



ANI: THE CAPITAL OF MEDIEVAL ARMENIA

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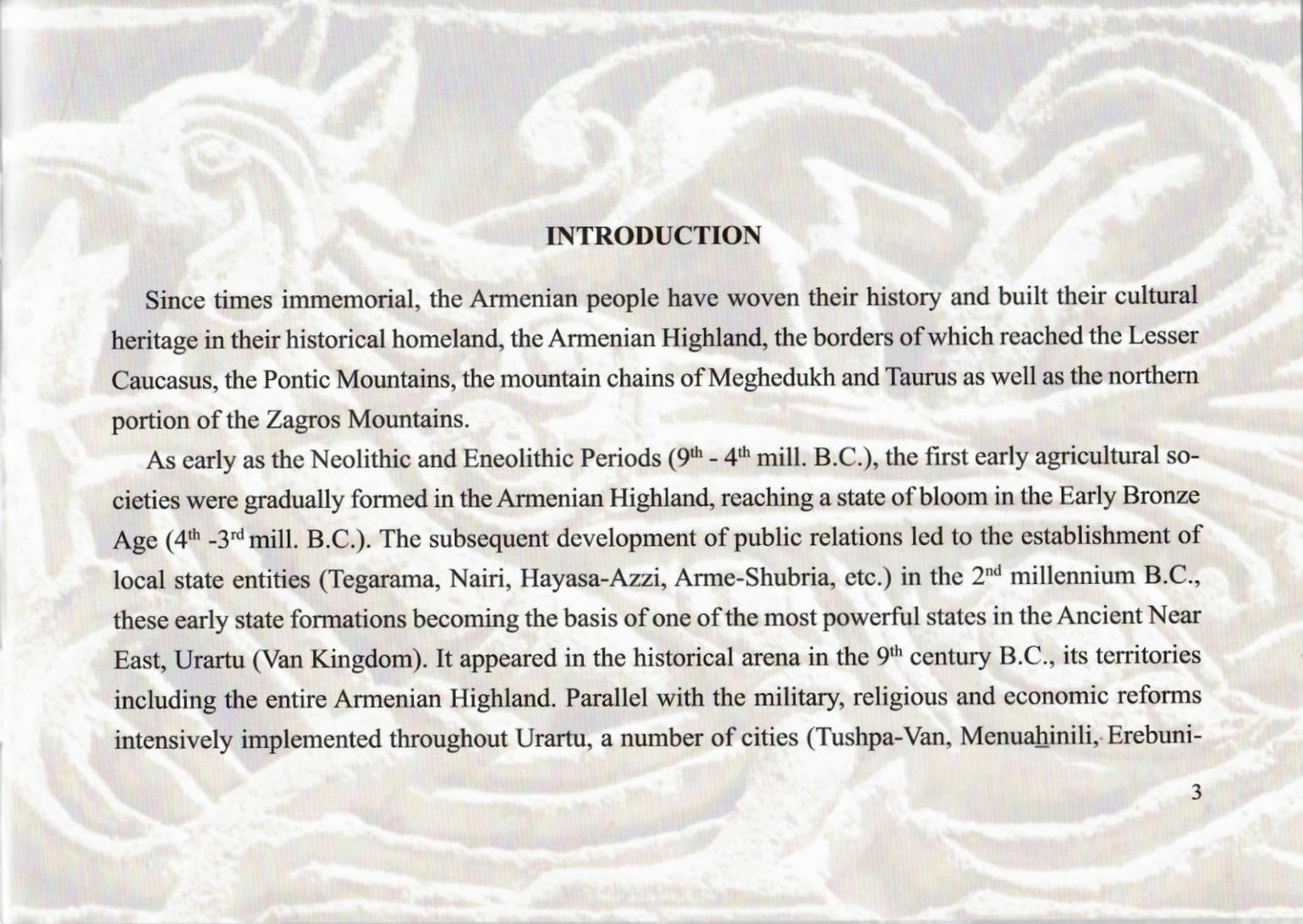


