# DIGITISING ENDANGERED ARMENIAN EPIGRAPHIC HERITAGE IN INDIA

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**Abstract**

This article presents the results of a pilot survey and digitisation project conducted under the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP1721), focusing on the endangered Armenian epigraphic heritage of India. The material consists primarily of funerary gravestones and commemorative stone inscriptions dating from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries and preserved in churches and cemeteries in Madras (Chennai), Kolkata (Calcutta), Mumbai, and Hyderabad. These inscriptions represent the most durable material evidence of the historical Armenian presence in South Asia and provide direct insight into diasporic settlement patterns, family structures, religious life, and transregional commercial networks. The project combined a systematic field survey with targeted pilot digitisation to assess the scope, physical condition, and preservation risks of the corpus, and to evaluate the feasibility of large–scale digital preservation. The survey methodology was site–based and focused on identifying approximate quantities, typological composition, custodial frameworks, and observable deterioration patterns. Particular attention was paid to environmental exposure, biological growth, urban pressure, and the effects of demographic decline on long–term custodianship. Sample digitisation was conducted at four representative locations to assess documentation workflows and metadata practices in accordance with Endangered Archives Programme guidelines. The survey identified more than 1,800 Armenian funerary and commemorative inscriptions across the four cities, of which a representative subset was digitised during the pilot phase. Preservation conditions vary significantly, ranging from relatively well–maintained ecclesiastical sites to severely neglected burial grounds where inscriptions face imminent risk of irreversible loss. The findings confirm both the material's vulnerability and the feasibility of systematic digitisation as a non–invasive preservation strategy. By integrating epigraphic survey methods with structured digital documentation, the project establishes a sustainable foundation for future research and preservation initiatives and argues that understanding Armenian epigraphic heritage in India requires a coordinated, methodological and institutional approach.

**Keywords and phrases:** Armenian epigraphy; diaspora heritage; digitisation; of cultural heritage, preservation assessment; funerary inscriptions, interdisciplinary methodology.

# ՀՆԴԿԱՍՏԱՆՈՒՄ ՎՏԱՆԳՎԱԾ ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ ՎԻՄԱԳՐԱԿԱՆ ԺԱՌԱՆԳՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԹՎԱՅՆԱՑՈՒՄԸ

**ԳԱՅԱՆԵ ՀՈՎՀԱՆՆԻՍՅԱՆ**

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**ՀԱՄԵՍՏ ԹԱՄՐԱԶՅԱՆ**

Թվային հումանիտար գիտությունների լաբորատորիա,
Շվեյցարիայի դաշնային տեխնոլոգիական ինստիտուտ, դոցենտ, Լոզան, Շվեյցարիա
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**Համառոտագիր**

Սույն հոդվածը ներկայացնում է Վտանգված արխիվների ծրագրի (Endangered Archives Programme, EAP1721) շրջանակներում իրականացված հետազոտական և փորձնական թվայնացման ծրագրի արդյունքները, որի նպատակն էր Հնդկաստանում պահպանված հայկական վտանգված վիմագրական ժառանգության փաստագրումն ու ուսումնասիրությունը: Ուսումնասիրվող նյութը հիմնականում ներառում է քարակերտ տապանաքարերի և հուշատախտակների արձանագրություններ, որոնք թվագրվում են XVII դարից մինչև XX դարի սկիզբը և պահպանվում են Մադրասի, Կալկաթայի, Միումբայի և Հայդարաբադի հայկական եկեղեցիներում ու գերեզմանատներում: Այս արձանագրությունները Հնդկաստանի հայկական համայնքների պատմական ներկայության առավել կայուն նյութական վկայություններ են՝ արտացոլելով բնակեցման ձևերը, ընտանեկան կառուցվածքները, կրոնական կյանքը և առևտրական ցանցերը:

