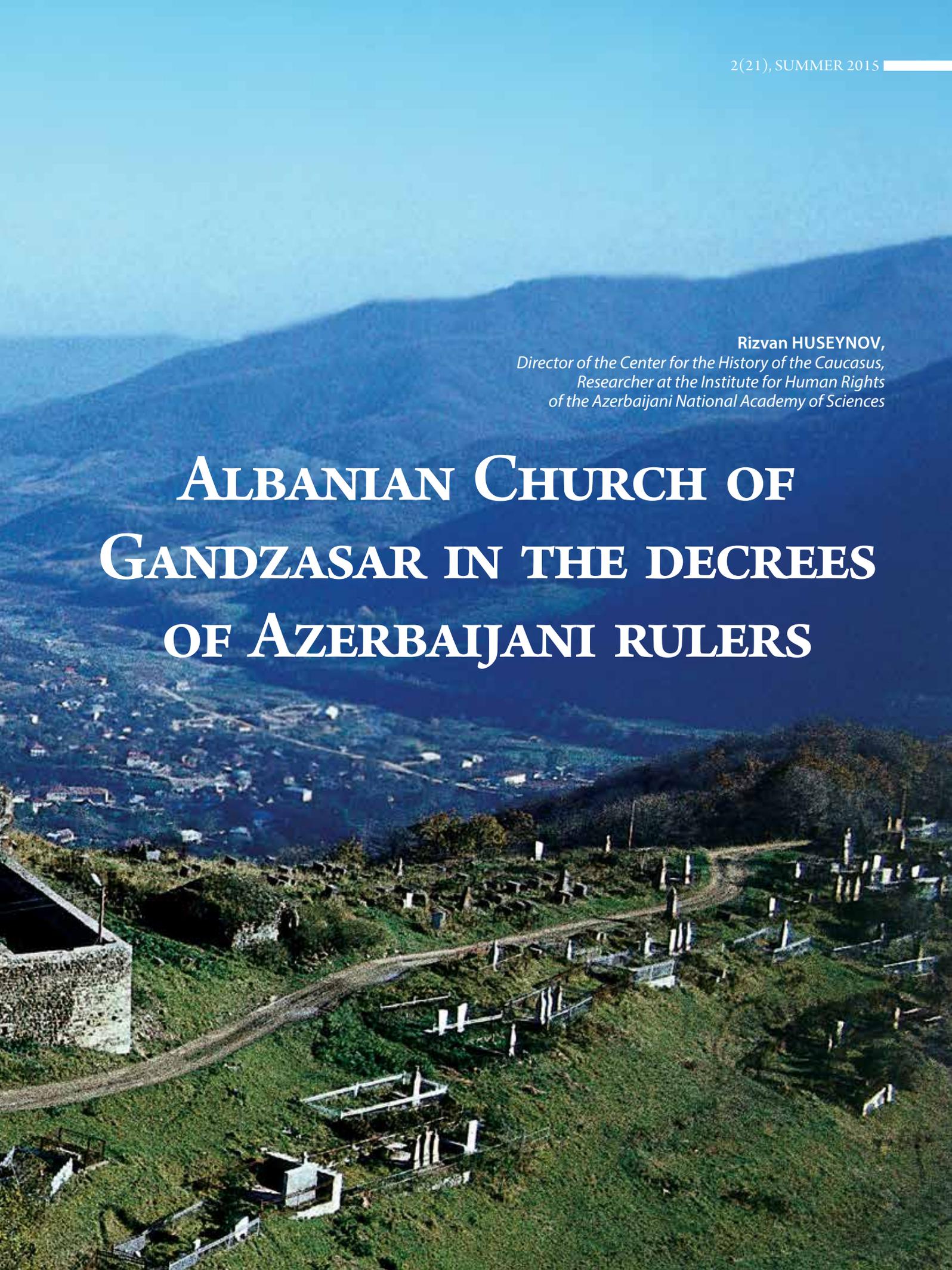




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ALBANIAN CHURCH OF GANDZASAR IN THE DECREES OF AZERBAIJANI RULERS



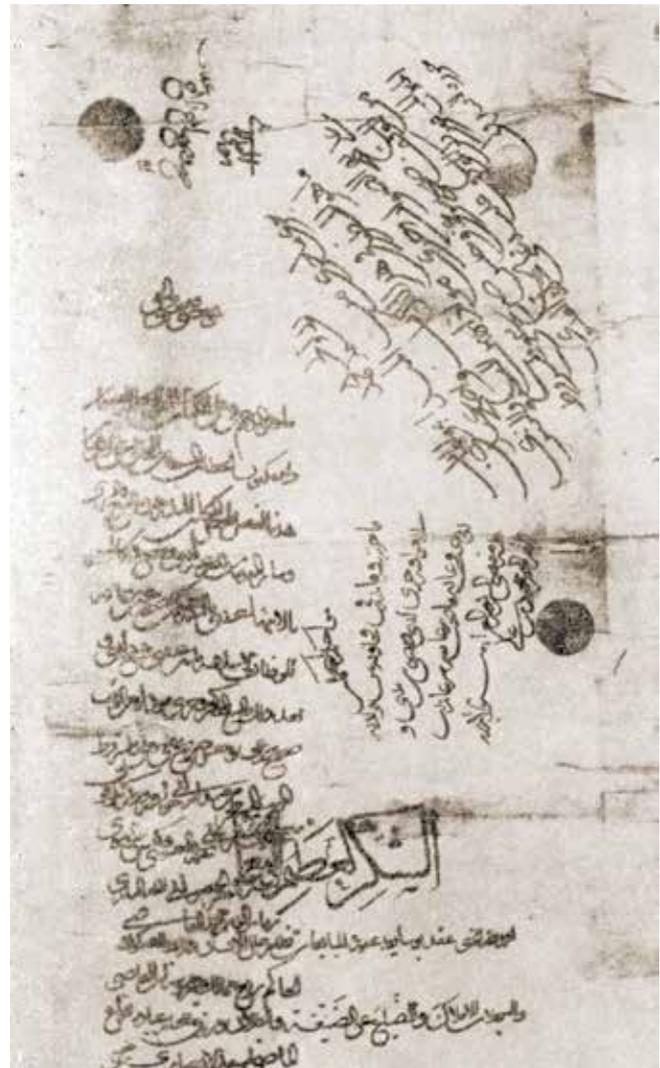
A deed of 1430 on the sale of the village of Vagarshapat (Uchkilisa) to an Armenian bishop

This article is devoted to Armenian falsifications aimed at misappropriating Albanian manuscript heritage and churches on the territory of present-day Armenia and in the occupied Azerbaijani lands of Karabakh. According to sources, **Armenian Church superiors settled with the permission of Jahanshah, the ruler of the Azerbaijani state of Qara Qoyunlu in the village of Uchkilisa - now Echmiadzin - in 1441.** This information is confirmed by Encyclopaedia Britannica (1910), where the article "Armenian Church" states that Armenian catholicoses first moved to Echmiadzin in 1441 (1). The article "Armenia" in the same place notes that Armenia is geographically located in Asia Minor, not in the Caucasus (2).

It should be noted that even before 1441 the Armenian clergy gradually flocked to the vicinity of Uchkilisa in several decades and bought land for their church here with the permission of Azerbaijani rulers. Numerous medieval decrees and bills of sale signed by Azerbaijani rulers and feudal lords from the archives of Armenian catholicoses were collected and analyzed by the Soviet Armenian scientist A. D. Papazyan and then published by the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR as a series of books called "Persian Documents of Matenadaran" in 1956, 1959 and 1968 respectively (3).

