

Observing South Caucasus' Historical Landscape: An Open Photo Archive Tools, Activities, and Purposes of the OSCOP Project

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Abstract This article presents the project *Observing South Caucasus' Historical Landscape: An Open Photo Archive*, whose strategic objectives are to collect, digitise, and catalogue a collection of photographs documenting the cultural heritage of the South Caucasus. The preservation and valorisation actions are targeted at three different facets of this heritage: (1) the tangible photographic collection (i.e. the photographic object itself); (2) the intangible historical layers (evolution of site ownership, historical stratification, and corresponding toponymy); (3) the tangible architectural and natural heritage of historical Armenia and Georgia.

Keywords South Caucasus. Armenian heritage. Georgian heritage. Photo collection. Cataloguing strategies.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The History of the Photo Collection of the CSDCA Archive. – 3 Work in Progress: Preserving the Material Heritage of the Collection. – 4 The Online Database: A Digital Portal to Intangible Heritage. – 5 Conclusions.



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1 Introduction

The OSCOP project¹ entails the comprehensive preservation and scholarly re-examination of an invaluable but under-researched photographic archive and aims to make it accessible to researchers through an open-access digital repository. On the one hand, it seeks to enhance the content of the archive and hence the historical landscapes, both natural and monumental, of the South Caucasus region; on the other, it unravels an example of 'Western art-historical criticism' in the Middle East, a narrative that is intertwined with the history of the archive itself. The OSCOP project is supported by Ca' Foscari University as SPIN (Supporting Principal Investigator) and by the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max Planck Institut (KHI). The Centro di Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena (CSDCA) is actively involved in the OSCOP initiative as a technical partner. The CSDCA owns and houses the photographic collection, provides the necessary scanning and conservation equipment, and offers its library as a workspace for archivists. The photographic collection of the CSDCA comprises approximately 10,000 photographic items (transparencies, negatives, and printed photographs) documenting the cultural heritage of historical Armenia and Georgia. The time and resources of the OSCOP project allowed us to consider only a group of 900 colour slides, selected due to the high perishability of this type of item. The subjects of the slides considered for the database cover a wide geographical (from Iranian Azerbaijan to *de facto* Abkhazia and from Eastern Anatolia to *de facto* Nagorno-Karabakh) and chronological range (from the fifth to the nineteenth century).

Recent decades have seen a marked increase in international scholarly interest in the cultural heritage of the South Caucasus region. The mediaeval monuments of that area emerge as integral components of historical landscapes and are deeply interwoven with an ever-changing ecosystem where urbanisation, construction, restoration [figs 1-2], wars, and geopolitical dynamics perpetuate the influence of human geomorphological intervention on both the natural and monumental heritage.

¹ The OSCOP project is funded by Ca' Foscari University of Venice (SPIN Program 2022) and co-funded by the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max Planck Institut, in partnership with the Centro di Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena (CSDCA) in Venice. Its principal investigator is Stefano Riccioni. Although the text is the result of collective work, Stefano Riccioni wrote paragraphs 1 and 5, Beatrice Spampinato wrote paragraphs 2 and 3, and Francesca Penoni wrote paragraph 4. Spampinato and Penoni curated the Appendix.



Figure 1 The Temple of Garni in 1969 (Armenia). © Centro Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena



Figure 2 The Temple of Garni in 1975 (Armenia). © Centro Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena

Since the second half of the twentieth century, the South Caucasus has faced numerous challenges, from natural disasters [fig. 3] to political tensions and inter-state conflicts, resulting in a rapid transformation of its natural and architectural heritage. This volatile situation presents a formidable obstacle to art historians and archaeologists, hampering their efforts to monitor the ever-changing state of cultural preservation in the region. As a result, scientific exploration and research efforts in the South Caucasus have become of paramount importance. On the one hand, modern tools such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), unmanned aerial vehicles (drones), and the increasingly streamlined dissemination of digital imagery have made it possible to document existing conditions in real time. On the other hand, digital databases have opened new ways of storing, cataloguing, and preserving images from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



Figure 3 Church of Surb Amenap'rkich' in Gyumri (Armenia) after the earthquake in 1988.
© Centro Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena

Over a period of two years (2022-24), the OSCOP project has collected a first batch of 900 items. This first step was intended to encourage collaboration with other institutions and to facilitate cross-study data exchange between international photo collections and archives through an established network of partners. A first attempt in this direction was the collaboration with the KHI project *Aesthetics, Art and Architecture in the Caucasus*, which provides open access to contemporary photographs of the Georgian heritage (Wolf, Hoffmann 2022). In addition to the 2,000 images of Georgian art and architecture already available, the project is in the process of incorporating about 1,000 photographs of prominent Armenian landmarks, which will create a stimulating dialogue with the CSDCA's collection dating back to the Soviet period.