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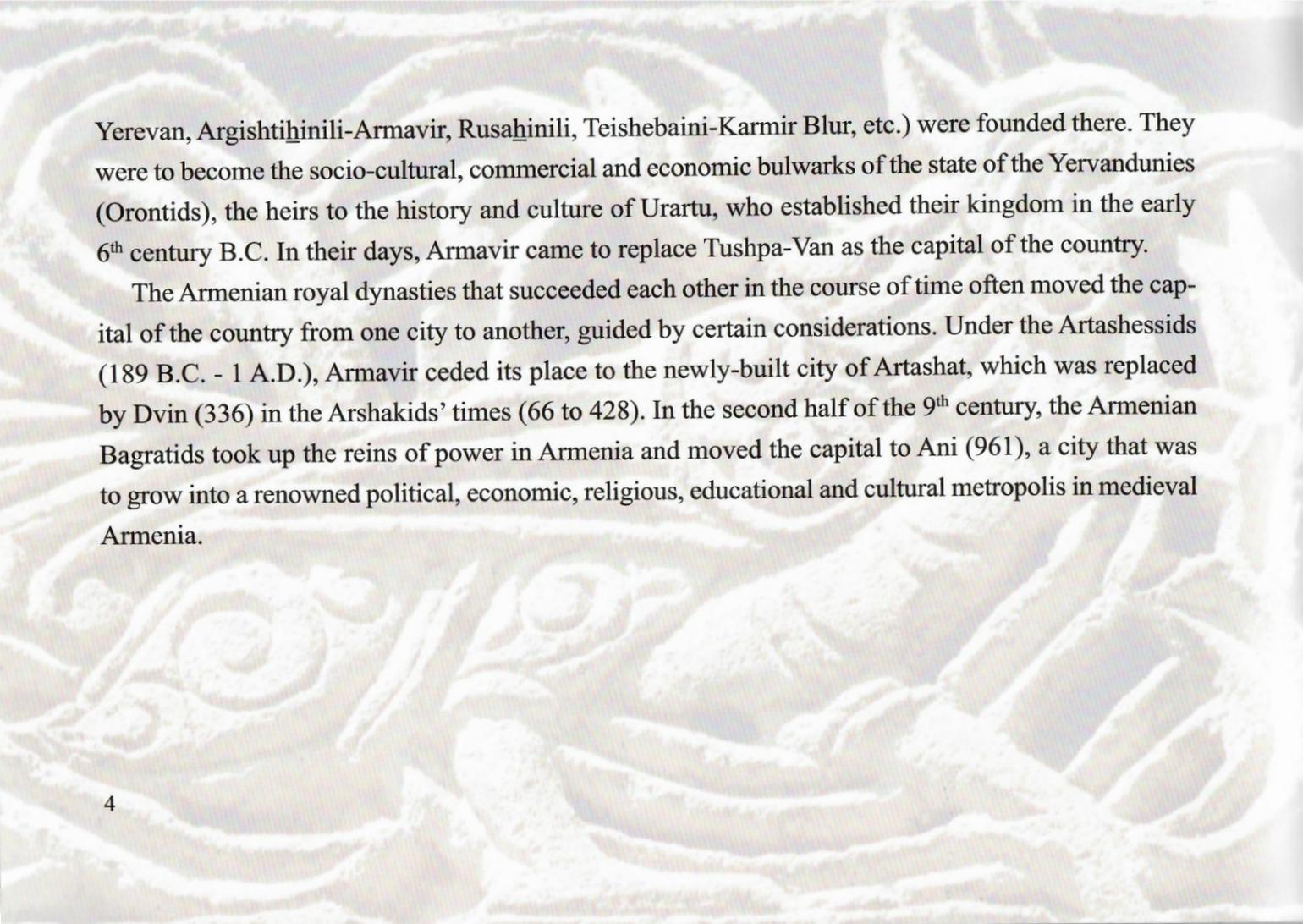
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INTRODUCTION

Since times immemorial, the Armenian people have woven their history and built their cultural heritage in their historical homeland, the Armenian Highland, the borders of which reached the Lesser Caucasus, the Pontic Mountains, the mountain chains of Meghedukh and Taurus as well as the northern portion of the Zagros Mountains.

As early as the Neolithic and Eneolithic Periods (9th - 4th mill. B.C.), the first early agricultural societies were gradually formed in the Armenian Highland, reaching a state of bloom in the Early Bronze Age (4th -3rd mill. B.C.). The subsequent development of public relations led to the establishment of local state entities (Tegarama, Nairi, Hayasa-Azzi, Arme-Shubria, etc.) in the 2nd millennium B.C., these early state formations becoming the basis of one of the most powerful states in the Ancient Near East, Urartu (Van Kingdom). It appeared in the historical arena in the 9th century B.C., its territories including the entire Armenian Highland. Parallel with the military, religious and economic reforms intensively implemented throughout Urartu, a number of cities (Tushpa-Van, Menuahinili, Erebuni-



Yerevan, Argishtihinili-Armavir, Rusahinili, Teishebaini-Karmir Blur, etc.) were founded there. They were to become the socio-cultural, commercial and economic bulwarks of the state of the Yervandunies (Orontids), the heirs to the history and culture of Urartu, who established their kingdom in the early 6th century B.C. In their days, Armavir came to replace Tushpa-Van as the capital of the country.

The Armenian royal dynasties that succeeded each other in the course of time often moved the capital of the country from one city to another, guided by certain considerations. Under the Artashessids (189 B.C. - 1 A.D.), Armavir ceded its place to the newly-built city of Artashat, which was replaced by Dvin (336) in the Arshakids' times (66 to 428). In the second half of the 9th century, the Armenian Bagratids took up the reins of power in Armenia and moved the capital to Ani (961), a city that was to grow into a renowned political, economic, religious, educational and cultural metropolis in medieval Armenia.