Ծրագիրը համադրել է դաշտային փաստահավաք ուսումնասիրությունը և նպատակային փորձնական թվայնացումը՝ վիմագրական նյութի ծավալը, ֆիզիկական վիճակը և պահպանման ռիսկերը գնահատելու, ինչպես նաև լայնածավալ թվայնացման հնարավորությունը ստուգելու նպատակով: Ուսումնասիրությունն իրականացվել է տարածքահեն մեթոդաբանությամբ՝ ընդգրկելով արձանագրությունների մոտավոր քանակը, տիպաբանական կազմը, խնամակալական պայմանները և տեսանելի վնասվածքների ձևերը: Առանձնահատուկ ուշադրություն է դարձվել շրջակա միջավայրի ազդեցություններին, կենսաբանական քայքայմանը, քաղաքաշինական ճնշումներին և ժողովրդագրական փոփոխությունների հետևանքով խնամակալության թուլացմանը: Փորձնական թվայնացումն իրականացվել է չորս բնորոշ վայրերում՝ փորձարկելու փաստագրման աշխատանքային հոսքերը և մետատվյալների կառուցվածքներն՝ ըստ ծրագրի ուղեցույցների:

Հետազոտության արդյունքում հայտնաբերվել է ավելի քան 1800 հայկական տապանագրական և հուշագրական արձանագրություն, որոնց մի մասը թվայնացվել է արդեն իսկ փորձնական փուլում: Պահպանվածության աստիճանը զգալիորեն տատանվում է՝ համեմատաբար լավ պահպանված եկեղեցական համալիրներից մինչև բացարձակապես անտեսված

գերեզմանատներ, որտեղ արձանագրությունները ենթակա են անդառնալի կորստի: Այս հոդվածը հիմնավորում է, որ համակարգված թվայնացումը հայկական վիմագրական ժառանգության տեղեկատվական բովանդակության պահպանման համար նվազագույն վնասի սկզբունքով գործող կենսունակ միջոց է, և Հնդկաստանի հայկական վիմագրությունը ներկայացնում է որպես ամբողջական փոխկապակցված համալիր:

**Բանալի բառեր և բառակապակցություններ՝** հայկական վիմագրություն սփյուռքի ժառանգություն, թվայնացում, մշակութային ժառանգության, տապանագրեր, պահպանման գնահատում, միջգիտակարգային մեթոդաբանություն:

# ЦИФРОВИЗАЦИЯ НАХОДЯЩЕГОСЯ ПОД УГРОЗОЙ АРМЯНСКОГО ЭПИГРАФИЧЕСКОГО НАСЛЕДИЯ ИНДИИ

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**Аннотация**

В статье представлены результаты пилотного исследовательского и опытного проекта по оцифровке, реализованного в рамках Программы по сохранению находящихся под угрозой архивов (Endangered Archives Programme, EAP1721), направленного на документирование армянского эпиграфического наследия Индии. Исследуемый материал включает главным образом надгробные и мемориальные каменные надписи, датируемые XVII – началом XX века и сохранившиеся на территории армянских церквей и кладбищ Мадраса (Ченнаи), Калькутты, Мумбаи и Хайдарабада. Эти надписи представляют собой наиболее устойчивые материальные свидетельства исторического присутствия армянских общин в Южной Азии и отражают особенности расселения, семейной структуры, религиозной жизни и трансрегиональных торговых связей диаспоры. Проект сочетал систематическое полевое обследование с целенаправленной пилотной оцифровкой с целью оценки объёма, физического состояния и рисков сохранности эпиграфического корпуса, а также определения осуществимости масштабной цифровой фиксации. Методология исследования носила территориально-объектный характер и была ориентирована на выявление примерного количества памятников, их типологического состава, условий хранения и наблюдаемых форм разрушения. Особое внимание уделялось воздействию природных факторов, биологической деградации, градостроительному давлению и ослаблению системы опеки вследствие демографических изменений. Пилотная оцифровка была проведена на четырёх репрезентативных площадках с целью

апробации рабочих процессов документирования и структуры метаданных в соответствии с требованиями программы. В ходе обследования было выявлено более 1 800 армянских надгробных и мемориальных надписей, часть которых была оцифрована в рамках пилотного этапа. Состояние сохранности памятников существенно варьирует, от относительно благополучных церковных комплексов до заброшенных кладбищ, где надписи находятся под угрозой необратимой утраты. Полученные результаты подтверждают как уязвимость данного наследия, так и практическую осуществимость систематической оцифровки как неинвазивного метода его сохранения. В статье обосновывается необходимость рассмотрения армянского эпиграфического наследия Индии как взаимосвязанного комплекса, требующего координированных методологических и институциональных усилий.