2 The History of the Photo Collection of the CSDCA Archive

In 1967, Alpago Novello took charge of the project “Research on Mediaeval Armenian and Georgian Architecture”, carried out by the Institute of Humanities of the Polytechnic University of Milan. In the same year, together with his colleagues Armen Manoukian and Harutiun Kasangian, he undertook a research expedition to Soviet Armenia, documenting fifty-five sites of its monumental heritage (Kazangian 1996; Alpago Novello 2005). During a second mission in the autumn of 1969, the group of architects, accompanied by photographer Giovanni Nogaro, visited and documented twenty-two additional monuments on Soviet territory. In 1970, three further missions with different research teams extended the area of interest to historical Armenia, Anatolia, and Cilicia. Between 1971 and 1975, the missions of Alpago Novello and Enzo Hybsch focused mainly on the heritage of Soviet Georgia and northern Iran (Brambilla 2021) [fig. 4].



Figure 4 Adriano Alpago Novello and Armen Zarian during a research trip in Armenia.
© Centro Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena

Throughout these years, the architect Armen Zarian mediated the official relations between the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic and Italian universities (Bevilacqua, Gasbarri 2020), allowing Italian scholars working on the documentation of the Armenian heritage to access Soviet Armenia. The latter's work proved particularly valuable, not only for the outstanding survey results that they shared with their Soviet colleagues, but also in terms of visiting and documenting Armenian and Georgian monuments located outside the Soviet border between Iran and Turkey, which were inaccessible to Soviet scholars (Zarian 1996; Alpago Novello 1996). The efforts to study the heritage of the South Caucasus, led by Alpago Novello, continued until 1992 (Bonardi 2014) **[Appendix]**.

In 1976, almost a decade after the first research mission, Alpago Novello founded the CSDCA, which he directed until his death in 2005. The Centro's mission could be summarised as a passionate commitment to promoting interest and research in Armenian culture and architecture, with the dual aim of producing material of significant scholarly value and disseminating its findings to a wider audience. Its research group has diligently amassed an extensive

collection of written documentation, a substantial library, and a comprehensive photographic archive. At the same time, it has facilitated the creation of an Italo-Armenian network, forging lasting partnerships among individual scholars, public organisations, and research institutions in both countries, as well as with their Georgian and Iranian counterparts. Alpago Novello's decision to set up the CSDCA independently of the Polytechnic University, which at the time was experiencing a period of instability, undoubtedly had a positive impact on the course of the research project and contributed to the continuity of the activities carried out at an international level.

The photographs, surveys, and bibliographical material collected during the missions constitute the secondary sources used by the Alpago Novello's research group to produce landmark publications. The most notable of these is the thirty-year series *Ricerca sull'architettura armena* (Research on Armenian Architecture), published after the missions (between 1970 and 1986, the CSDCA published twenty-five volumes). This series served as an internal departmental resource, intended for a select audience of teachers, collaborators, and interdisciplinary students. In addition, the publishing initiative *Documents of Armenian Architecture*, structured as individual monographs with extensive photographic content, was aimed at a specialist readership but had a wider circulation than its predecessor (between 1968 and 1998, the CSDCA published twenty-three volumes). Each volume in the series was published in Italian, English, and Armenian. Another important output of the research group was the organisation of five international symposia on Armenian art – two in Armenia and three in Italy – between 1975 and 1988. The original papers presented at the Italian symposia were published in three volumes that remain a valuable resource to contemporary scholars. The same is true of the three symposia on Georgian art held between 1974 and 1980 in Bergamo, Bari, and Lecce (Zekiyani 2014; Riccioni 2020).

In addition, the research group curated three photographic exhibitions presented in various national and international venues. The inaugural exhibition of 1968, entitled “Armenian Architecture from the fourth to the eighteenth Century”, consisted of 155 panels covering an area of approximately 400 square metres, set up using the Danish “Abstracta Modular System”. In 1974, this exhibition format was adapted to present Georgian architecture. It was followed by a third exhibition dedicated to *xac'k'ar* in 1981.²

Despite the series' extensive photographic and documentary material, they do not include the entirety of the 4,000 photographs collected during the first missions alone, nor do they convey the

2 *Architettura armena* 1975; *Architettura georgiana* 1979; Ieni 1981; Spampinato 2020.

challenges of a long and ambitious research project characterised by linguistic, political, and bureaucratic complexities. The intricacies involved in the creation of this Italo-Armenian collaborative network, the dissemination of its results, the bureaucratic hurdles to be overcome, and the methodological challenges of researching a distant artistic and architectural culture are all documented in the archival material.

