

SUMMARY

The University of Sanahin (founded in 966 AD in the Sanahin monastery, 130 years earlier than the famous Oxford University) is one of the oldest educational institutions of the world, a great historical value that can be of honor and arouse pride.

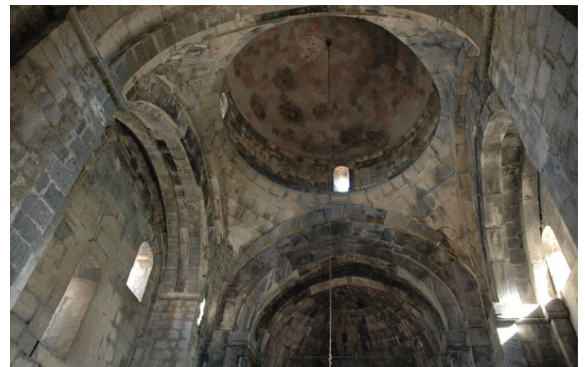


Sanahin Monastery. Amenaprkich (Holy Redeemer) church (the 10th century)

Several manuscripts about Sanahin have survived up to our days; extracts from the writings of Armenian historians such as Mattheos Urhayetsi, Kirakos. Gandzaketsi, Stepanos Taronetsi - Asoghik, Samuel Anetsi, Stepanos Orbelyan and others; as well as inscriptions on the walls of the church and adjacent buildings collected and published by K. Ghafadaryan, S. Saghumyan,

H.Ghalpakhchyan and others.

Besides the aforesaid authors many other such as; N. Mar, H. Orbeli, T. Toromanyan, G. Hovsepyan, M. Brosset, G. Shakhkryan, A. Mnatsakanyan, A. Matevosyan, I. Harutyunyan, A. Eritsov, E. Lalayan and others carried out research on the architecture of the church complex as well as the University, its writing centre and other cultural values there.



Dome inside Amenaprkich church



Interior of Sanahin Monastery



Khatchkar (cross-stone) detail at the monastery

The church complex of Sanahin was established in the years of ascension of the Armenian Bagratuny dynasty, a period of peace enabling to undertake creative work. It was within this period that all the layers of the Armenian society never missed the opportunity to upgrade and turn Armenia into a prosperous educational aid cultural centre. Armenian kings and queens sponsored and supported spiritual development of

the country. Sanahin and Haghpat are a thousand-year-old marvelous and perfect pearls of the Lori region famous for its nature and historical monuments. Having the best traditions of the 5th century education in their background, developing and raising to the new heights education and the art of miniature, they bridged the preceding and succeeding generations to best of their ability, fulfilling the historical mission.

It was in 979 AD that at the order of the king Smbat II, Sanahin was announced a spiritual centre, with the eclectic church. This boosted its educational activity. Next to the primary schools, the church university became the place where came together the most prominent thinkers educated in different countries among them being Dioskoros Sanahnetsi, Anania Sanahnetsi, Gregor Magistros, Deacon Hovhannes, Gegory Tuteordi, Gregory Arasaordi, Hovhannes Imastaser, Vardan Areveltsi, the monks Matevos, Karapet, Khacahatur Avedic, Lazar, Hovhannes, Stepanos and others who transferred their knowledge and skills to the young generation.



St. Gregory chapel

“Seven liberal arts” - philosophy, logics, medicine, rhetoric art, geography, chronology, religious music and other subjects were taught at Sanahin University. On the initiative of Dioskoros Sanahnetsi the church library was built in 1063, the latter being of the greatest contribution to the Armenian education system. It was also a “centre of art of calligraphy”, where numerous manuscripts were copied and as a result the depository of manuscripts – the Matenadaran was founded.

Sanahin with its unprecedented architectural monuments, high school, scientist monks, a rich

library, a unique school of calligraphy, art of miniature, sculpture and diverse branches of art and science has greatly contributed to the development of the Armenian art and influenced both its surroundings and future generations. It has educated generations of scientist monks, chroniclers, skilled miniaturists, whose creations have gained recognition outside the University and, generally, out of Armenia, becoming of international importance.

More than a thousand -year -old church complex of Sanahin still stands as an alive witness, stone document and manuscript to prove that our roots stretch into the depths of the centuries; it was us, as natives of the Armenian Highland, who had the University, library, depository of manuscripts and skilled calligraphists.



A manuscript from the Sanahin monastery



The monastery's library

V. Bryusov, who was well aware of spiritual riches of the Armenian wrote: “The works of the period witness that the knowledge of the 10th-11th cc. Armenian scientists was in no way less than that of their European penmates”.

Sanahin still stands like a brave hero; it announces to the world that Armenians during millennia have always created, educated and spread enlightenment.