

MUSH

Assesment Report of Tangible Cultural Heritage



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The joint work of a group of experts from Armenia and Turkey, working together on the cultural heritage in Turkey, constitutes a challenging task. The experts participated in this project in their personal capacity, their assessments and the contents of this report do not reflect the opinion of the organizers and funding organizations. Anadolu Kultur and Eurasia Partnership Foundation will be happy to receive feedback, including related to errors and misjudgments in the report.



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of Tangible Cultural Heritage

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* The original names of the sites and monuments are provided in Turkish and Western Armenian (in English transliteration) where the authors were able to find the original Armenian name. The English translations are also provided.

FOREWORD

From October 20-25, an international field-workshop was organized for Mush Province. The workshop followed others that had also focused on identifying and assessing Armenian heritage in Eastern Turkey. This report follows a previous report published in 2014 on a similar field-workshop conducted during the autumn of 2013 in Kars Province (Ani in Context, World Monuments Fund 2014). And, as in the previous report, the aim is to present a summary of the main observations, along with some recommendations based on these observations.

The findings of the report are structured around the following main parameters:

- Documenting individual sites to determine the historical, art historical, architectural and archaeological significance of each site or monument;
- Assessing risk levels for each site to determine current structural conditions and make suggestions, where feasible, for strategic interventions.
- As far as possible, identifying local stakeholders and other related issues that are of importance for making decisions about the future management of the sites. The goal would be to create a sense of common interest for the preservation and sustainable management of the essential qualities of these heritage assets, and in turn develop a vision for sustainable tourism in Mush Province.

Compared to what was found in Kars Province, the intangible aspect of the heritage in Mush was more manifest, whereas the physical condition and monumentality of the heritage was less visible. There is no single explanation for this difference but among the factors are the different histories of the two provinces, with a particularly high density of important monastic and church buildings in the hinterlands of the walled medieval city of Ani. On the other hand, the monuments visited during the Mush workshop were more diverse, with a higher number of vernacular constructions, including bridges and a watermill.

Some of the monuments visited were strongly affected by current use, but this also meant that in some cases there were inhabitants who had a good deal of knowledge about the history of the site, which they were willing and in some instances also eager to share.

With the sometimes strong entanglement of the life of contemporary communities and the physical heritage, it is obvious that there is both a need for and an important potential in the involvement of the communities as stakeholders in a sustainable management of the sites. Firstly, development of a future heritage-based tourism is an economic potential for the local communities of Mush Province. Additionally, the insight into the local history that heritage offers is, in itself, a quality that was obviously acknowledged among some of the communities visited during the workshop.

The workshop and report was supported by Anadolu Kültür and Eurasia Partnership Foundation within the "Support to the Armenia-Turkey Normalization Process" project funded by the European Union- External Action and the Embassy of Norway. We want to extend our thanks for all of the contributions made by experts and donors. We also want to thank the local communities for their kind welcomes and good guidance.

It is our hope that this report can be a help in the development of management plans for the diverse heritage of Mush Province.

Osman Kavala
Chairman, Anadolu Kültür

Carsten Paludan-Müller
General Director, NIKU

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This preliminary report on the tangible cultural heritage of Mush district is the result of a workshop of local and international experts that took place on October 20-25, 2014. The work focused on identifying and assessing the Armenian heritage of Mush district. The structure of the trip was based on previous field workshops; the trip itinerary was organized based on a list of monuments and sites to be visited. During the field workshop the expert group visited these sites in order to prepare a technical assessment. The notes, observations, and recommendations of the participants were then incorporated into a final report.

A previous visit by two of the group members and a detailed study by D. Kertmentjian on the monuments and history of Mush helped the trip organizers to create an initial monument list for the planned Mush workshop. However, since most of the monuments that were mentioned in the historic texts no longer existed, we were not able to identify some of the historic structures we encountered in many of the villages and sites within the limited time available during this field trip. Another limitation was the difficulty in locating some of the monuments, as there were no coordinates available and the mountainous terrain did not allow for a broader exploration.

This report and field visit should be seen as a preliminary study to map the heritage of Mush region, a landscape interlaced with both tangible and intangible heritage that has played an important role throughout its history, standing at the crossroads of a number of civilizations.

THINKING BEYOND: RECOMMENDATIONS ON RECOGNIZING THE SOCIAL / INTANGIBLE HERITAGE IN MUSH

Throughout the process of documenting a cultural landscape there are various characteristics, which should be taken into account and included in the larger narrative. The work presented in this report represents one aspect of the multi-perspective approach required for a cultural heritage project. Specifically, the summaries included on the following pages document the tangible heritage of the present and past communities located in the region of Mush in varying stages of physical preservation.

In order to expand this regional biography a thorough inquiry and documentation of the alternative aspects of Mush are necessary to incorporate as well, which will present a comprehensive picture of the personal and daily experiences of the local communities, including both those that exist today and those that have been lost.

The intangible cultural heritage of a region is integral to the development and value of a site and cannot be divorced from the tangible, physical and built heritage. The public buildings and scattered ruins documented in the pages of this report should not be considered separately from the communities who once used them and the communities who inhabit the landscape today. The intangible forms of the cultural heritage sited in this region, should be broadened from the definition published by UNESCO,¹ which may include craft, music, dance, etc, to also incorporate the contributions of local histories and personal narratives of community members.

¹ Intangible cultural heritage is most often cited according to standards set by UNESCO and the World Heritage Centre as “traditions or living expressions” (UNESCO) that may include music, cuisine, crafts, and performing arts, as well as including, most recently, sensory aspects of culture and heritage. For more information on intangible heritage see <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003>>

One example of the intangible heritage of this region that has already been recognized by UNESCO and inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is: *Armenian cross-stones art. Symbolism and craftsmanship of Khachkars* in 2010.² The khachkars, which are present across the physical and tangible remains in this region, also represent the skills, craftsmanship, arts and traditions of the intercultural communities that once inhabited this region. This continuing tradition and present usage of the past objects represent the new lives of this intangible heritage that necessitate further actions, beyond the sole documentation and preservation of the built heritage.

In order to promote a holistic approach towards conservation and recognition of the values of these sites, along with the present and past communities, the heritage of Mush should be considered as a cultural landscape.³ The best example for this being the site of the historic St. Karapet Monastic Complex, which can be seen today, integrated within the contemporary Yukarı Yongalı/Çengili village, both in the physical fabric of the village houses and also in the daily lives of the community who continue to use the spaces that used to be a part of the monument.

A previously implemented four-year project based on the region of Mush illustrated how to include local narratives in the documentation process of cultural heritage, and culminated in a publication entitled *Muş, sweet Muş: Mapping Memories from Armenia and Turkey*, published by The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association in 2013.⁴ While the main goal of this project was to benefit the Turkish-Armenian reconciliation efforts, *Mush, sweet Mush* was a thorough research and artistic project, which documented local narratives through photography, oral history and performance.

Community-based, participatory and creative heritage projects such as the *Mush, Sweet Mush*, should be used as comparative and exemplary projects. As plans progress for the physical preservation of the built heritage and landscape in this region, programming and projects should also be developed, in parallel for the recognition and engagement with the past and contemporary, living and intangible heritages of the region through community engagement practices. Established heritage methods such as oral history can provide a structured approach to engaging, recognizing and including the voice and personal histories of the local community members, both past and present. Additional practices such as those which utilize creative, arts-based approaches as well as those that employ community development programming may provide other alternative, ethical approaches to working with present and past heritages.

Gizem Dörter – Emily C. Arauz

² Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee: 5.COM 6.1. 2010. <<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/decisions/5.COM/6.1>>

³ For more information on cultural landscape definitions and background see World Heritage Centre. <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/cultural-landscape/>>. For further information on the definition, management and challenges of cultural landscapes see World Heritage Papers. 7, 26 and Peter Howard, *An Introduction to Landscape*. For all publication details see the bibliography at the end.

⁴ Kharatyan, Lusine, Ismail Keskin, Avetis Keshishyan, S. Aykut Öztürk, Nane Khachatryan, Nihal Albayrak, Karen Hakobyan. *Muş, sweet Muş: Mapping Memories from Armenia and Turkey*. The Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association, Bonn, Germany. 2013. <http://www.dvv-international.de/fileadmin/files/Mush__sweet_Mush_web.pdf>

RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

	SIGNIFICANCE					CONDITION					RECOMMENDATIONS					Total				
	Historical significance	Social Significance	Archaeological Remains	Previous Restoration or Reconstruction	Authenticity	Integrity	Difficulty of Access	Vulnerability			Historical	Structural	Social							
								Environmental	Structural	Anthropogenic	Documentation	Archival Research	Oral History	Excavation	Conservation		Stabilization	Engagement	Education	Capacity Building
1 LOW - 2 MEDIUM - 3 HIGH																				
GROUP 1	Surp Garabed Monastery	3	3	3	N/A	3	1	0	3	1	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	20
	St. Mary Chapel & Workshops	2	2	3	N/A	2	1	0	3	1	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	17
	Surp Arakelots Monastery	3	3	3	N/A	3	2	3	3	3	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	26
	Aspet / The Castle of Knights	3	3	1	N/A	3	3	3	3	3	2	✓	✓		✓	✓				24
	Yegherdut / Red Church	3	3	3	N/A	3	2	2	3	2	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	24
GROUP 2	Mercimekkale	3	1	2	N/A	3	2	3	3	N/A	3	✓	✓		✓	✓				20
	Hırsız Kalesi	2	1	2	N/A	3	2	1	3	N/A	3	✓	✓		✓					17
	Malazgirt / Manazkert / Kız Köprüsü	3	1	1	✓	3	3	0	2	2	1	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	16
	Malazgirt / Manazkert / Garmir Vank	1	1	1	N/A	2	1	1	1	N/A	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	9
	Malazgirt / Manazkert / Armenian Cemetery	1	1	N/A	✓	2	2	0	1	N/A	3	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	10
	Malazgirt / Manazkert / Okçuhan	1	1	1	N/A	1	1	0	2	N/A	2	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	9
GROUP 3	Derik / Yüce-tepe / Aştişad	1	1	2	N/A	1	1	0	1	1	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
	Malazgirt / Manazkert Citadel	3	1	1	✓	0	1	0	0	0	1	✓	✓							7
	Malazgirt / Manazkert Vaulted Structure	1	0	2	✓	1	2	0	1	0	2	✓	✓							9
	Malazgirt / Manazkert / Hatun Köprüsü	2	1	N/A	✓	1	2	0	1	1	1	✓				✓				9
	Kırköy / Sironk Village	2	2	3	✓	2	2	0	2	2	3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	18
	Kepenek / Aragh Village	1	1	N/A	N/A	1	1	0	1	N/A	1	✓		✓				✓	✓	6
	Mush / Surp Marine Church	1	1	3	N/A	1	1	0	2	2	2	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	13
	Mush / Public Baths	1	1	3	N/A	1	1	0	2	2	3	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	14
	Mush / Archaeological Site	1	1	3	N/A	1	1	0	2	N/A	2	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	11
GROUP 4	Murat Su Bridge	0	0	N/A	✓	0	2	0												2
	Historic Watermill (Sungu Village)	0	1	N/A	N/A	1	1	0						✓				✓		3
	Soğucak / Mokunk Village	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0										✓		0
	Kızılağaç / Karmirtzar	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0												0
	Mush Castle Area	N/A	N/A	3	N/A			0												3
	Mush / Ulu Mosque	1	1	N/A	✓			0												2
	Mush / Hacı Şeref Mosque	1	1	N/A	✓			0												2
	Mush / Alaeddin Mosque	2	1	N/A	✓			0												3
Mush / Yıldız Han	2	2	N/A	✓			0						✓						4	

MATRIX EXPLANATION

GROUP 1

Historically significant monuments in varying degrees of preservation. All in need of urgent/emergency documentation and conservation projects.

