

# ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

## BACKGROUND, CURRENT STANDING & PERSPECTIVES



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**TITLE OF THE PRESENTATION**

**"ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH: BACKGROUND, CURRENT STANDING,  
AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES"**

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**VENUE**

**UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG**

**DATE OF THE REPORT**

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**PURPOSE**

- CONDUCT A COMPREHENSIVE, INTEGRATED, AND OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE BACKGROUND OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH.**
- IDENTIFY THE CAUSES OF CRISIS PHENOMENA AND PROPOSE SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS THEM.**



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\*ETCHMIADZIN CATHEDRAL IS THE OLDEST LEGALIZED CHURCH IN THE WORLD, WAS BUILT BETWEEN 301 & 303

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# ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

## Ancient Oriental Orthodox

### Historical Overview



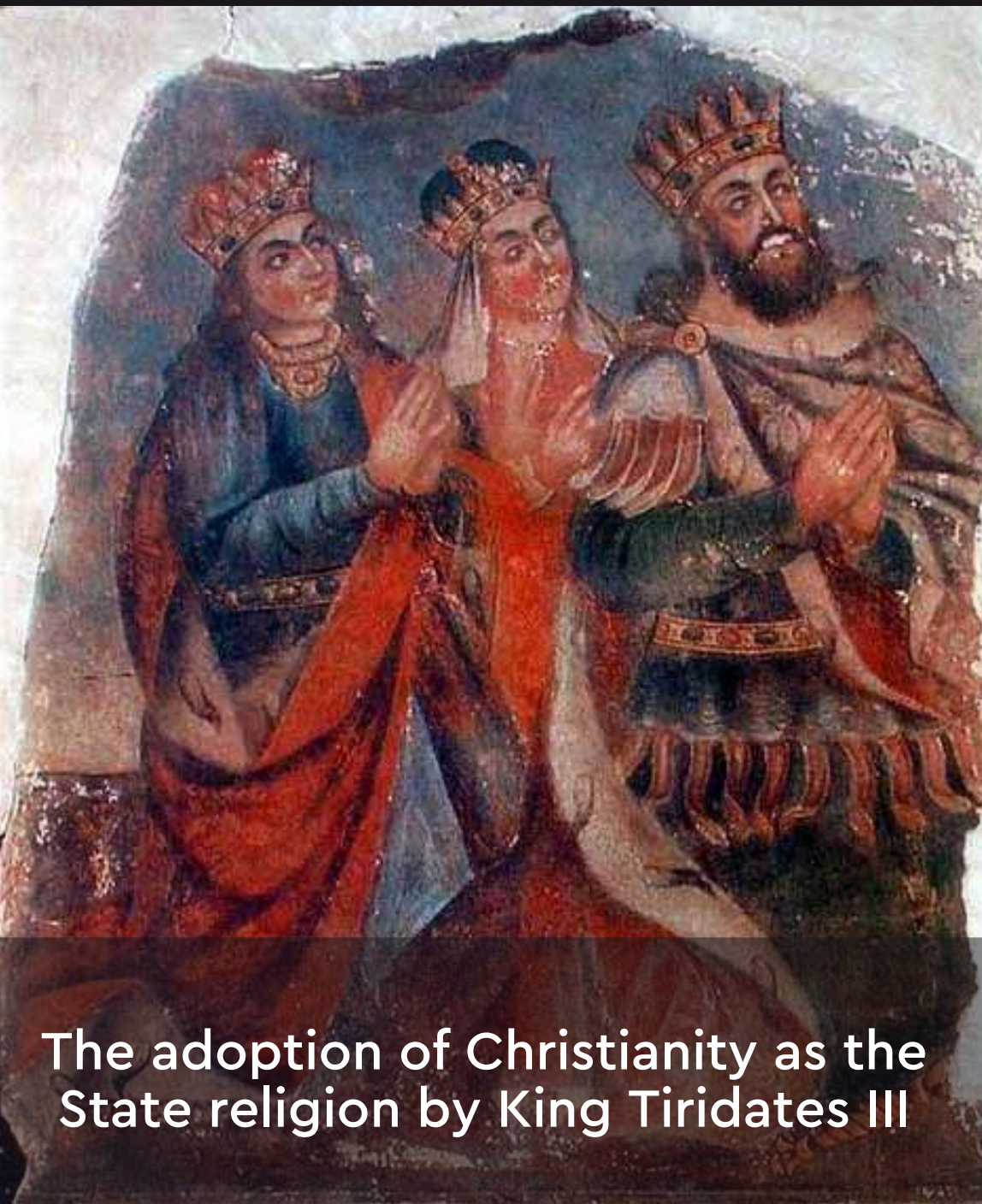
Bartholomew the Apostle  
Martyred in Armenia  
Holds the Spear of Longinus