In 1992, the library and archive found a new home, moving from the CSDCA's headquarters in Milan to the Loggia del Temanza in Venice. This move coincided with the CSDCA's separation from its former affiliation to the Polytechnic University of Milan and with its membership of the OEMME publishing house and association. Under the umbrella of OEMME, presided by Agopik Manoukian, the activities of the publishing house and of CSDCA converged. The latter, while maintaining its core objectives of studying and promoting Armenian culture, narrowed its focus to two specific areas of interest: a musical section, headed by Minas Lourian, and one specialising in architecture and restoration, coordinated by Gaiànè Casnati (a protégé of Alpago Novello). The transfer of the archives and photographic library was rather hasty, with the materials arriving in Venice in sub-optimal packaging and without prior reorganisation.

Previous efforts, although incomplete for various reasons, laid the foundations for the scanning and cataloguing of the photographic material. At the beginning of the 2000s, Gianclaudio Macchiarella (a Professor at Ca' Foscari University) and Gaiànè Casnati began organising surveys and digitising the photographs. Between 2010 and 2015, the CSDCA participated in the European project *Armeniaca*, and the continued digitisation efforts contributed to a database of photographic material in the possession of prominent European scholars of Armenian heritage. However, these efforts have remained incomplete to this day.

Recently, thanks to a generous donation from the Alpago Novello family (facilitated by Minas Lourian and Manuela da Cortà), the CSDCA has received additional archival material. Building on previous efforts, which had already highlighted the importance of the photographic subjects and objects, the foundations were laid for the development of this project.

3 Work in Progress: Preserving the Material Heritage of the Collection

At the heart of the OSCOP project is the careful management of Alpagò Novello's extensive photographic archive. Most of the photographic collection consists of colour transparencies and negatives. However, the documentary files also include printed photographs that have been organised according to recognisable criteria. The reasons for this organisation are given in the brief notes accompanying the printed photographs. The Ektachrome slides, usually grouped according to geographical criteria, have been selected over time to be transferred or reproduced in other sections based on specific architectural typologies and motifs. In general, each photograph in the collection has a 'double existence' – as an image and as a material object (Caraffa 2019) [fig. 5].



Figure 5 Colour transparency of the Church of Öjun, Armenia.
© Centro Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena

The paper of the printed photographs and the polyester of transparencies and negatives are not just “neutral supports” but also have physical properties (Edwards, Hart 2004, 2). One of our main tasks regarding the material archive of the CSDCA was the systematic treatment of tangible photographic objects. We scanned each item after thoroughly cleaning and repairing its storage cases and recording the numbers and inscriptions on each case [fig. 6], since several cases were displaced or broken during the transport from Milan to Venice.



Figure 6 Cases of the colour transparencies of the Church of Surb Gayane in Eġmiacin (Armenia) from the photo archive of Centro Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena

In addition, some of the slides present damp stains (due to unfavourable humidity conditions) and dust stains (due to repeated handling) [fig. 7] and the films are occasionally scratched (probably due to manipulation during scanning) or present marks and traces of glue from previous indexing or cutting. We were unfortunately unable to correct these imperfections on the surface of the film during cleaning. Similarly, the colours of some images have shifted toward blue, green or red. While these defects may affect the aesthetics of

the image, they do not compromise the integrity of the documentary information it conveys [fig. 8]. We therefore chose to preserve these alterations in both photographic objects and digital images, without resorting to restoration and post-production techniques.



Figure 7 Colour transparency of the Church of Surb T'eodoros in Yelvard (Armenia) with yellowish moisture stains. © Centro Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena

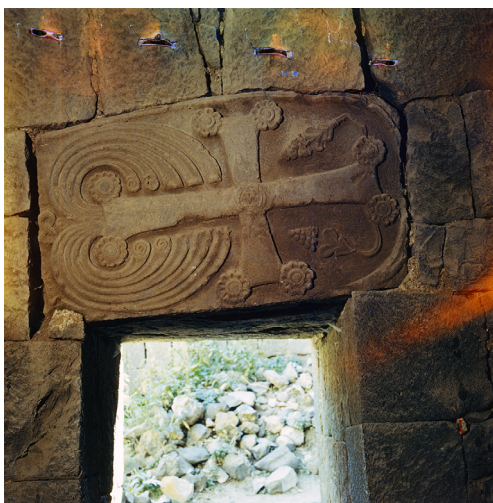


Figure 8
Colour transparency
of the Church
of Surb Astvacacin, Kot'avank'
Monastery (Armenia)
with staple holes.
© Centro Studi e Documentazione
della Cultura Armena

