ARMENIAN CHURCH ARCHITECTURE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Despite traditionalism being a stylistic peculiarity of the Armenian Architecture, the current situation intends to review and regenerate the inherited values. However form and content in Architecture are alternating and church architecture is not an exception. In spite of the fact that world church design practice has passed to typological: codex order for a long time, modern church design processes in Armenian Architecture are in compositional concept which is reflected in theoretical references, such as the collaborative book of Paulo Cuneo\(^1\) in the best case. The problem is pressing because in the post-Soviet period there has been no confirmed codex in Armenia yet.\(^2\) Moreover, hereby the use of international parallels is not efficient, because of the fact that every country or religious unit has their own beliefs\(^3\). That is why the modern church design should derive from contemporary experience developing in Armenia.

A sufficient material of the latter is documented in this study, on behalf of 189 newly built churches attended in the spring-summer months of 2013. It’s important to mention that although there are around 30 new churches which are built after the mentioned date\(^4\): 2014\(\rightarrow\)2016, however they do not effect the conclusions of the presented research and are unrelated to the instances of this study.

The documentation of the newly built churches and chapels are carried out in diocese order existing nowadays in the Republic of Armenia. Every church is documented according to construction date, location, architectural type, the constructors and sponsor(s) of design, construction and operation. Included as evidence are all dedication inscriptions which fix the reign and other details. Due to mention is that Ejmiadzin being the center of the Catholicosate of All Armenians is the first and not included in the system of dioceses.

THE HOLY SEE ST. EJMIADZIN is the Holy center of all Armenians, hereby are constructed new sanctuaries dedicated to the event of the 1700\(\text{th}\) anniversary of the proclamation of Christianity as the state religion in Armenia, such as: 1. St. Tiridates\(^5\) open alter church (arch. Jim Torosyan) and 2. St. Grigor Lousavorich (i.e. Gregory the Illuminator) Gateway (arch. Romeo Julhakyan). Both of the structures built beside each other at the main entrance of the Holy See. Other undertakings dedicated to the same

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1. See Paolo Cuneo, 1989, 712\(\rightarrow\)832.
3. Compare: Time-Saver Standards for Building Types, 461\(\rightarrow\)489, as well: Ernst and Peter Neufert, 579\(\rightarrow\)585 etc.
4. This is according to the records of the Holy See architecture office at Ejmiadzin.
5. Tiridates III is Arsacid king of Armenia (287\(\rightarrow\)330) who first proclaimed Christianity in 301.
occasion are: 3. St. Vardan and St. Hovhannes Mkrtich\(^6\) baptismy (arch-s J.Torosyan and R.Julhakyan), 4. St. Hreshtakapatats church (arch. J.Torosyan) and the hall for lighting vocative candles as a mausoleum for the Catholicoses of All Armenians (arch. Aslan Mkhitaryan ). All the buildings are special undertakings bearing the stylistic stamp of the modern World and the Armenian architecture of the contemporary period.

A. **THE ARARAT DIOCESE**, includes the area of Ararat valley and the Capital – Yerevan

Yerevan. The region is in the South central part of the contemporary Armenia. The newly built sanctuaries include the following constructions: 1. St. Haroutiun (i.e. Holy Resurrection) in Nerkin Dvin (arch. Baghdasar Arzoumanyan), 2. St. Gevorg (i.e. St. George) in Maramarashen (Arch. Hrachya Gasparyan), 3. St. Astvadzadzin (i.e. Holy Mother of Lord) in Arevshat (arch. David Kertmenjian), 4,5- St. Gevorg and St. Thaddeus churches (arch. Anahit Tarkhanyan) in the city of Masis, 6,7- St. Hovhannes (i.e. St. John) and St. Astvadzadzin churches in Artashat (arch. Artak Ghulyan) and Ararat cities successively. There are 13 new churches in Yerevan, some of them are built and others are still under construction. Moreover: the Cathedral (n. 8) dedicated to St. Grigor Lousavorich (arch. Stepan Kyurkchyan), 9. St. Vardanants of Yerablur for the victims of the Karabakh conflict (arch. A. Mkhitaryan) and 10. The Catholicos residence church, there are: 11. Chapels (n- s 11, 12) at the Police academy, 13. St.Targmanchats\(^7\) at Senior “Ayb” school and other seven churches (no.s 14\^-120) in different quarters. The information of the latter is available in the Internet.\(^8\) Almost all of the mentioned churches are distinguished for the ir monumental architecture with traditionalistic features, as well as successful synthesis of Arts.