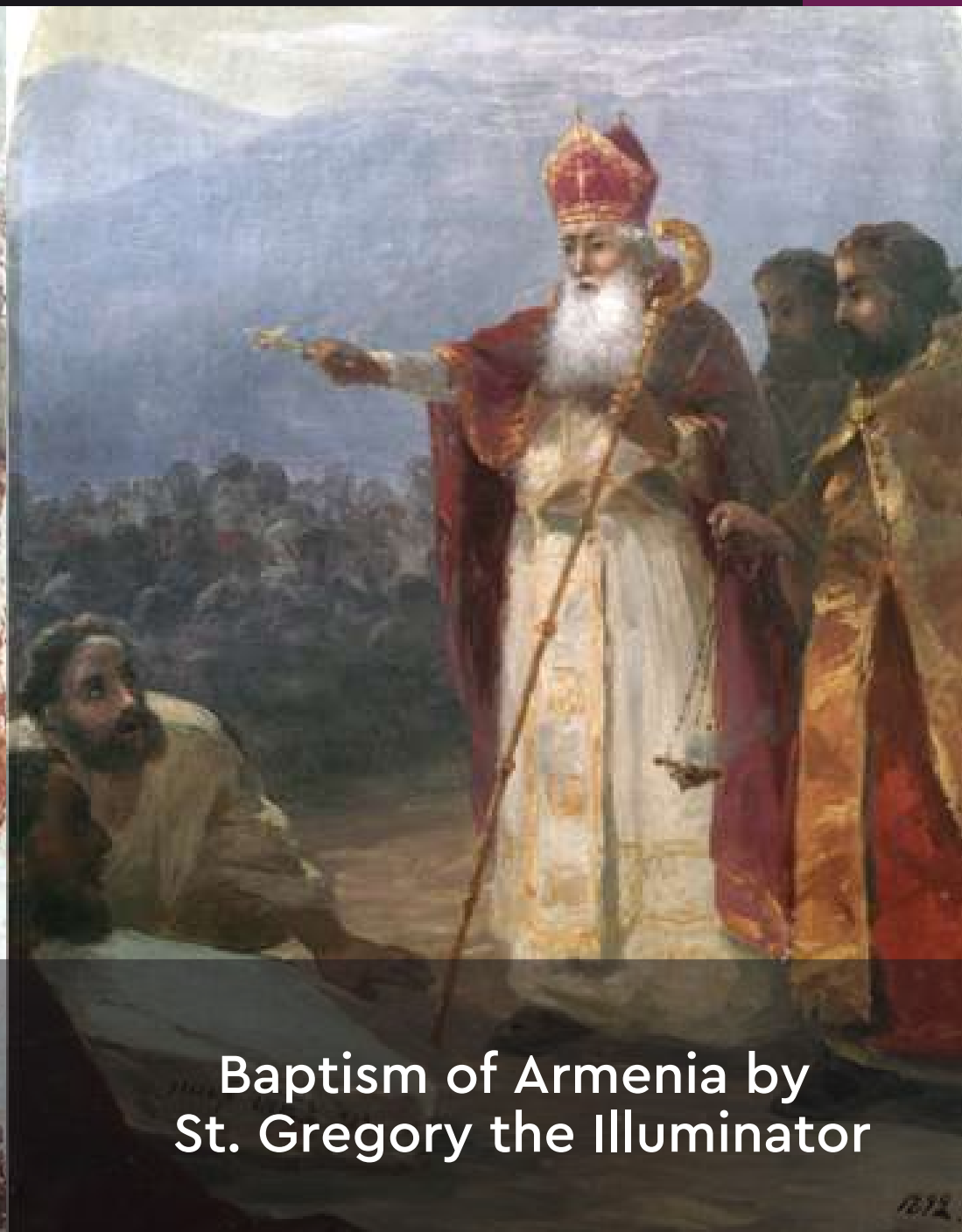
Armenian King of Edessa Abgar V (50 AD)  
Holding the mandylion, the image of Christ