According to R. Barthes, photography is threatened by several 'intimations of mortality', including the mortality of the photographer, the subject, the viewer, but also of the photograph itself (Barthes 1981, 93-4). Moreover, referring to Barthes's *Camera Lucida*, Edwards writes:

Marks on the photographic object point to the history of its presentational forms and engagements with them [...] Handling damage, the torn and creased corners, fold marks, perhaps text on the back, scuffing and dirt point to the use of images or, indeed, neglect of images. (Edwards, Hart 2004, 12)

In other words, the inscriptions, stains, scratches, glue or colour changes described in the previous paragraph make it possible to better link the 'photo-object' to its history.

The conservation of the material collection had a twofold goal; to protect transparencies and printed photographs from further alteration, and to record the condition and 'signs' of the photo-objects during the indexing process. The latter goal was achieved by selecting information directly related to the object - and not exclusively to the subject - in the online index. Once scanned, the new digital renditions were categorised according to an updated nomenclature, as previously described. Moreover, the archivists recorded and translated the 'traces' - meaning, in the words of Maurizio Ferraris (2009), "the alteration of a surface that is valid as a sign or reminder for a mind capable of understanding it as such". Finally, following the sequential numerical sequence of the *Object ID* (an alphanumeric code given to the digital photograph and to the material object in the physical archive), the original order of the transparencies is indicated, giving an insight into Alpago Novello's own methodology. Through this process, we created a meta-language that links the photographic object stored in the case to the photographic subject analysed in the online index and to the space of the subject that can be physically explored.

4 The Online Database: A Digital Portal to Intangible Heritage

The intangible heritage and its historical layers are documented through the online database of the OSCOP project. The cataloguing system, inspired by that of the Italian Central Institute for Cataloguing and Documentation, is designed to provide an index card for each digital entry. The index is mainly divided into two sections: the first section focuses on the subject represented in the photograph; the second, on the photographic object itself.

The *Title* provides the name of the main subject of the photograph (e.g., monument, work of art, or natural site), Romanised following the romanization system adopted by the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN) and the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use (PCGN). The original name (for instance in Armenian or Georgian) is also provided and becomes a tool to overcome the limitations and misinterpretations caused by name changes over the centuries, due to the evolution of state ownership of the sites. Information about the current location can be found under *Toponym* and *Geographical coordinates* (see below). Geographical coordinates are provided for each site relying on sources such as the Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names (TGN). In order to guide the users based on their research, subjects are categorised on a material and technical basis (*Architecture*, *Sculpture*, *Painting*, *Manuscript*, *Metalwork*, *Cartography*, and *Landscape*). The subject of the photograph is then described in detail through three entries filled with an open vocabulary: *Art and Architecture*, *Ornaments and Iconography*, and *Landscape*. The presence of *Inscriptions* is also recorded by a dedicated entry in order to facilitate research of palaeographic interest. The chronology of the subject is given at the entry *Subject Date*.

In the second section, the object is described according to its material typology (*Object type*), such as colour transparency, colour or black-and-white print, and black-and-white negative. The *Photograph Date* and the *Photographer* are traced by consulting archival material relating to the missions [Appendix]. The entry *Notes* refers to any information about the photographic object, such as written notes recorded on the cases, the conservation status of the photograph, and references to previous publications. Finally, the second section provides a basic *Bibliography* on the subject of the photograph.

Let us now briefly highlight the methodological references and geo-historical context that directed the selection of the listed entries. From the 1960s to the present day, the vast area covered by the visual material collected at the Alpago Novello archive went through several political events that resulted in toponymic transformations: this is what Öktem calls “toponymical engineering”, a practice whose main goal is “the destruction of the interwoven layers of historical and linguistic meaning, i.e. of the ‘archeology’ of place names and their replacement with an alternative toponymic order that conforms with the time and space vision of the nation-state” (Öktem 2008, §17). Numerous Armenian and Georgian toponyms have undergone this process, especially in Turkey and the ex-Soviet Republics, where the central states silenced the historical toponyms in order to legitimize a uniform national toponymic landscape (Saparov 2023). Moreover, when cited in a European or North American context, toponyms and terms are often translated to make them