B. **SHIRAK AND ARTIK DIOCESES** with the central cities of Gyumri and Artik.

Besides the cathedral at Gyumri named after St. Hakob Mtsbnatsi\(^9\) (n.1, arch. B. Arzoumanyan), there is another new church of St. Sargis (i.e. St.Sergius, n 2) in the city. Other churches of the region are of small-cruciform -domed- type built at different villages, such as: 3. St. Amenaprkich (i.e All Savior) in Spandaryan, 4. St. Sargis at Eghnjaur, 5.St. Vardan in Lernakert, 6. St. Hogi (i.e. Holy Sipirit) in Gharibjanyan, 7. St. Khach (i.e. Holy Cross) in Haykavan, 8.St. Khach in Zuyg - Aghbyur and others in 9. Kagavakar etc. The total number is 14 churches. Architecturally notable is the cathedral of Gyumri.

C. **GUGARK DIOCESE** with the central city of Vanadzor is in the Central-Northern region of Armenia.


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\(^{6}\) The baptistery has two halls one is dedicated to St. Vardan (387\^-451): a military leader who martyred for christianity at 451. The other is St. Hovhannes Mkrtich i.e. St. John the Batist.

\(^{7}\) St. Targmanchats is in behalf of Sahak Parthev and Mesrop Mashtots who translated the bible into Armenian.

\(^{8}\) See Wikipedia: «Churches in Yerevan» and other sites.

\(^{9}\) i.e. Iacubus Nizibinus, see for the name «Historia Christiana Vetrum Patrum, Parisisis, M.D.LXXXIII.», 242
cathedral of Vanadzor (arch. Rouben Azatyan), and 10. St. Mankants (i.e. Holy Children) in Vanadzor, 11. St Mariam Astvadzadzin in Sarchapet, 12. an open altar nearby “Kotradz-Zham” church, dedicated to the 90th anniversary of the Holy Battle of Gharaikilisa (arch. R. Julhakyan) etc. The Cathedral of Vanadzor and St. Mankanots church are very original and notable for their wall paintings.

D. ARMAVIR DIOCESE with the central city of Armavir in the Central-Western region of Armenia


E. SYUNIK DIOCESE with the central city of of Goris. The region is the southeast region of Armenia.


F. ARAGADZOTN DIOCESE with the central city of Ashtarak is in the North-Western area of Armenia.


10 Translates as the broken church.
11 Translates as «Dark Haired Holy Child».
12 See the link : http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php? saint_id=261
13 Mesrop Mashtots is the inventor of the Armenian Alphabet and scientist celebrated for his works and virtue.
13. 14. St. Hakob and St Grigor Narekatsi chapels in Vardenis, 15. St. Khach-St. Yerrordutyun-St. Louys14 open alter complex and open-sky museum nearby the city of Aparan, 16. a memorial church dedicated to "Mothers who lost their sons" etc. The mentioned sanctuaries are chapels, notable ones among them are the churches in Nor Edesya and Chknagh villages.


