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The Atlas has been prepared by Duty of Soul NGO with the support of RAA Foundation.
Artsakh (also known as Lesser Armenia) Province of Armenia Major constitutes the extreme northeastern portion of the Armenian Plateau. Its northern and central districts lie in the basin of the river Kar, and the southern ones in that of the Arax. From the north southward, the major rivers of the catchment basin of the region are the Arinjaver, Gandzak (also called the Water of Voskanapet), Kuruk, Sevijeren, Injia, Trin (with its three major tributaries, the Lev, Dukhur and Tirgih), Khachen, Kiefar, Knosa, Varuna and the Ishkananget (all these rivers mainly flow in an easterly direction).

The Gyantskhi (3,725 m), Merv (3,340 m), Alburak (3,066 m), Metz (Greater) Kirs (2,725 m) and Dizapet (2,448 m) are the loftiest peaks in the region where the terrain is mostly mountainous.

Since times immemorial Artsakh has always actively participated in all the spheres of life in Armenia, playing a great role in the military, economic, and cultural affairs of the country.

The archaeological monuments unearthed in the territory of Artsakh (such as those in Azakh, Metz (Greater) Taghber, Shushi, Khajoi, Ararajde, etc.) prove that the region has been inhabited since the Neolithic era (going back to over 300 thousand years) without any intervals.

Between the 9th and 7th centuries B.C., Artsakh was under the political supremacy of the Kingdom of Urartu (also called Ur and Araratian): this is proved by a conscript inscription found in the territory of Terwir Village, in present-day Geghardavank Region, RA. Under the Armenian royal dynasties of the Ordovids (6th to 2nd centuries B.C.), Artsakhssids (189 B.C. to early 1st century A.D.) and Arshakids (66 to 428), Artsakh formed part of the Armenian state.

According to the Asbakhahavants, a 7th-century Armenian work on geography, Artsakh had 15 districts: Metz (Greater) Kervi, Kauoi-Parnes, Kongh, Aghve-Ti, Berdusert, Yavakumik, Metz (Greater) Aranik, Rev-Pazdzan, Piank, Pazzamik, Mukhurk, Myus, the Habar, Harjik, and Sisakan-Vostan.

In the 9th century, Artsakh succumbed to the Arab rule despite the severe resistance put up against the invaders under Prince Yevsayi Abu Mansur’s leadership. After its liberation from the Arab yoke, the region shifted into the possession of the Armenian Bagratids (885 to 1045) together with some principalities (such as Khachen and Kichik) and part of the kingdom of Persia. It should be noted that by then the principality of Khachen had considerably expanded its territories, thanks to which, in the west, the lands of Artsakh reached the monastery of Shoghat, in other words, the domains of Khachen went beyond the borders of Artsakh proper, including certain portions of the neighboring province of Shunik, particularly the eastern and southern shores of Lake Sevan.

The princely houses of Artsakh retained their lands, with some minor territorial changes, until the Mongol invasions of the 1220s. The devastating Mongol domination of the 13th to 14th centuries seriously affected the economic and cultural life of the region. Besides, it weakened and eroded the Armenians of Artsakh to such an extent that they proved unable to repel the incursions of the Turkish tribes of the Kar-Koyants and Ay-Koyants continually invading the region in the 15th to 16th centuries.

The period between the 16th and 18th centuries, when Artsakh was under Persian rule, was marked with repeated outbursts of Turk-Persian wars which brought only calamities and devastation to the region. On the other hand, however, in the 17th century, the Persian shahs restored the former rights of some major and minor old Armenian princely houses, this leading to the establishment of a number of semi-independent principalities (melikdoms) in Artsakh. In order to further strengthen themselves against foreign incursions, in the late 17th century, these principalities entered into alliance and united into the melikdom of Khasma. It comprised the melikdoms of Guzelfistan, Erzberd, Khachen, Varuna and Dizapet, their common borders reaching from the vicinity of Gandzak to the river Arax. In the west, the melikdom of Khasma bordered on another group of Armenian principalities—the melikdoms of Voskanapet, Geghardavank and Kashatagh—the territories of which stretched all along its western border.
ensuring its security against foreign incursions most
likely made for plunder.