GROUP 2

Historic monuments and sites that need thorough documentation, research and conservation projects.

GROUP 3

Historic monuments and sites that can be integrated to larger cultural heritage project for the region if a documentation, research, conservation and interpretation plan is implemented.

GROUP 4

Historic sites and monuments that either belong to General Directorate of Foundations (Başbakanlık Vakıflar mosques) or have lost their authenticity and integrity due to extreme restoration or were demolished at one point in history.

NUMERICAL EVALUATION

The numerical evaluation indicates historical and social significance and the conditions of the visited sites in terms of authenticity, integrity and different kinds of vulnerability on a scale of 0-3. (0 - non, 1-low, 2- medium, 3-high or N/A - not applicable).

CHECK MARKS

Under the recommendations the possibility or need of certain historical, structural or social recommendations are indicated with check marks.

COLOR-CODING

Yellow	Monuments with mainly over ground remains;
Orange	Mounds and other archaeological sites.
Green	Villages with historic structures and spolia. Lack of enough information to identify most of the monuments / historic structures at these sites.
Blue	Historic bridges (restored and unrestored)
Purple	Monuments and sites within the urban fabric of Mush and Malazgirt / Manazkert.

The order of the monuments/visited sites in the report follows the order as they are listed on the risk assessment matrix.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

	TOTAL	RECOMMENDATIONS
GROUP 1	Surp Garabed Monastery	24 Emergency documentation and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	St. Mary Chapel & Workshops	23 Emergency documentation and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	Surp Arakelots Monastery	25 Emergency documentation and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	Aspet / The Castle of Knights	8 Emergency documentation, stabilization and conservation needed
	Yegherdut / Red Church	22 Emergency documentation and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects
GROUP 2	Mercimekkale	17 Documentation and conservation needed
	Hırsız Kale	13 Documentation and conservation needed
	Malazgirt / Manazkert / Kız Köprüsü / Bridge	11 Documentation and conservation needed
	Malazgirt / Manazkert / Adalar / Karmirvank	7 Documentation and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects
	Malazgirt / Manazkert / Armenian Cemetery	4 Documentation and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	Malazgirt / Manazkert / Okçuhan	10 Documentation and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects
	Yüce-tepe / Derik	10 Further research, documentation and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	Malazgirt / Manazkert / Citadel- City Walls	7 Documentation and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	Malazgirt / Manazkert / Vaulted Structure	14 Documentation and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	Malazgirt / Manazkert / Hatun Köprüsü / Bridge	7 Further research, documentation and conservation needed
GROUP 3	Kırköy / Sironk	14 Emergency documentation, stabilization and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	Kepenek / Aragh	9 Further research, documentation and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	City of Mush / St.Marine Church	13 Emergency documentation, stabilization and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	City of Mush / Armenian Public Baths	7 Emergency documentation, stabilization and conservation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	City of Mush / Archaeological Site	6 Emergency documentation and conservation needed
	Murat Su Bridge	0
	Historic Watermill at Sungu	0 Further research and documentation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
GROUP 4	Soğucak / Mokunk	3 Further research and documentation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	Kızılağaç / Karmirtzar	2 Further research and documentation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	City of Mush / Castle	2 Further research and documentation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	City of Mush / Ulu Mosque	3
	City of Mush / Hacı Şeref Mosque	4
	City of Mush / Alaeddin Mosque	0 Further research and documentation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history
	City of Mush / Yıldız Han	0 Further research and documentation needed; Potential for community based projects and oral history

COLOR-CODING

Yellow	Monuments with mainly over ground remains;
Orange	Mounds and other archaeological sites.
Green	Villages with historic structures and spolia. Lack of enough information to identify most of the monuments / historic structures at these sites.
Blue	Historic bridges (restored and unrestored)
Purple	Monuments and sites within the urban fabric of Mush and Malazgirt / Manazkert.

MUSH AND MALAZGİRT / MANAZKERT

OVERVIEW

Located in the south east of contemporary Turkey, the province of Mush stretches east to west on the northwestern territory of Lake Van. The city of Mush lies in the west while the next historically and commercially important district center of Malazgirt / Manazkert lies in the east of the region. Mush Plain is framed by a mountainous landscape and surrounds the city of Mush. The landscape of Mush has played an important role in the historical development of the area with a number of civilizations from different time periods having left their mark on the region.

Several mounds mark the landscape, the most important being the Mercimekkale Höyüğü [mound]. According to the Van Regional Conservation Board there are 93 protected sites⁵ and 60 monuments in the province of Mush that are registered by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism.⁶ The breakdown of the registered sites and monuments according to the districts of province of Mush includes both first and third degree archeological sites and also historic monuments. However this list is not definitive and it should be noted that there may still be unregistered historic and/or archaeological heritage in the region (Table 1).

PROVINCE	MUSH						
DISTRICT NAME	CENTER	BULANIK	HASKÖY	KORKUT	MALAZGİRT / MANAZKERT	VARTO	TOTAL
SITES	15	39	1	15	19	4	93
MONUMENTS	32	15	2	3	6	2	60
TOTAL	47	54	3	18	25	6	153

Table 1: The breakdown of registered heritage sites and monuments in Mush province. <http://www.korumakurullari.gov.tr/TR,127210/tasinmaz-kultur-varliklari-cizelgesi.html>

The medieval city of Malazgirt / Manazkert, situated northwest of Lake Van, is most well known for being the site of the Battle of Malazgirt in 1071 A.D. between the Selçuk Turkish tribes and the Byzantine forces of the Emperor. Located in the center of the historic district, the remains of a heavily restored citadel structure and city walls composed of black basalt are still extant. The city was originally founded as an Urartian settlement. As a seat of industry and trade, Malazgirt / Manazkert became, during the Abbasid occupation, one of the prominent cities of Asia Minor. It was the capital of two successive Arab emirates (late 8th to 10th centuries) and continued to enjoy prosperity until the mid 13th century.

According to the topographic map carried out by H.F.B. Lynch and O. Oswald, the city consisted of a castle located at the east and a walled city to the west. There are two cemeteries in the north and northwest of the city. The center of the city, which included the main square, commercial and public buildings, was at the crossroads connecting the gates to the inner parts of the walled city. At the feet of the citadel toward the south and west were traces of a mosque and a caravanserai/khan. The city had two churches: Surb Astvatzatzin with three chapels, and Surb Sargis. Until the First World War, the city had one functioning Armenian school.

⁵ Protected areas, *Sit alanı*, are defined in Turkish Legislature no. 2863, Article 3.

⁶ <http://www.korumakurullari.gov.tr/TR,127210/tasinmaz-kultur-varliklari-cizelgesi.html> Accessed 14 December 2015.

The old monuments of the city are relatively well preserved. The defensive walls of the old fortress along the eastern edge of the city are still standing, as are the towers and a number of ruins of other structures. The architectural structures of historical Malazgirt / Manazkert were constructed completely of basalt (local black rock).



The old neighborhood area in Mush that was recently cleared to make way for new development. In the background are the historic Ulu and Hacı Şeref Mosques.



The city of Mush as seen from the "castle." The ruins of the old Armenian neighborhood that was recently demolished and cleared are visible in the foreground.



VISITED SITES

- 1 SURP GARABED VANK / ÇANLI KİLİSE / SURP GARABED MONASTERY
- 2 SURP MARYAM VANK / MERYEM ANA KİLİSESİ / ST. MARY CHAPEL & WORKSHOPS
- 3 SURP ARAKELOTS VANK / ARAK MANASTIRI / SURP ARAKELOTS MONASTERY
- 4 ASPET BERD / HASPET KALESİ / THE CASTLE OF KNIGHTS
- 5 YEGHERDUT VANK / KIZIL KİLİSE / RED CHURCH
- 6 MERCİMEKKALE HÖYÜĞÜ / LENTIL CASTLE MOUND
- 7 HIRSIZ KALESİ / THE CASTLE OF THIEVES
- 8 KIZ KÖPRÜSÜ / MAIDENS BRIDGE
- 9 GARMIR VANK / DERASOR / KIZIL MANASTIR / RED MONASTERY
- 10 ERMENİ MEZARLIĞI / ARMENIAN CEMETERY
- 11 OKÇUHAN / OGHJIN / OKÇUHAN VILLAGE
- 12 DERİK / YÜCETEPE / ASHTISHAT
- 13 MALAZGİRT / MANAZKERT KALESİ - MALAZGİRT / MANAZKERT CITADEL
- 14 MALAZGİRT / MANAZKERT TONOZLU YAPI - MALAZGİRT / MANAZKERT VAULTED STRUCTURE
- 15 HATUN KÖPRÜSÜ / LADIES BRIDGE
- 16 KIRKÖY / SIRONK / KIRKÖY VILLAGE
- 17 KEPENEK / ARAGH / KEPENEK VILLAGE
- 18 SURP MARINE VANK / SURP MARINE KİLİSESİ / SURP MARINE CHURCH
- 19 HAMAMLAR / PUBLIC BATHS
- 20 MURAT SU KÖPRÜSÜ / ARADZANI GAMURCH / MURAT SU BRIDGE
- 21 TARİHİ SU DEĞİRMENİ / HISTORIC WATERMILL
- 22 MOKUNK / SOĞUCAK / SOĞUCAK VILLAGE
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SURP GARABED VANK / ÇANLI KİLİSE

SURP GARABED MONASTERY

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.96146, 41.19161

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Yukarı Yongalı Village (Çengelli/Çüngüş)

Other Names: Çengeli Kilise, Innagianvank, Klagavank, Çengli (Lynch)

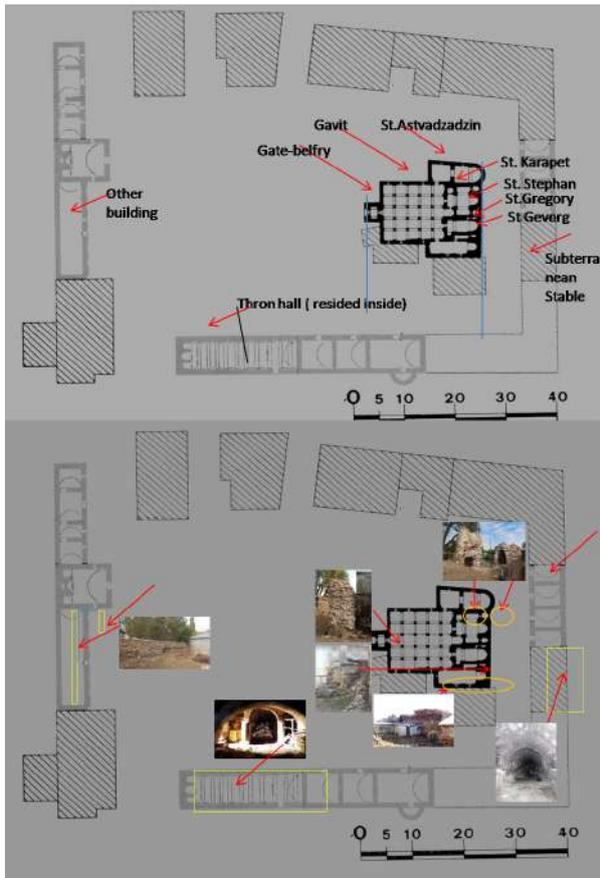
Access: The ruins of the Surp Garabed Monastery are distributed throughout the Yukarı Yongalı Village. The village is 50 km northwest from Mush city center, 6 km from the main Bingöl-Mush road and easily accessible by vehicle.