I. VAYOTS DZOR DIOCESE with the central city of Vayk. The region is a prosperous area in the South-East of Armenia. The territory has famous medieval complexes. In the period of independence the following sanctuaries have been

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14 i.e. Holy Cross-Holy Trinity- Holy Light a conceived combinations of three sacristies.
15 The church and the sacristy, as well as many other churches sponsored by Dzarougyan family.
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J. TAVUSH DIOCESE, is the North-Eastern region of Armenia centered by Noyemberyan


K. ARTSAKH DIOCESE, is the region of NKR.

The territory consists of many geographic subdivisions which are involved in this study as a whole. Within the last decades many sanctuaries have been built and reconstructed and some are distinguished by some armory. In Stepanakert center and surrounding towns and villages built following sanctuaries have been built: 1,2. St Hambartsman (i.e. Holy Ascension) and Aghavno St. Nahatakats (means Holy Pigeon of Martyrs ) churches at Kashatagh, 3. St. Astvadzadzin in Askaran (arch. S.Gurzadyan), 4. St. Sargis in Haroutunagomer of Martakert area, 5. St. Sargis in Eghdzahogh of Shoushi area, 6. St. Nerses Medz (Nerses the Great) in Martuni, 7. St. Hakob in Stepanakert center, 8. St. Anton in Zaglik of Martakert area, 9. St. Gevorg in Medz Shen, 10. St. Astvadzadzin in Vaghuhas of Martraker area,11. St. Ghazaros in Getingomer of Martakert area, 12. The church of Shoshkavank, 13. St. Stepanos in Khach-Mach village, 12. Church in Khachen village, 13. The Cathedral of Stepanakert which is under construction, and others.


CONCLUSIONS:

Church building activities carried out during the reign of His Holiness Garegin II is a constituent part of Armenian modern culture, without which it is impossible to have an
idea about the contemporary Armenian Architecture since the period of Independence. Regarding the notable quantity of the erected churches, and in order to avoid reiterating the names of churches, the systematization presented below adopts a coding method, where every church is mentioned by the first letter of the diocese it belongs to, followed by its number in the list of churches. Actually, the presented classification is for codex promotion reasons, and as a development and fixation of new features of the contemporary Armenian architecture. In comparative sense with the existing traditional churches the classification is as follows:

In the existing church classification for fixing the following new features:
1/ Some new spatial layouts of available praying halls (see T10, S12, Am5, Gu8).
2/ Contemporary use of the “Big churches” (see MK13, T15, V2, K9, Gu9, P1, Ad20, Ad19, Ad18, Ad17, Ad15, Ad12, Ad9, Ad6, Ad5, E3, E2, E1).
3/ The renaissance of wall painting (see T3, V3, K9, K6,S10, S9, Am11, Am5, Gu14, Gu11, Gu9, Gu8, Gu4, Sh1).
4/ The progress of sculpture and khachkar craftsmanship (see MK3, MK1, T11, T10, T4, T2, T1, V6, V1, G10, G8, K9, K8, K7, K6,K5, K4, Ag3, S10, S9, Am11, Am9, Am6, Am5, Am4, Gu8, Gu7, Gu5, Sh14, Sh1, Ad20, Ad19, Ad18, Ad17, Ad13, Ad12, Ad10, Ad6, Ad5, Ad3, Ad2, Ad1, E3, E2, E1).
5/ Respreads of “open alter” churches (see Ag16, Ag10, Ag9, Ag8, Gu11, E1).
6/ The spread of some instances of apse-like morphology or form within church portals (see MK3, V6, Gu4).

For adding the following categories in existing church classifications:
“Community church centers” of Armenian diaspora which have different space-use programs than the samples of churches in Armenia.

