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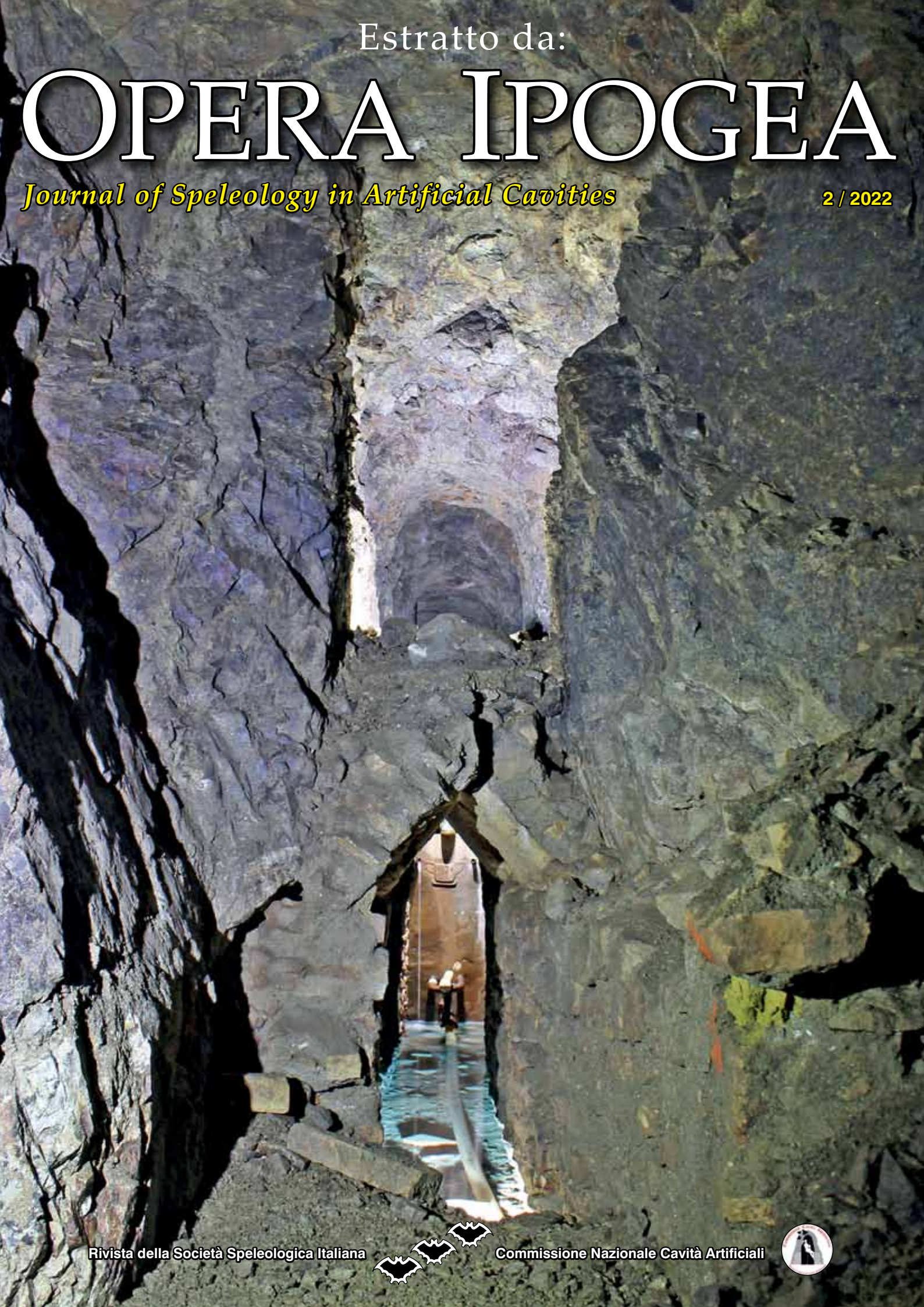

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Commissione Nazionale Cavità Artificiali

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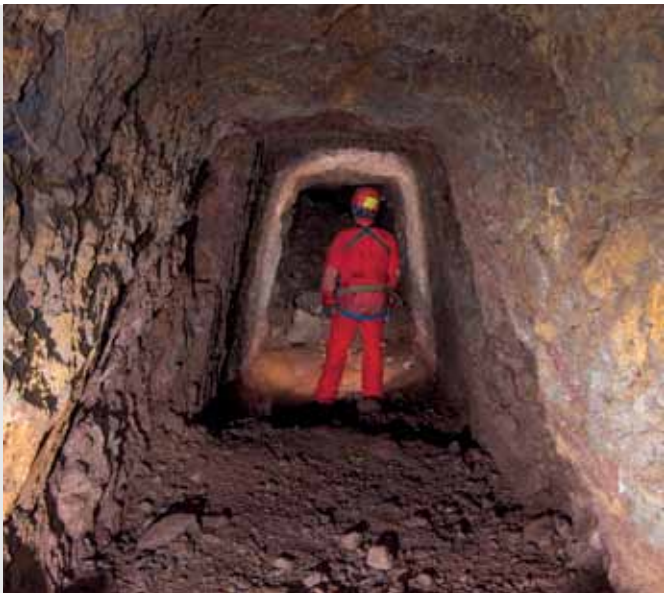

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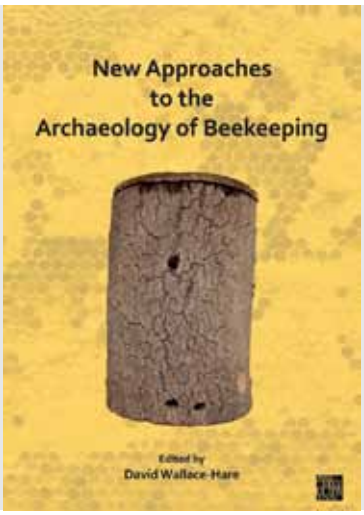