2. DESCRIPTION

Surp Garabed was a monastic complex, situated in Mush region and named for the first church built at the site, which may have been the first foundation church of St. Gregory the Illuminator. This complex was considered to be the second most important Armenian monastery at the time of construction and original usage. Containing a jamatun and a belfry along with a cemetery, the complex was comprised of up to nine churches, including Surp Astvadzadzin, Surp Stephan, Surp Garabed, Surp Gevorg, Surp Hakob and Surp Sargis. Some of the earliest churches can be dated as early as the fourth and fifth centuries and were in use up until the destruction of the site during World War I. Few remains of the complex are left, with many of the stones being dispersed throughout and incorporated into the modern structures of the contemporary village of Yukarı Yongalı.



Surp Garabed Monastery as seen from the south (Kévorkian and Paboudjian, 1915 Öncesinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ermeniler, Aras Publishing, 2012, p. 486)



Drawing of the Surp Garabed Complex on the outlines of the contemporary village by D. Kertmenjian



Surp Garabed Monastery, main altar (Kévorkian and Paboudjian, *ibid*, p. 487)



Surp Garabed Monastery, 1890's (Kévorkian and Paboudjian, *ibid*, p. 486)

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The visible remains of the monastery complex are fragmented and comprised of still standing, in-situ elements, spolia used in surrounding village houses, underground spaces and buried structures. The plan of the monastic complex is not easily readable due to the village settlement. However, the plan of Surp Gevorg, which is the southernmost church of the complex, is still legible.

The monastery complex is integrated into the contemporary village in a number of ways, which can be categorized in three main groups:

1. Usage of spolia from the buildings of the monastery complex in the contemporary village houses with decorated parts visible in the façades.
2. Parts of still standing monastery complex walls and areas that have not been reused by the contemporary village residents.
3. Spaces of the monastery complex that are still standing and used in accordance with their authentic functions (barns, storage spaces, stables, etc.)

The site has few visitors, most of whom are already familiar with the history of the site, numbering up to 5000 a year, and are visiting mainly from Armenia, France/ EU, Lebanon, and the United States. There are no signboards at the site except for a directional sign on the main road.





4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Today it is impossible to separate the remains of the monastery complex from the contemporary village structures. Therefore, the whole village must be considered as a historical monument and declared as a conservation area, including both the historical architectural remains and the contemporary village.

A detailed, scientific inventory of the spolia used among the houses of the village and further architectural, archaeological and topographical surveys in the area should be carried out in order to document the remaining authentic materials and spaces historically belonging to the monument. There are also a number of inscriptions on the spolia used on the village houses,⁷ which need further scientific studies.

A number of socio-cultural projects and capacity-building programs for the village community should be carried out in parallel with the documentation and conservation project.



⁷ For notes on inscriptions see appendix B



SURP MARYAM VANK / MERYEM ANA KİLİSESİ ST. MARY CHAPEL & WORKSHOPS

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.96261, 41.20881

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Yukarı Yongalı Village surroundings

Access: St. Mary Chapel, workshops and cemetery are located 3 km east of the Yukarı Yongalı village. Accessible on a dirt road from the village, either by car or on foot (20 minutes walk)

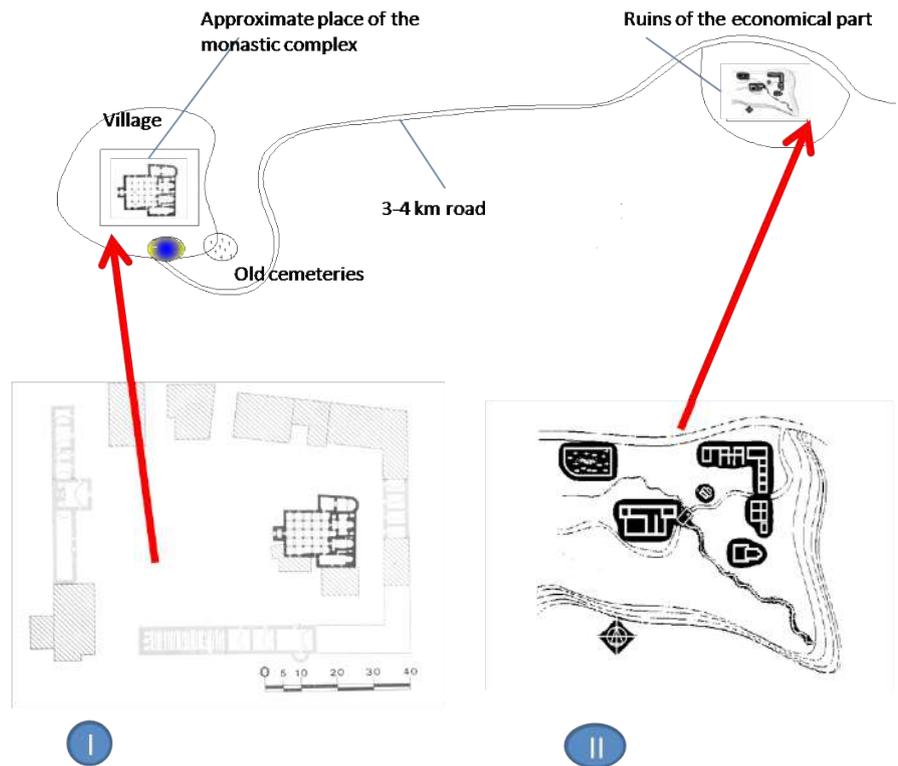
2. DESCRIPTION

The St. Mary Chapel (or “Meryem Ana”), workshop area (public buildings) and cemetery are related to the monastic complex but are located outside of the historic monastic area and the current village. Considered by many academics to be an important area, little has been studied or excavated to date.





Surp Garabed Monastery terraces towards the south looking over Mush plain and the mountains (Kévorkian and Paboudjian, *ibid*, p. 488)



Drawing by D. Kertmenjian

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The partially standing and partially buried ruins of historic structures of the workshops, St. Mary Chapel and the cemetery are located further away from the village and hence in an uncontrolled area where they are easily reached by treasure hunters. Two illegal excavation/treasure hunters' pits were observed, one within the chapel walls and the other one by the cemetery.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The site is only visited by people who specifically have knowledge and interest in the site. A thorough archaeological and architectural field survey should be carried out and the area should be secured from treasure hunters.





SURP ARAKELOTS VANK / ARAK MANASTIRI

SURP ARAKELOTS MONASTERY

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.69578, 41.51951

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: In the proximity of Kepenek Village

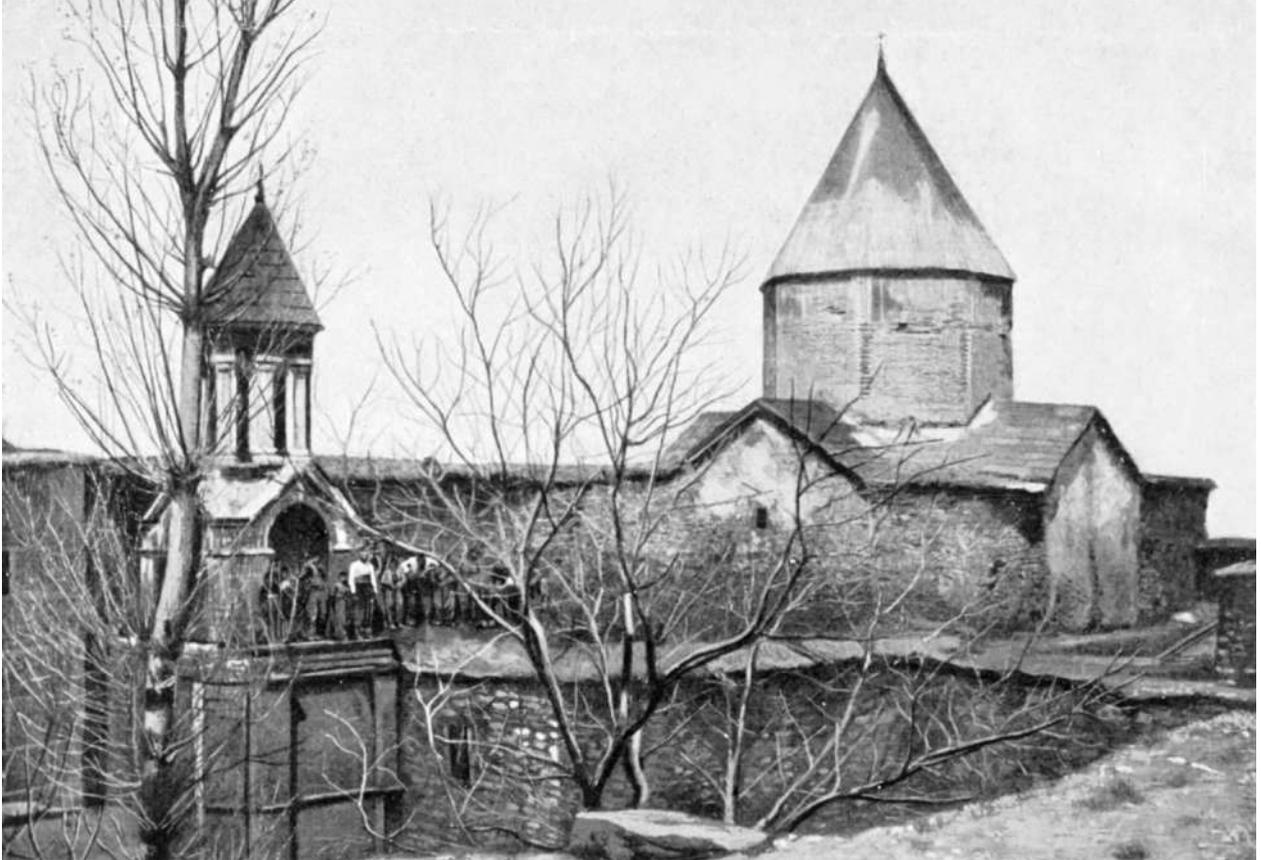
Access: Accessible only on foot (40-60 min. uphill trek), 3 km southwest of the Kepenek Village, or by tractor for the initial part of the trek. Located on the north bank of the stream running through the village. A guide is needed. The village of Kepenek is 8 km from the city center of Mush.

2. DESCRIPTION

Built on a gently rising area above the river valley, Surp Arakelots Monastic complex was founded in the fifth century and comprised of one church, a gavith (or annex/belfry) and two chapels, St. Thaddeus and St. Stephan's. Noticeable along the outer walls of the complex are the remains of two circular towers at the southern corners; 3-4 meter high khachkars, which are no longer extant, were also once present at the site. The main Apostles Church is an inscribed cross-type church originally covered by a dome resting on an octagonal drum with four chambers, three of which were barrel-vaulted. At the entrance of the church particularly striking ornamental decoration is found. On the southern terrace of the church are several large gravestones with inscriptions and decorations that can be dated to the mid-twelfth century. The gavith, originally dated to 1555 and partially rebuilt in 1791, is a four-pillared construction with a groin-vault ceiling and has the same dimensions as the main church. The upper story of the annex, which no longer exists, was a typical octagonal



rotunda terminated by a calotte at the top. Located to the south of the main church, St. Stephan's Chapel was rebuilt in 1663 and survives as a simple nave and apse. The small chapel of St. Thaddeus is a cross in a rectangle and is topped by a relatively tall drum and cap, constructed of brick and cut stone, and dates to the fourteenth or fifteenth century.