more familiar to a 'Western' audience. This process, inherited from the colonial approach of the first European missions to 'the East', adds further strain to indigenous terms and toponyms, which lose their connection to the local environment and to specific semantic nuances. Structuring the index around a geohistorical approach that restores a multi-layered toponymic landscape (*Title, Original Language Title, Toponym, Coordinates, Notes*), serves to safeguard the historical layers that could otherwise be lost due to geopolitical shifts and national ideological appropriation. The neutral process of transliterating rather than translating sites' denominations (e.g. *Surb Astvacacin* instead of Holy Mother of God) and indigenous terms (e.g. *xăč'k'ar* instead of cross stone, *gavit'* instead of atrium) further reinforces the attempt to preserve the intangible historical layers of a changing landscape. Geohistory of art encourages us to consider material evidence independently from the community to which it currently belongs, avoiding nationalistic discourses of appropriation or mystification (DaCosta Kaufmann 2005). One such example is that of the *Surb Xăč'* church in *Alt'amar* Island on Lake Van. After the Armenian Genocide of 1915, the church was abandoned and in late 1922 the Treaty of Kars established the new border between the Soviet Socialist Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey. Lake Van was included in the latter territory. Alpagó Novello's study mission in the 1960s found the church in a state of neglect. The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism decided to restore it in 2005-06. In 2007, the church was reopened as a museum thanks to the Faith Tourism Programme, aimed at promoting the multi-religious composition of Anatolia and the image of Turkey as the "cradle of civilizations and religions" (Över 2016, 179). The reopening of *Surb Xăč'* was met with criticism and concern by the Armenian community, as the musealization of the religious building was used to justify the removal of the cross from its top. Today, the church of *Surb Xăč'* is promoted primarily as a tourist attraction under the Turkish name *Akdamar*, with minimal acknowledgement of its association with a specific ethnic or religious community. References to its Armenian identity are marginalised and mostly omitted. In other words, instead of portraying the site of *Alt'amar* as part of a common heritage, there seems to be a process of appropriation for touristic and economic purposes.³

The medieval Armenian and Georgian architectural heritage of Turkey, located mainly along its eastern regions (from the northern

3 The official webpage of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism regarding the Church of *Surb Xăč'*, also known as the *Akdamar Monumental Museum*, is below: <https://muze.gov.tr/muze-detay?DistId=MRK&SectionId=VAN01>. The archaeological site of *Ani*, district of *Kars*, was the subject of a very similar process of appropriation (Zeitilian Watenpugh 2015).

district of Artvin to the southern district of Van), has been not only largely misinterpreted, but also neglected, abandoned, and often made inaccessible (Kaya, Çalhan, 2018). One such example is the Fourteenth century monastery of Surb Bardulimeosi Vank' (Saint Bartholomew) in Başkale, in the Van district, which was left in disrepair for more than six decades until its inclusion into a military zone in 1990. After more than twenty years of use as a military barrack, the site was made accessible again in 2013. However, it was not included in the Faith Tourism Programme, and no actions were taken to improve its poor state of conservation. The CSDCA photo collection also includes several photographs of the Surb Bardulimeosi Vank' dating back to the late 1960s, which can help us reconstruct the rich decorations, still suggested by the remains. The situation is even more complex in the *de facto* states of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh, where the lack of international recognition makes it difficult to develop collaborations beyond the highly politicized relationships with their respective 'patron states' (Broers, 2020). Despite the delicate political environment, the OSCOP project does cover these sites: for instance, several religious sites located in Abkhazia were explored and photographed by Alpago Novello's colleague Enzo Hybsch in 1974 [fig. 9], and Nagorno-Karabakh was visited twice by the research group: first around 1969 and again in 1979 [fig. 10].



Figure 9 Bedia Cathedral (Abkhazia). © Centro Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena



Figure 10 Cicernavank' (Nagorno-Karabakh). © Centro Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena

The aftermath of the 2020 war and the more recent offensive in September 2023 have led to a rapid and ongoing transformation of Armenian sites, and valuable projects are currently underway to monitor their current state of conservation.⁴ Present and past visual evidence is being used as authoritative data against misinterpretation, denial and abuse. Moreover, to meet the need for trustworthy sources, both high-resolution satellite imagery and traditional visual tools such as photography need to be considered (Smith 2023).

