

УДК: 7.033.2; 7.033.12

ББК: 85.14

DOI: 10.18688/aa2111-02-21

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The Frescoes of the Haghpat Monastery in the Historical-Confessional Context of the 13th Century

The Haghpat Monastery is one of the famous ecclesiastical centers of medieval Armenia. It was founded in the 10th century under the Bagratids and was completed in the 13th and early 14th centuries under the Zakharids and their successors [12, pp. 9–88; 22]. One of the unique so-called “Savior” khachkars with a scene of Crucifixion dates back to this very period [22, fig. 19].

The Haghpat monastery is better known for its architecture and sculpture. However, inside the earliest Church of the Holy Sign (*Surb Nshan*), the fragments of the wall paintings are preserved. For many years, they were under soot and remained almost invisible. There were only general notes on frescoes and paleography [12, pp. 9–88; 7, p. 152; 28, p. 208]. However, recently Christine Lamoureux and Ara Zarian from Italy started the restoration of the frescoes¹ and published a book [14]. Now the monument is available for study.

The Church of the Holy Sign was built between 976–991 by the king Ashot III Bagratid and his wife Khosrovanush for the glory of their sons. The voluminous sculptures of the princes Smbat and Gurgen are fixed in the niche of the eastern pediment, with the model of the church in their hands [22, fig. 1, 8–9]. A few years earlier, the same patrons had built the Church of the Savior (966) of the Sanahin monastery, a complex paired to Haghpat, with the relief images of the same princes.

The frescoes of Haghpat have no exact date. The scholars mentioned the two or three layers of the frescoes and suggested different dates from the 10th–11th to 13th–14th centuries [12, pp. 19, 154; 7, p. 152; 28, pp. 208, 410, 534; 23, pp. 191–192; 17, pp. 270–271; 19, pp. 49–50; 14, pp. 111, 180]. There is every reason to consider the lower layer of the murals to belong to the Bagratids. The upper layer dates to the different periods of the 13th century. Namely, the beginning and the middle of the century, or the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries are mentioned. Also, the alternation of different artistic styles is highlighted. In this case, the stylistic and comparative analysis of the frescoes is of a great importance. However, an equal value has the historical context, which outlines more definite frames of time. Therefore, our aim is to examine the murals of the Haghpat monastery considering the historical background.

In the Church of the Holy Sign, big fragments of the frescos have been preserved in the sanctuary and on the southern wall. The semi-dome and the altar wall are decorated and divided into three tiers. An ornamental band presenting the row of blooming buds separates the

¹ The previous restoration was carried out in the 1950s by the team of L. Durnovo.

semi-dome from the altar wall. This band is similar to the other two on the southern wall. The rest of the tiers and the scenes are separated by simple red lines.

In the semi-dome, there is the Deesis (Ill. 29), below it there are four Feasts, the two by the sides of the central window. The next one is the tier with the scene of the Eucharist, also divided into two parts by the central window. The holy bishops are at the bottom.

The Deesis is presented on a dark blue background. Christ is in the center sitting on the throne (the height is 5.4 m) and is flanked by the Mother of God and John the Baptist. They are in a prayer pose turned towards the Savior. The gestures and poses of the figures are emphasized due to their big forms, which are tightly inscribed in the concave surface. Way back L. Durnovo noted Tetramorphs here [7, pp. 149, 152], which is confirmed by the restorers [14, p. 147]. The latter are from the side of John the Baptist.

Christ blesses with one hand and holds the open codex in the other. There is the quotation from John “*I am the light of the world ...*” (John 8:12), given simultaneously in Armenian and Georgian. According to P. Muradyan the texts are coeval due to the identical style. Besides that, both texts demonstrate a non-standard version of the Gospel.

In the Deesis, there is another inscription “*The Creator of the Heaven and Earth*” [12, pp. 154–155; 23, pp. 190–191] which is in Armenian, but according to P. Muradyan, there was also the Georgian fragment. As a rule, such bilingual inscriptions in the Oriental Christian culture are connected to the Armenian-Chalcedonians².