In the second half of the 1720s, the melikate of Khamsa suffered a disastrous attack by the Ottoman army which caused formidable depredations in the region, subjecting the local inhabitants to unreckon-
able persecution and slaughter. The situation aggra-
ivated even further as the neighboring Islamic khansates and sultanates joined the Ottomans togeth-
er with hordes of Lezghins to kill and plunder the population of the region. It was during this very peri-
od that a lot of Armenian districts, including Zakam, Mzapot, Tzar (Upper Khachen), Kashatch, Kashokh, and Kevakian, were almost completely or just totally stripped of their Armenian inhabitants. Many other districts—such as Shamkor, Gardman, Yavots Dzor, Tzezhik, Dzerk, and Arevak—were partially depopulated. The Armenians of hundreds of villages in a number of districts, including Kapaghak, Shake, Dsakan, Khachamzas and the adja-
cent ones, converted to Islam under the threat of death. Even the Melik-Yeganos’ descendants (they represented a branch of the Meliks of Ditzak), living in the village of Togh in Artashat, renounced their Christian faith (in the Soviet years, they had the fam-
ily name of Yeganos and were considered Azerbaijanis).

As for the melikate of Khamsa located in the heart of Artashat, it mostly succeeded in putting up organi-
sed self-defense against these raids. However, the mass slaughters, deportations and emigration left the region with a drastically reduced number of popula-
tion; moreover, Khamsa lost the district of Tzar (Up-
ner Khachen), which was of vital importance to it.

Later the Armenian meliks’ relations were spoiled by some moods of mutual intolerance and egoism. Under these circumstances, they completely neglect-
ed the national interests of the Armenian people which should have been placed high above every-
thing else (it goes without saying that in this way, they played into the hands of their enemies, particu-
larly some nomadic tribes of Turkic origin). Thus, for instance, Melik Shahmanzor, the leader of Varanda District, allowed the occupation of the fortress town

of Shushi, situated in the heart of Artsakh, by the chieftain of the tribe Ivarshikhe, Panah. In 1747 the latter established the khanate of Karabakh and started gradually fortifying and expanding its borders by invading the weakening Armenian melikates and seizing more and more lands from them.

In 1805 the khanate of Karabakh became part of the Russian Empire although local government con-
tinued being carried out by Muslim governors now called hayes (the successors of Padaro’s son, Ibrahim Khan). In 1822 it was disintegrated, being incorpo-
rated into the newly-established province of Yezikhetap over a short time later.

During the period of Russian rule, some immi-
gants, particularly Germans and Russians (ban-
ished from their countries as separatists) arrived in the region (the former in 1818 and the latter in the 1840s). Within a short time, several German colonies and over twenty Russian villages were established there.

It is interesting to note that the immigrants intro-
duced some novelties in the region: thus, the Russians who had brought new agricultural tools helped the natives improve their farming skills, while the Germans acquainted them with new meth-
ods and approaches in house construction, viticultu-
re and crafts.

While attending to the housing problems of the immigrants, particularly the Russians, the tsarist authorities exercised rather a rough and even brutal policy against the natives of Artsakh; thus, entire plots of land were seized from the Armenian villages and allocated to the newly-established Russian ones. Moreover, in 1865 all the inhabitants of the ancient, partly Armenian village of Paris were banished and it was allocated to the Russian immigrants. This pol-
icy of discrimination created an atmosphere of mis-
trust in the region, affecting negatively the inter-rela-
tions of the two nations. Nevertheless, in terms of law observation, the period of Russian reign was incomparably better than that of the khans’ rule: the leaders of the gangs (the so-called phakeghads) attacking and plundering particularly the Armenian villages were often arrested and sent into exile.

From the very first years of the establishment of their rule in the region, the Russian authorities planned to force the Caucasian Tartars (this was a col-
lective name used with reference to various tribes of Turkic origin) into assuming a sedentary mode of life (they were threatened with banishment if they refused to do so). Supposedly, this would keep them away from their savagery (it should be noted that they plundered the immigrants as well). Indeed, it was rather difficult for the tsarist government to re-
 mould the Caucasian Tartars, accustomed to preserving their existence through plunder, into law-abiding citizens. In fact, this process took several decades, being completed only in the 1910s. However, even after giving up their nomadic life, the Turkic tribes kept attacking and plundering the villages of Artsakh like the Lezghin of Doghustan who did the same in the 18th century with the only difference that they did not live there permanently.