THE POSITION AND STRUCTURE OF ANI CITY

Ani was founded on a triangular promontory at the confluence of the rivers Akhurian and Ani (Tzagkotsadzor, Alaja), in Shirak District, Ayrarat Province, Armenia Maior (Metz Hayk). The promontory is bordered by deep gorges on three sides and has extremely steep slopes of a depth of 35 to 80 metres. The city, now lying forsaken and devastated, occupies an area of more than 3.5 sq. km and extends at an altitude of 1,464 metres above sea level in stony and rugged terrain. In the 11th century, it had a population of around 100,000. At present it is situated 7 km west of Ani Station, in Kars Province of the modern-day Republic of Turkey, close to the Armeno-Turkish border, about 30 km south-west of the city of Gyumri, Republic of Armenia.

The territory and general structure of Ani make it almost no different from the other major medieval cities of the region and the Near East in general. It consisted of a citadel, the city proper (called *shahastan* in Armenian) and some suburbs. The citadel, which towered on a giant rock at the south-western extremity of the city, was separated from it by ramparts. It comprised the royal palace and bath-house, several churches and other buildings. The regal residence covered an area of 3,500 to 4,000 sq. metres,



A general view of Ani Citadel

the walls of its various halls being decorated with murals of secular themes. The palace bath-house consisted of seven compartments with basins of cold and hot water. There was also a pipeline through which water ran away. Certain parts of the southern half of the palace were double-floor, the upper storeys generally comprising ceremonial halls, and the lower ones utility rooms and sections used for defensive purposes.



The ramparts (10th to 11th centuries) of Ani



A bridge across the river Akhurian

The city proper, which extended on the aforementioned spacious promontory, north-east of the citadel, had a large marketplace, a quarter inhabited by craftsmen, caravanserais, hotels, bath-houses as well as various other public and religious buildings. It also boasted a system of water supply and sewerage. The principal streets were paved, their width reaching 6 metres. Ani was enclosed within ramparts crowned with denticles: they had a height of 8 to 10 metres and a length of about 2.5 km. Most of their towers, where the city garrison used to be stationed, were inwardly of 2 or 3 floors. Outwardly, the ramparts had a deep ditch of a length of about 500 metres.

Five stone bridges, built over the river Akhurian, connected Ani with the outer world. Judging from the preserved remnants of the principal bridge, it represented a three-span structure. Its right- and left-bank spans had wooden coverings which were movable: when necessary, the traffic-carrying part of the left-bank span was pulled back, making the bridge impassable.



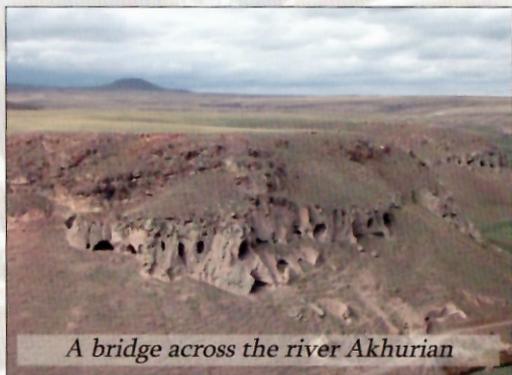
Shakhmatashar (Chequer-Board) Gate of Ani



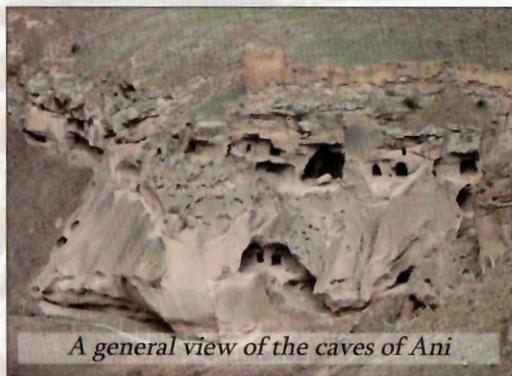
One of the gates of Ani

Thanks to this, in the 10th to 11th centuries, the bridges of Ani effectively protected the city against inimical inroads.

According to written sources and legends, Ani used to have 40 gates, among which particularly well-known were Avag (*Principal*), Shakhmatashar (*Chequer-Board Gate*) as well as those of Gayladzor (Glidzor), Karin, Kars, Dvin (Yerevan) and Igadzor.



A bridge across the river Akhurian



A general view of the caves of Ani

The so-called Underground City (the Caves of Ani) was located on the steep slopes of the promontory, in the direction of Tzaghkotsadzor and Gayladzor. The excavations carried out in the 1890s by orientalist N. Marr, archaeologist H. Orbely and architect T. Toramanian unclosed remnants of secret water pipelines, monks' cells, prayer halls, gigantic passageways, tunnels with various traps and dead ends underneath the city. In times bygone, the inhabitants of Ani used these caves both for everyday needs and defensive purposes.

Ani was an important trading hub standing on a number of transit routes stretching from the basin of the Mediterranean Sea to the countries of the Orient, and from Indochina to Europe. The imported goods included silk and porcelain of the type of celadon from China; high-quality painted glassware and dyes from Byzantium, Cilicia and Egypt; faience from Persia; precious stones and spices from India, etc. Ani

also produced certain goods such as weaponry, armour, high-quality pottery, kitchen and church utensils, carpets, clothing, objects of luxury made of gold, silver, bronze and other metals, etc. All these products were sold both in the local and foreign markets.

THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE TOPONYM OF ANI

So far researchers studying the history and culture of this medieval Armenian capital have not reached any unanimous viewpoint regarding the etymology of the name of *Ani*. The earliest discussions regarding this issue can be found in the works of some Armenian authors of the Middle Ages: thus, poet Nerses Shnorhali (1100-1173) associated the toponym's composition of three letters with the Holy Trinity; historian Vardan Areveltsy (1198-1271) saw its root in the Armenian words *ashkhatel* (*to work*) and *anel* (*to do*). According to renowned historian Gh. Alishan, an abbot of the Mkhitarist Congregation in Venice, *Ani* derives from the name of Anahit, the pagan Armenian goddess of fertility and maternity. Celebrated linguist and orientalist N. Marr attributed a Japhetic origin to the name



*A celadon piece
(10th to 11th centuries)*

of *Ani*, holding that it comes from the root of *an-* meaning *God*. Another famous orientalist, Gr. Ghapantsian, connects the origin of the toponym with the name of *Ania(s)*, one of the kings of the country of Hayasa that existed in the central parts of the Armenian Highland between the 15th -13th centuries B.C. Another viewpoint links the city name with Ani-Kamakh, an ancient place in Daranagh District of Bardzr Hayk Province of Historical Armenia and the religious centre of heathen Armenians. Folklorist A. Petrossian holds that the toponym derives from the Urartian proto-form *arnuia* (*to come to rescue*). To our mind, it may have derived from the name of Goddess Aniqu mentioned in some Urartian cuneiform inscriptions which were found in the Ararat Valley.

All these versions of etymology want further comprehensive analysis and firm substantiation.

WRITTEN SOURCES ON THE FORTRESS OF ANI

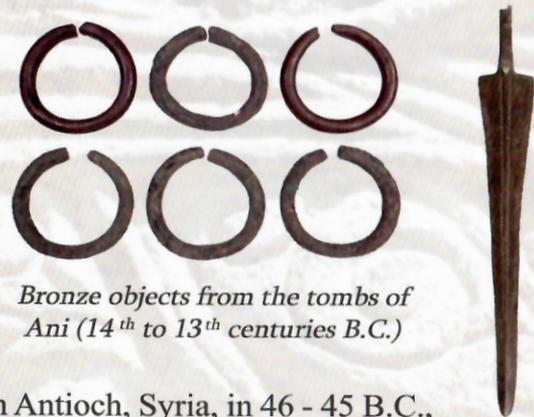
The available written sources and legends mention this capital of Armenia under the names of Ani, Ain, An, Ana, Anion, Anisi, Anna and Aumian.

Information regarding the earliest historico-cultural life of Ani is acquired through the remnants of material culture unearthed in the territory of the city site during the excavations conducted by N.

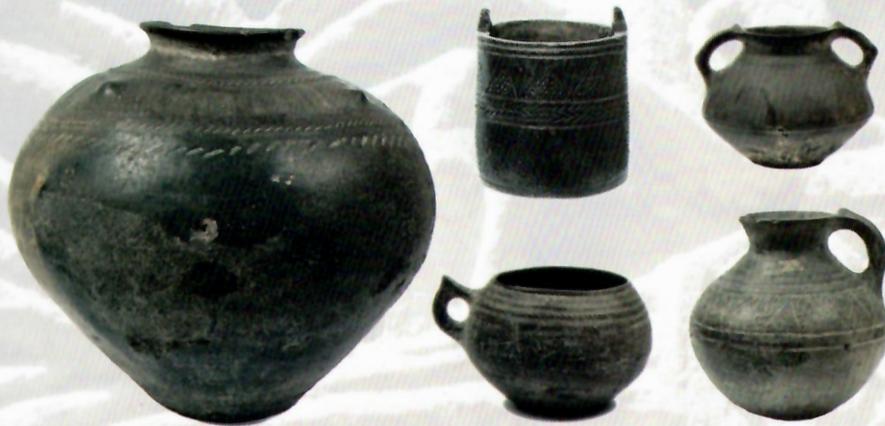
Marr in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Judging from these artifacts, as early as the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C., the territory of Ani contained a settlement of the Late Bronze Age which continued its existence in the Iron Age (11th - 7th centuries B.C.) as well.

So far neither cuneiform nor hieroglyphic inscriptions have been found in Ani: judging from 2 cuneiform inscriptions left by Argishti I (786 - 764 B.C.), one of the most powerful rulers of the kingdom of Urartu (Van), near Marmashen and Spandarian, in Historical Shirak, the site where the city of Ani was to be founded in the future was most probably included in the tribal union of Eriakhi.

The excavations of Ani have also unearthed vestiges of material culture pointing to the existence of a Hellenistic and antique settlement in the territory of the city. With this regard, special mention should be made of a coin and a tetradrachm of silver: the former (found in the neighbourhood of Ani), which was minted in Artashat, depicts one of the most powerful kings of Armenia, Tigran II (95 - 55 B.C.) from the Artashessids' dynasty; the latter, produced in Antioch, Syria, in 46 - 45 B.C.,



Bronze objects from the tombs of Ani (14th to 13th centuries B.C.)