It is well known that the Deesis endowed with eschatological meaning appeared in the apses of the Eastern Christian churches in the 10th century, replacing the more archaic Theophany. Regarding the Deesis, the scholars mention especially the monuments of Cappadocia and Georgia (the murals of the Ateni Sion, 11th century, the so-called column churches in Göreme, late 11th century, etc.) [30, pp. 59–89; 32, pp. 264–265]. But taking into consideration the monuments of the whole region, it is obvious that this was a regional tradition referring to Armenia as well. Despite the poor preservation of the Armenian frescoes, the Deesis could be found in a number of wall paintings and in sculpture [10, pp. 74–79]. These are the Church of the Holy Cross on the Aghtamar Island (915–921, apse), the Church of St. Gregory in Kecharis (after 1214, tympanum), the funerary chapel of Tigran Honents in Ani (before 1212, semi-dome). In Armenia, the Deesis was ordinary both for the monuments of the National Church and for that of Armenian-Chalcedonians. Among the Orthodox monuments of Armenia, the Deesis is available in the Church of Pghndzaank (Akhtala, early 13th century, eastern arch, western wall), Church of St. Gregory (Tigran Honents) in Ani (mid-13th century, semi-dome), the small Church of Kobayr (late 13th century, semi-dome). In Georgia it appears at Pavnisi (1170–1180s, semi-dome) and in the Church of the Holy Cross of Shio Mgvime (early 13th century, semi-dome). This brief overview shows that the Deesis became one of the popular compositions of the apses in the 13th century.

As the Deesis compositions became wide spread in Byzantium from the 10th century, L. Durnovo dated all the frescoes in the apse of the Church of the Holy Sign to the same period,

² The Armenian-Chalcedonians were the Orthodox Armenians living in Armenia and elsewhere, retaining their ethnic self-awareness, at the same time they were subjects of the Byzantine and later Georgian Churches. Accordingly Armenian was their native language, and Greek and then Georgian were confessional languages [1, pp. 346–351].

but did not exclude later renovations [7, p. 152]. S. Manukyan attributes only the face of Christ to the 10th century [19, p. 49]. Ch. Lamoureux and A. Zarian consider the frescoes of the apse to belong to different periods [14, p. 111]. According to my preliminary remarks, the frescoes in the sanctuary are closely related, and if they were renovated, this could be done after the earthquake in the middle of the 13th century.

One of the peculiarities of the frescoes of the Church of the Holy Sign is the location of the Feasts in the sanctuary. They are (from left to right): the Annunciation, Nativity, Presentation, and Baptism. These scenes have the same dark background as the Deesis, and they have bilingual inscriptions as well. In Georgian we have “*Nativity*”, and in Armenian “*Nativity of Christ*”, and the scene of the Presentation is inscribed “*Bringing to the Temple*” in the both languages [23, pp. 191–192] (Ill. 30). The two scenes on the edges are poorly preserved; in the Annunciation, there are fragments of the mantle of the Virgin, an angel’s wing, and a piece of curtain, and in the Baptism, there are only the contours of a standing figure. The central scenes are in relatively good condition. In the Nativity, the Mother of God reclines in front of the cave, the Child is in the cradle, and above His head, there is a star in the segment of the sky. We see also musing Joseph, praising angels, preaching shepherds, and the servants bathing the Child. Such a compositional scheme was typical for the Byzantine art of the 12th–13th centuries.

The Presentation in the Temple is also given in the popular iconographic version: Joseph and Mary are on the left, and Symeon and Anna are on the right. Symeon holds the Child in his arms. In the center, there is the altar with baldachin and the architectural backstage. In the Nativity, the faces of the Child and of the angels are preserved, and in the Presentation, it is the face of Joseph. The closest stylistic and typological parallels are found in the frescoes of Pghndzaank (Akhtala), Kintsvisi (Churches of St. Nicholas and Our Lady, early 13th century) and Timotesubani (1206–1215), all in Georgia. The frescoes of the sanctuary in Haghpat are more complicated in the modeling of faces and clothing. Taking into account the iconography of the 12th–13th centuries, as well as stylistic peculiarities of the murals, it seems likely that the apse frescoes were executed in the early 13th century. This is confirmed by the bilingual Armenian-Chalcedonian inscriptions, which were common in the early 13th century. This is also the period of the political activity of the monastery’s chief patron, *amirspasalar*³ Zakare (died in 1212).