Surp Arakelots Monastery (Kévorkian and Paboudjian, ibid, p. 491)



Surp Arakelots Monastery (Kévorkian and Paboudjian, ibid, p. 488)

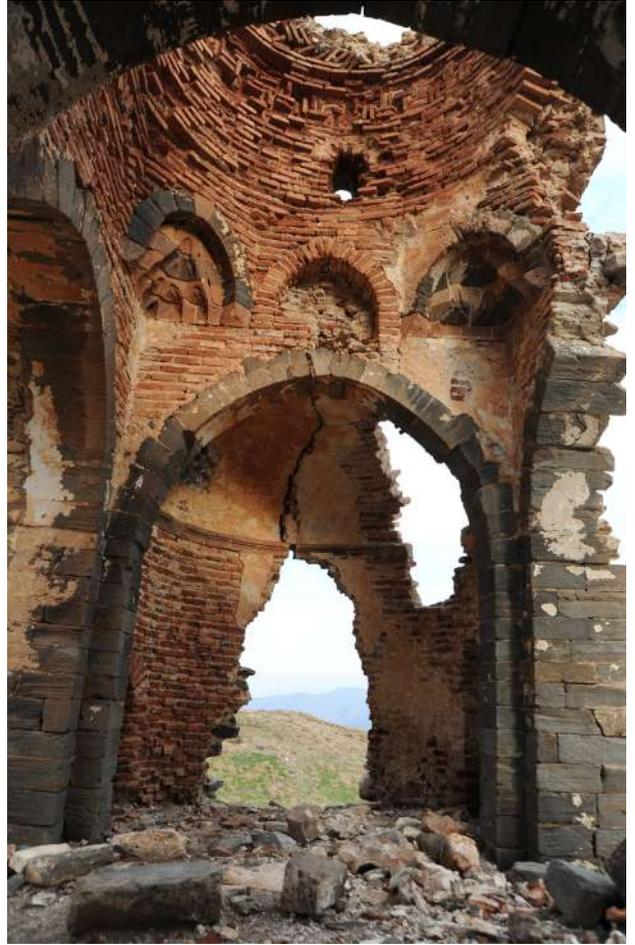
3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The dome and octagonal drum of the St. Apostle's church were demolished. St. Stephan's chapel survives as a simple nave and apse and the foundations of the remaining walls are underground because of the rubble fallen on its south side.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The remains of the Arakelots monastic complex are in urgent need of a conservation project. As an important example of brick usage of the typical architecture of the period, the historic remains should be conserved with care. The conservation project should also take into consideration the access challenges and interpretation issues.





ASPET BERD / HASPET KALESİ

THE CASTLE OF KNIGHTS

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.71332, 41.51471

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: In the vicinity of Soğucak Village

Other names: Asbediberd / Astghaberd / Mogunk / Maghonk

Access: 4.5 km southeast of Mush city center. South of Soğucak Village on the hill. Accessible only by off-road vehicles.

2. DESCRIPTION

The Haspet Fortress is located close to the village of Soğucak and in the same region as the Arakelots Monastery. According to sources the fortress can be dated to the fifth century and was one of the most famous Armenian fortresses in medieval times. Mythological stories attached to the fortress claim that Astghaberd was built by the goddess Astghik who would host the fire-bearing god Vahagn when he came to rest at the castle after the dragon wars.⁸ Despite the small surface area it covers, the castle occupies an important position and was once of great strategic importance.



⁸ The Dictionary of Location Names in Armenia and Adjacent Regions, Volume 1, Yerevan, 1986, page 344. Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia, Volume 1, 1974, page 577.



3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Access to the medieval fortress is difficult and requires either an off-road vehicle or a long uphill trek via Soğucak village. Sections of the massive towers and walls of the fortress are still standing. Semicircular towers, two of which have been preserved more than 10 meters in height, fortified the corners of the castle. Due to the difficulty of access in comparison to many structures from the same period it is very well preserved and retains most of the original materials and walls.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The fortification can become an important point of interest in an itinerary of Mush cultural heritage if a conservation and interpretation project is created and implemented. The authenticity of the fortress, as the site has not been subject to previous restorations, presents a number of opportunities.



YEGHERDUT VANK / KIZIL KİLİSE / RED CHURCH

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.75058, 41.34027

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

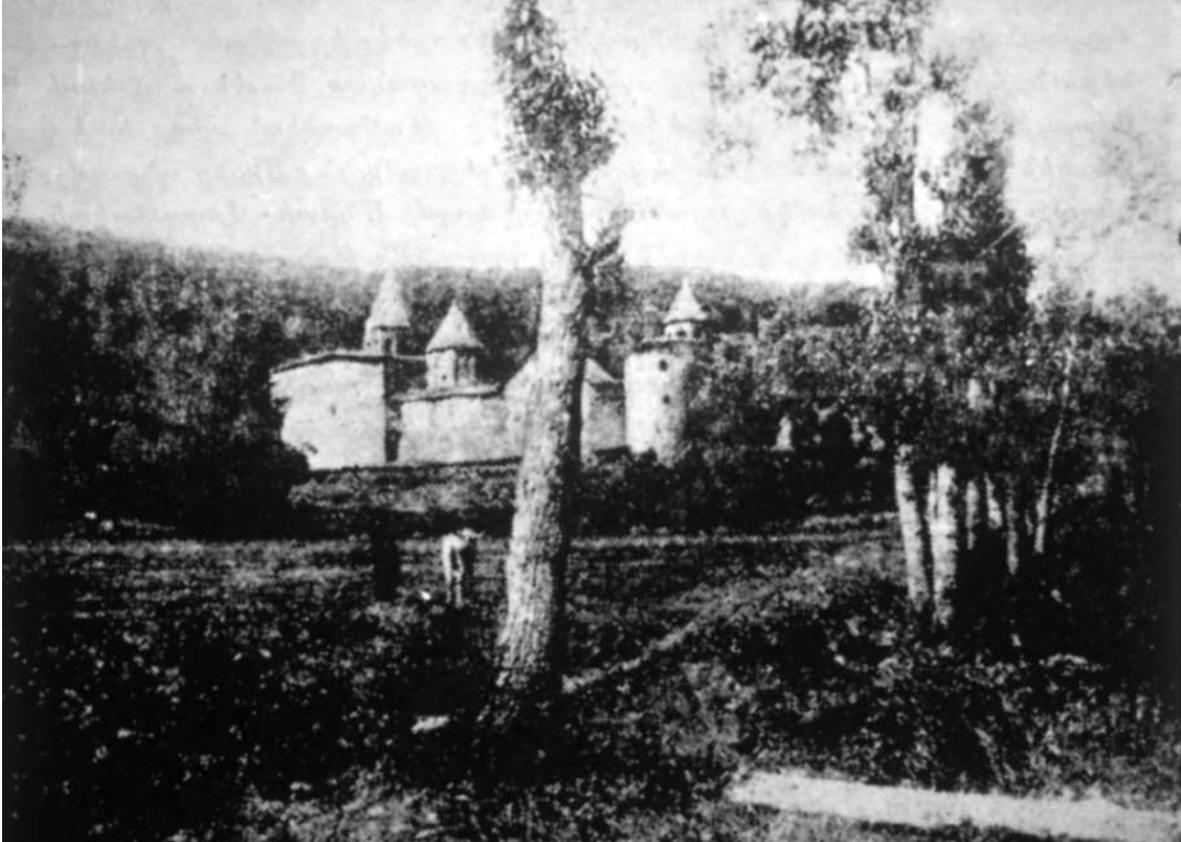
Location: Above the Suluca Village

Other names: Komer/Suluca/Kavar Village

Access: Climbing up the hill from the Suluca Village, the remains of the Yegherdut Monastery are 3 km at an elevation of 1860 m. Suluca Village is situated 20 km to the west of Mush city center. After reaching Suluca Village, access is only on foot uphill or by off-road vehicle.

2. DESCRIPTION

Yegherdut is a monastic complex and was a renowned scriptorium in the fifteenth century.⁹ The monastery was destroyed and abandoned by the end of the nineteenth century. Built in a linear order, the complex was comprised of three churches, most likely built by the thirteenth century,



Yegherdut Vank (Kévorkian and Paboudjian, ibid, p. 489)

⁹ First bibliographical evidence about the monastery is from XIII century by Vardan Areveltsi.



including also a small martyrium, two jamatuns and a belfry. The rectangular perimeter of the complex was built of large masonry blocks, brick and limestone. At the center of the eastern wall there was a circular rampart with additional ramparts along the southern side. The southernmost church in the arrangement is St. Stephan, another inscribed-cross church form with depositories at the corners and domed.¹⁰ Located to the north of St. Stephan and of the same dimension, St. Astvadzadzin opens onto the same gavith, from the west. Following the linear arrangement, St. Hovannes is the northernmost church in the complex and is a mono-nave basilica. The apse is identical with the two other churches, being semicircular with elongated sides towards the west. The gavith of this church has four pillars at the center and led directly to the neighboring churches through an entrance at the northern side. The belfry is an octagonal rotunda, supported by a tetra-pylon. Additionally, there were thirty, two-story cells, a prelacy, shed, as well as a school, bakery, refectory and a library built in the late nineteenth century, completing the monastic complex. At the northern end of the complex was located the cemetery of the monastery.

¹⁰ Typologically it is identical with St. Stephan of St.Karapet of Changli complex, St. Apostle church of Arakelots monastery and the neighboring St. Astvadzadzin.

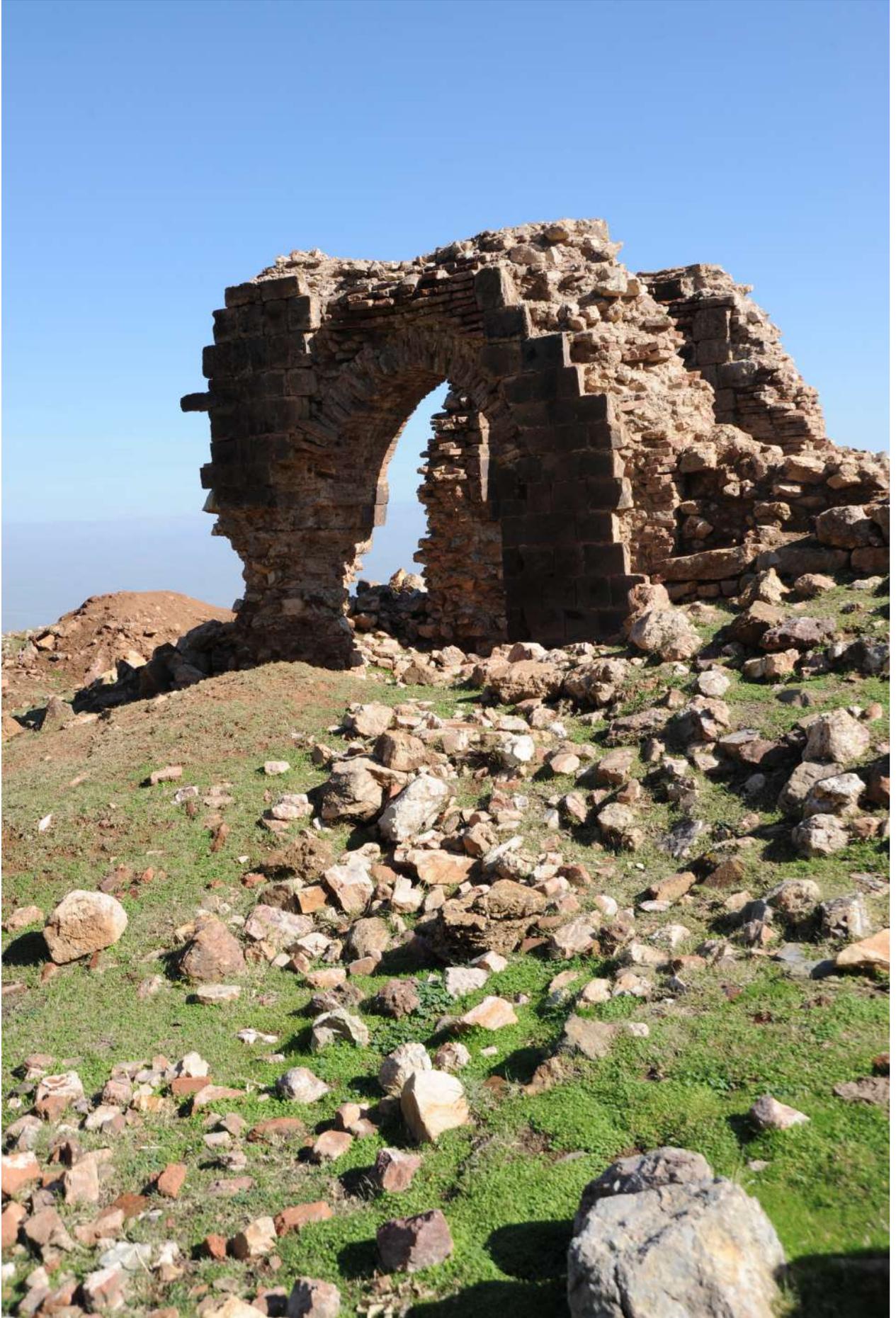
3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Treasure hunters as can be observed from the illegal excavations throughout the site of the monastic complex. Shepherds also use the area. A number of brick materials are preserved and remain at the site. Although most of the structure is demolished it is still possible to decipher the plan of some of the structures.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

An urgent conservation project for the whole site should be implemented. Illegal activities of treasure hunters must be stopped before the site suffers further damage. A thorough documentation project and further archival research should be conducted.