Ceramic ware from the tombs of Ani (2nd to 1st millennia B.C.)

shows Seleucid king Philip I Philadelphus (93 - 83 B.C.). The impressive finds of this period include two identical bronze masks of Dionysus, which are traced back to the period between the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. They were originally attached to both the opposite parts of the top of a situla and had hoops from

which its handle hung. All these artefacts allow the presumption that the antique settlement of Ani existed at least during the 3rd to 1st centuries B.C., being involved in the monetary circulation of Armenia to some extent thanks to commercial deals.

Most presumably, the oldest part of the city is the rock projection of Aghjkaberd Castle, on the surface of which, the remnants of an old settlement and of a pagan temple can be discerned. Armenian

historian Yeghishe's (5th-century) *History of Vardan and the Armenian War* is the earliest available written source to mention Ani as an impregnable fortress in connection with the Armeno-Persian clashes of 450 to 451 and the battle of Avarayr. Ani is also mentioned by another 5th-century Armenian historian, Ghazar Parpetsy, in his account of the uprising of 481 to 484: as reported in his *History of Armenia*, the Persian satrap of the country, Atrvshnasp, and the Armenian Zoroastrians following him fortified themselves in the fortress of Ani to defend themselves against Armenian commander Vahan Mamikonian, satrap Sahak Bagratuny and the revolting Armenian servicemen. As attested by the available written sources, during this period, Ani belonged to the princely house of the Kamsarakans to-



The silver coin of Tigran II (95 to 55 B.C.)



The silver tetradrachm of Seleucid king Philip I Philadelphus (93 - 83 B.C.).

gether with the districts of Shirak and Arsharunik (Yeraskhadzor): they had received these lands, once belonging to the royal court of Armenia, as patrimony from Armenian king Trdat the Great (287 to 330), who had also ranked them among the senior *nakharars* (*princes*) of the country. The vestiges of the period of the Kamsarakans' reign include the remnants of the ramparts (built of hard stone) of a 5th-century castle, the so-called palace church, which represents a vaulted structure of the 7th century, and a double-floor funerary chapel.

In the early 9th century, Armenian prince Ashot Bagratid the *Meat Eater* (*Msaker*) purchased the districts of Arsharunik and Shirak, together with the fortress of Ani, from the Kamsarakans. From these times onwards, Ani is constantly mentioned in the works of Armenian and foreign historians of the High Middle Ages.

ANI BETWEEN THE 11TH AND 14TH CENTURIES

For a long time, the Armenian kingdom of the Bagratids did not have a permanent capital: Dvin still remained the centre of the Arab emirate, the struggle for its liberation proving too long and without any tangible success. During the first years of the Bagratid rule, the Armenian kings had to repeatedly

move the capital from one city to another due to certain circumstances connected with both foreign and domestic relations. In this way, Bagaran, Shirakavan (Yerazgavors) and Kars followed each other as the capitals of Armenia although in fact, none of them had the features required of a capital. In the late 9th century, Ani was still a village town, but it actively participated in the political affairs of both the domestic life and foreign relations of the country. It had become the centre of the economic, political and cultural life of the Bagratid Kingdom so that it was simply necessary to raise it to the status of a capital.

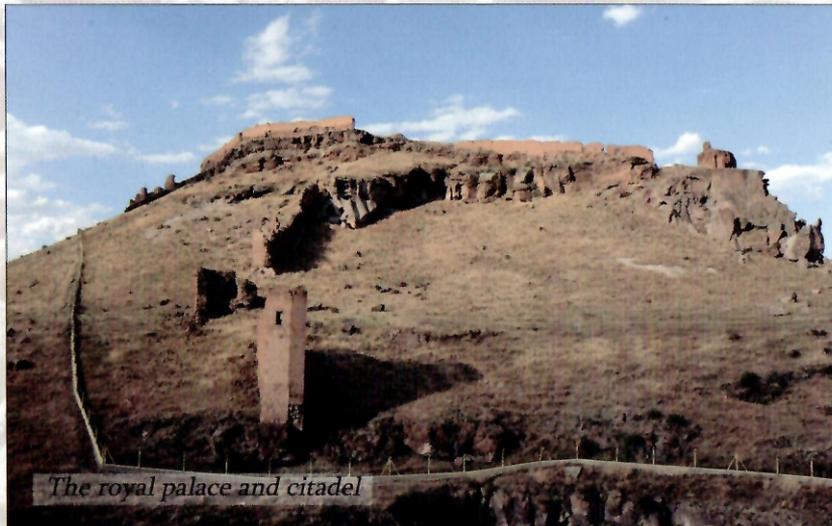
The proclamation of Ani as the capital of Armenia was celebrated together with the festive coronation of Ashot III, both these highly impressive events taking place in 961 in the presence of high-ranking officials from Armenia, Iberia (Virk) and Caucasian Albania (Aghvank).