Thaddeus the Apostle  
Martyred in Armenia



The adoption of Christianity as the State religion by King Tiridates III



Baptism of Armenia by St. Gregory the Illuminator



\*THE IMAGE OF EDESSA (MANDYLION) IS THE IMAGE OF THE FACE OF JESUS CHRIST (NOW LOCATED IN GENOA)

# 2

## ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH Period: Missionary Historical Overview



**Saint Miniatus (250 AD)**  
The first martyr of Florence



**Saint Servatius (384 AD)**  
The first Bishop of the Netherlands & Belgium



**Saint Blaise (316 AD)**  
Bishop of Sebastea



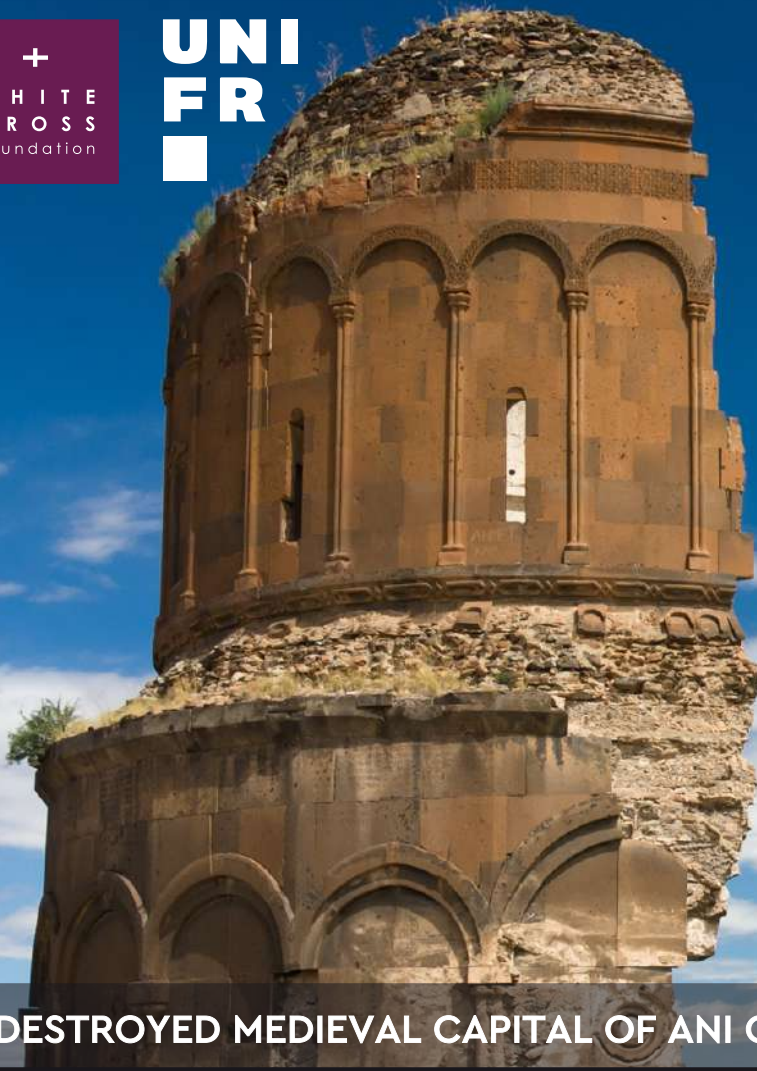
San Davino Armeno (1050)  
Saint of Lucca, Tuscany, Italy



Anna Porphyrogenita (1011)  
Byzantine princess  
Grand princess consort of Kievan Rus