MERCİMEKKALE HÖYÜĞÜ

LENTIL CASTLE MOUND

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.95848, 41.52344

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Agricultural fields along the Erzurum-Mush Road

Other names: Vospnblur, Sakay / Vospipert

Access: The ruins of the structures are situated on top of the Mercimekkale mound, located 25km north from Mush city center to the east of Erzurum-Mush road. The base of the mound is accessible by vehicle but the summit of the mound from the road is another 600 m uphill accessible only on foot, 30-40 min by walking.

2. DESCRIPTION

Most recently, the mound of Mercimekkale was topped by a fortress constructed by Alaeddin Bey of Mush in 1800. Before construction of the fortress the mound was possibly one of the twenty-eight hills discovered in the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) period, which were used for communication purposes. Due to the substantial nature of the mound's geography and ar-



chaeological evidence on the slope, it is assumed that there was a fortress-like structure at Vospnblur dating back to Urartian times. While it was still standing, the fortress of Alaeddin Bey was part of the Van region. In the beginning of the 19th century, within a period of forty days, the fortress and city were reduced to rubble by Çeteci Pasha and his 15,000-strong forces.¹¹

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The ruins of the fortification are situated on top of the Mercimekkale mound, which is accessible only after an uphill trek. The ruins of the rectangular fortress with semicircular towers at its four corners are partially buried. Ruins belonging to various structures can be seen across the whole perimeter of the fortress. A brick structure with plastered walls that could have been used as a storage space for food or a well is preserved parallel to the old fortress wall ruins. Holes dug by treasure hunters are visible on the outside of the northeastern walls of the structure. The illegal excavation by the treasure hunters also revealed a part of the wall that is 2.5 meters in depth. Also visible are three large tunnels, probably built for drainage purposes that are well preserved in the southwest corner of the hill, immediately below the walls. At the southwestern foot of the mound the buried ruins of a structure that might have been a lower fortress or a palace complex have been exposed.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Mercimekkale mound has an important identity value for Mush as an easily identifiable geographical feature already used in promotional media. Survey and excavation work needs to be carried out in order to understand and document the medieval ruins and the earlier periods of the mound formation.



¹¹ The Dictionary of Location Names in Armenia and Adjacent Regions, Volume 4, Yerevan, 1998, page 177.

HIRSIZ KALESİ / THE CASTLE OF THIEVES

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

39.15104, 41.43022

District: Varto

Location: Aşağı Alagöz Village

Access: 4 km southwest of Varto towards Aşağı Alagöz village. Accessible by vehicle until the base. From the base, on foot the summit is an uphill walk for 15 minutes.



2. DESCRIPTION

Hırsız Kalesi ("the Castle of Thieves") is another archaeologically formed mound over-looking the Mush-Varto road and pass. Visible above the surface and along the side of the slopes are a grouping of megalithic rocks in disarray; their original purpose and usage is unclear. The presence of human remains suggests a graveyard on the top of the hill.

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The technical group spotted a number of late-medieval ceramic pottery sherds on the slopes of the hill during the visit. It was not possible to identify the dates of the graves on the hill but it was observed that many of them were dug up by treasure hunters. The forms of the graves suggest cromlech burials dating to Bronze Age.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

A field survey is essential to secure the dating of Hırsız Kalesi and to document the extent of the site, which should be registered as an archeological area for future studies regarding the cultural heritage of Mush and the region.



DERİK / YÜCETEPE / ASHTISHAT

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.96986, 41.45191

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Yücepetepe Village

Access: Derik is situated 6 km west of Mercimekkale Mound and northwest of the Mush plain, 30 km from the Mush city center. Accessible by vehicle.

2. DESCRIPTION

The historical village of Derik (or “Yücepetepe”) was an unassuming village with a population of around 600 Armenian inhabitants and a church called Surp Sahak. Today’s Derik village has approximately 260 houses and a population of 3000. It is believed that the town of Ashtishat, which was a famous pagan religious center in pre-Christian Armenia, was located close to Derik. After the acceptance of Christianity the pagan temples were destroyed and a church was built in their place. Three ecclesiastical meetings took place in Ashtishat; one meeting in 356 A.D. is particularly well documented.¹² The Armenian Catholicos, Sahak Partev, and his daughter Shushanik were buried in Ashtishat. A tomb was built above the grave of Sahak Partev. In the 7th century, after the Ashtishat monastery was destroyed, a new church was built in its place, which existed until 1915 and was called Surp Sahak. Surp Hovhannes Mgrdich and Surp Athanagiye chapels were also located nearby.

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The old structure of the small church has been preserved but remains in bad condition and currently serves as storage for hay by the villagers. The church has a rectangular layout and the roof, which is badly damaged, was vaulted. Decorative stones can be seen on the sidewalls of the structure. The entrance located on the west is locked and the windows are blocked off from the inside. The cladding stone of the exterior from the building has been removed. There are crosses etched into the lower section of the northern wall.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The visit to the village by the technical team took place at a later hour and due to the light conditions only the small church structure was briefly surveyed. However, upon closer inspection of some of the current village structures (storage areas, houses) further decorated spolia was spotted. Further survey needs to be conducted and the residents of the local village should be considered integral stakeholders in any cultural heritage program that will take place at the site.

¹² Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia, Volume 1, 1974, p. 493.



MALAZGİRT / MANAZKERT KALESİ

MALAZGİRT / MANAZKERT CITADEL

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

39.14692, 42.54504

District: Malazgirt / Manazkert

Location: Malazgirt / Manazkert city center

Other names: Manavazakert / Mantzikert

Access: Located within the city center of Malazgirt / Manazkert, the citadel is currently locked due to ongoing restoration work. Malazgirt / Manazkert city center is 135 km from Mush city center and is accessible by vehicle and public transportation.

2. DESCRIPTION

The citadel of Malazgirt / Manazkert is a fortified rectangular area with a tower on the southwestern side and a palace at the northwest end. The standard layout of the wall consists of a series of small, open backed, semi-circular towers projecting from a curtain wall. The citadel and the walled city had a three-tiered fortification. The Byzantine historian John Skylitzes wrote in the eleventh century that Malazgirt / Manazkert was a strong and impregnable city and had three-layered walls of black stone with five gates. Over a former gate there is an inscription, dated to the early thirteenth century. The city-gates have double towers on each side. Much of the black basalt wall of the medieval city survives and there is evidence that the wall was completely intact until about the end of the eighteenth century. Archaeological and historical evidence suggests that the city and citadel were abandoned during the medieval period. The present town is, for the most part, contained within the wall, which could date to the twelfth or thirteenth century reconstructions.



3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Upon observing the implementation of the ongoing restoration project, the technical team determined a number of problems at the site. The authenticity of the walls and the citadel park are in jeopardy due to past and the current heavy restoration work. A number of stones with Armenian inscriptions are haphazardly displayed in the no longer used citadel park, which used to house a tea garden on its grounds, which is also closed now.¹³ The largest tower of the citadel, built in the 11th century, has been particularly well preserved; however, most of the closed park area has been left to deteriorate.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The authorities in charge of the restoration must ensure that the work going on at the site is compliant with the international standards for conservation and restoration. The citadel park used to be a public space with landscaping; however, since the space fell out of use the condition has declined significantly. The park urgently needs a conservation, interpretation and landscaping project that will regenerate the space for public and touristic use. In line with contemporary aspects of cultural heritage management, the local community should actively participate in the leadership and planning process for this public and communal space.



¹³ Please see the notes of Karen Matevosyan on the inscriptions in appendix B.

MALAZGİRT / MANAZKERT TONOZLU YAPI

MALAZGİRT / MANAZKERT VAULTED STRUCTURE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

39.14794, 42.54416

District: Malazgirt / Manazkert

Location: Malazgirt / Manazkert city center

Access: This vaulted structure is 60 m from the citadel and is adjacent to the city walls, on 328th Street. Accessible by vehicle or on foot.

2. DESCRIPTION

Located close to the citadel this structure is constructed with basalt stone. This building is entered through a modest door, which opens into a spacious vaulted interior. Along the ceiling of the vault there are two openings, which allow in air and light. Not in use currently, the original use of the structure is unknown but is most likely dated to the medieval period.

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The vaulted structure was locked; entry required a key kept by local residents. While the building is in good condition structurally, at some point it has been used as a garbage dump.



4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The ownership of the structure needs to be determined. After cleaning and minimal intervention the space can be repurposed to meet the needs of the public or the private owner.



KIZ KÖPRÜSÜ / MAIDENS BRIDGE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

39.13003, 42.54801

District: Malazgirt / Manazkert

Location: Malazgirt / Manazkert city surroundings.

Access: 2 km to the south of Malazgirt / Manazkert city center and about 500 m east of Ahlat-Malazgirt / Manazkert Road. Accessible by vehicle.

2. DESCRIPTION

South of the city of Malazgirt / Manazkert, Kız Köprüsü (meaning “Maidens bridge” in Turkish) spans a small tributary of the Murat River. The bridge is comprised of two megalithic stone slabs of basalt, which are tenuously supported by the modest stone constructions on either bank of the streambed. Süphan Mountain is visible in the distance.



3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The stone constructions on both sides of the stream are in need of conservation. The garbage dump around the bridge needs to be cleared.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The megalithic bridge in the vicinity of Malazgirt / Manazkert is considered by scholars participating in the workshop to predate the medieval period. After further research on the history is complete, a plan for the presentation and interpretation of the site should be prepared.



HATUN KÖPRÜSÜ / LADIES BRIDGE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

39.15187, 42.51041

District: Malazgirt / Manazkert

Location: Malazgirt / Manazkert city center

Access: This Bridge spans a tributary of the Murat River and is located 2.5 km west of the Malazgirt / Manazkert city center, on the Mush-Ağrı Road.

2. DESCRIPTION

Spanning another tributary of the Murat River to the west of the Malazgirt / Manazkert city center, Hatun Köprüsü was originally constructed with shaved tuff stone as a three-arched bridge, with only one arch now surviving.