The depiction of the feasts in the altar is very rare in Byzantine art, especially for the monuments of Metropolis. Nevertheless, we can see such ‘deviations’ in the Church of the Holy Trinity in Sopočani (ca. 1265, Serbia), in the Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos in Ohrid (1294/1295, Macedonia) and some others, where the feasts are placed in the bema. There are also some examples in the East where the scenes are placed in the apse proper: the murals of the New Tokali Church in Cappadocia (950s, Turkey) with the scenes of the Passion [29, p. 170, fich. 35; 11, p. 96–98, pl. 6, 64], as well as two churches in Tayk, Parkhar (before 973)⁴ and Chordvank (978)⁵ where the Feasts include the Annunciation, Nativity, Presentation and

³ It is translated as the commander-in-chief.

⁴ The name of the church in the literature is known as Parhali, which is the Georgian version of the Armenian name of the surrounding Parhar Mountains and the river of the same name.

⁵ The historical name of the monastery is Chordvank, which is of Armenian origin and translated as “four monasteries/churches” (the surname of Chordvani came from the same root). The Georgian Otkhta Eklessia and Turkish Dort Kilise are the literal translations of the original Armenian name.

Baptism [31, p. 683]. The main difference, however, is that in Haghpat the Feasts precede the Eucharist and the holy bishops, while in the Tayk murals it is just the opposite.

Considering the stylistic and paleographic unity of the frescoes in the apse of the Holy Sign Church, it can be assumed that only the altar part was allotted to the Orthodox Armenians. Having a limited space, the painters were compelled to combine the scenes traditional for the apse and the bema, following the historical order. In this way a certain compromise of confessions was reached, as the main Feasts are highlighting the main dogmas of Incarnation and Salvation, and then comes the Eucharist having pronounced Byzantine character. In the Eucharist in the second tier of the sanctuary Christ is represented twice; He stands behind the altar, under the canopy. Due to the limited space, the flanking archangels are moved into the inner slopes of the central window. It is noteworthy that the archangels were discovered during the restoration [14, p. 150, no. 9]. Inside the same window, the four-leafed ornamental motifs resembling rotating wings have been preserved.

From the both sides of the scene, the apostles move to the Savior by rhythmic steps. Their figures are slightly elongated, with thin legs against the spacious background that gives the effect of floating figures. Their draperies emphasize the figures well and make the movement of the apostles dynamic. This is very close to the Byzantine artistic perceptions and shows the difference between the frescoes of the altar and the southern wall.

The Eucharist became popular in Byzantine art from the first half of the 11th century on [15, pp. 97–98; 13, pp. 691–699]. As an echo of the Orthodox tradition, it becomes mandatory in the Armenian-Chalcedonian monuments [16, pp. 78–79; 9, pp. 182–183]. As it was mentioned in connection with the frescoes of Pghndzaank, the scene of the Eucharist emphasizes the adherence to the Orthodox iconography [16, p. 83; 18, pp. 68–69, 366–368]. However, in the coeval Georgian murals until the end of the 13th century, the canonical Eucharist does not exist [3, pp. 123–124; 16, p. 77; 26, pp. 240–241]. Strict adherence to the Byzantine iconography for the Armenian-Chalcedonians was of a great importance, because it confirmed their Orthodoxy in the situation of coexistence of the two confessions in Armenia, in contrast to the Georgian mono-confessional milieu.

The inscriptions of the names have survived: Jesus Christ, Peter, John, Mark. In addition, above the heads of the apostles on the both sides, there is a fragment from Matthew's Gospels (Matthew 26:26) "*Take and eat*". It is interesting that the text in the left of the scene is given in the mirror order (from right to left), so that it comes from Christ [23, p. 192]. All inscriptions are in Armenian.

The holy bishops are in the lowest tier. Three of them are depicted on the north side. They are frontal and given in full length. There is also a contour of a halo on the southern side. From the both sides of the tier, there are two original square niches and they are decorated with the same quatrefoil motif we have inside the apse window. Considering the dimensions of the figures, they would be ten, by five on each sides [14, p. 151]. It seems that in the very center of the tier there was another image, since there is a spatial pause after the central figure. According to the results of the restoration there was an image of Christ, now lost [14, p. 151]. Supplementary images in the center of the bishops' tier are known in three Orthodox murals. This is the image of the Virgin Orans in the altar niche of Pghdzaank (early 13th century) [18, p. 371] and the Pantokrator in the Church of St. Nicholas in Kintsvi (early 13th century, Georgia) [27, p. 24],

but the most famous is perhaps the bust of Christ in the big church of Kobayr, although it is placed in the tier of the Eucharist [6, p. 10, fig. 17].