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Ingressi del complesso rupestre di Derevank (Kayseri, Turchia) (foto di A. Yamaç)

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Derevank rock-cut monastery of Kayseri (Turkey)

Il monastero rupestre di Derevank a Kayseri (Turchia)

Ali Yamaç

Abstract

With a total of 16 rock-cut structures, Derevank Monastery, also known as St. Sergius/Surp Sarkis Monastery, is one of the most prominent religious sites in the region. It is located east of Kayseri in the Derevank Valley. Even though it has been referenced in numerous books, this rock-cut monastic structure has never been fully examined. A number of the articles written about it, are also inaccurate and incomplete, as you'll see below. This rock-cut structure, together with Subaşı Monastery, is one of Kayseri's two largest rock-cut monasteries. In this article, all previous studies on this structure were evaluated and analyzed in addition to the survey and research we conducted at Derevank Monastery.

Keywords: Cappadocia, Kayseri, Derevank, Armenians, rock-cut monastery.

Riassunto

Dopo una panoramica sui siti rupestri dell'Asia Minore, in particolare quelli di origine armena, tra cui Urfa, Ani e Ahlat nella Turchia orientale, viene presentato un breve *excursus* sui ritrovamenti delle strutture sotterranee, tra cui quelle di culto, nell'ambito di un progetto pluriennale di ricerca sul territorio di Kayseri, capoluogo di una delle province dell'Anatolia centrale, già capitale in epoca romana dello storico *thema* di Cappadocia. Oggetto del contributo è, nello specifico, il Monastero di Derevank, la cui denominazione testimonia l'origine armena. Si trova nella omonima Valle di Derevank, contigua alla periferia est di Kayseri. È conosciuto anche come Monastero di San Sergio/Surp Sarkis. Con un totale di 16 concamerazioni che si estendono su un fronte di 120 m, parallelo alla falesia, e risulta essere, assieme al Monastero di Subaşı, uno dei principali siti di culto cristiano scavati nelle rocce vulcaniche della regione.
Nonostante che il complesso monastico sia citato in numerose pubblicazioni, in realtà non è mai stato indagato sistematicamente. Molti articoli scritti sull'argomento sono risultati sia imprecisi sia incompleti, come vedremo nello sviluppo dell'articolo in cui vengono riportati i risultati delle indagini condotte dal 2014 dall'Obruk Cave Research Group di Istanbul in accordo con le Istituzioni locali.
Ad integrazione delle osservazioni puntuali sui vari settori che compongono l'insediamento, evidenziando peculiarità e anomalie, sono stati presi in considerazione e analizzati i dati rilevati dagli studi precedenti mettendo, tra l'altro, a confronto le varie ipotesi di datazione che riconducono ad un'epoca almeno precedente al XVI secolo, ma verosimilmente risalente al tempo delle razzie arabe, tra VII e XI secolo. Inoltre, si sottolinea il fatto che tuttora, nonostante le più recenti e specifiche indagini, ancora troppo poco si conosce di questo insediamento; sussistono, persino, dubbi sulla sua effettiva destinazione d'uso, tra luogo di culto e residenza.

Parole chiave: Cappadocia, Kayseri, Derevank, armeni, monastero rupestre.

Armenian rock-cut architecture

Artificial cavities and rock dwellings are common not only in the Cappadocia region but also in almost every part of Anatolia. Although located hundreds of kilometers apart and spanning thousands of years, all these structures, serve similar but varied purposes from residential to the storehouse, and from religious to defensive structures.
In addition to several singular rock-cut structures that have been carved in provinces such as Konya-Kilistra and Sille, Bitlis, Ankara-Nallıhan, Batman, Mardin-Midyat or Çorum, there are also dense rock-dwellings carved close to one another in different parts of Anatolia. Apart from Cappadocia, one of the most common places where such structures are seen is the region known as the "Phrygian Highlands", in the provinces of Eskişehir-Afyon in Northwest Anatolia. There are hundreds of rock-cut shrines and settlements in this area of approximately 4,000 km^2. The rock-cut structures in this region were first carved by the Phrygians in 600-700 BC; some of them were used for residential

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purposes or converted into churches over time. In addition, many more rock-cut churches were carved during the Byzantine Period (Uçkan, 2010).

In Karaman Province, in Central Anatolia, there are also numerous rock-cut structures carved into the soft Neritic limestone. Although first discovered by the Russian geographer Pierre De Tchihatcheff as early as the middle of the nineteenth century, only some of these structures that are concentrated around Manazan and Gödet villages, but which are part of large cliff settlements, have been subjected to scientific studies. In the second volume of his monumental work "Asie Mineure: Description physique, statistique et archeologique de cette contree", published in five volumes between 1853-60, he stated regarding Gödet Village "*This rock settlement, on the walls of a deep canyon, is very impressive*" (De Tchihatcheff, 1853-60).

There are numerous Armenian rock-cut structures and churches in some regions with dense Armenian settlements, for example in Eastern Anatolia, especially Urfa, Ani, and Ahlat. In Urfa Province, both on the walls of the Euphrates River and within the city there are numerous Armenian rock-cut structures. Among these structures, some of which have been studied by us in recent years, there are houses, churches, and even a five-story monastery. A rock-cut church with Armenian inscriptions on its walls that we found during our studies around Urfa–Halfeti, along with the well-known Hromgla Castle on the opposite shore, can be dated to the 12th or 13th century (Obruk, 2019).