3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The historic bridge, used solely by pedestrians, stands to the side of a new bridge for vehicular use. A good deal of past conservation work is visible on both sides of the arch.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Hatun Köprüsü should be included in a comprehensive cultural heritage plan for Mush and Malazgirt / Manazkert. Conservation work is needed and interpretative information for the site would be beneficial.



GARMIR VANK / DERASOR / KIZIL MANASTIR RED MONASTERY

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

39.12346, 42.51375

District: Malazgirt / Manazkert

Location: Adalar Neighborhood

Access: 5 km from Malazgirt / Manazkert city center to the southwest. Accessible by car but further exploration is necessary by foot.

2. DESCRIPTION

In Adalar district, southwest of Malazgirt / Manazkert, there are remains of a residential area and a church which is thought to be Derasor ("Red Monastery") or Karmir Vank in Armenian.¹⁴ The area is now identifiable through a landscape strewn with tumbled basalt rocks on the banks of one of the tributaries of the Aratzen River.¹⁵

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

It was not possible to locate the church during the visit of the technical group. Local residents shared with the group that in the construction of the primary school many cut stones (some with inscribed crosses) were used. On some of the rocks inscribed crosses were observed.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Further survey and research needs to be conducted in the area of Adalar.



¹⁴ Bishop Trdat Palian, *Armenian Monasteries*, Ejmiatzin, 2008, page 247.

¹⁵ The territory is located 1560 m above sea level, geographical coordinates 39° 07' 22.51" N, 42°30'44.74" E



ERMENİ MEZARLIĞI / ARMENIAN CEMETERY

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

39.14948, 42.54094

District: Malazgirt / Manazkert

Location: City center on Hastane Caddesi

Access: Accessible by vehicle.

2. DESCRIPTION

The Armenian cemetery in Malazgirt / Manazkert is located in the city center directly across from one of the city gates.

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The Armenian cemetery received funds from a donor for the construction of a short wall around the perimeter of the site though it remains a publicly accessible area where people can enter freely. Upon inspection the assessment group noted a number of destroyed graves by treasure hunters including a number of damaged gravestones.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The cemetery should be protected from treasure hunters looking for gold. For this purpose public education seminars regarding the cultural heritage of the city along with more active measures of engaging the local community as participants in the planning process could be organized and better security measures should be put into effect.





OKÇUHAN / OGHJIN / OKÇUHAN VILLAGE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

39.15311, 42.47901

District: Malazgirt / Manazkert

Other names: Okçuyan / Oğçin

Access: Located 8 km to the west of Malazgirt / Manazkert city center and on the north side of the Mush-Ağrı Road.

2. DESCRIPTION

Okçuhan (Okchia(n), Okçuyan, Oghjin¹⁶) Village was comprised of about 55 households in the early twentieth century, including a church which no longer exists. Visible remains include rock formations etched with crosses located in the southwest part of the village. On the western side of the village there is a particularly beautifully carved stone with a cross, probably dated to the twelfth or thirteenth century.

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The church no longer exists. A number of khachkars and inscriptions were observed at the site.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Further research needs to be conducted in the village to document the rock-cut inscriptions, grave-stones and khachkars.



¹⁶ The Dictionary of Location Names in Armenia and Adjacent Regions, Volume 5, Yerevan, 2001, page 477. It is possible that Oghjin coincides with a village called Mkhjin, mentioned in the same region, which, in 1909 had an Armenian and Kurdish population of 45 households.



For notes on inscriptions see appendix B

KIRKÖY / SIRONK / KIRKÖY VILLAGE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.82921, 41.65817

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Kirköy Village

Other names: Tsronk, Serong

Access: 26 km driving from Mush city center. Situated northeast of Mush city center. It is 10 km north of the airport. Accessible by car.

2. DESCRIPTION

Sironk (Tsronk, Serong, or Kirköy) is historically an Armenian village in the Mush region with two churches, St. Hakob and St. Sargis. The larger of the two churches, St. Hakob, was a basilica construction with a baptistery, decorated with a relief of a seventeenth century cross. Currently, only the seventeenth century vaulted basilica structure of St. Sargis remains (also referred to in some literature as St. Grevorg), which is smaller in size (8 x 6 m) and is made of the same masonry, standing on the small hill in the center of the village. The apse of St. Sargis is semicircular and the altar was divided into three equal sections separated from one another with vaulted arches, although only the section of stone next to the altar has been preserved. Two high windows allow in a dim natural light.



The walls of the church were arranged in layers, which suggest that it was built in the early medieval period (5-7th centuries), probably replacing an older church. The window on the eastern side of the altar, which likely had three chambers on each side, was blocked at some point. The two chambers located nearest to the window served as niches for church ceremonies; while the last was a hidden passage that led to the top of the altar (this is particularly visible on the right side of the dilapidated section of the altar). There is also a window on the western side immediately above the entrance, which only opens inwards. The later renovation of the second or central niche, located in the left or northern section of the altar, involved the use of a cross with arms of equal size, etched on a basalt slab.¹⁷ In various sections inside the church sculpted cross-stones (probably dated to the 13th century) have been used. On a baptismal pool some of the inscribed stones along the edges have been preserved in the northern section. Burials were organized around the church.

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

A treasure hunter's pit has been newly and illegally dug in the altar section of St. Sargis, which has revealed the base. The window openings are haphazardly blocked. As a precaution against illegal excavations within the church the door is currently kept closed and locked. The local authority (muhtar) of the village provided the key for the visit of the interior of the church. The historical structure is now significantly damaged– the arches in the church's external corner as well as the internal vaults are missing, as are the shaved stones on the edges of the entrance and the windows. Some sections of the soil-covered roof have collapsed and some repairs have been made with concrete blocks in certain parts, especially above the entrance, at the altar and on the window in the east. Older residential and commercial structures are visible in various parts of the village along with two, heavily damaged cemeteries.



¹⁷ Crosses with equal arms, expanding radially, and enclosed in a circle, or so called Greek crosses, were characteristic features in Armenian early medieval art. They were widespread both as stand-alone cross monuments and also as inscriptions in the design of various religious structures.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The ownership and registration status of the church should be determined. A conservation plan should then be prepared for the historical structure.





KEPENEK / ARAGH / KEPENEK VILLAGE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.70808, 41.54855

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Kepenek village

Other names: Arak / Ar'ag

Access: By car 15-minute drive from Mush center.

2. DESCRIPTION

Aragh (Kepenek) was an Armenian village through the early twentieth century. Located close to the Arakelots Monastery, other extent remains near this village include an earlier settlement and a cemetery, dating back to the seventh century.¹⁸ Within the village are the remains of a church dated to 831 AD called Surp Kirakos.¹⁹ Remnants of older residential buildings of the village are constructed with pieces of sculpted stone.

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Surp Kirakos is preserved as a vaulted, half-ruined structure and is now used as a stable. Most of the houses of the village either have incorporated spolia in their walls or are residential structures built by previous communities, which retain their original function.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

A conservation project for the cultural heritage of the village should incorporate the local residents as well as the Arakelots monastery complex remains on the hills of the village.



¹⁸ Hovhan Mamikonyan, *The History of Taron*, Yerevan, 1989, p. 76 <<http://armenianhouse.org/mamikonyan/4-history-taron-hovhan.html>>

¹⁹ <<http://kuyerel.org/yazarlarimiz/YaziGoster.aspx?id=1506&yazarId=62>>



The City of Mush (Kévorkian and Paboudjian, ibid, p. 486)



SURP MARINE VANK / SURP MARINE KİLİSESİ

SURP MARINE CHURCH

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.72871, 41.48761

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Mush city center

2. DESCRIPTION

The structure is thought to be the Surp Marine Church is located in the historic Armenian district (Tsori Tağ) of central Mush.²⁰

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The building has lost its roof and, as a result, the structure is open to the effects of weather conditions, which have caused further damage. There is free and uncontrolled access to the building through open windows and doors, which makes it an easy target for littering and vandalism.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Further research and architectural survey needs to be conducted at the site in order to securely identify and document the historic structure.



²⁰ According to Agos Armenian-Turkish weekly, destruction of the Armenian district started back in summer 2013, with only walls of the church left standing today. The Church was a part of the St. Apostles monastery complex, fully destroyed in 2015.



HAMAMLAR / PUBLIC BATHS

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.72759, 41.48826

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Mush city center.

Access: A short walk of 5 min. from the road.

2. DESCRIPTION

The structure identified as the public bath is located next to the stream.

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The historic structure is in ruinous condition.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The bath structure needs urgent conservation and a repurposing plan.





ARKEOLOJİK ALAN / ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.73013, 41.48221

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Mush City Center, near the Castle

Access: Possible to access by car or on foot. A high wall surrounds the site.

2. DESCRIPTION

There is currently no information on what the site was originally. The technical group coincidentally, on the way down to the city center from the Mush citadel, spotted the excavation area.

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Surrounded by a high wall the site is located within the city boundaries and next to the road leading down from the Mush citadel. The current condition of the site suggests a possible excavation. The building elements are haphazardly scattered throughout the site.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The interesting and unexpected site was discovered by chance and must be further researched in the archives as well as in the field in order to identify and document the artifacts and architectural stones visible above ground.





MURAT SU KÖPRÜSÜ / ARADZANI GAMURCH MURAT SU BRIDGE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.86279, 41.51265

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Located on the Murat River.

Other names: Arsanias/Arsania for Murad Su

Access: 14km to the north of Mush city center. Accessible by vehicle.

2. DESCRIPTION

The Murat Su Bridge crosses the Murat River. The repair inscription's date has been read as 1817. One of the travelers who recorded this bridge in the early 1840's noted that the restored arches, which were pointed, could be distinguished from the original rounded ones. Despite the repair of 1817, the travelers found a heavily damaged bridge. Only six arches were complete, and by the late 19th century the number was down to three. A restoration subsequent to the inscription, perhaps immediately before World War I or between the World Wars, put the bridge into its present condition.

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The bridge structure is heavily restored; however, it is possible to distinguish between different phases of restoration and part of the original structure still remains.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Murat Su Bridge can become a point of visit for visitors to Mush in the larger context of a Mush Cultural Heritage program.