In Armenia, the Matenadaran archive keeps **the 1430 bill of sale for the village of Uchkilisa** compiled on the basis of three separate bills of sale from 1428-1430, which show **how the Armenian clergymen began to buy land from Azerbaijani feudal lords for their future residence.** The original bill of sale shows that 4/6 of land in the village of Vagarshapat (Uchkilisa) were acquired in three steps from specific Azerbaijani landowners mentioned by name in the bill of sale (4). It is important to note that this and four other bills of sale kept in Matenadaran (Doc. 5, 8, 9 and 23) **indicate these lands as part of Azerbaijan.** Therefore, Papazyan was forced to point out that the Chukhur-Sa'd vilayet is referred to as one "of the regions of Georgia subordinate to the country of Azerbaijan".

Papazyan tried to explain in his own manner why Echmiadzin (Uchkilisa), as well as the entire territory of modern Armenia were located within Azerbaijan in the Middle Ages. According to him, this is the result of the "administrative" or "financial" division of the medieval Safavid Empire: "Under the Safavids, the country was divided into four major financial departments (departemens) - Iraq, Fars, Azerbaijan and Khorasan." He cites V. Minorskiy, who indicates that Azerbaijan had four baylarbaydoms: Tabriz,



Chukhur-S'ad, Karabakh and Shirvan (5). But the references above confirm that **the Azerbaijani possessions included vast territories in the Caucasus, including present-day Armenia (Chukhur-S'ad), Karabakh and Shirvan.** It is clear that Papazyan had to stretch the truth and play with formulations so as not to hurt the feelings of Armenian nationalists, who sensitively reacted to any mention of the fact that Armenia was created on medieval Azerbaijani lands. After all, any more or less literate Orientalist understands that the abovementioned medieval administrative and financial subordination is directly indicative of the political sovereignty of Azerbaijan over these lands of the Caucasus.

After the Armenian Church gained a foothold in Echmiadzin, where the residence of the Patriarchs of the Albanian Church had been located for centuries, **the deliberate Armenification of the rich heritage of the Christian peoples of the region began. The Armeni-**

A decree by Begum Khatun, the wife of Sultan Jahan Qara Qoyunlu dated 1462, issued to Gandzasar Catholicos Ioannes, confirming his patriarchal rights



fiction of Albanian heritage took on a total nature in the early 19th century, when the mass settlement of Armenians in the region began after Azerbaijani territories in the Caucasus were incorporated into Russia. During the 19th and 20th centuries, more than one million Armenians from Persia, Turkey and the Middle East were resettled to the South Caucasus. After that, the Russian monarchy abolished the Albanian Autocephalous Church, which had served as one of the most important spiritual centers of the region since the 4th century, and handed over its temples, archives and flock to the Armenian Church of Echmiadzin. **Numerous Albanian manuscripts were copied in the Armenian language and their content was faked, and as a result, there appeared a whole layer of fabricated sources that**

claimed the belonging of the Albanian church and its flock to Armenian ethnicity. Besides purely Albanian manuscripts and texts, **numerous decrees by medieval Azerbaijani rulers of Qara Qoyunlu, Aq Qoyunlu and Safavids**, the originals of which in Azeri and Persian then disappeared or were destroyed, were rewritten in Armenian. These rewritten copies, together with numerous other documents, were transferred to Echmiadzin and Matenadaran, where they are now used as the original medieval sources on Armenian history. Some of these decrees of Azerbaijani rulers issued to Albanian and Armenian monasteries were included in the abovementioned "Persian Documents of Matenadaran".

Papazyan, distorting the meaning of the documents in his study and adding the "necessary" words to them, is

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repetition, in such wise that a sinner could be restored to grace not once only, but as often as the clergy chose to accept his repentance and communion. Thus the whole development of the penitential system is traceable in the MS.

The confusion of a dying man might be better by any layman present, and written down in order to be shown to the priest when he arrived. It then was the duty of the latter to expostulate for his forgiveness, and administer to him the Eucharist.