Within but 4 to 5 decades, the modest village town grew into one of the major cities of Armenia and the Near East. Between 961 and 1020, the Interior (Ashot's) and Exterior (Smbat's) Ramparts of the city were built, together with the royal palace, numerous churches, caravanserais, hotels, rock-cut dwellings, residential buildings, bath-houses, etc. The city also had several streets lined with shops of craftsmen and merchants . Spiritually and culturally speaking, the capital was particularly closely linked with the church of Tekor, the cathedral of Argina as well as with the monasteries of Horomos

(Ghoshavank) and Khetzkonk. The castles of Maghasaberd and Tignis protected the approaches to the city against foreign inroads.

Ani also played a considerable role in the spiritual life of Armenia. It hosted the church councils of 969, 971, 1038 and 1207. Besides, the Armenian Catholicosate moved its seat to Ani, thus making it the spiritual capital of the country. In order to highlight its special significance, in the late 10th century,

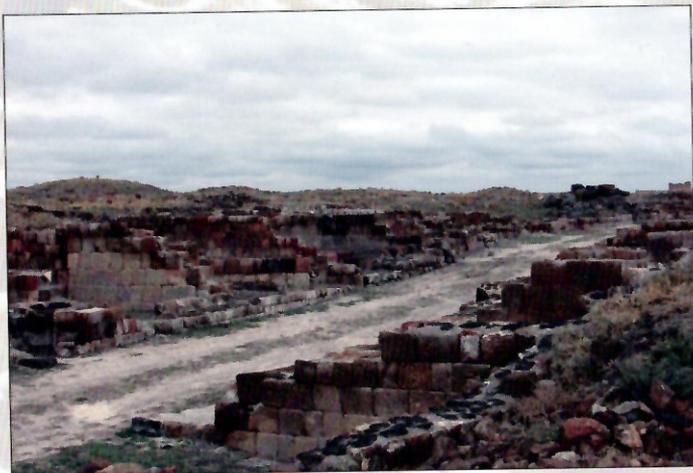
Catholicos Sargis Sevantsy I moved part of the relics of the virgin adherents of St. Hripsime from Vagharshapat to Ani and even built a church for them. The city served as a residence for Catholicoses Sargis Sevantsy I (992-1019) and Petros Getadardz I, after which the Byzantines moved the Catholicosal seat away from the capital by force. After these events, the bishopric of



The royal palace and citadel

Ani started playing a remarkable role in the ecclesiastical life of the city and the country in general.

Medieval Armenian and foreign historians call Ani *the city of a thousand and one churches*, and this is not accidental: in the course of time, numerous churches were erected there by the members of the royal family, noblemen, clergymen and just the inhabitants of the city. The 10th and 11th centuries saw the construction of a great number of majestic religious monuments which often repeated the



Caravanserais, hotels (11th – 13th cc.)

forms of the classical period of Armenian ecclesiastical architecture, representing varied or refined specimens of the given type. The renowned spiritual monuments of Ani include the Cathedral, Gagkashen St. Grigor, built after the composition of Zvartnots, Sourb Arakelots (Holy Apostles'), built after the composition of Echmiatzin Cathedral, Abughamrents (St. Grigor), Sourb Prkich (Holy Saviour), Tigran Honents (St. Grigor Lusavorich) and Hovvi. In the neighbourhood of the city, the monastic ensembles of Horomos, Bagnayr, Arjo Arij and Khetzkonk prospered as advanced spiritual and cultural centres. Christian Armenian culture flourished both in the churches of Ani and in the adjacent monasteries and convents, with schools functioning there, historiographical works written and dozens of manuscripts copied. In the 11th to 13th centuries, a high school of philosophy functioned in the city: it particularly flourished under Grigor Magistros Pahlavuny (990-1058), Hovhannes Sarkavag *Imastaser* (the *Philosopher*, 1047-1129) and Mkhitar Anetsy (12th century). As compared to other similar establishments, this school was more of a secular nature, philosophical and natural sciences being especially predominant in its curriculum. The school had a rich repository of manuscripts.

Ani reached the peak of flourishing under the reign of Gagik I (989 to 1020): the city had commercial contacts with Byzantium, Persia, China, the Arabic countries, South Russia and Middle Asia. However, the situation drastically changed after the first quarter of the 11th century, when a period of

bitter struggle commenced in the domestic life of the Bagratid Kingdom. At the same time, the Armenian state had to confront the pressure of Byzantium to succumb to its control. On the other hand, the impending Seljuk incursions had become a real threat to the future existence of the Armenian kingdom. Byzantium launched several attacks to conquer Ani, but all of them ended in its defeat. After Gagik I's death, his sons, Hovhannes-Smbat and Ashot IV, started a bitter struggle for the royal throne.



The Cathedral (1001) of Ani



*Ani Cathedral church
candelabrum (1001)*

In 1023 the former, who was childless and weak of will, bequeathed Ani and its vicinity to the Byzantine Empire, fearing another invasion of its army.