4 The Monument Watch platform registers and presents the state of the cultural heritage of Artsakh, below is the link: <https://monumentwatch.org/>. The Caucasus Heritage Watch project uses satellite imagery and open-source media to monitor, and document endangered and damaged cultural heritage, below is the link to their webpage: <https://caucasusheritage.cornell.edu/>.

5 Conclusions

The examples mentioned above illustrate the complexity of the region and the challenges inherent in studying and cataloguing photographs of a contested heritage. Such complexity becomes even more problematic when attempting to translate all of this information into catalogue entries. The careful structure of the index card aims to provide an indexing model for future similar case studies. Moreover, through this digital transformation, the archive has the potential to become a vital research tool, helping scholars to unravel the historical evolution of vast landscapes that have undergone significant changes due to natural processes, destruction, and abandonment. This resource was designed to meet a wide demand, both geographically and in terms of subject area and interest.

The OSCOP project webpage is accessible from the Ca' Foscari University portal.⁵ So far, the site provides a comprehensive project overview and an up-to-date list of our outputs. The online database allows users to explore 900 photographs and download copies for personal or academic use. In conjunction with the launch of the database (October 2024), in the framework of the international Conference “Spiritual Landscapes and Photography” held at the KHI, the international academic community was invited to share general methodological reflections and specific case studies on the exploration of both natural and monumental historical landscapes through the lens of photography. The application of this geohistorical approach to the documentation published by Alpago Novello's research group is a fitting continuation of a legacy in which photography emerged as a primary, if not central, medium – not only for display but also for meticulously documenting and studying the heritage of the South Caucasus.

⁵ This link provides access to the OSCOP section of the CSDCA photo archive: <https://pric.unive.it/projects/oscop/photo-archive>.

Appendix

List of the sites and regions visited by the research group led by Adriano Alpago Novello from 1967 to 1982. The list provides an overview of the subjects in the photo archive of the Centro Studi e Documentazione della Cultura Armena. The transliteration in use is the romanization system adopted by the United States Board on Geographic Names (BGN) and the Permanent Committee on Geographical Names for British Official Use (PCGN). This choice was made to be consistent with the system used in the OSCOP project database.

1967

Adriano Alpago Novello

Armen Manoukian

Harutiun Kasangian

Armenia SSR

Anipemza, Basilica of Yereruyk' (Երերույք տաճար), 5th-6th cc.

Aparan, Basilica of K'asagh (Քասաղի բազիլիկ), 4th-5th cc.

Arates Monastery (Արատեսի վանք), 12th-13th cc.

Aruch (Արուճ), Church of Surb Grigor, 7th c.

Ashtarak (Աշտարակ), Church of Surb Astvatsatsin Karmavor (Կարմավոր), 7th c.; Church of Surb Sargis 7th c.; Church of Surb Mariane 13th c.,

Avan (Ավան), Church of Surb Astvatsatsin, 6th-7th cc.

Berjor (Azerbaijan), Monastery of Tsitsernavank' (Ծիծերնավանք) 5th-6th cc.,

Bjni (Բջնի) Church of Surb Sargis, 6th-7th cc.; Church of Surb Astvatsatsin, 11th c.

Byurakan (Բյուրական), Church of Surb Hovhannes, 10th c.; Artavazik Church, 13th c.; Amberd, 7th-11th cc.

Garni, Temple of Garni (Գառնիի տաճար), 1st-2nd cc.

Geghard Monastery (Գեղարդավանք), 12th-13th cc.

Gndevank' Monastery (Գնդեվանք), 10th-12th cc.

Haghartsin Monastery (Հաղարծին վանք), 11th-13th cc.

Haghpat Monastery (Հաղպատավանք), 10th-13th cc.

Harrichavank' Monastery (Հառիճավանք), 13th c.

Hayravank' Monastery (Հայրավանք), 9th-12th cc.

Hovhannavank' Monastery (Հովհաննավանք) 13th c.

Jrvezh (Ջրվեժ), chapels, 4th-5th cc.

Karbi (Կարբի), Church of Surb Astvatsatsin, 13th-14th c.

Kech'arris Monastery (Կեչառիսի վանք), 13th c.

Kosh (Կոշ), Fortress and chapel, 13th c.

Mak'enis Monastery (Մաքենիյաց վանք), 10th-11th cc.

Marmashen Monastery (Մարմաշեն), 10th-11th cc.

Mastara (Մաստարա), Church of Surb Hovhannes, 7th c.

Mughni (Մուղնի), Church of Surb Gevorg, 17th c.

Noravank' Monastery (Նորավանք), 12th-14th cc.