The clergy of all grades were originally married. The parish priests, or white clergy, are so still, except some of the Latinizing ones. But since the 17th century, or even earlier, the higher clergy, i.e. patriarchs and bishops, have taken monastic vows and worn the cross.

There were abortive attempts to unite the Armenian church with the Byzantine in the 6th century under the patriarch Phocas, and again late in the 11th under the emperor Manuel Comnenus, when a joint council met at Nicaea, but failed. The Armenians were united to nothing (A.D. 1170). Neither could the Armenians keep on good terms even with the Syriac monophysites. From the age of the crusades on, the Armenians of Cilicia, whose position set at the increased their acquaintance with Rome; and more than one of their patriarchs adopted the Roman faith, at least in words. Dominican missions went to Armenia, and in 1216 under their auspices was formed a regular order called the United Brothers, the forerunners of the Order of the Holy Spirit, who have convents at Venice and Vienna, a college in Rome and a seminary following in Turkey. They retain their Armenian liturgy and rites, profess to suit the Vatican standards of orthodoxy, and they recognize the pope as head of the church.

The patriarchs of Great Armenia first resided at Ani, then at the Azna. From 1216 to 1221 they occupied Diiv in the same neighbourhood, then Aghtashar, an island in the Lake of Van, 1221-26; the city of Ani, 1226-1255, when they still visited the

their cathedra at Ani, and at Echmiadzin, the residence of Yezid, the catholicus, who had been exiled to Ani. The catholicus of Echmiadzin is usually called the catholicus of Armenia. A catholicus of Ani had his cathedra at Ani. The catholicus of Van had his at Van. The catholicus of the province of Taurus had his at Taurus. The catholicus of the province of the Taurus had his at Taurus. The catholicus of the province of the Taurus had his at Taurus.

of the church; but its decisions are subject to the veto of a Roman prelate. There are Armenian patriarchs, subject to the spiritual jurisdiction of Echmiadzin, in Constantinople and Jerusalem. In the latter place the Armenians occupy a convent on Mount Zion, and keep up in the churches of the Sepulchre and of Bethanias their own distinct rites and feasts, the only ones which at all resemble those of the 6th century.

The following list of councils was compiled by John, catholicus about the year 1716, and read at the council of Hissarlik, when the dogmatic and disciplinary attitude of the Armenian church was defined once and for all:

1. In twelfth year of catholicate of Gregory and thirtieth year of Totus, the king, an return of Asiaticus from council of Nice, bringing the Nicene creed and canon.

2. Council held by Nisene in response from the council of the 150 fathers at Constantinople against Monothelism.

3. Held by St Sahak and Hromy on receipt of letters from Phocas and Cyril bishop of Alexandria, in response to the query in the Epistle "was adapted. Held against Nestorianism.

4. Held by Joseph, disciple of Manolios (Mousis) and St Sahak, in the sixth year of King Yezid (i.e. Theodosius) when the latter came (shortly afterwards a schismatic council was held at Fenik, for the regulation of the church. Forty bishops present. (The Manolians were annihilated.)

5. Held by Sahak, catholicus in the city of Ani (i.e. Diiv), in the fifth year of King Kavut (i.e. Karad), against the heresy of Ananias and Barzuma (Barozuma), the schism of Hissarlik. The first (Nisene) faith was sent to the Armenians of the farther East (shortly afterwards a schismatic council was held at Fenik with a pseudo-Athanasian spurious word by Eusebius of Pontus and given in Greek in Paris. Ge. navi. Col. 1212).

6. At the beginning of the Armenian era, held by Nisene in

Diiv, in the fourth year of his catholicate, in the fourteenth of Chosroes' reign and in the fourteenth of Chosroes' reign. Held against Chalcedon, against the Bishop and Christina feasts on the 6th of January (Epiphany), declaring for monophysitism, and against the "Tragical words" who were crucified for us." This settlement lasted for about seventy-four years.