The faces of the holy bishops and the inscriptions of their names do not survive. However, judging from the type of the dressing (two of them have *phelonion* with crosses) and the supposed number of figures, we can conclude that the most authoritative bishops were depicted here, such as John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Cyril of Alexandria⁶. It can be assumed that one of the holy bishops was Cyril of Alexandria by the remains of the dark headdress which he usually wears (as in Pghndzaank and Kobayr). Looking at the bold crosses in squares on the *phelonion* of the third bishop (denoting archiepiscopal rank), one could recognize him as John Chrysostom or Gregory the Theologian (as in Pghndzaank and Kobayr). It is not excluded that Gregory the Illuminator could have been among the bishops in Haghpat. Firstly, Gregory of Armenia was one of the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Church and in this rank he was represented in Byzantine and Armenian-Chalcedonian frescoes (Nerezi, Macedonia, 1164; Afendiko, Mystra, early 14th century; Pghndzaank; St. Gregory in Ani (both early 13th century) [5, pp. 55–60]). At the same time, he was the national saint [24, p. 20; 18, p. 373], from whom the Armenian-Chalcedonians considered to be descended [16, pp. 79–80; 2, p. 58].

The holy bishops are presented in static poses with closed Gospels in their hands. It seems that such iconography is somewhat archaic, as from the end of the 11th century the version of the officiating Bishops disseminated, where the figures are in a symbolic movement. In some Armenian-Chalcedonian monuments of the 13th century, this certain version is displayed: the church of St. Gregory in Ani and Kirants. At the same time, a group of the 13th century murals in the South Caucasus followed the early tradition, such as the one in Pghndzaank, both churches of Kobayr, as well as the churches of Tbeti and Betania (late 12th century, both in Georgia).

The emergence of Chalcedonian murals in Haghpat poses the questions, since it is known for certain that the monastery was never Orthodox and such a matter could be explained only within historical-confessional background of the time. At the turn of the 12th and 13th centuries, when the role of the Chalcedonian community in Armenia had been increased, a period of religious tolerance was established between the two confessions. This was largely facilitated by the fact that the rulers of Armenia, the Zakharid brothers, were followers of different confessions (the younger Ivane was Chalcedonian, Zakare adhered to the National Church, but supported the Orthodox)⁷. Expressing his loyalty to the Chalcedonians, Zakare gave them a broad authority and tried to bring in some changes to the liturgy in accordance with the Byzantine tradition (councils of Lori, 1205, and Ani, 1207)⁸. A group of the clergy of the National Church opposed him, and Zakare expelled them from the Haghpat monastery [4, p. 216]. Therefore the emergence of the Chalcedonian frescoes here was the direct reflection of

⁶ In the big church of Kobayr there are eight Holy Bishops. The most significant ones (Gregory the Theologian, Basil the Great, John Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria) are represented in the center full-length, and the others are given at the edges or below the central figures in bust shape [6, p. 10].

⁷ In medieval Armenia there were always two confessional communities and depending on the political situation the Orthodox community became very strong.

⁸ It is known that Zakare discussed these sensitive issues with the king of Cilician Armenia Levon III and Catholicos John VI and received their full approval [4, p. 211].

these events. During the reign of the Zakharids, for a short period, an atmosphere of religious tolerance was set up, especially among Armenian intellectuals [25, pp. 5–34, 193; 23, pp. 7–14, 171–190]. The brothers were engaged in the arrangement of the country and they founded the buildings and renovated many churches and monasteries, regardless of their confessional affiliation. The idea of the union of Christian churches, which Orthodox Armenians actively discussed at the turn of the 12th–13th centuries, also contributed to that tolerance. Only from this point of view, we can understand why one of the prominent figures of the National Church, a scholar and theologian, the abbot of the Nor-Getik (Goshavank) monastery Mkhitar Gosh, supported the reforms of Zakare, and made the Orthodox Ivane the trustee of his non-Chalcedonian monastery [4, p. 219; 25, pp. 98–101]. Based on the peculiarities of the historical-confessional situation in Armenia, as well as taking into account the period of political activity of Zakare, the bilingual frescoes in the sanctuary of the Church of the Holy Sign can be dated before 1212⁹.

