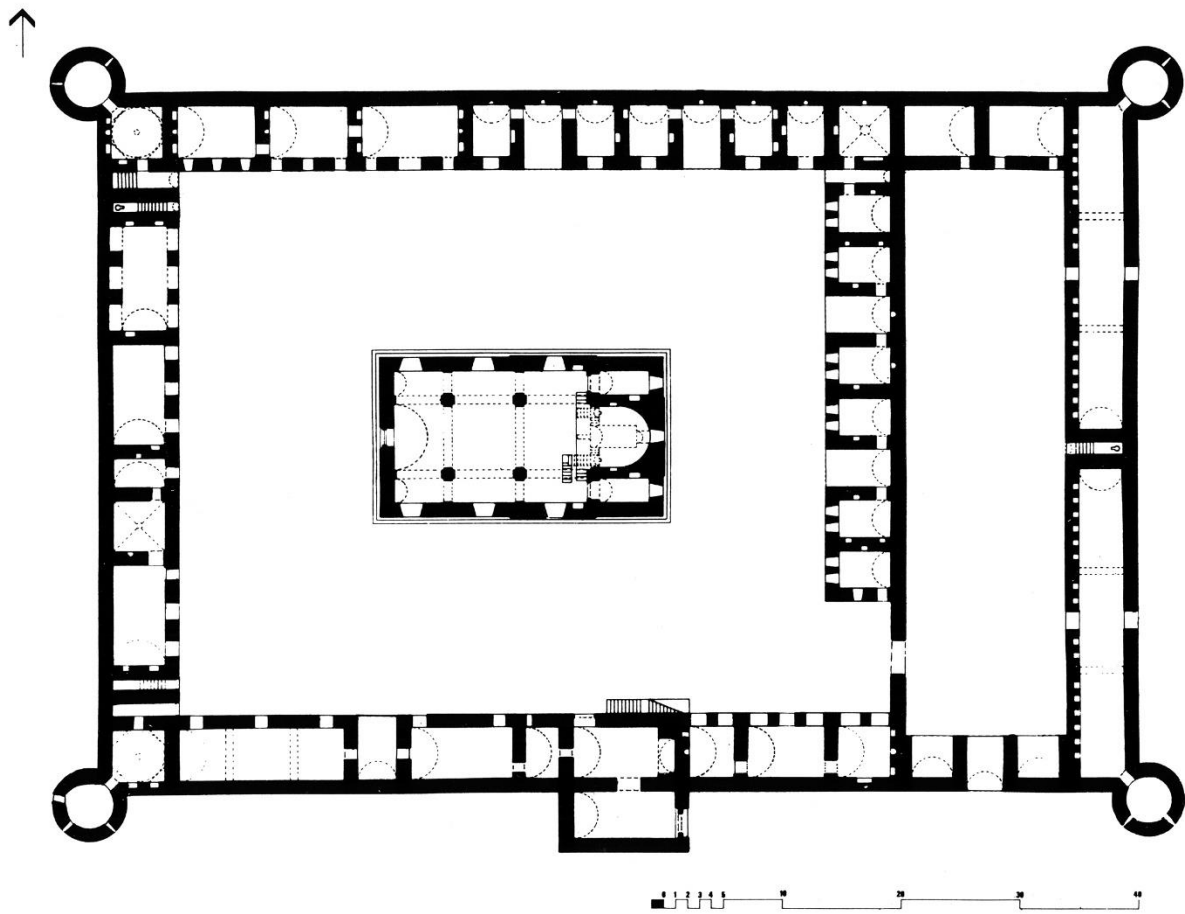


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General plan after Lala Comneno *et al.*, 1988, p. 101