In eastern Anatolia, especially in Ani and Ahlat, hundreds of rock-dwelled settlements were explored, surveyed, and documented during years of archaeological work. Dwellings carved in volcanic rocks in the east of Kars, on the slopes of the ancient Armenian site of Ani facing the Arpaçay River (Ahurian), and in the citadel were investigated by Kipshidze in 1915. After his death, Kipshidze's notes were published by Tokarski in the Armenian Academy of Sciences in 1972. These notes mention the impressive number of 823 underground structures, mostly dwellings, but also churches, passages, cemeteries, and dovecotes in Ani (Kipshidze, 1972). Most of these artificial cavities found in Ani were extensively researched and published by Centro Studi Sotterranei of Genoa (Bixio *et al.*, 2009).

During the four-year surface investigations in Ahlat, on the west coast of Lake Van, more than 400 rock-cut structures were identified and surveyed in 17 different zones. Although it is difficult to determine the age of all these structures carved in the pyroclastic rocks, which is not unusual in the case of artificial cavities, they are likely to date to a period between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, both by comparing the architectural features of the Armenian church and by examining the potteries found during the underground tunnels excavations (Bixio & De Pascale, 2011; Bixio *et al.,* 2013; 2014; 2015).

Despite being a dense Armenian settlement, academic studies on Armenian rock-cut structures around Lake Van are still very insufficient. The only exception is a study of Armenian rock-cut churches in Gevaş – Üçpınar (Başak *et al.*, 2018).

In some other regions, Armenian churches are intertwined with the rock-cut structures of other religious groups. Like many other regions, Cappadocia is one of the regions where places of worship of several different faiths coexist, but this area is very different from all the other regions mentioned above. The difference is that in Cappadocia, besides the sheer number of rock-cut churches or dwellings, there lived a troglodyte population in a very large area that lasted hundreds of years. Cappadocia's underground and rock-cut structures are both incredible in number and variety. The inventory of these rock-cut sites, which are also known to contain dozens of Armenian churches, is still incomplete (Akyürek *et al.*, 2015).

Rock-cut religious architecture of Kayseri

Cappadocia, in general, and Kayseri, particularly, is considered the cradle of Christianity in Anatolia. In this region, where Christian communities began to take shape in the second century, the first religious buildings started to be built in the 4th century, influenced by important religious figures such as St. Basil, and numerous rock-out churches were excavated in the following centuries. There are more than 300 rock-cut churches -which can be dated between the 6th and 13th centuries- and they have always been the most significant cultural artifacts of Cappadocia. The rock-cut churches of Cappadocia, some of which are located within Göreme National Park, which was accepted as a World Heritage Site in 1985 by UNESCO, are covered with frescoes, some of which date back to the 6th and 7th centuries. Despite being the capital of Cappadocia during ancient times, no comprehensive scientific research of the rock-cut architecture in Kayseri has been carried out until now. To fill this deficiency, we, as Obruk Cave Research Group, started to work for the "Kayseri Underground Structures Inventory Project" in January 2014.

During this project, till now, we have explored, researched, and surveyed 47 Byzantine rock-cut churches, 35 underground settlements, 10 Assyrian tin mines, three underground aqueducts, and six different cliff settlements. Forty-five of these 47 rock-cut churches that we researched and surveyed had never been the subject of any scientific publication previously. Within the scope of the project five preliminary reports have been published so far. Apart from these preliminary reports, we published many articles in scientific journals about rock-cut structures that we researched during our studies, and three of them were specifically about rock-cut churches (Straub *et al.*, 2019; Yamaç, 2021; Yamaç & Tok, 2015).

Most of the 47 rock-cut churches are single nave, small, without any ornaments, and only a few have some partial frescoes. That there are no frescoes in most of the churches and that they have similar architectural plans also makes it difficult to date these churches. One of the few exceptions is one out of two rock-cut churches which we photographed and surveyed in Değirmendere Valley. It was dated by Cath-

erine Jolivet-Levy from mid to late 8th century, despite its frescoes are destroyed (Jolivet-Levy, personal communication, 2020). Two churches were examined by Karakaya before we started working in the region. Even though Karakaya dates the Ispıdın Church No.1 and Subaşı Church to the 10th–11th and 11th–13th centuries, respectively, these dates either cannot be considered as references for all other churches in the same region, or they are rather argumentative (Karakaya, 2013; 2014). On the other hand, in Belağası, located in a rock-dwelled village, "Holy Cross Church" was constructed in 1842. The southern wall of the church had been built by carving the rocks and the northern façade is stonewalled. The church was exposed to the devastation of time and illegal "treasure hunters" after 1915. Only a very small part of decoration and Armenian epigraphs within the building have reached the present day (Yamaç & Tok, 2015).
Forty-two of these 47 rock-cut churches we researched are located in Koramaz Valley, east of Kayseri. There are seven villages on the slopes of this valley, which has a total length of 16 km from east to west; they are Büyük Bürüngüz, Üskübü, Küçük Bürüngüz, Ağırnas, Dimitre, Vekse, and Ispidin. The distribution of the rock-cut churches according to the villages is as follows:

Koramaz Valley	
VILLAGES	**CHURCHES**
Büyük Bürüngüz	-
Subaşı	1 (monastery)
Küçük Bürüngüz	-
Ağırnas	15
Dimitre	7
Vekse	5
Ispıdın	14
TOTAL	**42**

The "Kayseri Underground Structures Inventory Project", which is still ongoing after eight years, has allowed the investigation of brand-new structures that have not been researched before, identified in each of our explorations. The last of these and perhaps one of the most important is the Derevank Monastery, in the omonimous valley orthogonal and not far (10 km west) from the above said Koramaz Valley, the details of which are reported below.

Fig. 1 – Location map showing Kayseri and Derevank Valley (after Google Maps and Google Earth - elaboration A. Yamaç).
Fig. 1 – Mappa di posizionamento di Kayseri e della Valle di Derevank (da Google Maps e Google Earth - elaborazione A. Yamaç).