The Caucasian Tartars’ transition to a sedentary mode of life completely changed the ethnic distribu-
tion picture in Artashat. The point is that beginning with the times of the Mongol invades, the natives of the region had gradually withdrawn from its plains that were considered more vulnerable to the able to more effectively defend themselves against foreign raids. The Ottoman threat of the 1720s stripped them of certain territories in the highlands of the region as well so that they eventually found them-
seled huddled in the middle zone of mountainous woodland where the terrain was more convenient for self-defense. As a result, after the aforementioned transition, the long chain of Armenian-inhabited vil-

lages lying along the foothills of the region appeared as clasped between the Caucasian Tartars from below and above.

The results of the population censuses carried out in 1886 and 1914 proved quite interesting: within 25 years, an average increase (through natural reprodu-
cation) was predominantly observed amongst the Russians, the Armenians and Germans following them in the second and third places respectively. As for the Caucasian Tartars, surprising as it is, a sharp reduction of population number was fixed in almost all their villages, despite their evidently higher growth rate. As noted by some researchers of those times, the reason was their transition to a sedentary mode of life, as prior to that, the members of the same tribe were registered for several times in their various (including summer and winter) encamp-
ments.

The Armenians of Artsakh considerably suffered in the aftermath of the Armenian-Tatar fights of 1905 to 1907, which had been incited by the tsarist author-
ities. A great number of Armenian villages were destroyed and plundered, the Russian powers fol-
lowing all this with complacency and a flagrantly biased attitude (later Armenian revengers properly punished those Tartar villages the inhabitants of which had been particularly cruel and brutal towards the Armenians).

On 27 May 1918, a state called Azerbaijan emerged into the political arena, its establishment having been planned by Turkey. On 28 May of the same year, Armenia declared independence, after which the Musavatist authorities of Azerbaijan start-
ed laying territorial claims on Artsakh, attempting to annex it to their country. During the same year, the National Council of Karabakh convened three con-
gresses in Shushi (on 22 July as well as on 6 and 17 September) refusing to recognize the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan over Artsakh. This rejection was further ratified by two decisions of the same Council made on 19 February and 23 April 1919. Besides, on 4 March 1920, another similar decision was adopted by the 8th congress of the National Council of Karabakh. In response to all this, on 23 March of the same year, the Musavatist bands and the Turkish troops together launched attacks against the Armenian quarters of Shushi City and numerous Armenian villages in Artsakh in an attempt to make the local Armenians succumb to Azerbaijan’s demands.

In the long run, in 1923 Artsakh was "cut out" into the Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh, which did not include Northern Artsakh and the dis-

trict of Shubahum. With Stalin’s desire and approval, it was annexed to Soviet Azerbaijan, hav-
ing been deliberately stripped of its common border with Soviet Armenia.

Despite this situation, the Armenians cherished hopes that justice could triumph in the Soviet Union. The First Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia, Aghani Khajian, attempted to raise the issue of the secession of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh from the Republic of Azerbaijan and its re-unification with Soviet Armenia. In 1955, however, he was shot to death because of these very endeavours. After the disintegration of Transfederation (1936), the extremely limited rights of the Armenians living within the Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh were restricted even further.

Until 1988 the issue of the secession of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh from Azerbaijan was shrouded in silence although it was never consigned to oblivion. On 20 February of the same year, the extraordinary session of the Regional Council of the People’s Deputies of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh adopted a decision to apply to the Supreme Council of Azerbaijan with a petition to break away from that republic and to apply to the Supreme Council of Armenia with a request to be incorporated in the republic. Another petition was addressed to the USSR Supreme Council with an expectation to receive a positive settlement of the issue.