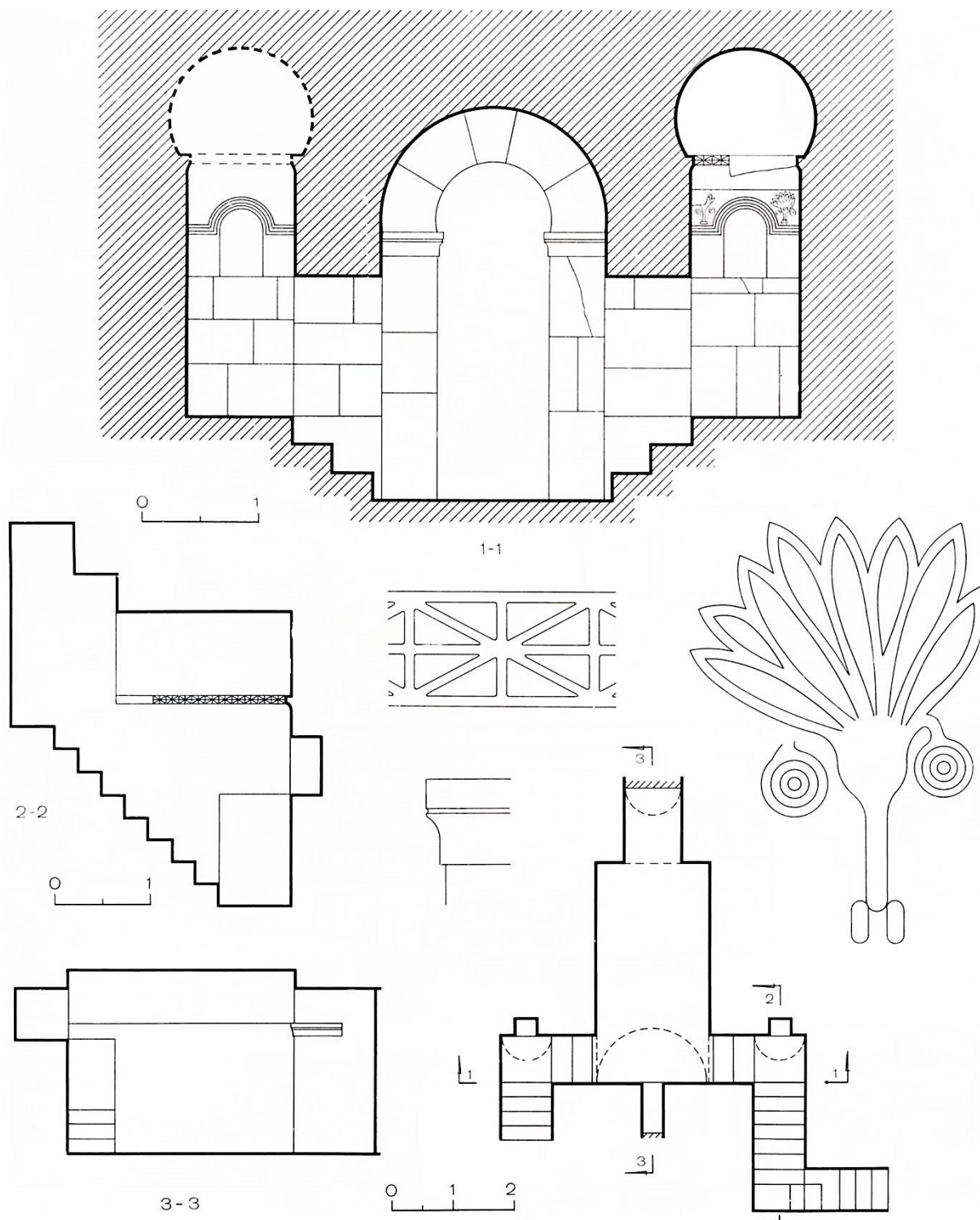


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Plan, sections and drawings, after M. Hasratyan 2000, p. 168



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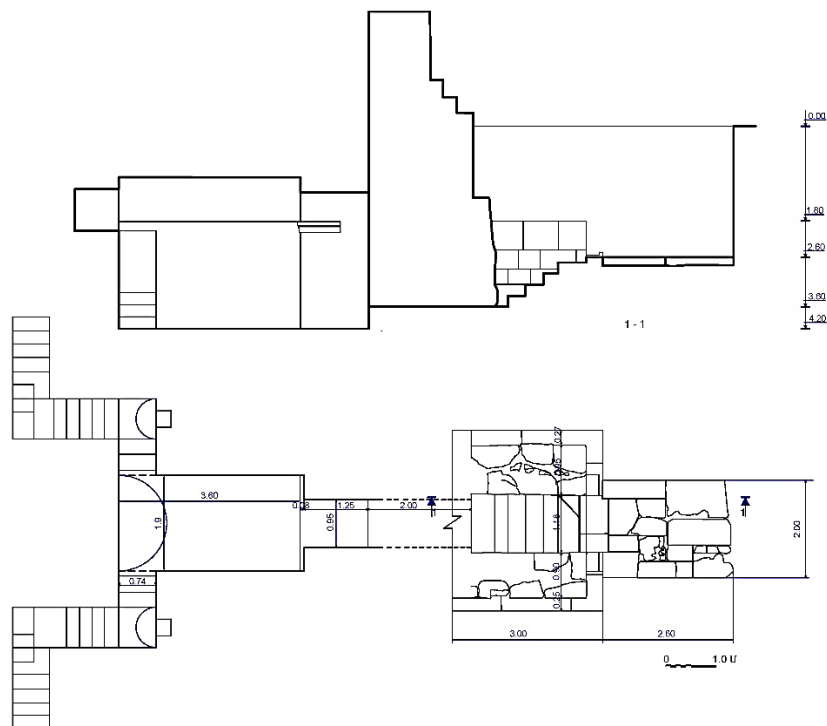


Figure 5.65. Plan and longitudinal section of the mausoleum with its newly discovered eastern entrance. After H. Petrosyan 2020a, p. 226, fig. 4

Appendix

Select Bibliography on the Armenian Medieval Architectural Heritage of Arts‘akh

(including the articles published in the book *Monuments and Identities in the Caucasus. Karabagh, Nakhichevan and Azerbaijan in Contemporary Geopolitical Conflict*, Brill, 2023)

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