Petros, Abraham, Stepanos (1056)  
Christian missionaries in Iceland



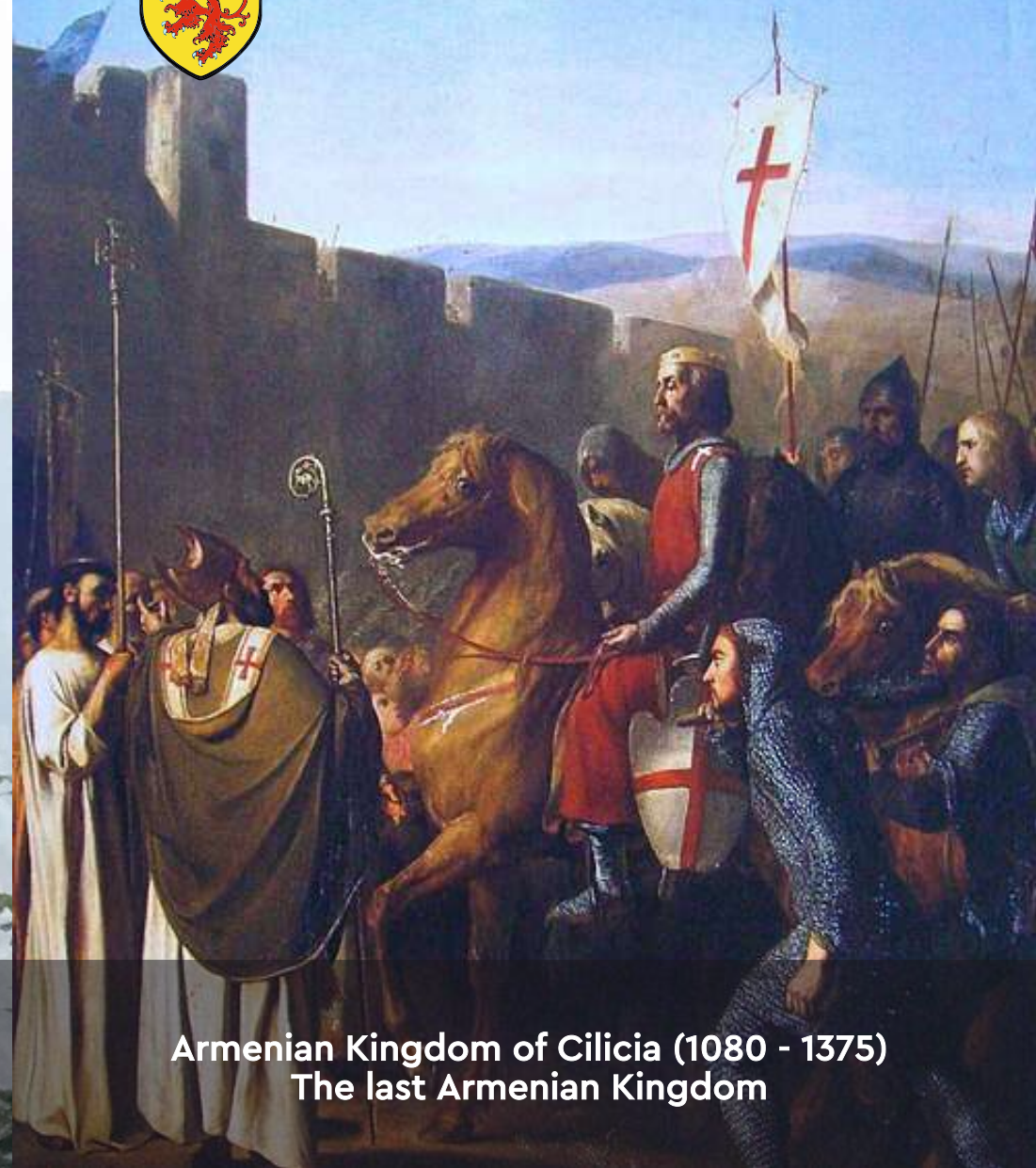
\*THE DESTROYED MEDIEVAL CAPITAL OF ANI OF THE ARMENIAN KINGDOM, THE CITY OF 1001 CHURCHES