Another big fragment of the painting is on the southern wall. It is divided into four tiers with the scenes of the New Testament and the donor images. I believe that it was an integral composition, which is obvious from the characteristic of the division of the tiers and their dimensions, as well as from the specimens of the ornamental motifs. There are four horizontal bands which are similar, but not completely identical. Two of them are the so-called blossomed buds, or animated foliate scroll, well known in the Caucasian murals (Ateni Sion, Udabno, Kobayr, St. Gregory in Ani, Kintsvisi). The scheme of drawings in the two bands on the southern wall is different, but the artistic manner is identical. There are also similarities with the decorative band of the sanctuary, but in the apse, the ornamental patterns are more complicated. This may indicate the desire to imitate a visual connection between the two parts of the murals. The similar motif is found in the frescoes of Kobayr, which is the closest in style to the patterns of the southern wall [6, fig. 15–16]. The third, most damaged band is presenting a perspective zigzag motif also popular in the wall paintings (Ateni Sion, Kintsvisi, St. Gregory in Ani). The fourth, lower band is a filigree drawing of stylized acanthus with alternating red and black folios. Such an ornament is found in the decoration of the inner slopes of the original southern window, which in its turn testifies to the existence of the integral murals on the southern wall. The identical pattern is found again in Kobayr.

In the upper part of the southern wall, the composition is crumbled. In the next two horizontal tiers two scenes are represented on the sides of two windows in the center. The upper window is original, and the lower and wider one appeared after the earthquake of the 17th century.

In the first horizontal tier, there is the Descent of Christ into Hell on the left and the Ascension (Ill. 31) on the right. In the next tier only the right scene, the Pentecost, is preserved. Actually two compositions are missing. According to the local iconographic tradition and to the Feasts traditional in the Armenian Church, it can be assumed that such compositions as the Last Supper, Washing of the Feet or the Myrrh bearers at the Tomb should have been displayed here.

As the frescoes of the sanctuary, the southern murals have inscriptions too, but they are only in Armenian. Only on the mandorla in the Ascension the name of Christ is written in

⁹ Zakare fell on the battlefield and was buried in the family tomb at the Sanahin monastery.

Greek (Ill. 31). The artistic style of the frescoes could be characterized as local with an emphasized plane interpretation of figures and static compositions, where the outlines play essential role. The faces are wide and the figures are stocky, the modeling of the images is simplified. Nevertheless, it seems that the painter was trying to reconcile his paintings with the frescoes in the apse (the typology of the images of the angels). The closest monument to the frescoes of the southern wall of the Church of the Holy Sign should be considered the frescoes of Kobayr, where the plane interpretation and the graphic manner are essential too. The typologies of the faces on the southern wall also have the closest connection with the images of the saints and apostles in Kobayr. The stylistic difference between the paintings of the southern wall and the sanctuary of Haghpat indicates the work of different painters, or rather, the different periods of execution of the frescoes.

Next to the figures of the patrons, where the upper layer is crumbled, an earlier plaster layer is visible. There is a fragment of an inscription mentioning the Holy Sign and a plant ornament detail [14, p. 184]. This earlier layer obviously belonged to the Bagratids period and existed before the earthquake in the middle of the 13th century. I think that the damage of the frescoes during the earthquake was the reason for the new murals of the southern part (and possibly of the northern too) ordered already by the new patrons.

The last and the lowest tier of the southern wall is assigned to the patrons. The utter right figure with the inscription of his name Khutlubuga is well preserved (Fig. 1). We shall keep in mind that the khachkar “Savior” (Amenaprkich) in the Haghpat monastery (1273) was dedicated to him. The figure is standing inside the arch which is supported by thin columns with ‘tied in knot’ parts in the middle. Such decorative columns are known in the Canons Tables of the Byzantine manuscripts in the 12th–13th centuries, as well as in the Armenian Gospels of the 13th century. In this context, the Canon Tables of the Haghpat Gospel dated 1211 (Matenadaran 6288)¹⁰, with its ‘tied in knot’ columns, are especially noteworthy (the folios 8v, 9r, 15r) [20, pp. 32–33, 39].

The middle of the tier is poorly preserved. Obviously, in front of Khutlubuga there was another figure, as the thin edge of the dress (the back) has been preserved and the continuation of the decorative arch could also be seen. Way back, L. Durnovo fixed more details and pointed out to the shoes and a headdress of belonging to this image [7, p. 152]. After the restoration, the third figure came out in the far left corner of the tier. The face is well distinct, although the previous layer shines through it and apparently it is the image of the Holy Warrior [14, p. 181]. The hairstyle of this image is similar to the apostles from the Pentecost. This figure is inside the arch, too. The scholars always mentioned two figures of patrons, but now we know they were at least three.