After Ashot IV (1040) and Hovhannes-Smbat (1041) had died, Catholicos Petros Getadardz I and Prince West Sargis attempted to surrender Ani under the compulsion of Byzantium, but they encountered fierce resistance on the part of many patriots. In 1043 Ashot IV's son, young Gagik II, was declared king of the country through the efforts of Commander Vahram Pahlavuny. Between 1043 and 1044, the Byzantine

troops sieged Ani for several times and demanded its surrender, but the city remained inaccessible thanks to the self-defence organised by the Armenian army and the local population. Now Byzantium took another action: in 1045 King Gagik II was treacherously summoned to Constantinople and dethroned. To make matters worse, Vahram Pahlavuny was killed in the struggle against the Arabs so that the pro-Byzantine Ar-



Incensory (11th-13th cc.)

menian princes were free to yield up Ani to Byzantium in 1045, the fall of the metropolis also marking the collapse of the Bagratid Kingdom of Armenia.

After the overthrow of the Armenian Kingdom, Byzantine governors were installed in both Shirak and Ani. At the end of the Byzantine rule that lasted for about 20 years, in 1064, during their third invasion of Armenia, the Seljuk Turks, who were led by Sultan Alp-Arslan, took Ani at the cost of great



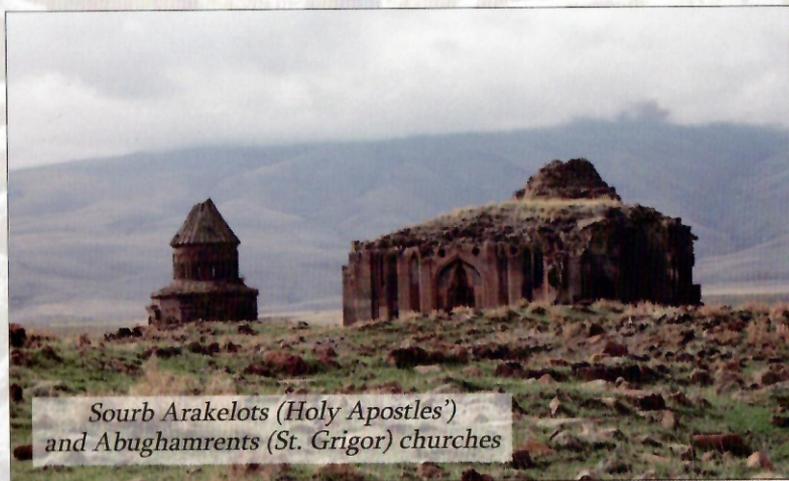
The statue of King Gagik I



Gagkashen St. Grigor Church (11 th century)

losses and almost levelled it to the ground. At the crucial battle of Manazkert, which took place 7 years later, the Seljuk Turks finally crushed the Byzantines and spread their sway over entire Armenia. In 1072 Alp-Arslan sold the semi-ruined city of Ani to the emir of Dvin, Abu-l-Asvar, who in his turn, put it into the possession of his son Manuche. This marked the foundation of Shaddadian Principality in Ani. Manuche, who descended from the Bagratids on his maternal line, considered himself the legal successor of the Bagratid Dynasty. In an attempt to improve his relations with the Armenian inhabitants

of the city, he renovated Smbat's Ramparts. He also reconstructed one of the city buildings (according to specialists, originally a court, a custom-house or a Catholicosol palace) into a mosque by adding a minaret to it. From these times until 1199, Ani was under the control of the Shaddadians: it was only for several times (in 1124 to 1126, in 1161 and in 1174) that it shifted into the rule of



*Sourb Arakelots (Holy Apostles')
and Abughamrents (St. Grigor) churches*

the Georgian Bagratids as a result of the joint efforts of the Armenian population of the city and the Georgian troops.

The ordination of Barsegh Anetsy in 1072 marked the foundation of the bishopric of Ani and Shirak as a distinct spiritual and administrative-territorial entity within the Armenian Church. From this year until the days of Sargis (last mentioned in 1220), the bishops of Ani were from the powerful family of the Apirations,

who were related to the Pahlavunies by marriage. Later the bishop's office was assumed by the Pahlavunies. In the 13th century, Ani had two bishops one of whom was called *leader*, and the other *head of priests* (*yeretsapet* in Armenian). The priests of Ani who were quite large in number played



Sourb Prkich (Holy Saviour) church

an important role in the 12th century, leading the local Armenians' liberation struggle against the emirs of the Shaddadian family.

In 1199 the Armeno-Georgian united forces finally succeeded in liberating Ani from the Seljuk Turks. The city shifted into the governorship of the Zakarians' Armenian princely family, who served for the Georgian court. Between 1199 and 1204, Zakare Zakarian, *Amirspasalar* of the Georgian army,



Manuche's mosque (11th to 12th centuries)

incorporated certain northern provinces of Armenia with Ani, which in fact became an administrative centre. A number of ecclesiastical and secular buildings were erected in the city, its ramparts and bridges being renovated. When speaking of the Ani of this period, historians mention it as a great, magnificent metropolis, also using other honorary epithets with regard to it. The city again saw flourishing of trade, crafts and cultural life (ulj. 19). Ani was a major centre of crafts, with metal working,



Tigran Honents (St. Grigor Lusavorich) Church

pottery and building activities being highly developed there (the same is also true of the local service sector). The number of crafts practised in Ani reached 50, the goods made by the artisans of the city being renowned not only in Armenia but also in the markets of the neighbouring and even remote countries. Particularly well-known were the textiles, carpets, metal ware, weapons and pottery (լւ. 20, լւ. 21, լւ. 22) made by the craftsmen of Ani.