# 3

## ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH Period: Armenian Kingdoms & Islamic Rule



Bagratid Armenia Kingdom (885 - 1045)  
Medieval Armenian Kingdom



Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia (1080 - 1375)  
The last Armenian Kingdom



Arab Caliphate (639 - 885)  
Conquest



Persian Empire (1502 - 1828)  
Oppression and dependence



Ottoman Empire (1453 - 1917)  
Genocide, Destruction

## San Lazzaro degli Armeni



San Lazzaro degli Armeni is a small island in the Venetian Lagoon which has been home to the monastery of the Mekhitarists, an Armenian Catholic congregation, since 1717. It is one of the two primary centers of the Armenian Diaspora, along with the monastery in Vienna.



Church of St. Gregory  
of Armenia

\*THE SAINT BASIL'S CATHEDRAL OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH ON RED SQUARE, WAS BUILT IN 1561

# 4

## ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH Period: Russian Empire Historical Overview



\*The painting depicts the moment when the Catholic Mkrtych I throws the decree of the Russian Tsar on the floor.

- The term “Gregorian” was coined in the Russian Empire in relation to the Armenian Church in the 19th century, after the annexation of eastern Armenia.
- This term was used to diminish the status of the Church by focusing on Gregory the Illuminator rather than on its apostolic origins.
- On June 12, 1903, the Russian Empire confiscated the property of the Armenian Church and prohibited Armenian schools.
- Catholicos Mkrtych I Khrimian instructed the Armenian clergy to reject both the Tsar's decree and Stolypin's decree, which mandated that all ceremonies be conducted in Russian.
- At the Catholicos's urging, the Armenian people rose in resistance.
- On August 1, 1905, Tsar Nicholas II signed a decree that returned the confiscated property to the Armenian Church.

- The Armenian Church became dependent on state regulation of the Russian Empire.
- Using basic theological differences between the Armenian and Orthodox Churches to limit the rights of the Armenian Apostolic Church.
- The influence even extended to Church service, when Armenian altars began to be covered with iconostases, as was the case in the Russian Church.
- In particular, the architecture of some Armenian churches changed under the influence of imperial Orthodox architecture.





CATHOLICOS GEVORG V BLESSES ARMENIAN SOLDIERS TO DEFEND THEIR HOMELAND, ON THE EVE OF BATTLE 1918

# 5

## ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH Period: First Republic Historical Overview



St. Ignatius Maloyan (1915)  
He was martyred by Turks  
Canonized in 2025 by Pope Leo XIV