7. After the sinking of Jerusalem and recovery of the Cross from the Persians in the eighteenth year of his reign, Heraclius called a mixed council at Karla (Throdosopolis) of Greeks and Armenians under Kar (Kallin), orthodox, at which the preceding council of Diiv was annulled, his reforms repudiated and the confession of Chalcedon adopted. This reinstated the official attitude of the Armenian church until the catholicate of Elias (702-717). John, catholicus, in Manisart, in the one hundred and seventeenth year of the Armenian era (i.e. a.d. 716) under the presidency of Gregory Ashkanaz Chorphopos (Gregory Ashkanaz). All the Armenian bishops attended, as also the metropolitan of Ushak (Edessa), Jacobus bishop of Gortman, of Nisibis, Anania, by command of the archbishop of Antioch. Chalcedon was repudiated, union with the Jacobites (Jacobites) was of water and leaves in the Eucharist condemned, the five days' preliminary fast before Lent restored, Saturday as well as Sunday made a day of fasting and abstinence, say the archbishop excluded from the Mosaic Thanksgiving Communion, the first communion of the new catechumens; union of the Eucharist and Christmas feasts was restored, and the faithful forbidden to fast on Fridays from Easter until Pentecost. In general these rules have been observed in the Armenian church ever since.

For list of authorities on the Armenian church see the works assembled at the end of ARMENIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE. For the relations of the Armenian church to the Persian King see PERSIAN LITERATURE, section viii. §§ 11 and 12.

ARMENIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE. The Armenian language belongs to the group called Indo-European, of which the most ancient and best known are Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, and Gothic, Albanian, Italian, Celtic, Germanic, Avestan, and Balto-Slavonic dialects the other great branch. Unlike most of these, Armenian lost its gender long before the year A.D. 600, when the existing literature began. Modern Persian similarity has lost gender; and in both cases the liberation must have been due to attrition of other tongues which had a different system of gender or none at all. So the Armenians were ever in contact on the north with the Iberians of the Caucasus who had none, and with the Hittite races on the south and east which had other ways of forming genders than the Indo-European tongue.

From the original Armenian stock can be readily distinguished a mass of Old and Middle Persian loan-words. These are so common that for a time Armenian was classed as an Iranian tongue. For more than a thousand years, say until a.d. 640, Armenia was an outpost of the realm of the Persians and Parthians. Until a.d. 610 the Armenians were occupied by a younger branch of the Achaemenid dynasty that ruled in Persia until the advent of the Sasanians (i.e. a.d. 226), and the internal strife and civil administration of Armenia were modelled on the Persian or Parthian. Accordingly over 200 proper and personal names in Armenia were Old Persian, as well as 200 names of places. If we enter in the derivative form of these words we get at least 2000 Old Persian words. Often the same Persian word was borrowed twice over in an earlier and later form at an interval of centuries, just as in English we inherit a word direct or have taken it from Latin, and have also assimilated from French a later form of the same. The Persian influence in Armenia was already strong as early as 600 B.C., when Xenophon used a Persian interpreter to converse. It was one of the Armenian villages which answered him in Persian. The Persian loan-words already present in Armenia in 600 B.C. are 400 more or less the earlier political and social life of Armenia. The many of their kings and nobles had Persian names; Persian also were most