**Ключевые слова и фразы:** армянская эпиграфика; наследие диаспоры; оцифровка культурного наследия; оценка сохранения культурного наследия; погребальные надписи; междисциплинарная методология.

## Introduction

Armenian epigraphic inscriptions preserved in India constitute one of the most durable material records of Armenian diasporic life in South Asia. Carved primarily on funerary gravestones and commemorative plaques, and dating from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries, these inscriptions document names, kinship ties, clerical roles, places of origin, and memorial practices linked to transregional mobility and commercial networks **[4, 6, 12, 17, 18, 20].** Unlike manuscripts and archival papers that may be displaced, re-catalogued, or consolidated, inscriptions are fixed in situ and remain dependent on their local environments and custodial regimes. This material stability is therefore inseparable from a distinctive vulnerability: surface erosion, biological growth, humidity and rainfall, urban pressure, and weakened custodianship following demographic contraction contribute to the progressive loss of legibility and, in some cases, to the irreversible disappearance of the inscriptional record.

The Endangered Archives Program pilot project EAP1721 was designed to address this vulnerability through an integrated workflow combining field survey and targeted digitisation at Armenian heritage sites in Madras (Chennai), Kolkata (Calcutta), Mumbai, and Hyderabad. The project's immediate aim was not to produce a complete national inventory, but to establish an evidence-based overview of the corpus—its approximate extent, typological composition, custodial contexts, and observable patterns of deterioration—while testing whether consistent documentation and metadata practices could be applied across sites characterised by markedly different preservation conditions. This article argues that the digitisation of endangered epigraphic heritage requires an explicitly interdisciplinary methodology as an operational necessity shaped by the nature of the objects and the constraints of fieldwork. Epigraphic expertise is required to identify script types, editorial phenomena (ligatures, abbreviations, damaged characters), and calendrical conventions (including Armenian Era dating and local month names), while historical and diaspora-focused perspectives provide the interpretive framework for relating inscriptions across cities as components of a distributed corpus rather than isolated local survivals. Material observation is equally essential: choices about prioritisation,

photography angles, and descriptive recording must respond to stone type, carving technique, surface condition, and risks posed by the micro-environment (shade, overgrowth, moisture accumulation, proximity to pollution sources). These interpretive and material decisions directly shape the structure and long-term usability of the resulting digital archive.

Within the EAP1721 pilot, documentation was conducted non-invasively and in cooperation with custodial authorities, with digitisation limited to items that could be photographed safely and ethically. The survey identified more than 1,800 Armenian funerary and commemorative inscriptions across the four cities, while pilot digitisation produced a representative subset used to validate workflows and metadata fields under diverse conditions—from comparatively maintained ecclesiastical complexes to severely neglected burial grounds where stones are fractured, overgrown, or partially buried.

By presenting the survey logic, the digitisation workflow, and the metadata decisions adopted in this pilot phase, this study contributes a transferable methodological model for documenting endangered diasporic epigraphy at scale. The core claim is practical: systematic digitisation is feasible even under uneven custodianship and advanced deterioration, provided that epigraphic interpretation, material assessment, and structured digital description are treated as interdependent components of a single documentation process.