Odzun (Օձուն), Church of Odzun, 6th-7th cc.,

Oshakan (Օշական) Church of Surb Sion – Mankanots' (Մանկանց), 7th c.

Ptghni (Պտղնի), Church of Ptghvank', 6th-7th cc.

Saghmosavank' Monastery (Սաղմոսավանք), 11th-13th cc.

Sanahin Monastery (Սանահին վանք), 11th-13th cc.

- Sevan Monastery (Սեւանականք), 9th c.
Sisian (Սիսիան) Church of Surb Hovhannes, 7th c.
Spitakavor Monastery (Սպիտակավոր վանք), 13th c.
T'alin (Թալին), Cathedral of T'alin, 7th c.
T'anahat Monastery (Թանահատ վանք) 5th-6th cc.,
Tat'ev Monastery (Տաթևի վանք), 6th-18th cc.;
Tegher Monastery (Տեղերի վանք), 13th c.
Vagharshapat (Վաղարշապատ)
Voghchaberd (Ողջաբերդ), fortress, 4th-5th cc.
Vorotnavank' Monastery (Որոտնականք), 10th-12th cc.
Yeghegis (Եղեգիս), Church of Surb Nshan, 13th c.
Yeghvard (Եղվարդ), Basilica, 6th c.
Yeghvard (Եղվարդ), Church of Surb T'eodoros Zoravar (Չորավար), 7th c.
- Georgia
Akhkerpi (ახკერპი), Khorakert Monastery, 13th c.
- Iran
West Azerbaijan Province of Iran, Qareh Kelisā (قاريه كليس), Monastery of Surb T'adeos 12th-19th cc.
- Turkey
Akdamar Adası, Church of Surb Khach' (Akdamar Adası Kilisesi) 10th c.
Ani, 10th-13th cc.
Özlüce, Monastery of Haghots, 10th-13th cc.
Yanal, Church of the Holy Cross – Soradir (Yanal Kilisesi) 6th-7th cc.

1969

Adriano Alpago Novello
Hagopik Manoukian
Haroutiun Kasangian
Giovanni Nogaro

Armenia SSR

- Akht'ala Monastery (Ախթալայի վանք), 10th c.
Arates Monastery (Արատեսի Վանք), 12th-13th cc.
Areni (Արենի), Church of Surb Astvatsatsin, 14th c.
Arzni (Արզնի), Church of Surb Astvatsatsin, 17th-19th cc.
Arzni (Արզնի), Church of Surb Kiraki, 6th-7th cc.
Bjni (Բջնի), Church of Surb Astvatsatsin, 11th c.; Fortress of Bjni, 9th-10th cc.
Erebuni Fortress (Էրեբունի), 8th c.
Goshavank' Monastery (Գոշավանք), 12th-13th cc.
Hayravank' Monastery (Հայրավանք), 9th-13th cc.
Jiliza (Ջիլիզա), Monastery of Khorakert, 13th c.
Karmir Blur Fortress (Կարմիր Բլուր), 7th c.
Koghb (Կողբ), Monastery of Mshkavank', 13th c.
Nerk'in Getashen (Ներքին Գետաշեն), Monastery of Kot'avank', 9th c.
Noravank' Monastery (Նորավանք), 12th-14th cc.
P'rrosh Fortress (Պրոշաբերդ), Vayots' Dzor, 13th c.
Selim caravanserai (Սելիմի իջևանատուն), Vayots' Dzor, 14th c.
Spitakavor Monastery (Սպիտակավոր վանք), Vayots' Dzor, 13th c.

1970, first mission

June-July

Giovanni Nogaro

Franco Marrà

Walter Pagliero

Herman Vahramian

Turkey

Akdamar Adası, Church of Surb Khach' (Akdamar Adası Kilisesi) 10th c.

Ani, 10th-13th cc.

Başkale, Monastery of Surb Bardughimeos (Saint Bartholomew Monastery), 9th-10th cc.

Bayburt, Fortress of Bayberd (Bayburt Kalesi), 9th c.

Kiagmis Altı Church, 10th c.

Erzerum, Madras of Çifte Minareli (Çifte Minareli Medresesi), 13th c.

Erzerum, Madras of Yakutiye (Yakutiye Medresesi), 14th c.

Erzerum, Mausoleum of Üç Kümbetler, 12th-14th cc.

Erzurum, Khakhuli Monastery (Hahuli Manastırı), 10th-11th cc.

Erzurum, Oğht'ik Fortress (Oltu Kalesi), 10th-11th cc.