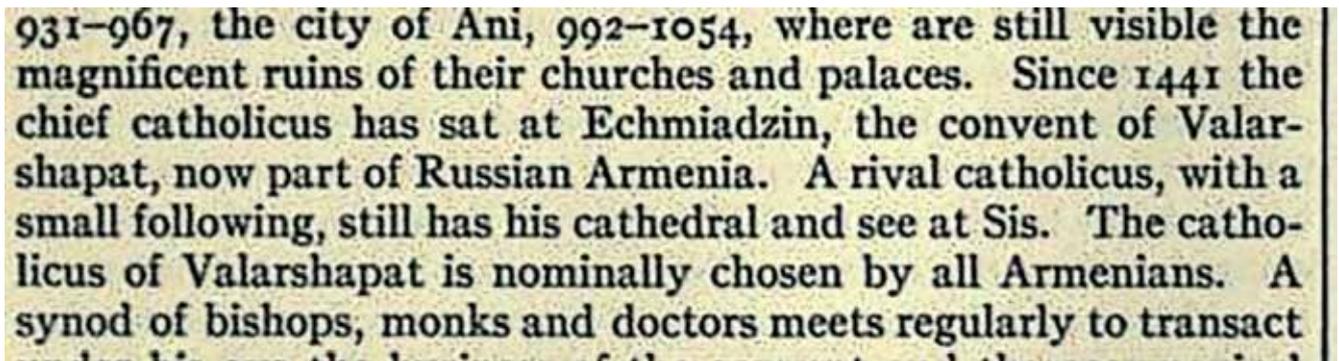
copied by Armenian priests from the original texts seized from the archives of Gandzasar in 1840. Apparently, **these documents from the archives of Gandzasar fell into the hands of the Armenian Church after 1836, when the Albanian Church was abolished, and its temples, manuscripts, archives and property were handed over to Echmiadzin.** It must be noted that **the original decrees of Azerbaijani rulers mysteriously disappeared from the archives of Gandzasar,** and only a few copies made by the abbot of the Sanain monastery, Archbishop Sargis Jalalyan (1810-1879), were delivered to Echmiadzin. That is we are dealing not with the originals, but with Armenian copies, which have masses of falsifications and corrections to the text. The miserable fate of the Gandzasar archives was noted by Papazyan himself: *"During his travels in Artsakh, Archbishop Sargis Jalalyan took this and several other decrees (not known if they were originals or copies) from the Catholicosate of Gandzasar. It is curious that the decrees taken by Jalalyan, according to his testimony, included edicts (certificates) of Armenian kings too. These decrees disappeared from his library during his trip to Russia. Fearing that the decrees in the Persian language may be subject to the same fate, he translated them (number 15) into the Armenian language and placed them as an annex to the second volume of his work "Journey to Great Armenia" published in 1858 (6). The Persian copies of these decrees, taken probably by Sargis Jalalyan himself, are currently in the collection of Persian documents of Matenadaran."* (7)