TARİHİ SU DEĞİRMENİ / HISTORIC WATERMILL

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.75027, 41.60688

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

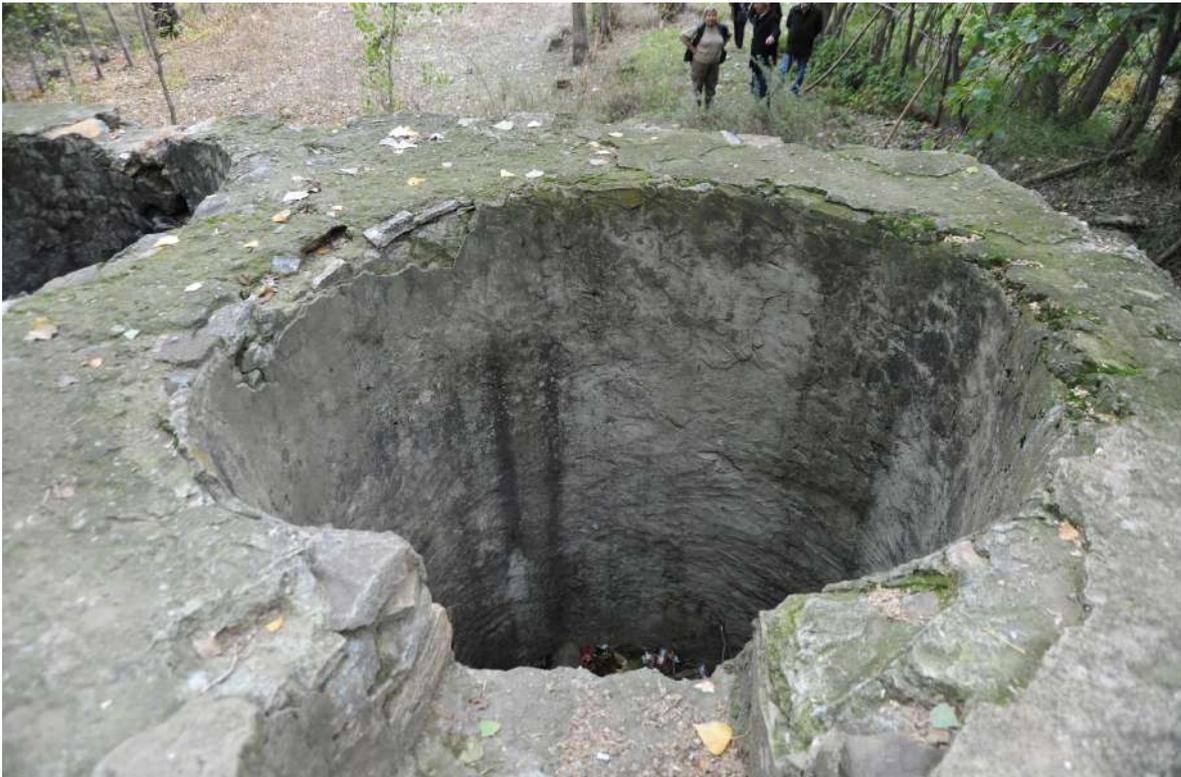
Location: Sungu Village

Other names: Norshen /Norşen /Norşin which means "new structure" in Armenian.

Access: By car. 11 km east of the city center towards the airport. 3 km from the Mush-Bitlis Road.

2. DESCRIPTION

Sungu (Norshen) was a large village located in the eastern part of the Mush fields, between two tributaries of the Karasu River (Meghraget), which would overflow in the spring, turning the surrounding area of Sungu into a peninsula. Many watermills were built in this village due to this abundance of water and one of the more interesting structures is still preserved. This particular structure is 4m high and consists of two wells, one larger with a smaller one dug on top where the flowing water entered, rotating the rocks of the mill. The water, which filled the wells, ran through two openings on the lower level of the structure, while the remaining overflow on the platform was drained off through a pipe. Sungu also had two churches, Surb Mariné (also referred to as Surb Mariam Astvatzatzin) and Surb Sofia (of the Armenian Catholics), as well as an Armenian cemetery.



3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The watermill, known among locals as belonging to “Bedros / Petros,” is no longer used due to insufficient water supply. No other surveys were carried out at the village other than the visit to the watermill.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Known historically as a rich and cosmopolitan village, Sungu/Norshen can be a primary area for an oral history research. The current villagers who have roots in Siirt (Arab community) and the Caucasus, still have stories about the Armenian residents of the village, including the owner of the watermill.



MOKUNK / SOĞUCAK / SOĞUCAK VILLAGE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.72651, 41.51222

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Soğucak Village

Other names: Mongok /Mogunk/ Mogdun

Access: By car 15 minute drive from Mush city center.

2. DESCRIPTION

Soğucak (Mokunk) is another historically Armenian village in the vicinity of Mush, which was inhabited by a substantial population and relied on an agriculturally based economy through the early twentieth century. Similar to Aragh and according to various and contradictory historical accounts earlier occupation of the site may be dated to the seventh century.²¹ According to sources there was a church in the village and remains of the village and church could be seen in the beginning of the twentieth century.²²

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Due to the schedule of the field mission it was not possible to arrive at Soğucak in the remaining hours of daylight in order to inspect the village. 2 km to the south of Mokunk village, the ruins of the Astghaberd (now called Haspet) fortress can be found preserved on a hill.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Soğucak village should be examined on a future field mission.

²¹ There is the opinion that Mokunk was mentioned by historian Hovhan Mamikonyan in the 7th century as Mokkuns, so named because the Magi were martyred and buried there. But the place mentioned by the historian is actually the village of Grhen in the Hashtenits region and cannot be identified as Mokunk. (Hovhan Mamikonyan, *The History of Taron*, Yerevan, 1989, p. 99, 106 It is also mentioned as Mogtun. <http://armenianhouse.org/mamikonyan/4-history-taron-hovhan.html>
Mokunk is also mentioned as Makunk or Makunats. Astghaberd was often called Makunats Berd.)

²² *The Dictionary of Location Names in Armenia and Adjacent Regions*, Volume 1, Yerevan, 1986, p. 796. St. Melik-Bakhshyan, *Armenian Places of Worship*, Yerevan, 2009, p. 92.



KIZILAĞAÇ / GARMIRDZAR

RED TREE VILLAGE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.80045, 41.30938

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Kızılağaç Village

Other names: Kızılhaç / Karmır Tzar

Access: Located close to the Kızılağaç Village, on the north of the Mush-Kulp Road. Again this village is situated to the west of Mush city center, approximately 20km. Accessible by car.

2. DESCRIPTION

Kızılağaç is a village in the Mush region located between the monasteries of Surp Garabet and Surp Hovhannes, at the foot of the Kozma Mountain. Well known for tobacco processing, the inhabitants worked as land cultivators, animal rearers and artisans through the early twentieth century. The Armenian residents named the village for the red-leaved tree species in the forest near the village.²³ Historical evidence of the village is available from the fifteenth century when it was mentioned in a decree by the Catholicos of the Armenian Church²⁴ and is described in Khachik Dashent's novel *The Call of the Plowmen*.²⁵

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

There are no visible architectural remains of the historical Karmirtzar located close to the current Kızılağaç village. The brick production shops close to the stream are also gone but traces are visible in the plain of the small stream. Local residents mentioned a disease that took over the community of Karmirtzar. A few illegal excavation pits were observed.

In the Kızılağaç village there was a church that no longer exists; however, a number of older residential houses have been preserved, some of which are mentioned today as being Armenian.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Further field surveys and archival research needs to be conducted in order to determine the location of different structures and to document the remains.

²³ Karmir Tzar literally “red tree” in Armenian.

²⁴ In a 1445 decree of the Catholicos of All Armenians Grigor Makvetsi, Karmir Tzar is mentioned as Ghzlaghach or Gzlaghach, as part of the land belonging to the Surb Hovhannes monastery. Manuscript List of Mush, of the Surb Arakelots-Targmanchats Monastery and its Surroundings, Sahak S. Muradyan, Nazareth P. Martirosyan, Jerusalem, 1967, pp. 199-204. G. Badlayan. The 1445 Decree of Subr Hovhannes (Yeghrdut) of Taron, Ejmiatzin, 1997, N 7, pp. 88-109.
<[http://tert.nla.am/archive/HGG%20AMSAGIR/echmiadzin-vagharshapat/1997/1997\(10\).pdf](http://tert.nla.am/archive/HGG%20AMSAGIR/echmiadzin-vagharshapat/1997/1997(10).pdf)>

²⁵ <<http://armenianhouse.org/dashtents/novels-am/ploughmen/chapter11.html>>



Kızılağaç, Mush (Kévorkian and Paboudjian, ibid, p. 491)







YAZITLI TAŞLAR / INSCRIBED STONES

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.72982, 41.48569

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Mush city center.

Access: Vehicle accessible.

2. DESCRIPTION

The inscribed stones, stone basins along with historic parts of residential structures on display at the garden of a coffee house in the area which is speculated to be in the location of Mush Castle.





Armenian neighborhood in Mush city (Kévorkian and Paboudjian, ibid, p. 484)



The City of Mush (Kévorkian and Paboudjian, ibid, p. 483)





ULU CAMI / ULU MOSQUE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.73011, 41.48792

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Mush city center

2. DESCRIPTION

The Ulu Cami of Mush is located to the west of the Alaeddin Bey Camii and Arslanlı Han and was likely constructed in the fourteenth century, with many repairs since. The brick and stone structure is a rectangular prayer hall, covered with a dome in the center and vaults on either side. The minaret was built in 1968.

3. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The mosque is under restoration. Upon conversation with the stonemasons and observation of the site it was discovered that the bricks used in the current restoration are sourced from the other historical structures around Mush. Either the company or other individuals are providing the restorations with historic bricks, which are cleaned and then reused. Differing from the spolia however, these bricks are probably sourced from other registered historic sites that are unattended.





HACI ŞEREF CAMİİ / HACI ŞEREF MOSQUE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.72987, 41.48911

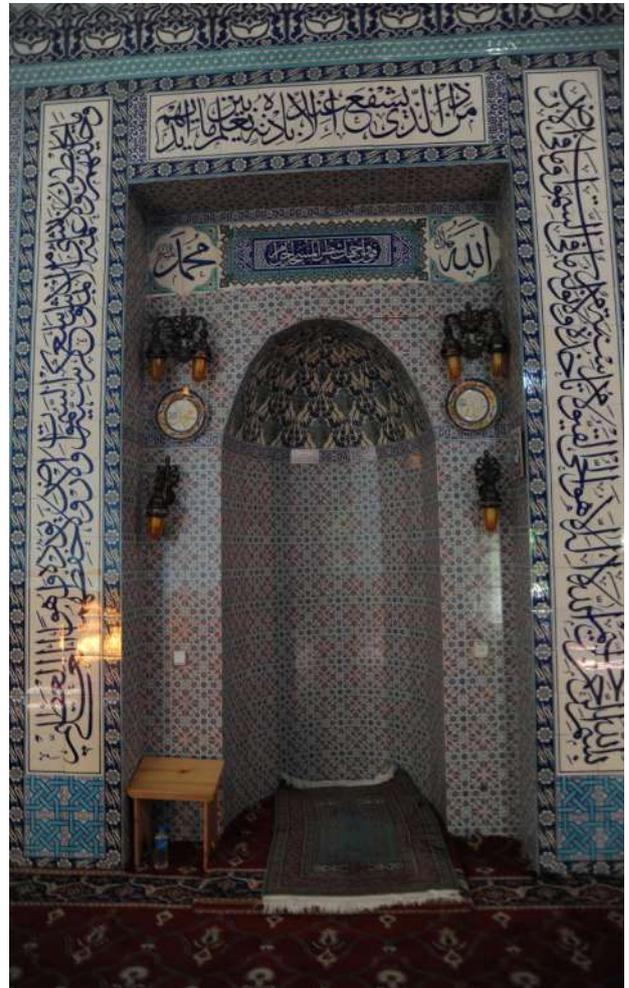
District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Mush city center

2. DESCRIPTION

The Hacı Şeref Camii was likely a seventeenth century addition to the already existing Alaeddin Bey Han on the road to Mush. A large central dome with smaller domes on the sides covers the rectangular prayer hall. It has a wooden portico and a minaret, which was built in 1902.





ALAEDDİN CAMİİ / ALAEDDİN MOSQUE

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.73082, 41.49015

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

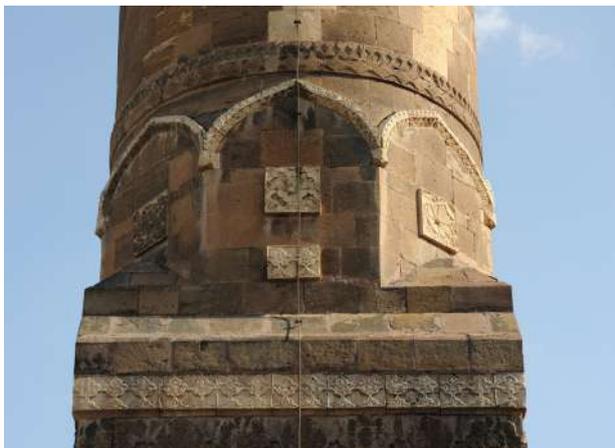
Location: Mush city center

2. DESCRIPTION

The Alaeddin Camii is located close to the center of the old town and can be dated to the early eighteenth century. The main prayer hall is roofed with a dome, with the adjacent spaces covered by smaller domes and vaulted ceilings. Particularly interesting, carved stone decoration can be found on the interior's columns and on the muqarnas on the doorways of the portico and the prayer hall. At the base of the minaret are decorations and inscriptions written by the Armenian constructor addressed to the Muslim users of the mosque.