## Theoretical and Methodological Foundations

Armenian epigraphic inscriptions preserved in India constitute one of the most durable material records of Armenian diasporic life in South Asia **[2, 3, 7, 6, 12, 14].** Carved primarily on funerary gravestones and commemorative plaques from the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries, these inscriptions document names, kinship, clerical roles, places of origin, and memorial practices associated with transregional mobility and commercial networks. Unlike manuscripts and archival documents, which may be displaced, reorganised, or consolidated, inscriptions remain fixed in situ and depend on local environments and custodial regimes. This material stability is therefore inseparable from a distinctive vulnerability: surface erosion, biological growth, humidity and rainfall, urban pressure, and weakened custodianship following demographic contraction contribute to a progressive loss of legibility and, in some cases, to the irreversible disappearance of the inscriptional record.

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This study, through the Indian case, demonstrates that the digitisation of endangered epigraphic heritage benefits from an explicitly interdisciplinary methodology shaped

by the nature of the objects and the constraints of fieldwork. Epigraphic expertise is required to identify script forms, editorial phenomena (ligatures, abbreviations, damaged characters), and calendrical conventions (including Armenian Era dating and local month systems). Historical and diaspora-oriented perspectives provide the interpretive framework necessary to relate inscriptions across cities as components of a distributed corpus rather than as isolated local survivals **[10, 11, 15, 16].**

Material observation is equally essential: decisions regarding prioritisation, photographic strategy, and descriptive recording must respond to stone type, carving technique, surface condition, and environmental risk factors such as shade, overgrowth, moisture accumulation, and pollution exposure. These interpretive and material considerations directly influence the structure and long-term usability of the resulting digital archive.

Within the EAP1721 pilot, documentation was conducted non-invasively and in cooperation with custodial authorities. Digitisation was limited to monuments that could be photographed safely and ethically. The survey identified more than 1,800 Armenian funerary and commemorative inscriptions across the four cities, while pilot digitisation produced a representative subset used to validate workflows and metadata fields under diverse conditions, from comparatively maintained ecclesiastical complexes to severely neglected burial grounds where stones are fractured, overgrown, or partially buried.

By presenting the survey logic, digitisation workflow, and metadata decisions adopted during this pilot phase, this study contributes a methodological model applicable to comparable contexts of endangered diasporic epigraphy. Its central claim is practical rather than theoretical: systematic digitisation is feasible even under uneven custodianship and advanced deterioration, provided that epigraphic interpretation, material assessment, and structured digital description are treated as interdependent components of a single documentation process.

## Research Methods

The practical implementation of the proposed methodological framework was grounded in the principle that each inscription should be documented as a structured historical unit rather than as an isolated text. The objective was to create records that preserve not only the wording of the inscription but also its material, spatial, and contextual characteristics in a consistent and reproducible format.

Each documented monument was treated as an individual item and assigned a discrete record. The record incorporated the following interconnected components:

***Textual Documentation:*** The inscription was transcribed in accordance with established Armenian editorial conventions, particularly those systematised in the *Divan Hay Vimagrutyan* (Օրբելի 1965). Editorial signs indicating lacunae, restored letters, ligatures, abbreviations, and erased characters were preserved in accordance with Armenian scholarly **[19].** No speculative reconstruction was introduced beyond what could be justified by visible epigraphic evidence. In cases of severe damage, illegibility was recorded explicitly rather than silently normalised.

Material and Physical Description: Each inscription was described as a material object. Information concerning stone type, dimensions, layout, carving technique (relief or incised), and decorative elements was systematically recorded. Particular

attention was given to the relationship between the inscriptional field and monument form, as these features often carry chronological and cultural significance.

***Dating and Calendrical Recording*:** Dates were recorded exactly as inscribed, including the use of Armenian Era dating, alphabetic numerals, and local calendrical systems **[1].** Where possible, Gregorian equivalents were calculated and documented separately, without replacing the original formulation. This dual recording preserves historical authenticity while ensuring chronological clarity for contemporary analysis.

***Geographical and Contextual Referencing:*** The precise location of each monument was documented, including its position within a churchyard, cemetery, or architectural complex. Toponyms appearing in the inscription were recorded in their historical context to avoid anachronistic reinterpretation. This approach enables comparative regional analysis while respecting the historical integrity of inscriptional references.