However, it seems to me that there were more figures depicted here, since the continuation of the arches is obvious; and if so, there should be five figures. Moreover, taking into account that the lowest window was cut through only in the 17th century, there is every reason to see here five patrons included into the arches. Before Khutlubuga, there is his father Sadun¹¹. And who are the others? According to the historical data, they must be the representatives

¹⁰ The manuscript was copied in Haghpat monastery and illustrated in Ani.

¹¹ L. Durnovo mention that Sadun stood in front of his son. Ch. Lamoureux and A. Zarian consider that Sadun stands at the edge of the left side.



Fig. 1. Khutlubuga. Church of the Holy Sign. Haghpat Monastery. The southern wall. Late 13th century. Copy by G. Khanaghyan, 1924. Courtesy of NGA

of Zakharid family, the supreme ruler and the commander-in-chief. It is known that the Artsrunids were the subjects of the latter. As the subjects of Zakare Zakharid and his son Shahnshah (died in 1261), Sadun and Khutlubuga inherited from them the titles of *atabek*¹² and *amirspasalar*. Furthermore, according to the epigraphs, the daughter of Sadun was the wife of Shahnshah Zakharid¹³, which means that these nobles were in close relative ties as well. Thus, it could be assumed that in Haghpat there was painted a group of patrons, besides Khutlubuga and Sadun presumably including Zakare (from the right to left), Ivane¹⁴, and Shahnshah. In this regard, we could compare it with the other patron's composition in the small church of Kobayr (1282) with the members of Zakare family, where some of them are included inside the arches [6, pp. 12–13, fig. 34–35]. Although putting the images of patrons inside the arches is not typical for Eastern Christian iconography, King George III, Queen Tamar, and her son are depicted in this way in the murals of Kintsvisi (early 13th century, Georgia). Moreover, the arches are supported by 'bound' columns. The connection between the murals of Kobayr and that of the southern wall of the Church of the Holy Sign becomes more obvious due to similarities in style, typologies of faces, and decorative motives. The affinity of the frescoes of the southern wall in Haghpat and Kobayr, as well as coeval Armenian miniatures (Ani, Syunik, Upper Armenia), testify to the existence of a local artistic school by the end of the 13th century, as was mentioned by A. Lidov [18, p. 234].

The clarification of the date of the murals of the southern wall is possible due to some facts known about Khutlubuga. The wall paintings cannot precede 1273, when the khachkar was erected by Sadun. Yet Khutlubuga himself acted as the patron of the murals, so they were most probably executed in the years of his political activity as the commander-in-chief and before his death in 1293¹⁵, i.e. the 1280s. At the same time, we could consider the murals of Kobayr (1276–1282) as a reference point for dating the fragments on the southern wall at Haghpat.

The good preservation of the image of Khutlubuga gives a general idea of the princely garment of the time (Fig. 1). Khutlubuga wears a wrap-around caftan with contrasting inserts on the overdress. He has high boots, a wide belt and a low triangular hat. While comparing the Armenian and Georgian patron images of the time, one can notice the general fashion of the princely overdress and the type of headdress. Such overdresses we see in the frescoes of the small church in Kobayr and in the sculpture of the Spitakavor church (prince Eachi¹⁶ and his son Amir Hasan, early 14th century) [21, pp. 141–145; fig. 57–58], as well as on the frescoes of Udabno (Martyrs chapel, Burbakar, 12th century), Vardzia (Rati Surameli, late 12th century), Bertubani (Georgi Lasha, early 13th century) and Sapara (patrons, early 14th century) [8, fig. 57, 83] (all in Georgia).

Thus, the Church of the Holy Sign at the Haghpat monastery was built and painted by Bagratids. From this early layer of murals, only the very small fragments have been preserved

¹² It is translated as the regent.

¹³ There are inscriptions both in Armenian (the *gavit* (nartex) of Haghpat) and in Georgian (bell tower-tomb in Kobayr) languages [12, p. 171; 23, pp. 177, 183].