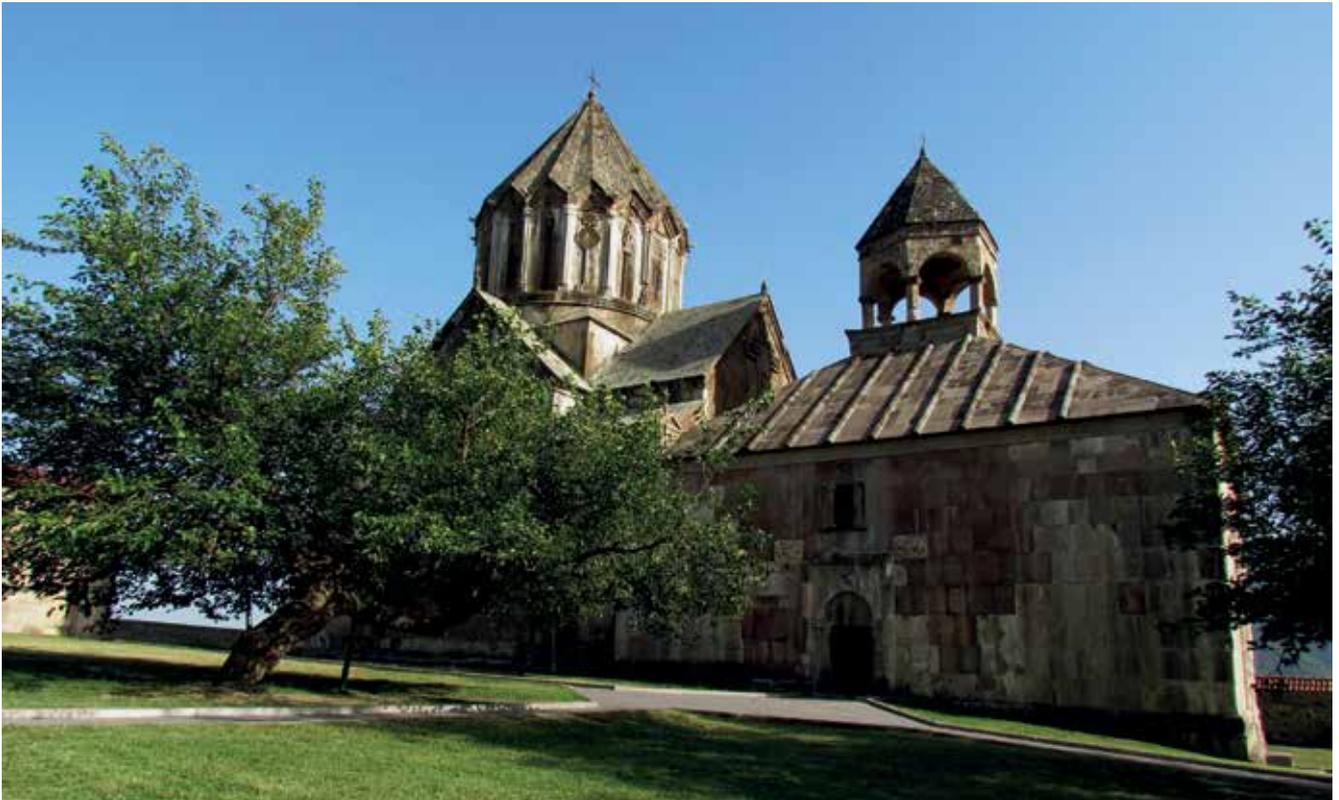
We are dealing with Armenian translations of the decrees of Azerbaijani rulers, which Papazyan, like all Soviet science, stubbornly called "Persian". But even in such a distorted and rewritten form, these decrees provide a wealth of information about Azerbaijan and the Albanian Christian heritage.

Let's cite some examples of fraud and falsification committed by Papazyan, in **the decree of 1462 by Begum Khatun, the wife of Sultan Jahanshah Qara**

trying to build the history of medieval Armenia, which did not exist in this territory in that historical period. At the same time, **in many medieval documents he adds the word "Armenian" and "Armenia" at his own discretion, adds the ending "yan" to the surnames of persons referred to in the documents and Armenifies regional place names.** The main object of Papazyan's fraud is the heritage of Caucasian Albania and Azerbaijani Turks.

At the same time, thanks to the documents cited in the writings of Papazyan, it is possible to restore some details of the medieval history of the Albanian Church. Let's address copies of the decrees of Azerbaijani rulers





Qoyunlu, issued to Gandzasar Catholicos Ioannes, he is referred to as *“the pride of the Christians and the catholicos of the vilayet of Agvank (Albania)”* (the Gandzasar monastery complex is located on the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh currently occupied by Armenia - R. G.). However, Papazyan tries to present the Gandzasar catholicos as being subordinate to Armenia and Armenian catholicoses, although this decree of Begum Khatun clearly states that *“Armenians of this vilayet are subordinate to the Albanian catholicos”*. Here, **Armenians means not ethnicity, but the Albanian population of the Armenian-Gregorian faith**. This decree confirms the patriarchal rights of the Albanian catholicos of Gandzasar, which were previously granted to them by Jahanshah Qara Qoyunlu (1397-1467) and even earlier Sheikh Uveys Jelairid (1356-1374) (8).

The decree of Begum Khatun makes it clear that the Gandzasar patriarch had direct links with the Albanian rulers of Cilicia (Asia Minor), who settled here in the 10th-13th centuries. Today **Armenian science is trying to take credit for all the Albanian heritage of the Cilician Hethumids** who moved to the Cilician city of Sis headed by Albanian Prince Hethum. One of the most important primary sources of the 14th century - the book of Muhammad Nakhchivani *“Dastur ul-Katib”* cited the full title of the kings of Cilicia, with which the Turkic rulers turned to

them: *“To the venerable friend, great Basileus, glory of Alexander’s family, shelter of Christians and the king of Sis...”* (9).