Derevank Valley and village

The name of Derevank Valley, which is 4 km east of Kayseri and eroded by the Karasu Stream (fig. 1), has been transformed into Turkish from the Armenian original name. Poghosyan writes that the first form of the name is "Dzoravank", and it turns into "Teravank" and then "Derevank" over time and adds: "… *in the Armenian language the word 'vank' means a monastery, and 'dzor' means a gorge; and in Turkish the gorge sounds like 'dere'...*" (Poghosyan, 2018).
Located in the east of Talas district, in the northwest-southeast direction, this valley stretches from Tavlusun to the south, up to Zincidere. A stream carrying a large amount of water flows into the riverbed in winter and spring. There are many large and small artificial caves on both steep slopes in the northern part of the valley (fig. 2). The small village at the northwest exit of Derevank Valley is also called Derevank Village. This settlement, which

Fig. 2 – General view of Derevank Valley from the north entrance towards south. The Derevank Monastery is located on the steep cliffs on the right of the photo (photo A. Yamaç).

Fig. 2 – Panoramica della Valle di Derevank vista dall'imbocco settentrionale verso sud. Il Monastero di Derevank è posizionato sulla ripida balza sulla destra della foto (foto A. Yamaç).

does not have much remains today and is considered a part of Tavlusun district, had 70 households in the 1806 census. Many important people of the city had their homes in this village, which was a summer resort of Kayseri at that time.

Quoting Alboyajian, who describes both the valley and the village in detail, Poghosyan said that the fronts of all the houses in Derevank Village were made of cut stone and their backs are adjacent to the rocks and have carved like-cave rooms used as storage facilities and even refrigeration rooms. There were two churches and a modest school in the village (Poghosyan, 2018).

The Balyan family, which has eight important architects during the last period of the Ottoman Empire and left their mark on the late Ottoman architecture, was from Derevank. After the imperial architect Merametçi Bali Kalfa (death 1803), other architects of the family created dozens of important public structures such as Çırağan Palace, Ortaköy Mosque, Aksaray Valide Mosque, Beyazıt Fire Tower, II. Mahmud Tomb, Abdülmecid Tomb, Beylerbeyi Palace, Galatasaray High School, Ihlamur Pavilion, Küçüksu Pavilion in Istanbul (Pamukciyan, 2003).

Sarkis Karakoçyan (1865-1944) is an important Ottoman lawyer who was the compiler of many laws and regulations, especially the Corpus of Laws and Registry of Laws. The Karakoçyans are an Armenian family from Derevank with a history of more than 300 years. The oldest known member of the family is Karakoç, the son of Koca Zakar, and this name is written on a 1669 Bible belonging to the Derevank Monastery (Akgündüz, 2001).

Apart from the monastery in Derevank Valley, there were two more Armenian masonry churches inside Derevank Village: Surp Toros and Surp Asdvadzadzin (Surp in Armenian, corresponds to Saint).

They were in use until the 1890s. In the list prepared by the Patriarchate, it is seen that the Surp Toros Church on the upper side of the village was built in 1626. Surp Asdvadzadzin Church, which was destroyed in the earthquake of 1825, was re-

built in 1859 with an edict of 1848 (Açıkgöz, 2007; Penoni, 2015).

Derevank Monastery (St. Sergius - Surp Sarkis Monastery)

Along with its church, there is a huge rock-cut Armenian monastery in Derevank Valley, which is the origin of the valley's name, as "vank" means "monastery" in Armenian. Although it is one of the most important rock-cut monasteries in the whole of Kayseri, this structure, which has only been briefly mentioned in a few different publications, has not been extensively researched and historical information about it is very limited. The first date of construction of the Monastery is unknown and even its name is misspelled in some sources.

For example, its name, which is stated to be St. Sergius or Surp Sarkis, is referred to as Surp Toros both in Güner Sağır's Master's Thesis and in the article she wrote by quoting from this thesis (Sağır, 2000; 2005), and Poghosyan corrects this error with the following sentence in his article: *"… the young researcher in the 5th issue of the journal 'Turkish Archeology and Ethnography' for 2005 published an article 'A group of Armenian churches built in the Ottoman period in the province of Kayseri', in which one of the four parts was dedicated to the church in the village of Derevank and was called 'Surp Toros Kilisesi'. The researcher in his article erroneously presented the cult center of the monastery of St. Sergius as the church of St. Toros*" (Poghosyan, 2018).

Indeed, this rock-cut monastery complex in the Derevank Valley is referred to in all sources as St. Sergius or Surp Sarkis, and Surp Toros, written by Güner Sağır, is the name of another church in Derevank Village. On the other hand, Poghosyan, who made the most comprehensive study on this structure, did not even come to the region, not to mention the fact that he never saw the monastery complex. In the "The Derevank Cave Complex" presentation he made at the Speleology and Spelestology IX International Scientific Conference in 2018, he says: "*Due to the fact that the relevant structure is inaccessible to research, references to it mainly refer to modern times, i.e. to the period of the 18th - 20th centuries*".

The positive aspect of Poghosyan's study is the research of all Armenian sources about this monastery. As he himself emphasized, all information he wrote in his presentation about this structure refers to old and recent sources. For example, he is the first researcher to translate the detailed description of this structure written by Arshak Alboyajian (Alboyajian, 1937).