A high level of development was also observed in the domestic and foreign trade of Ani: the city had a market-place and caravanserais, agricultural products and hand-made goods forming the bulk of the objects of trade. In addition, Ani was a centre of international transit commerce, being located on a number of caravan routes, including those of Ani-Tpkhis, Ani-Kars-Karin-Black Sea shores, Ani-Mayafarkin (Tigranakert)-Assyria and Ani-Yerevan-Dvin-Tabriz, which became particularly important between the 11th and 13th centuries. During this period, Ani had commercial and economic ties with Georgia, Caucasian Albania (Aghvank), Atropatene, Persia, the western portion of Armenia, as well as with Galicia, Poland, South Russia, Cilicia, the cities on the Black Sea shores, etc. Some of the local tradesmen had grown into wealthy merchants (Tigran Honents, Sahmadin and others) who were also landowners and money-lenders.

Ani was also an outstanding centre of the development of city architecture. The local school of ar-

chitecture, which was established in the 10th century, left its imprint on the architecture of European and other countries. Between the late 10th and early 11th centuries, architect Trdat built the Cathedral of Ani and Gagkashen Church, the principles he applied in these monuments being preserved and also used in the 12th to 14th centuries. We are speaking of the same Trdat, who renovated and consolidated the dome of the Cathedral of St. Sophia (Hagia Sophia) in Constantinople in the late 10th century.

Between the 9th and 13th centuries, Ani, which had a great number of schools and scriptoria, also boasted the fame of a centre of science and learning. In different times, the students of its renowned high school (11th to 13th centuries), often called university by researchers, were taught by such celebrated scholars as Grigor Magistros Pahlavuny, Hovhannes Sarkavag, Mkhitar Anetsy and others. Ani's school of miniature unfolded its activities during the cultural bloom of the city, when various manuscripts were written and copied there. Miniature painting par-



*A detail from a bronze caldron
(12th -13th centuries)*



*A porcelain plate
(10th to 12th centuries)*



*A detail from a big jar with
an Armenian inscription*

ticularly flourished in Ani in the first decades of the 13th century, the surviving works of this period including 3 manuscripts by Hovhannes, the Gospel of Haghpat (1211) illustrated by painter Margare, the Gospel of Bagnayr (1232) by scribe and miniature painter Ignatios of Horomos, etc. One of the best known manuscripts of Ani's school of miniature is the renowned work of illustrator Abas, the apse-shaped patterns (*khorans*) of which were executed by Ignatios. In 1298 a manuscript was copied and illustrated by Yeghbayrik, with the scenes from Christ's life and the images of the Evangelists painted by Khachatur. The last manuscript that has come down to our days from Ani was written in the early 15th century by the bishop of the city, Hovhannes Voskeporik. Regretful as it is, a great number of manuscripts were lost during the repeated acts of the devastation of the city and the migration of its inhabitants; nevertheless, the surviving specimens are enough to attest to the high level of development that Ani's school of miniature had reached.

The flourishing and prosperity Ani enjoyed under the Zakarians were

to be interrupted by the Mongol inroads. In 1236 they laid siege to the city and took it. In 1249 and 1260 the Armenians of Ani attempted to put an end to the Mongol rule by rising in revolt against them, but in vain. Ani continued its existence as a city until the mid-14th century. The ruthless policy exercised by the Mongols and later by the Turkic tribes forced the local Armenians (as well as those of other cities of Armenia) to emigrate in large multitudes. They mainly found refuge in Georgia, South Russia (Astrakhan, Crimea), Constantinople, Galicia and Poland. Later a group of Armenian migrants founded the city of Nor (New) Nakhichevan on the bank of the river Don.

The total devastation of Ani is traditionally ascribed to the earthquake of 1319, but in an inscription preserved in Yerevan, in 1364 a certain Shabaydin curses those who destroyed the city: this suggests that the once prosperous metropolis was reduced to a ghost city in the '60s of the 14th century by the Tatar tribes. Some coins of the 14th and 15th centuries uncovered in Ani attest that life continued in the city in the Late Middle Ages.



A wooden stand for manuscripts (13th century)

By the 16th century, Ani had been reduced to a small village. In 1878 Russia took control over what was left of the once large and thriving city. Throughout its existence, Ani always attracted the attention of historians, researchers and intellectuals. In the late 19th century, in 1892, an expedition headed by N. Marr started excavations in the city site, the work continuing at some intervals until 1917. These excavations became a “school of science” for such celebrated researchers of the 20th century as orientalist Hovsep Orbely, historian Nikoghayos Adonts, architect Toros Toramanian, archaeologists Levon and Ashkharbek Kalantar, who were brothers, photographer Aram Vruyr and others.

Today the ruins of the magnificent metropolis of medieval Armenia lie on the right bank of the river Akhurian, close to the Armeno-Turkish border, in the territory of modern-day Turkey. Although only a ghost city, Ani is still perceived as a majestic manifestation of the Armenian creative mind, symbolising the endless expectations and future achievements of the Armenian nation.



The ruins of Ani at present

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