The Azerbaijani authorities responded to these petitions with the brutal slaughter of Armenians living in different cities and about 100 villages in Azerbaijan, outside the borders of Artsakh. The pogroms proved particularly bloody in Sumgait, Baku, Kirovabad and a number of other cities. In the aftermath of the anti-Armenian hysteria raging throughout Azerbaijan, more than 450,000 Armenians were forced into leaving their birthplaces.

On 2 September 1991, the joint session of the Regional Council of the People’s Deputies of the Autonomous Region of Nagorno Karabakh and the District Council of Shahumian declared Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) an independent republic. Inflamed at this, the Azerbaijani authorities launched a true war against the Armenians of Artsakh who just wanted liberty; it lasted until May 1994 and ended in the brilliant victory of the Armenian side.

To summarise, the Armenians’ struggle for the freedom and independence of Artsakh goes as far back as 1722. It was interrupted in 1918 and suppressed in 1923. The murder of the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Armenia in 1935 postponed the settlement of the issue of Artsakh’s independence but only until 1988, when the Armenians’ struggle re-awakened. It was eventually crowned with a glorious victory gained at the cost of the incessant work and unspeakable sacrifices of thousands of Armenians, 7,000 of whom lost their lives while building this victory.

The Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) has been enjoying independence for already a quarter of a century. From time to time, Azerbaijan launches diversion attacks to show that it has not reconciled itself to the loss of Artsakh, a historical Armenian land that has never belonged to it (just another act of military aggression was launched early in April 2016, being repelled with honour, like all the previous ones).

The free and independent Republic of Artsakh, which has mostly recovered from the wounds of the war, is an embodiment of the realisation of the dreams of the entire Armenian nation, an infinite source of pride and enjoyment to every single Armenian. It has a growing generation that is just as old as the independence of the country, a generation that is deeply proud of its fathers’ struggle and achievements. It goes without saying that the Armenians of Artsakh will further strengthen their sacred homeland that has regained freedom at the cost of so much suffering.