However, we point out that Derevank Valley, described as "*inaccessible to research*", according to Taliyol (http://taliyol.com/2011/04/13/derevenk-vadisi/ access March 14, 2022) is today one of the favorite hiking routes of the region. We can also note that the plan of the church, taken from the Master's Thesis of Sağır's, quoted above, is very imprecise and, however, it is the only existing one. We will discuss this in detail in the Architectural Details section below. It is very difficult to find and read this 2500-page work, which was published in Armenian in Cairo and was not translated into another language, Poghosyan has the great merit, as mentioned above, of having read this work and of having extrapolated several quotations. Apart from Alboyajian, he also quoted the following lines from Inchichyan's work of 1806: "*There is a monastery near the village, the brethren of which consisted of only 3 - 4 monks. There are many caves in the rocks around the village, in one of them St. Sergius was once a hermit, and the monastery is dedicated to him. The main church of the monastery is carved into the rock. The passage to it is difficult and dangerous, and in front of it, there is a chapel, also carved into the rock*" (Poghosyan, 2018).

There are only two western travelers who have seen the rock-cut monastery in Derevank Valley and mentioned it in their works. Charles Texier, in his book published in 1849, expressed the opinion that the man-made caves in the Derevank Gorge was very ancient, dated back to the beginning of Christianity, and served as a place of prayers (Texier, 1849). And, 50 years after Texier, Vital Cuinet in the first volume of his four-volume work, suggested that the caves in the Derevank Gorge served as a place for hermits (Cuinet, 1890-95).

Apart from all these sources we have mentioned, there are only very short notes about Derevank Monastery in some other contemporary studies. For example, there is only one line about Derevank Valley in the article of Tavlusun in Hild and Restle's book "Kappadokien" and a rock-cut small church and rock-cut monasteries are mentioned around the valley (Hild & Restle, 1981). There is no detailed information about Derevank Monastery in the work titled "Kayseri with its Armenian and Greek Cultural Heritage" prepared under the editorship of Altuğ Yılmaz. The only note about this structure, which is mentioned as a line in the database, consists of the caption of a photo: "*The remains on the southern slope of the Derevank Valley of Talas are thought to belong to Surp Sarkis Armenian Monastery, which was built in the 17th century*" (Yılmaz, 2016).

There is no information about the complex even in the work prepared under the editorship of Banu Pekol, named "Kayseri, Adana, İzmir, Elazığ, Niğde, Bursa; Assessment Report of Architectural Cultural Heritage". However, in this work, the other two Armenian churches in the village located at the exit of Derevank Valley are described in detail (Pekol, 2018).

Architectural details

Derevank Monastery is indisputably different from all the rock-cut structures we have searched and surveyed in Kayseri for eight years, and architecturally it has a much more advanced conformation than any of the structures we have examined so far. Located 35 m above the valley floor, this monastery complex