Hoşap, Fortress of Khoshab, (Hoşap Kalesi), 17th c.

İşhan, Monastery of Ishkhan/Ishkani (İşhan Manastırı), 9th c.

Kars, Castle of Kars (Kars Kalesi), 12th c.

Kars, Church of Kümbet Kilise, 10th-11th cc.

Kars, Church of Surb Arrak'elots' (On İki Havariler Kilisesi), 10th c.

Şenkaya, Cathedral of Bana/Banak (Penek Kilisesi), 10th c.

Tortum, Fortress of Tortomi (Tortum Kalesi), 10th-11th cc.

Trabzon, Monastery of Amenaprkich' (Kaymaklı Manastırı), 14th-16th cc.

Yanal, Church of the Holy Cross – Soradir (Yanal Kilisesi) 6th-7th cc.

Yusufeli, Monastery of Parkhali (Barhal Manastırı), 10th c.

1970, second part

The group consisting of Maria Grazia Sandri, Franco Marrà, and Herman Vahramian visit Turkey focusing mostly on the monumental heritage of the following sites and regions:

Ani

Burdur District

Cappadocia

Cilicia

Konya District

Sivas District

1970, third part

Adriano Alpago Novello

Armen Manoukian

Herman Vahramian

Armenia SSR

Agarak (Ագարակ), Church of Agarak, 4th-5th cc.

Aghdzk' (Աղձք), hypogeum mausoleum, 4th-5th cc.

Aramus (Արամուս), Church of Surb Nshan, 7th c.

Arrinj (Արինջ)

Artik (Արտիկ), Church of Surb Astvatsatsin, 5th-6th cc.; Church of Surb Sarkis, 7th c.
Dvin (Դվին) 4th-7th c.
Garnahovit (Գառնահովիտ), Church of Surb Gevorg, 7th c.
Kapoutan (Կապուտան), Church of Surb Minas, 14th c.
Lmbatavank' (Լմբատավանք), 7th c.
Marmashen Monastery (Մարմաշեն), 10th-11th cc.
Masrouts Anapat (Մասրուտ անապատ) Surb Karapet Church, 9th c.
Pemzashen (Պեմզաշեն), Makaravank' Monastery, 10th-13th cc.
Tegher Monastery (Տեղերի վանք), 10th-13th cc.
Yereruyk' (Երերույք), Basilica of Yereruyk', 6th c.
Unknown Church of Surb Minas, 10th c.
Unknown Church of Surb Step'anos, 13th c.

1971-73

Adriano Alpago Novello

Enzo Hybsch

Giulio Ieni

Missions in Georgia (it is not yet possible to provide a detailed list of sites visited)

1974

Mission in Armenia by Adriano Alpago Novello.

Mission in Georgia by Enzo Hybsch: Black Sea coast.

1975

Exploratory mission in Iran by Adriano Alpago Novello: Ispahān and Shiraz.

Mission in Georgia by Enzo Hybsch: Khevsureti and Tusheti district.

1976

Mission in Iranian Azerbaijan by Adriano Alpago Novello, Gabriella Uluhogian, Haig Uluhogian, Nice Vecchione: Tabriz and Khoy districts, city of Ispahān and Nor Jugha.

1977

Mission in Iranian Azerbaijan by Adriano Alpago Novello, Gabriella Uluhogian, Haig Uluhogian, Nice Vecchione: Tabriz, Maku, and Julgha districts, with a specific focus on the Church of Surb Step'anos in Julgha district.

1978

Supplementary study of monuments in Armenia by Adriano Alpago Novello and Gabriella Uluhogian.

1979

Mission in Armenia: Ijevan district and Nagorno Karabakh.

Jukhtakvank' Monastery (Ջուխտակ վանք), 13th c.

Kirants Monastery (Կիրանց Վանք), 13th c.

Mat'evosvank' (Unknown)

Arrak'elots Monastery (Առաքելոց վանք), 12th-13th c.

Spitak (Սպիտակ), Cave complex

Dadivank' (Դավիթվանք), 9th-13th cc.

Gandzasar Monastery (Գանձասարի վանք), 13th c.

1980

Mission in Armenia by Alberto Pensa and Gabriella Uluhogian in Sevan district, Aparan, Amasia, Gyumri, Avan, Yerevan, Etchmiadzin, Marmashen, and Sardarapat Ethnographic Museum.

Supplementary mission in Georgia by Adriano Alpago Novello in Akhaltsikhe.

1982

Documentation of modern architecture in Yerevan by Alberto Pensa and Vittorio Intrini.

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