With every passing year, Artsakh is becoming more and more beautiful, prospering and powerful. It represents the second Armenian republic with over 350,000 peaceful and hard-working inhabitants. It is beyond doubt that in the nearest future it will celebrate its re-unification with the Republic of Armenia, which will mark another turning point in its history.
St. Hripsime (Iskand), a pilgrimage site;
Urartu (Hravelavank) Monastery of Tjerv (Tehle), where the body of Vaghshin (Vashin) the Apostle was first taken; Haghpat Monastery—standing before those desiring its water and drying up before those unworthy of it; South Avarastaran (Holy Virgin) (Church) of the monastery of Khat the Apostle (Khatchakavan), a bishop residence; The seat of Yeghish (Elisha) the Apostle, where his right hand is kept, a bishop residence; Charshen (Charben) Monastery, a bishop residence; Bishop Argizius and Priest Hierop; And in the place of the season’s martyrdom that was in Ayriz a snare started growing: it was known as a remedy for (various) pains. And a Persian named Anamit suffered martyrdom here? Shakhnuni Monastery, a bishop residence, where the Apostle’s chains are kept; Hararat Chitser; Bekhkavank (Pikitsagh) Monastery, a bishop residence; Khachikavan Monastery, a bishop residence, which was built by the Holy Enlightener; Tuenin (Okhtin) (Ezbar) Chitser; St. Voghbo (Elisha) Chitser; Tashnork Monastery; St. Hako (Jabez) Monastery, a bishop residence, where a relic of (St.) Hako of the Supreme Pontiff of Mirom is kept; Kasanit (Virgin’s) Chitser; Hurra (Hrava) Monastery, a bishop residence; Armvank, a Cathedral church for summer; [South] Ghabakapat (Holy Virgin) Monastery of Tzagh (Dasaki), a bishop residence; Pavdut Monastery, a bishop residence, with Yeghibo’s grave, a relic of King Vaghshin is kept there; Metevel Monastery; Mount Erebuni: some Taze hermits and believers were buried here (here) amidst stacks of barley and wheat. A mountain: The queen and many people suffered martyrdom here [here] and the place was called Kragilakhts (City Hill), Kasa Chitser; Tzagh Monastery, a bishop residence; Marhtgharanc Khach (St.) Tzhadoun brought here a piece of the cross in which the Saviour had been washed; Ananin (Monastery), a bishop residence and the first sea of the (Holy) Enlightener’s grandious Origiots. And they say that in the year 377 Vaghshin had a vision through which he found a battle of blood that was Persia Zarabia, a relic of (holy) bishop Parthen and a relic of Joseph of Armenia. Giorgi’s right hand and grave are here [in Ananin]. South Khach (Holy Cross Church) of the Holy See of Gandaranta, a Cathedral residence: Magistros (father-in-law Jhambri) had the (Holy) Enlightener’s jewel-stone brought here. A relic from the Holy Baptism’s head is kept here together with some relics of the holy martyrs Elisbe and David Drevaty; Kasanit (Virgin’s) Convent of Anamit’s (Village); Begghihan (Baghikhan) Chitser; Varzin (Varzun); The river Roper (Tariw), which runs to the east, passes through the city of Peth (Parnaw) and merges into the river Yer; Tzav Avarastaran (Old Oopak), a pilgrimage site; Panarat (Panarat) Chitser; Kenje (Gandara) City (at the vicinity of which) Khosrov was tortured to death; Tashnork Chitser; Peth (Parnaw) City, King Vaghshin’s residence, The site where David and himamspy suffered martyrdom; South Nohav (Holy Sign) Monastery, a bishop residence; Vor (Upper) Zerken (Zakaw): Ilenez Chitser of Oshapat; Parvoso Monastery, a bishop residence; Kispak (Kisapak) Monastery, a bishop residence; Kasanit (Virgin’s) Convent of Vaspurak; Kishken (Kisken) Chitser; Kasanit (Virgin’s) Convent; Kaitahane Monastery; Gtogh’s South Khach (Holy Crown), a pilgrimage site; Kekhtran Chitser, a pilgrimage site; Yeghibo Monastery of Gharpagan (Karabakh), a bishop residence; Ymel Manukani (Three Infants’) Monastery, a pilgrimage site, where some relics are kept; Chkukh Chitser, with Eos and sometimes more monks; Khati Khach of Punghar, a pilgrimage site; Arokjak Chitser; [South] Antzaperk’ak (Holy Savion) Chitser of Kyurikats (Kurekanits); Paniash, a pilgrimage site; Norkin Zekken (Lower Zekken); Kasanit (Virgin’s) Convent of Konentan (Kunadan); The river Sheruk’ar (Shamakor), which Sews eastward and irrigates the plain with so many canals that it (eventually) runs out of water; Archanghelos Triarx’s grave, a pilgrimage site; Khahlasap (Khakhak) Monastery, a bishop residence; Gark Chitser; Snapaj Monastery, a bishop residence; [South] Amsapravich (Holy Savion) Monastery, a bishop residence, with Khosrov’s grave (in the neighborhood), Migador, a pilgrimage site; Khakian (Kagikhkh’ak) a caravan-station; Kremian (Koeman) (Gonaran) District, with the grave of Archanghelos Hripsimaves Mezargamuty of blessed memory.
1. A view of Shushi City
2. A view of Tert Village, Khachen District
3. A view of Garegin Village, Khachen District
4. The house (1899) of Prince Mecrop Yeos-Torqarat in the centre of Garegin Village, Khachen District
5. A view of Soosan Village, Dadivank District
6. A view of Gyulko Village, Elchavanc District
7. A view of Dolnoe Village, Askeran District
8. A late 19th-century house in Gyulko, Khachen District
9. Monghos Village, Berdasor Sub. District, Askeran District
10. A view of Deravan Village, Askeran District
11. A view of Myatskhs Village, Martakert District
3.2. A manuscript of 1412 (Artsakh, State Historical Museum of Local Lore) 3-6. All: Several pages of illuminations from a manuscript of 1530 found in Shovak (Vaghjia Aghjya) Monastery.
5. 10. Two pages from a manuscript of 1606 found in Gandsar Monastery.
1. Alaverdi School (1899), Gndzak
2. The school of Shaki
3. The school (1952) of Mashtots Village, Shaki District
4. The school of Aygestan Village, Masis District
5. The school (1911) of Hravuty Village, Shaki District
6. The school of Baki (Shaki) Village, Shaki District
7. The construction inscription of the school (1899) of Saribabur Village, Arzni District
8. The school of Petrosavan Village, Hadrut District
9. The Ahur school of Garabov Village, Khachadur District
10. The construction inscription of the school (1902) of Mashtots Village, Shaki District
11. The school of Hravuty Village, Masis District