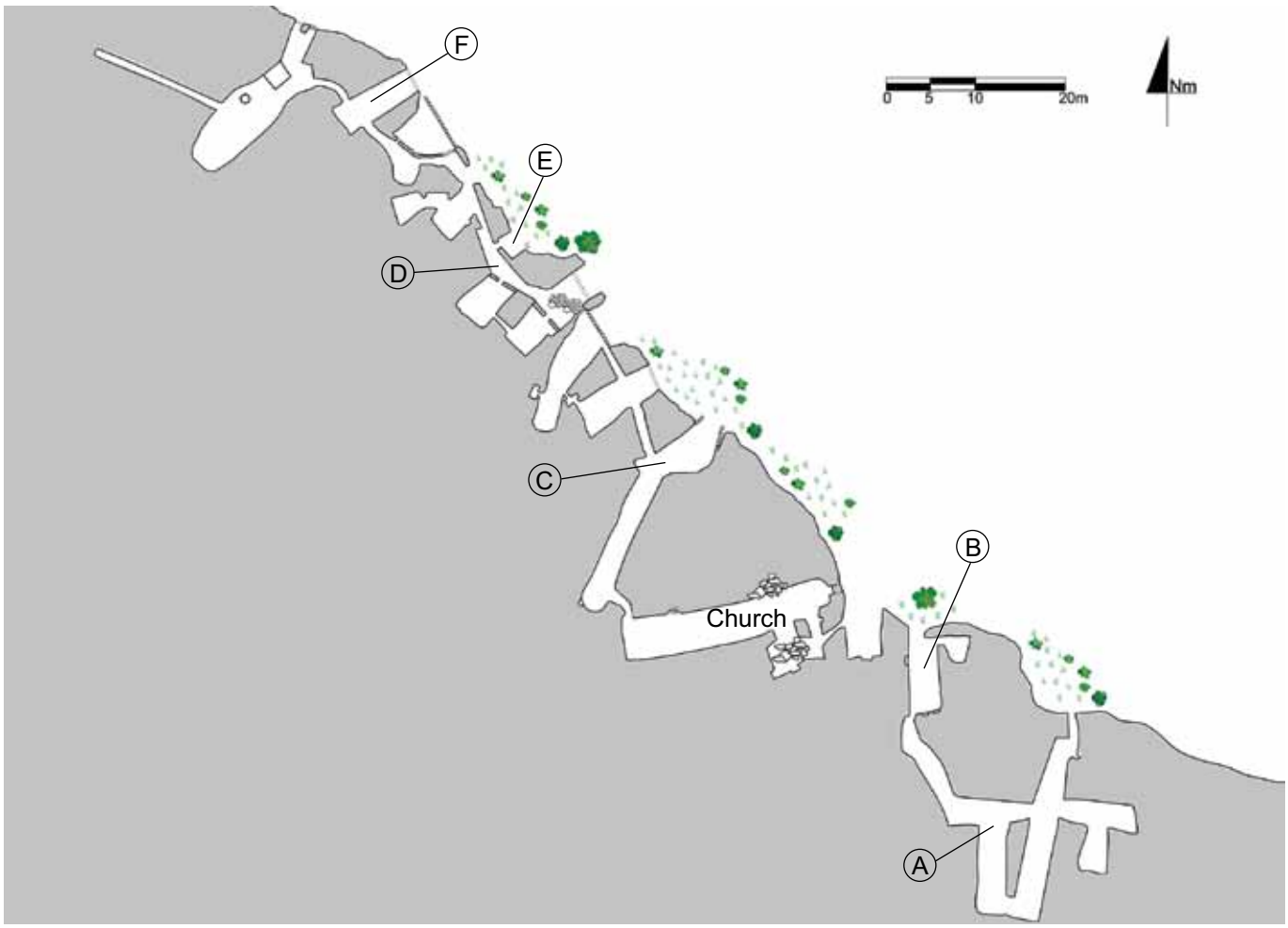

Fig. 3 – Plan of Derevank Monastery rock-cut complex (drawing H.I. Kala, A. Yamaç - January 2022).
Fig. 3 – Pianta del complesso rupestre del Monastero di Derevank (grafica H.I. Kala, A. Yamaç - gennaio 2022).

was completely excavated into soft volcanic tuff and the front of the complex, extending in the northwest-southeast direction, has a total axis length of 120 m. Apart from 12 different structures facing the valley – one of which is a church – there are also a few more chambers on the backside (fig. 3).
Derevank Monastery embodies a few different peculiarity from an architectural point of view. The first feature is that all chambers on the front and rear facades in the last part of the building, which continues to the northwest after the church, are connected by a longitudinal rock-carved internal corridor (D), more or less parallel to the profile of the external cliff. All rock-cut chambers of the backside still have doors opening to this underground corridor. The reason for such a difficult architectural practice, which is not intended for any protection, is unclear but this internal passage could be carved simply to avoid snow and cold during winter (fig.4).
In other examples such as the Subaşı Rock-cut Monastery, the necessary small passages were provided by individual short independent tunnels dug into the rocks, and the outside passage in front of the structures was used for all other connections. Of course, also in the case of the Derevank Mon-

Fig. 4 – Entrances of Derevank Monastery rock-cut complex. Harsh winters (up to 25 degree below zero), and hot summers, are probably the earliest reason that pushed the inhabitants to take advantage of the thermal inertia that characterizes the spaces excavated into the cliff (photo A. Yamaç).
Fig. 4 – Ingressi del complesso rupestre di Derevank. Inverni rigidi (sino a 25 gradi sotto zero) ed estati calde, sono verosimilmente la prima ragione che ha spinto gli abitanti a sfruttare l'inerzia termica che caratterizza gli ambienti scavati nella falesia (foto A. Yamaç).

Fig. 5 – A large basket vaulted gallery in the southeast section of Derevank Monastery (photo A. Yamaç).

Fig. 5 – Una delle ampie gallerie con "volta a paniere" del settore SE del Monastero di Derevank (foto A. Yamaç).

astery, along the facade of the cliff there is a large external path that can still be used today to reach the various entrances.

Another architectural peculiarity of the complex is the gigantic galleries located both in the southeast of the settlement and in the continuation of the church. These galleries start from the easternmost entrance of the monastery. The fact that there are no niches on the walls and no silos on the ground proves that the large galleries with basket vault, 4 m wide in places and 2.5 - 3 m ceiling height, were not used functionally. Following the first entry in the southeast, these galleries formed a triangle and continue in both directions along its long side, and are not part of the longi-

Fig. 6 – Chamber (B), view from the opening in the valley, looking south towards the back wall. The passage on the right, now closed by squared stones, was in connection with the galleries of the sector (A). Remnants of plaster on the walls can be seen (photo A. Yamaç).

Fig. 6 – Camera (B), vista dall'affaccio sulla valle, guardando a sud verso la parete di fondo. Il passaggio sulla destra, ora chiuso da pietre squadrate, era in connessione con le gallerie del settore (A). Sulle pareti sono visibili resti di intonaco (foto A. Yamaç).

Fig. 7 – Barrel vaulted Church of the Derevank Monastery: view to the east, toward the apse and the outside (photo A. Yamaç).

Fig. 7 – Chiesa del Monastero di Derevank con volta a botte: vista verso est, in direzione dell'abside e verso l'esterno (foto A. Yamaç).

tudinal rock-carved corridor we mentioned above. The reason for the carving of these galleries, which were too large to be connection tunnels is unclear (Point A in the map and fig. 5).

After a narrow passage, these galleries reach another chamber that opens to the surface and has niches on its walls (Point B in the map and fig. 6). The structure after this room and another contiguous corresponds to the church of the monastery (fig. 7). The narrow and short tunnel leading to the church is not original and apparently the church had no connection with any of these structures of the southeast.

Before our study, the only plan for the church of this monastery -as we mentioned above- was available in Sağır's thesis and article. The plan drawn by us of this church, whose interior details we measured with 46 different stations, was so different from Sağır's sketch that we simply thought there was another church in a different part of the valley (fig. 8). The church in this sketch -along with all the other monastery rock-cut buildings- is located on the west slope of the Derevank Valley, and its apse should face east. Although there is no direction arrow in Sağır's sketch, it is very clear that the rock wall and the entrance are oriented to the east and the apse is instead shown to the west.