For notes on inscriptions see appendix B.





YILDIZ HAN

1. LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

38.73061, 41.48945

District: Mush Merkez / Central District

Location: Mush city center, on Gazi Caddesi.

2. DESCRIPTION

In the old district of Mush, on the left side of the road stretching down toward the Alaeddin Bey Mosque (about 30 meters away from the mosque), there is a two-storey, three-arched building decorated with sculpted reliefs. There was an inscription in Armenian under the left arch, which is now perished (few letters are discernible.)

For notes on inscriptions see [appendix B](#)





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APPENDIX A

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Gevorg Ter-Gabrielyan

Nazar Binatlı

Hera Büyüktaşçıyan

Igor Dorfman-Lazarev

APPENDIX A

SCHEDULE OF FIELD ASSESSMENT VISIT

Arrival Day – Monday, October 20th (evening arrival)

Day 1 – Tuesday, October 21st

St. Karapet (Çark Kilise, Çengilli Kilise) Çengilli – Yukarı Yongalı

St. Mary's Chapel and Workshop area close to Yukarı Yongalı

Mercimekkale Mound

Murat Su Bridge

Derik / Yüce-tepe

Day 2 – Wednesday, October 22nd

Hırsız Kale

Malazgirt / Manazkert / Citadel

Malazgirt / Manazkert / Kız Köprüsü

Malazgirt / Manazkert / Adalar

Malazgirt / Manazkert / Hatun Köprüsü

Malazgirt / Manazkert / Vaulted structure

Malazgirt / Manazkert / Okçuhan

Day 3 – Thursday, October 23rd

Surp Hagop or Surp Sarkis Church in Tsronk/Sironk (today Kirköy village)

Old watermill at Norşen (today Sungu village)

Arakelots

Aspediberd Fortress

Day 4 – Friday, October 24th

Yegherdut Monastery

Mush City / St. Marine

Mush City / Bathhouses

Day 5 – Saturday, October 25th (half-day)

Mush City - Yukarı Ermeni Mahallesi (Verin Tağ / Tsori Tağ) – demolished houses.

Mush City / Citadel area

Mush City / Archeological area (close to the citadel)

Mush City / Ulu Mosque

Mush City / Alaeddin Mosque

Mush City / Hacı Şeref Mosque

Mush City / Yıldızlı Han

APPENDIX B

NOTES ON INSCRIPTIONS

All notes on inscriptions by Karen Matevosyan

SURP GARABED MONASTERY COMPLEX

There were many inscriptions in this famous monastery, some of which were reflected in literature. (H. Vosgiyan, *Monasteries of Daron-Duruperan*, Vienna, 1953, p. 134-244).

Currently the monastery is completely destroyed. Local Kurdish population has used its stones for construction of their houses. Carved stones of the monastery and various inscriptions can be seen on the walls of these houses.

1. One of the inscriptions under the khachkar has been preserved on the wall of one of the houses constructed to the east of the monastery. It reads:

I KRIKOR VARTABED AND TEACHER KHARIPSHAN ERECT THIS CROSS HERE IN 1518. FOR LIBERATION OF MYSELF AND MY SPIRITUAL BROTHER HAYRABED AND MY BROTHERS ISDE-PANOS YEBISGOPOS, ARAMSH, GARABED, KARIM, KARIKHAN.



The inscription is written in the name of Krikor Vardabed. The word VARBDS follows the name. It is also possible to interpret it as "VARBEDS" *(MY MASTER). However, we are inclined to assume that it refers to VARTABED, which is more likely to be the case. It is also possible that the names in the inscription are also mentioned in other sources.

2. A khachkar intertwined with other stones can be seen on the wall of another house located to the north of the complex.

On the upper part of the cross it reads:

ՏՐ (DER) ԱՄ (ASDVADZ)

On the inner corners of the cross frame it reads:

ՅԱ (HĪSUS) ՔԱ (KRĪSDOS)

On the bottom it reads:

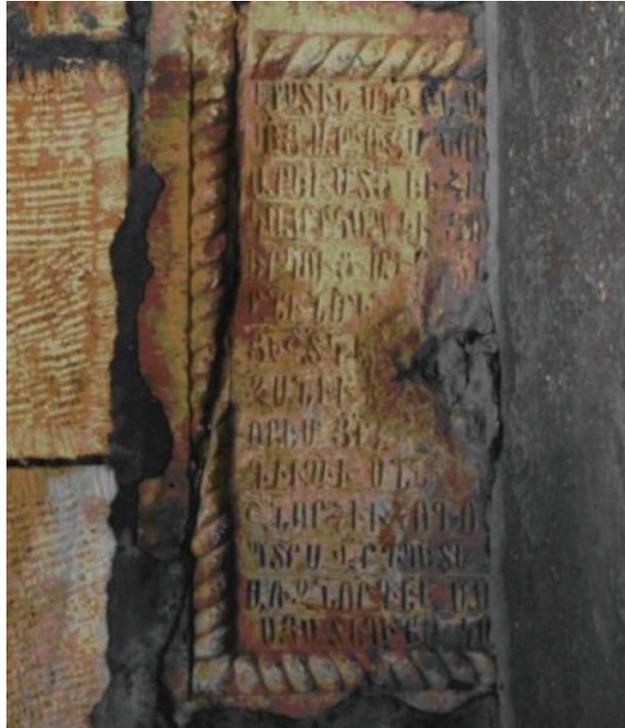
OUR HOLLY CROSS HAS BEEN ERECTED FOR THE MEMORY OF APRAHAMVARTABED AND HIS PARENTS (1706)



The *khachkar* was erected in memory of priest Apraham, preaching kindness, and his parents. This suggests that priest Apraham mentioned in the inscription may be Armenian Catholicos Apraham II Mshetsi (or Hoshapli). Yet he received the title of priest in 1703 and was placed in Mush Surb Garabed Monastery in 1704. While he was serving as the priest of the monastery between 1717-1730, in 1730-1734 he was the Armenian Catholicos (Encyclopedia of Armenian Churches, 1st fascicule of All Armenian Catholicoses, Echmiadzin, 2008 p. 10)

Another inscription in the same monastery mentioning the name of Apraham approximately with the same content and dating back to 1718 is cited in the book of H. Vosgian (H. Vosgiyan, age. p. 138.208).

3. A stone with another inscription is found on the wall of a house to the north of the monastery down the hill. Probably the inscription was framed with two or three stone pieces. The first piece is preserved.



The inscription mentions the name of priest Bedros. It is confirmed that a priest with this name was living in 1820ies. (H. Vosgiyan, age. p.224-232)

4. The inscription on the wall of a house to the north of the monastery reads:

THIS CROSS... TO MEMAR AVAK AND HIS LATE SPOUSE AND...



The inscription is a gift to the architect or construction foreman Avak and his late spouse. (For the term “memar” mentioned here refer to the chapter on Mush inscriptions.)

MALAZGİRT / MANAZKERT CITADEL

A fully preserved grave stone is found in Malazgirt / Manazkert citadel. According to the information that we accessed, it has been brought here from the cemetery. Probably it dates back to 16th-17th centuries. Unfortunately we were able to register only this part of the inscription (right up corner) stating the following:

.....IN YEAR (40) I VARDIG ERECTED THIS CROSS. FOR MY SPOUSE AND MYSELF

A cross on one of the edges (upper) of the stone, probably the west, edge has been engraved, while on the opposite side an inscription was found.



OKÇUHAN VILLAGE

The following inscriptions have been found near the crosses engraved on the rocks to southeast of Oğçin village, located 7 km to the west from Malazgirt / Manazkert:

MY CROSS

HAS BEEN ERECTED



ALAEDDİN MOSQUE

The Armenian churches in the city have been destroyed and no inscriptions were found nearby. However, surprisingly, Armenian inscriptions were found on the minaret of Alaadin Bey mosque, located in the area which is considered to be central.

YERANOS MEMAR (1748)

Even though the text is short, it gives holistic information in sense of history and inscription expertise. Yeranos (a version of Irenios modified to Armenian) is a name that is more frequently met in 14th-15th centuries. "Memar" means architect. ("me'mār" meaning 'architect' - a word with Arabic roots that later was adopted in Farsi, in Turkish "mimar" "architect" (Lambton, Persian vocabulary, Cambridge, 1961, 154, 197).

In the form of meymar the word is often found in Armenian writings. For example, Maymar Diradur built a narthex at the Varak monastery near Van in 1648. (It was used as Surp Kevork Church in 19th century.) Krikor Maymar constructed the walls of St. Mariam monastery in Rshduni land (south of Van lake) in 1663 and was registered in the inscriptions as follows: "The walls have been constructed with the hands of Meymar Krikor" (S. Parkhutaryan, Armenian Architecture and Masonry in Middle Ages. Yerevan 1963, p.111-113). The architect originating from Vaspuragan, who constructed the bell tower of St. Ejmiadzin and Sughn church, is mentioned as MR. MEYMAR on the grave stone (1667) in the village of Mugn, Hizanlı. (S. Saghumyan, Who Built the Bell Tower of Ejmiadzin Cathedral and When? Ejmiadzin 1976, Yerevan 1976, p. 30. Also G. Mateosyan St. Kevork Monastery of Maghnu. Yerevan 2000. p. 43). As mentioned above, we also came across with the name of Avak Memar in one of the inscriptions in St. Garabed Monastery in Mush. According to the Mush records, architect Yeranos constructed the minaret in 1748.



YILDIZ HAN

Under the right arch an Ottoman Turkish Arabic script reads:

SCULPTOR BENIAMIN

YILDIZLAR HAN

1307 (1889-1890)

In Armenian the date is erased. However, according to a drawing, the probable date is 1891.



APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY OF TERMINOLOGY

Belfry

The *belfry* is a structure that encloses the bell chamber and is a part of the bell tower. The walls of the belfry have openings for the bells to sound. The term can also refer to the entire bell tower.

Cromlech

Cromlech is a term used for prehistoric megalithic structures.

Gavit or zhamatun (jamatun)

Meaning “church house,” *zhamatun* is a part of the Medieval Armenian churches and monasteries serving as a narthex, mausoleum and assembly room. The square-planned structure was usually attached to the western side of the church.

Khachkar

Also referred to as Armenian cross-stones, *khachkars* are carved, memorial stele bearing a cross and are often decorated with additional motifs such as rosettes, interlaces, and botanical motifs. They are characteristic of Medieval Armenian culture.

In 2010 the symbolism and craftsmanship behind *khachkars* were inscribed in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/decisions/5.COM/6.1>

Spolia

Spolia refers to the reuse of ancient building materials, sculpture, gravestones or decorated architectural stones in a newer construction. This ancient practice has been widespread as the readily available materials of former monuments and sites were, for various reasons (e.g. economic, religious, social, convenience), repurposed by later communities in their construction activities. Usage of spolia is particularly interesting for historians, archaeologists and architectural historians.

This report and field visit should be seen as a preliminary study to map the heritage of Mush region, a landscape interlaced with both tangible and intangible heritage that has played an important role throughout its history, standing at the crossroads of a number of civilizations.