Holy Martyrs of the  
Armenian Genocide  
Canonized in 2014



Diana Apar  
Philanthropist, Diplomat  
Not yet Canonized



\*SAINT PAUL & PETER CHURCH, 5TH CENTURY. WAS DEMOLISHED IN 1930 & THE MOSCOW CINEMA WAS BUILT

# 6

## ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH Period: Soviet Union Historical Overview



In total about 67 Armenian  
clergymen were killed  
by the Soviets



Catholicos Khoren I  
was killed by KGB  
in 1938



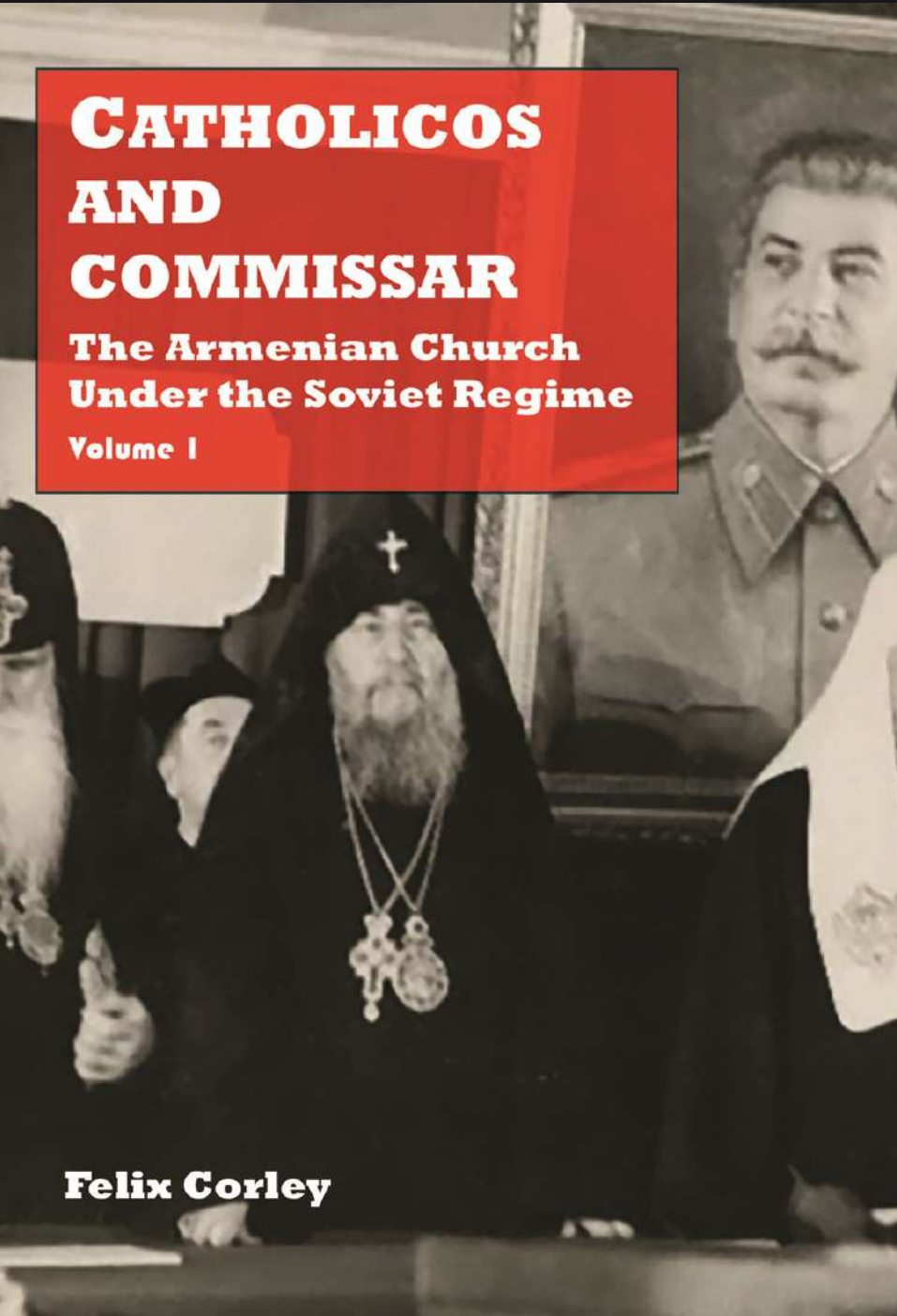
Bullet marks left by the  
Soviets on the Church's  
facade in Yerevan