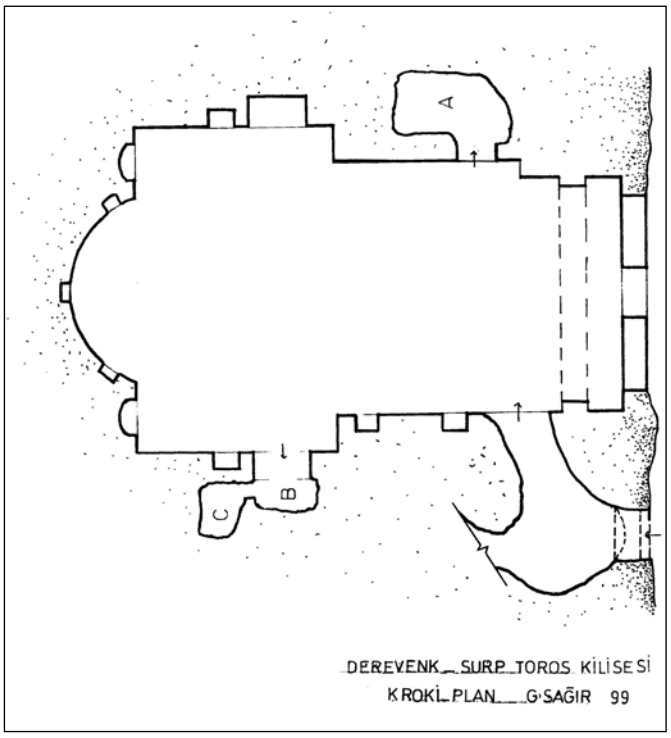

Fig. 8 – Reproduction of Sağır's 1999 sketch (without orientation and scale) of the Church of Derevank Monastery, which was wrongly referred as to Surp Toros Church (drawing after Sağır 2000).

Fig. 8 – Riproduzione dello schizzo del 1999 di Sağır (senza orientamento e scala) della chiesa del Monastero di Derevank, che è stato erroneamente attribuito alla Chiesa di Surp Toros (grafica da Sağır 2000).

If Sağır and Poghosyan are not describing another church located on the opposite slope of Derevank Valley but from the photos they have posted it seems not to be so, this sketch of the church and what they wrote about the building may not be exact. Most of the statements about this church that Sağır wrote in her thesis and article appear also incorrect.

As can be seen from our plan (fig. 3), the apse of the church is towards the east. There is a window on the upper part of the semicircular apse, whose altar has been completely destroyed. The nave is 26.5 m long and 5 m wide on average. The 3.80 m high ceiling of the nave is entirely barrel-vaulted, and the walls of both the apse and the nave are plastered, although partially spilled. Except for a few small marks on the north wall of the apse, there are no frescoes in the church. The part on the north wall of the nave, which we assume to be a chamber, is completely blocked by large blocks of rock fallen away from the ceiling. The other chamber, located on the south wall opposite this chamber, has a double connection to the nave. The outer connection tunnel of this second chamber, which opens to the surface, is not original and was excavated later - as we wrote above.

The next structure from the church to the north is another gallery–corridor whose function is uncertain. This basket vault gallery, which has one or two niches

Fig. 9 – The large straight basket vaulted gallery, 21 m long, which connects to the church (photo A. Yamaç).

Fig. 9 – La grande galleria rettilinea con volta a paniere, lunga 21 m, collegata alla chiesa (foto A. Yamaç).

on its walls, is 3.20 m wide and extends straight for 21 m (Point C in the map and fig. 9). After this gallery–corridor, the purpose of which cannot be understood, the above-mentioned "rock-carved longitudinal corridor" and chambers to the left and right begin. The architraves and jambs of entrance doors of some chambers are single-piece rock-cut basalt and stand intact (Point D in the map and fig. 10). Poghosyan makes the following comment in his article for another chamber, the front of which is completely open to the valley:

"*On the left side of the vestibule are the ruins of an intermediate room, which some authors took for a chapel, which is quite probable. This idea is prompted by several details. First, there are preserved niches both in*

Fig. 10 – The doors of the chambers along the longitudinal flat-ceiling corridor (D). One can note the walls partially composed of squared stones, as well as jambs and lintels made from monolithic blocks (photo A. Yamaç).

Fig. 10 – Le porte delle camere lungo il corridoio longitudinale a soffitto piatto (D). Si notano i muri parzialmente composti da pietre squadrate, nonché stipiti e architravi ricavati da blocchi monolitici (foto A. Yamaç).

Fig. 11 – Niches and frescoes in the chamber (E), entirely built with ashlars and a pointed (two-centered) vault, claimed to be a chapel (photo H.I. Kala).

Fig. 11 – Nicchie e affreschi nella camera (E), interamente costruita con conci e volta a sesto acuto (a due centri), che si ritiene fosse una cappella (foto H.I. Kala).

the adjacent part of the rock and in the perpendicular parts. Secondly, a vaulted roof resting on transverse walls. And finally, thirdly, the entire upper part of the described room is covered with frescoes. The fresco, located directly above the passage from the vestibule to the church, most likely depicted the two-storey school of St. Translators. Based on this, we can conclude that the frescoes are contemporary with the construction of the school building in the village of Derevank, i.e. belong to the 19th century and not earlier than the 18th century" (Poghosyan, 2018).

This paragraph is open to discussion for different reasons:

* The front façade of this chamber is completely open and there are not many wall remainings on it.
* Poghosyan does not show any reference when he says "*which some authors took for a chapel*".
* Again, niches that the author offers as supporting examples for the chapel are available in many different chambers of this complex, for example at Point B.
* The above mentioned frescoes, which are one of the most important elements of this chamber and even of the entire complex, are a subject of separate discussion. Although it is clear that all them were possibly made in the 19th century, as he states, he wrote that the masonry structure depicted in the fresco was built in Derevank Village in the early 1800s and that it is a two-story religious school named after St. Translators. We point out that the Derevank Village, which was completely rebuilt after the 1825 earthquake, has no remains of this structure today and there is no historical evidence that the two-storey building seen in this fresco is the St. Translators religious school. These frescoes, which have suffered great damage over the years, have been virtually reconstructed by Bilgin Yazlık (Point E in the map and fig. 11, fig. 12).