THE ARMENIAN SCHOOLS OF ARTSAKH
From the 19th Century until 1920

LEGEND

Armeneh (Persian)
1925 Opening Formation Year
1. The 14th-century fountain of Tagh Village, Hadrut District
2. Public fountain (1771), Shushi District, and its construction inscription
3. The 19th-century fountain of Karaqin Village, Hadrut District
4. The 19th-century fountain of Mokhri Village, Shushi District
5. The fountain (1778) of Taghber Village, Hadrut District
6. The fountain (1853) of Paro Pish Monastery, Shushi District, and an inscription commemorating its repairs
7. The fountain of Mokhri Village, Hadrut District
8. The construction inscription of the fountain (1778) of Taghber Village, Hadrut District
9. The fountain (1877) of Aghber Village, Karvachab District
10. The fountain (1915) of Tagher Village, Hadrut District

THE FOUNTAINS OF ARTSAKH
1. The 15th-century bridge of Tourmut Village, Karotak District
2. The old bridge of Karotak (Early Middle Ages), Stepanakert District
3. A bridge in Omades Village, Khelbar District
4. The 18th-century bridge of Gorn over the river Mork, Buzak District
5. The bridge of Lakez over the river Voron, Karabakh District
6. The 18th-century bridge of Inarets over the river Tovag, Hadrut District
7. The 17th-century bridge of Tare over the river Lezharbager, Shush District
8. Mera (Greener) Bridge of Bnates Village over the river Aghajar, Dashtadem District
9. The bridge of Akhaghyur over the river Voron, Askeran District
10. The bridge (1653) of Makeny, Askeran near Askeran Village, Askeran District
11. Your Bridge of Bnates Village over the river Aghajar, Dashtadem District
12. Kveshi (Effigies) Bridge over the river Torpaq, in the area between the small villages of Voronka and Norakiri, Shushkhanan District (in fact, the bridge is now abandoned not ever, but beside, the river due to the deviation of its original course)
1. A partial view of the ramparts of Tigranakert, Artsakh District, 6th century B.C.
2. A partial view of the castle of Askeran.
3. A partial view of the ramparts of Chandedagh (Khachatt) Castle, Marakart District, which adjoin its gate.
4. Fanjik Castle, Gadrak District.
5. A partial view of Chandery (Khachatt) Castle.
6. A partial view of Palus Castle, Khachenagh District.
7. A partial view of Handanaberd Castle, Shahumian District, and its gate.
8. The castle of Ortizmir, Shahumian District.
9. A partial view of the ramparts of Hacikushaherd Castle, Marakart District.
10. A partial view of the ramparts of Akhasher Castle, Marakart District.
11. Charkh Castle, Gadrak District.
1. Mekhitar Monastery, Marakel District, 6th to 17th centuries
2. Gndewen Monastery, Martakert District, 1364 to 1384
3. Yerhu Monastery, Martakert District, 17th century
4. Gharanechents South Amherstich Church of Shushi City, Shushi District, 19th century
5. Talinertxwark Monastery, Khashagh District, 5th to 7th centuries
6. Gtch Monastery, Khach District, 1241 to 1266
7. The monastery of Bes, Shahumian District, 1st to 17th centuries
8. Karapet (Talinnertxwark) Chuch, Debed River District, 17th century
9. Khosrov Monastery, Martakert District, 13th to 17th centuries
10. Arens Monastery, Martakert District, 4th to 17th centuries
11. Arinlukh (Yeghvard Amrapil) Monastery, Martakert District, 5th to 17th centuries
12. Kalvar (Arkapir) Monastery, Khach District, 4th to 14th centuries
ARTSAKH
ATLAS

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WORKS RELATING TO THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF ARTSAKH