***Preservation Condition:*** The condition of each monument was described using consistent criteria, including surface erosion, biological growth, structural damage, and degree of legibility. Recording preservation state as part of the inscriptional data acknowledges that material condition is historically relevant and may directly affect interpretation.

***Thematic and Associative Data:*** In accordance with Endangered Archives Programme (EAP) cataloguing requirements, thematic descriptors were assigned to each inscription. Because the corpus consisted predominantly of funerary monuments, descriptors such as "burial" and "diaspora-related" were recorded. The smaller subset of commemorative plaques was described as "memorial," "commemorative," or "donation-related." As these categories were not predefined in the EAP authority lists, they were consistently entered in the descriptive metadata to support subsequent comparative analysis. Associated places, institutions, and communities mentioned in the inscriptions were likewise recorded in structured form.

### 3.1 Metadata Architecture and Epigraphic Structuring

Cataloguing followed the metadata framework provided by the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP). Within this template, the principal epigraphic information was entered in the *Description* field, which functioned as a composite epigraphic record. Rather than dispersing information across numerous minimal fields, the project adopted a standardised internal sequence within this field to ensure clarity, consistency, and future reusability.

The Description field was structured in a fixed order: (1) physical and morphological description (object type, material, decoration, and carving technique) (2) layout characteristics (including number of lines and inscription language) (3) diplomatic transcription following Armenian editorial conventions (DHV), with explicit marking of ligatures, abbreviations, lacunae, erasures, and damaged characters (4) interpretative summary (5) bibliographic references and (6) geographical coordinates. While language and script were also recorded in separate EAP fields, this internally structured description served as the primary integrated epigraphic record.

Although this approach does not constitute full TEI/EpiDoc encoding, the deliberate segmentation of descriptive, textual, and interpretative components

facilitates future transformation into more granular schemas, including TEI XML (EpiDoc) **[8, 9],** by enabling the mapping of each segment to discrete markup structures without fundamental restructuring of the dataset.

By integrating these elements into a unified record, the documentation process transformed individual inscriptions into structured datasets that support both traditional historical analysis and long–term digital preservation. The emphasis was not on technological complexity, but on methodological consistency, clarity, and reproducibility. This structured model ensures that inscriptions from different cities and preservation contexts can be documented within a shared logical framework, allowing the corpus to function as a coherent whole rather than a series of isolated local observations.

## The Digitised Pilot Collection

The pilot digitisation phase produced 128 fully documented inscriptional records, each supported by 389 archival–quality TIFF image files. The material was digitised across four locations: the Armenian cemeteries and church complexes of Madras (Chennai), Kolkata (Calcutta), Mumbai, and Hyderabad. Specifically, documentation was conducted at St. Mary's Armenian Church (Madras), the Armenian Church of the Holy Nazareth and its adjacent cemetery (Kolkata), the Armenian cemetery at Antop Hill (Mumbai), and the Armenian cemetery in Hyderabad.

Each inscription was treated as a discrete digital object linked to a structured metadata entry.

The digitised subset reflects chronological, typological, and preservation diversity within the larger surveyed corpus. It consists predominantly of funerary gravestones, alongside a smaller group of commemorative and dedicatory plaques. Armenian constitutes the principal inscriptional language, with later monuments incorporating English. For each monument, multiple images were produced, typically comprising: (1) an overall view of the object, (2) a focused image of the inscriptional field, and (3) contextual views showing placement within the cemetery or architectural environment.

The pilot subset was intentionally selective rather than exhaustive. Its purpose was methodological: to validate consistency in transcription practices, descriptive recording, preservation assessment, and internal metadata structuring across heterogeneous material and environmental conditions.

The resulting collection functions as a controlled test corpus demonstrating that structured epigraphic documentation can be applied systematically across geographically dispersed ecclesiastical and funerary sites while maintaining fidelity to both material and textual detail.