The ceilings of the following two chambers, which were oriented towards the valley, were partially supported by stone vaults. The valley facades of both chambers, which were probably open when they were first built, were later covered with rough squared stones (Point F in the map and fig. 13). We can think that the last

Fig. 12 – On the left, the current state of the fresco *in situ*; on the right, a virtual reconstruction (photo and drawing B. Yazlık).
Fig. 12 – A sinistra, lo stato attuale degli affreschi in situ*; a destra, una sua ricostruzione virtuale (foto e grafica B. Yazlık).*

Fig. 13 – Chamber (F) of Derevank Monastery towards the north, with a stone arch at the entrance, closed by squared stones, partially collapsed (photo A. Yamaç).
Fig. 13 – Camera (F) del Monastero di Derevank verso nord, con un arco in pietra all'ingresso, chiuso da pietre squadrate, in parte crollate (foto A. Yamaç).

chamber, located in the northwest of the Monastery, in consideration of the presence of a winepress and a silo inside, could be a kitchen. From this last room a narrow tunnel, 15 m long, leads nowhere, towards northwest: evidently there was a project to expand the settlement, stopped during the excavation for unknown reasons.

Although conflicting dates are given in different sources, there is no historical record or document about the construction date of the Derevank Monastery. Poghosyan, in his article, objects that Kevorkyan and Pabujyan write in their works published in 1992, without referring to any source, that the monastery was built in the first half of the 17th century. Alboyajian also claimed that Armenians settled in Tavlusun and Derevank in the 17th century (Pog-

hosyan, 2018). But we know that the suffix "vank" in the name Derevank came from this monastery in the valley, and both Tavlusun and Derevank villages were already in Ottoman tax registrations dated 1500 (Inbaşı, 1993).

On the other hand, we believe that the 70 cm wide and 15 m long tunnel in the last chamber we mentioned above, which was abandoned without any further excavation, was a clue about the first construction date of Derevank Monastery. This tunnel, which looks like a typical entrance of a defense shelter, is very similar to its common counterparts in Cappadocia, and it is thought that such refuges were dug by local people to protect themselves from Arab raids that attacked the region between the 7th and 11th centuries AC. After the 11th century, no shelter was excavated in the region. If this tunnel was started to be excavated for defense purposes by the residents of this monastery and it was left unfinished when it was realized that there was no need, the latest construction date of the monastery -or at least that part of the complex- may be around the 11th century.

Conclusion

Although it is mentioned in many different sources and there are even a few articles about it, our information about Derevank Monastery is extremely limited. As there is no reliable historical source and no scientific study has been done to date, we do not have any significant information about this complex at present. We are even of the opinion that, despite the name, it is debatable whether this complex was a monastery or not, when even information about the first date of construction are unfortunately uncertain. Although it does not seem possible to have a residential rock-cut complex in such a desolate place, not even the court, kitchen, or refectory, typical of the Cappadocian monasteries, seem evident in this settlement. Contrary to popular belief, "trapeza" (table and sitting places carved into the bedrock), which is thought to be a tradition in monastic refectories, is not a characteristing requisite (Ousterhout, 2010). But, in this complex, even the location of the kitchen is uncertain, let alone the refectory. On the other hand, huge galleries with uncertain functions, located south of the building, are another question mark. Therefore, Derevank Monastery needs much more detailed and scientific research than has been done so far. It is our hope and wishes that this structure, which has an extraordinary historical value, is not destroyed until the day when these detailed studies are carried out.

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- Starting from the first page, the manuscript must include: italian title(Arial 24 pt), english title (Arial 9 pt), name and surname of Authors (Century schoolbook *italic* 12 pt), address and affiliation of Authors (Century schoolbook 9 pt), extended abstract in italian (Arial 9 pt), abstract in english (Arial 9 pt), key words (in italian and english) (Arial 9 pt).
- The manuscript written in english must be preceeded by an english abstract and an extended italian abstract (maximum length 1,000 spaces).
- The title must be written in Arial 24 pt, left alignment. The 1st order sub-titles must not be numbered, and must be written in Arial bold 12 pt, left alignment; the 2nd order sub-titles must be written in Arial 12 pt, left alignment.
- All the figures must be cited in the text, numbered progressively in Arab numbers between brackets (Fig. 1, Tab. 1). In the context of a sentence, the figure may also be indicated as: ... in figure ...
- Notes must be placed as footnotes.
- References in the text must be indicated Century schoolbook 10 pt between brackets, as follows: Author, year (separated by a comma). In case of more works, these must be indicated in chronological order, separated by a semi-colon (i.e. Bianchi & Rossi, 1999; Verdi et al., 2000). Multiple articles by the same Author, published in the same year, must be indicated with lower case letters after the year (i.e.: Bianchi 1999a; Bianchi 1999b).
- In case of long and repeated names in text, these must be fully indicated when cited the first time, and followed by its acronym between brackets, as in the following example: Tufo Giallo Napoletano (TGN). The acronym will be used in the following text.
- Cardinal points must be fully indicated in lower case letters (i.e.: north, east south east from Rome). Directions must be indicated in upper case letters (i.e.: N-S; ESE-WNW).
- Measurement units must belong to the International System (km, m, cm, mm); in case of ancient measurement units, the equivalent metric unit must be shown between brackets.
- Authors are responsible of the manuscript sent for publication, also as regards copyright of pictures and drawings.

Acknowledgements
- Acknowledgements at the end of the text must be preceeded by the word **Acknowledgements** in Arial Bold, 10 pt, left alignment.

References
- The reference list must include all the references cited in the text.
- Articles in preparation cannot be cited, whilst articles effectively in press (already accepted for publication) may be cited.
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- The figures must be numbered progressively, and accompanied by the english and italian captions.
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- All the maps and topographic surveys must present a metric scale, and indication of North.
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- The italian caption use Arial 9 pt, for the english caption use Arial Italic 9 pt

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