2. New types of churches which have not been before, such as the following:
   a. Private churches and churches of individual establishments, armory churches of Artsakh (MK) region (see: Armory chapels of MK, K16, K11, Ag9, S4, Ad 22, Ad21).
   b. Church types of different size settlements.
      i-Large (see: T3, V6, V2, V1, G5, K19, K18, K 15, K14, K1, S10, S2, Am12, Am11, Am 2, Gu7, Gu4, Gu3, Gu1, Ad16, Ad10, Ad2, Ad1),
      ii-Medium (see MK3, MK1, T14, T5, T4, V3, G19, G18, G15, G8, G1, K13, K12, K7, K6, K5, Ag4, Ag3, S9, Am11, Am8, Am5, Gu13, Gu10, Sh14, Sh8, Sh7, Sh6, Sh5, Sh3, Ad7, Ad4, Ad3),
      iii-Small or chapels (see MK5, MK14, T 13, T12 , T6, V5, G22, G20, Ag14, Ag13, Ag12, Ag5, S8, S7, S5, S3, S1, Am7, Gu 17, Gu16, Gu6, Gu5, Sh4, Ad14),
      iv- Churches out of settlements (see: MK2 , T11, T10, S11, Sh9).
   v- Churches for special ceremonies such as memorial churches, wedding churches, candle lighting chaples etc. (see: MK14, MK 4, G13, G6, G8, K10, K8, K5, K3, K2, Ag15).

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vi- Typical or uniform churches constructed in the same size and manner in many places (see MK11 and 12, MK8, T7, Am3, Am1, Gu14, Sh11).

vii- Basically reconstructed churches which are mainly three nave basilicas (see: MK10, MK8, T2, T1, G21, G17, G14, G12, K17, Ag11, S16, S15, S14, S13, Ag11, Am6, Gu15, Sh12, Sh10, Sh2).

viii- Domed halls type churches having lantern in place of dome (MK 6, 7, 9, G15).

The newly built churches in mainly traditional trend. There are some examples of modernist, rational, eclectic styled constructions too (see: V5, Ag6, Ag4, S12, Am9, Am4, Gu12, Gu7, Gu3, Ad13, Ad11, E3, E2, E1).

The investigated churches should be classified not only according to their compositional values, but also according to their typological features. It means that on behalf of functional properties they should be classified according to the following kinds and types of churches: 1. Basilica churches (typical, mono nave, three nave). 2. Domed basilicas having two and four columns. 3. Centric churches of traditional and combined types. 4. Multi apse churches. 5. Domed hall churches by cupola and lantern types. 6. Cruciform domed type churches. 7. Open Altar churches. 8. Multi hall churches. 9. Churches for special ceremonies. 10. Armory churches. 11. Private and churches within the territories of private establishments. 12. Sacristy type churches. 13. Diaspora churches and complexes.
Masis, St. Thaddeus church

Erevan, “AYB” school, St. Thargmanchats church
Gyumri, St Hakob Mtsbnatsi church

Spitak, St. Haroutune church

Vanadzor, St. Grigor Narekatsi Cathedral

Vanadzor, St. Makants open alter chapel.
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ԴՈԿՏՈՐ
dkertmenjian@gmail.com

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ДАВИД КЕРТМЕНДЖЯН
Доктор архитектуры,
Институт искусств НАН РА
dkertmenjian@gmail.com

ЦЕРКОВНАЯ АРХИТЕКТУРА АРМЕНИИ В XXI ВЕКЕ
РЕЗЮМЕ

Несмотря на то, что армянская архитектура сохраняет верность традиционным принципам, тем не менее реалии сегодняшнего дня диктуют необходимость пересмотра исторически сформировавшейся классификации церковных зданий и дополнения её новыми категориями.

Проектирование современной церкви в Армении должно быть основано на нормах, разработанных на местной основе, которые должны органически совмещать и традиционные классификации, и современные данные. Основой для этого может стать документальное изучение около 200 церквей, построенных за годы независимости, которое позволяет прийти к следующим предварительным выводам:

1. Необходимо закрепить в классификациях некоторые новаторские интерпретации мольберта: современное применение «больших церквей», возрождение фресок, распространение церквей типа «открытый алтарь» и др.

2. К существующим классификациям армянских церквей необходимо добавить следующие категории:

а) общины церкви диаспоры, которые по своим функциям определённо отличаются от таковых в Армении.

б) появившиеся на практике не имеющие прецедентов типы, как например, частные церкви, церкви, принадлежащие каким-либо учреждениям, а также городские, или церкви вне населённых пунктов, с особыми функциями.