## Results

The application of structured digital documentation to the Armenian epigraphic corpus preserved in India yielded results at two interconnected levels: the assessment of preservation conditions and the analytical potential of systematically organised inscriptional data.

**Scale and Preservation Patterns:** The survey identified a substantial corpus of Armenian funerary and commemorative inscriptions distributed across multiple urban

centres. The material varies significantly in typology, chronological range, execution, and state of preservation. On certain sites, inscriptions remain relatively stable and legible, particularly where ecclesiastical use continues, and basic maintenance is provided. In other locations, especially where Armenian custodianship has declined, monuments exhibit advanced surface erosion, biological growth, structural cracking, and partial burial.

A key methodological outcome was recognizing that deterioration is not uniform but patterned. Horizontal gravestones and low-relief carvings show accelerated loss of inscriptional detail compared with vertically mounted plaques or raised slabs. By systematically recording preservation conditions rather than impressionistically, it became possible to identify categories of vulnerability and to prioritize documentation accordingly. In this respect, digital structuring does not merely record loss; it reveals patterns of risk that may inform future preservation strategies.

**Recovery and Clarification of Corpus Extent:** Structured documentation also led to revisions of previously accepted quantitative data. In at least one site, earlier references significantly underestimated the number of surviving monuments. Through systematic item-level recording, the corpus was more accurately defined. In the Armenian cemetery in Hyderabad, 64 gravestones were identified, compared with the 20 mentioned in Armenian and Indian sources. Although a substantial proportion of these monuments has deteriorated to the point of illegibility, documenting their number remains historically significant for reconstructing the scale of the Armenian community that once flourished in Hyderabad.

**Preservation of Editorial Phenomena:** One of the most significant digital gains concerns the preservation of editorial detail. Armenian inscriptions frequently employ ligatures, abbreviated forms, erased letters, and alphabetic numerals. By systematically recording these phenomena in each entry, the documentation retains palaeographic detail as structured data rather than incidental commentary. This approach enables recurring epigraphic practices—such as formulaic expressions, abbreviation patterns, or calendrical notation- to be identified across geographically dispersed sites. The corpus thus becomes analytically interconnected rather than locally fragmented.

**Integration of Text, Material, and Space:** Another significant outcome is the integration of textual and spatial information. By recording the precise location of the monument and the places mentioned in the inscription, it becomes possible to examine relationships among burial placement, ecclesiastical hierarchy, family networks, and diaspora origins. Such connections are difficult to reconstruct from text-only publications. The structured format also preserves material characteristics—stone type, carving technique, and monument form, as well as textual content. This integrated recording enables the study of stylistic and material variation alongside linguistic and historical analysis.

**Temporal Documentation of Condition:** The creation of time-stamped digital records introduces an archival dimension absent from traditional printed corpora. The condition of each monument at the moment of documentation becomes part of the historical record. In contexts of ongoing deterioration, this function is essential rather than supplementary. Digital records preserve information that may eventually become unreadable on the stone surface and provide a baseline for future

comparative condition assessments.

Taken together, these outcomes demonstrate that structured digital documentation enhances not only preservation but also the analytical coherence of dispersed epigraphic corpora.

## Conclusion

The preservation of Armenian epigraphic heritage has historically depended on the sustained efforts of scholars who documented inscriptions through printed corpora and descriptive publications. This tradition remains foundational and indispensable. Yet the contemporary condition of many monuments—particularly in diaspora contexts—demonstrates that traditional publication alone is no longer sufficient to safeguard inscriptional knowledge amid ongoing material vulnerability.

The Armenian epigraphic corpus preserved in India illustrates both the scale of this vulnerability and the methodological possibilities available today. Progressive deterioration, uneven custodianship, and environmental exposure threaten the legibility of numerous monuments. At the same time, the structured documentation undertaken in this pilot project demonstrates that textual, material, spatial, and editorial information can be preserved in a systematic, reproducible digital format.