Besides Albanian patriarchs, Azerbaijani rulers supported Armenian-Haykan church dignitaries as well. It is thanks to this support that Armenian catholicoses, who also settled in Cilicia, relocated to Echmiadzin later and established themselves here. In particular, Papazyan rightly notes that Begum Khatun had special respect and provided support for Catholicos Akhtamartsi Zakaria, to whom she handed over the Catholicosate of Echmiadzin (10).

The 1487 decree of Yaqub, the shah of the Azerbaijani state of Aq Qoyunlu, to the Albanian Catholicos of Gandzasar Shmavon, exempts his congregation from different taxes and reports that **Agvank (Albania) is one of the vilayets of Azerbaijan**: *“Let amirs, hakims, darugas, well-born, noble and prominent people, meliks, kandkhudas and arbabs of all Azerbaijan, all mutasadds for divan affairs and mubashirs for royal affairs of the vilayet of Agvank know...”* (11). This decree mentions Armenian priests who came to confirm their rights in Gandzasar, but even here their Armenian Gregorian religion, not ethnicity, is meant. The fact is that **in the Middle Ages and later, all persons of the Armenian-Gregorian religion were called “Armenians”, which is cleverly used today by modern Armenian falsifiers**, attributing all the Armenian Gregorian



heritage of very different peoples to the Haykan people: Armenian Kipchaks, Assyrians, Udis, Tats, Kurds and others.

The Azerbaijani Safavid state also confirmed the previous decrees on the patriarchal rights of Gandzasar catholicoses. In particular, this is stated in the decree of Shah Tahmasib I of 1570 (12).

At the beginning of the 17th century, Azerbaijan frequently became a scene of battles in the Ottoman-Safavid wars. At a time when **Ottoman troops captured a significant part of Azerbaijan, including Karabakh, Ottoman henchmen - Armenian-Haykan churchmen from Asia Minor - were appointed catholicoses here.** This caused a bitter struggle between them and the legal heirs of the Gandzasar Patriarchate from the Albanian family of Prince Hasan Jalal, who built the Albanian temples of Gandzasar and other territories that were part of his Khachen principality in the 12th century. Only after the retreat of the Ottoman army from Azerbaijan, was the Catholicosate in Gandzasar returned to the descendants of Hasan Jalal. This is referred to in the decree of Safavid Shah Abbas I and Papazyan's commentary accompanying this document (13). Another decree by Shah Abbas I speaks about the restoration of Gandzasar temples and its taxation (14).

Here it would be appropriate to touch on a story

from the early 17th century connected with the Armenian Catholicos Melkiset and the ruler of the Azerbaijani Erivan Khanate, Amirgune. In this period, Armenians of different faiths were engaged in a struggle in which an important role was played by European rulers who sought to use the Armenians for their own purposes. With the efforts of European monarchies and the Roman Catholic Church, the overwhelming majority of Armenians in the Middle East, Asia Minor and Europe embraced Catholicism and were engaged in an ideological war with Monophysite Armenians in the Caucasus. A clear idea about the nature of this confrontation is given by **the theft by "Frankish Paters" (Armenian Catholics) from Uchkilisa (Echmiadzin) of the relics of St. Hripsime and Gayane,** which occurred in 1610. By the decree of Safavid Shah Abbas I, Khan Amirgune sent a detachment that caught the thieves and took the relics away from them. All the perpetrators of this crime, including the Catholicos of Echmiadzin Melkiset were punished (15). This event is narrated in the work of Armenian chronicler Arakel Davrizhetsi (of Tabriz), who points to the involvement in the theft of Catholicos Melkiset, who allowed the Catholics to take away the relics of saints from Uchkilisa for a bribe (16). 🌟

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