¹⁴ After the death of Zakare, Ivane continued to maintain the monasteries of the Armenian National Church, in particular in 1223 he built the fence walls of Haghpat.

¹⁵ Due to the mistake in the years of Khutlubuga's life L. Durnovo points out the 1313 as the years of his activity.

¹⁶ One of the sculptures is in the State Hermitage Museum.

on the southern wall. During the second flourishing of the monastery under the Zacharid rulers, when the Armenian-Chalcedonian community was on the rise, there was a demand for new frescoes (as a political act as well), which were executed in two stages. Under the patronage of Zakare, as the sign of loyalty to the Orthodox, the Armenian-Chalcedonians were invited to decorate this non-Chalcedonian church and apparently they worked on the sanctuary. These frescoes with bilingual inscriptions emerged before 1212. In the middle of the 13th century, after the earthquake, it became necessary to renovate the frescoes in the church, which was carried out already in the 1280s by the new patron, one of the Artsrunids, the adherents of the National Church. The murals of the Church of the Holy Sign in Haghpat were painted during a vivid and diversified epoch and that is why they precisely reflected the cultural and historical atmosphere of the time and undoubtedly became an important part of the cultural heritage of Armenia and of the Eastern Christian tradition on the whole.

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Title. The Frescoes of Haghpat Monastery in the Historical-Confessional Context of the 13th Century

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Abstract. The Church of the Holy Sign of Haghpat monastery was built and painted by Bagratids. From this early layer of murals only the very small fragments have been preserved. During the second rise of the monastery under the Zacharids, when the Armenian-Chalcedonian community was on the rise, there was a demand for new frescoes, which were executed in two stages. Under the patronage of Zakare, as the sign of loyalty to the Orthodox, the Armenian-Chalcedonians were invited to decorate this non-Chalcedonian church and apparently they also worked on the sanctuary. These frescoes with bilingual inscriptions (typical for Orthodox Armenians) emerged before 1212. In the middle of the 13th century, after the earthquake, it became necessary to renovate the frescoes in the church, which was carried out already in the 1280s by the new patron of the monastery from the Artsrunid family, adhering to the Armenian National Church.

Keywords: Haghpat, Holy Sign, Armenian-Chalcedonians, Orthodox, iconography, Zakharids, Khutlubgha, Deesis, Eucharist, frescoes

Название статьи. Фрески Ахпатского монастыря в историко-конфессиональном контексте XIII века

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Аннотация. Церковь Св. Знамени монастыря Ахпат была построена и расписана при Багратидах. От этого раннего слоя до нас дошли лишь незначительные фрагменты. В эпоху второго расцвета мо-

настыря Ахпат в начале XIII в. при Захаридах, когда в Армении переживает свой расцвет армяно-халкидонитская община, возникла необходимость новой росписи в церкви Св. Знамени. Она была осуществлена в два этапа. В начале века, а точнее в 1212 г., в апсиде появились армяно-халкидонитские фрески с двуязычными надписями, а в конце века — в 80-х гг. — были расписаны боковые стены церкви, уже новыми покровителями обители, представителем семьи Арцрунидов, последователя национальной Церкви. Под покровительством Закаре, как некий знак лояльности к православным, армяно-халкидонитская община была привлечена к украшению нехалкидонитского монастыря, что было исключительным фактом. В результате реставрационных работ, осуществлённых в последние годы, в церкви Св. Знамени было выявлено несколько новых живописных фрагментов. В частности, в боковых откосах центрального окна апсиды проявились фрагменты фигур архангелов и надписи их имен, а на северной стене — небольшой фрагмент фигуры ктитора, из чего стало ясно, что здесь был представлен ряд из пяти донаторских фигур.

Ключевые слова: Ахпат, Святое Знамение, армяно-халкидониты, православные, иконография, Захарида, Хутлубуга, Деисус, Евхаристия, фрески



Ill. 29. Deesis. Church of the Holy Sign. Haghpat Monastery. Wall painting in the semi-dome. Early 13th century. Photo by Ch. Lamoureux and A. Zarian

Ill 30. Presentation in the Temple. Church of the Holy Sign. Haghpat Monastery. Wall painting on the apse wall. Early 13th century. Photo by Ch. Lamoureux and A. Zarian





Ill. 31. Ascension. Church of the Holy Sign. Haghpat Monastery. Wall painting on the southern wall. Late 13th century. Photo by Ch. Lamoureux and A. Zarian