By integrating established Armenian editorial conventions with standardised metadata, geographic referencing, and preservation assessment, inscriptions may be documented as coherent and interconnected datasets. Such structuring enhances comparative analysis across regions, preserves palaeographic detail with greater consistency, and creates durable archival records of monuments that may not physically survive in the long term.

The methodological model presented here should therefore be understood as a framework applicable to comparable contexts of endangered Armenian epigraphy. It does not replace traditional scholarship but extends its capacity under contemporary preservation conditions.

The documentation approach developed in this study has been conceived within the broader framework of the ArmEpiC (Armenian Epigraphic Corpus) initiative, which seeks to establish structured digital standards for Armenian inscriptions across regions. The Indian corpus thus represents one segment of a wider effort toward methodological coherence and long–term sustainability in Armenian epigraphic research.

The integration of digital methods into Armenian epigraphy is not a rupture with scholarly tradition, but a continuation of it under new historical circumstances. The task ahead is to ensure that such methods are applied consistently, responsibly, and in accordance with established academic standards.

## Appendix

**Figure 1:** Tsatur, son of Meliknazar (Hyderabad).

**Figure 2:** Reverend Sahak Aivazyan (Mumbai)

**Table 1.**

Tsatur, son of Meliknazar (Hyderabad)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Bilingual title** | Մելիքնազարի որդի Ծատուրի տապանաքարը<br>Gravestone of Tsatur, son of Meliknazar (Hyderabad) |
| **Object type** | Gravestone |
| **Location** | Armenian Cemetery of Hyderabad (in situ) |
| **Material** | Vertically oriented rectangular stone slab |
| **Dimensions** | 143.25 × 54.86 cm |
| **Number of lines** | Six lines of Armenian text |
| **Execution** | Engraved (incised) |
| **Description** | Plain stone surface without sculptural ornamentation; inscription occupies the upper portion. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Inscription (Armenian)** | Այս է տապան Մէլիքնազարի որդի Ծատուրի, թվին ՌՃԻԸ, ղամար Ի: |
| **Notes** | Ligatures observed in Մէլիքնազարի, որդի, թվին, ղամար. |
| **Published reference** | Kortoshyan, R. (2024). Epigraphic Inscriptions of the Armenian Settlements in India. Yerevan: RAA, p. 292. |
| **Condition** | Surface weathering consistent with long-term outdoor exposure; inscription remains legible. |
| **Dating** | 7 Ghamar 1679 = 7 August 1679 (Gregorian). Armenian Era ՌՃԻԸ (1128). |

**Table 2.**

Reverend Sahak Aivazyan (Mumbai, Antop Hill)

| | |
|---|---|
| **Bilingual title** | Տէր Սահակ Այվազյանի տապանաքարը<br>Gravestone of Reverend Sahak Aivazyan |
| **Object type** | Gravestone: horizontal slab with head-cross |
| **Location** | Armenian Cemetery at Antop Hill, Mumbai (in situ) |
| **Material** | Marble slab; grey stone cross on stepped base |
| **Dimensions** | 189 × 65 cm |
| **Layout** | Bilingual commemorative text arranged in centred horizontal lines |
| **Execution** | Incised carving on marble; maker's signature in small Latin letters at lower right. |
| **Full description** | Horizontal rectangular marble slab set into a darker stone platform, surmounted by a freestanding stepped Armenian cross. Armenian text (10 lines) and English text (4 lines) arranged in centred horizontal lines. |
| **Inscription (Armenian)** | Շիրիմ / անբասիր հոգեվորական / տէր Սահակ քահանայ Այվազեանի / ծնեալ 1894 / վախճան 1961: / Հանգիր ի խաղաղութեան / եւ հատուսցէ քեզ Տէր / զպսակն փոխանակ / վաստակաց քոց |
| **English inscription** | "Reverend Sahak Aivazyan / 1894–1961."<br>Maker's signature: "Edward Jones." |
| **Condition** | Moderate to poor: biological staining, discoloration, surface erosion; diagonal structural crack across slab. |
| **Dating** | 1894–1961 |

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