## CATHOLICOS AND COMMISSAR

The Armenian Church  
Under the Soviet Regime

Volume I



Felix Corley

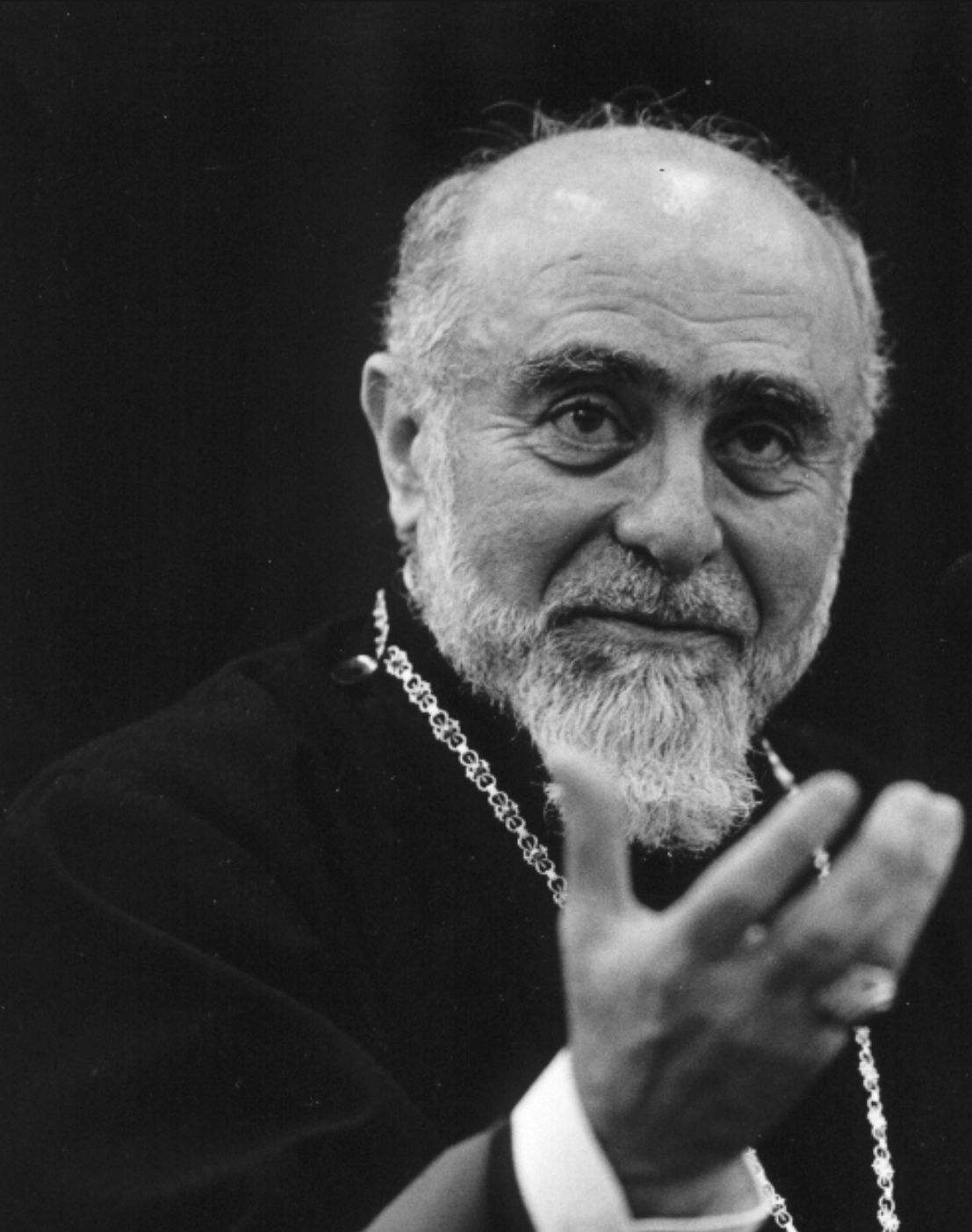
## TOOL OF INFLUENCE ABROAD

- In 1920, the process of Sovietization of the Armenian Church and society began.
- In 1932, the Armenian Church lost its religious and political independence.
- In 1946, the communists decided to cease the destruction of religious practices and instead bring them under their control.
- Tool of influence through the Armenian diaspora in Europe.
- Control over the Church was handed over to the KGB, making the Armenian Church a dependent institution under the atheistic communist leadership.



\*THE BEGINNING OF THE FORMATION OF AN INDEPENDENT STATE AND AN INDEPENDENT CHURCH IN 1991

# 7 ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH Period: Independence Historical Overview



## CATHOLICOS KAREKIN I

- Garegin I was a highly educated individual with extensive international experience.
- Graduated from Oxford University
- Served as the Cilician Catholicos for 18 years before becoming the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin.
- Made significant contributions to the national, religious, and cultural development of the Armenian diaspora.
- Strengthened inter-church and interfaith relationships and played a leadership role in several international organizations.
- Significantly contributed to revitalizing church life, strengthening Christian traditions.





\*THE BIBLICAL MOUNT ARARAT IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SYMBOLS OF ARMENIA, A SYMBOL OF NOAH



# ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

## Perspectives

### Overview

Stalin's largest monument, facing the biblical Mount Ararat, is now the Mother Armenia monument.

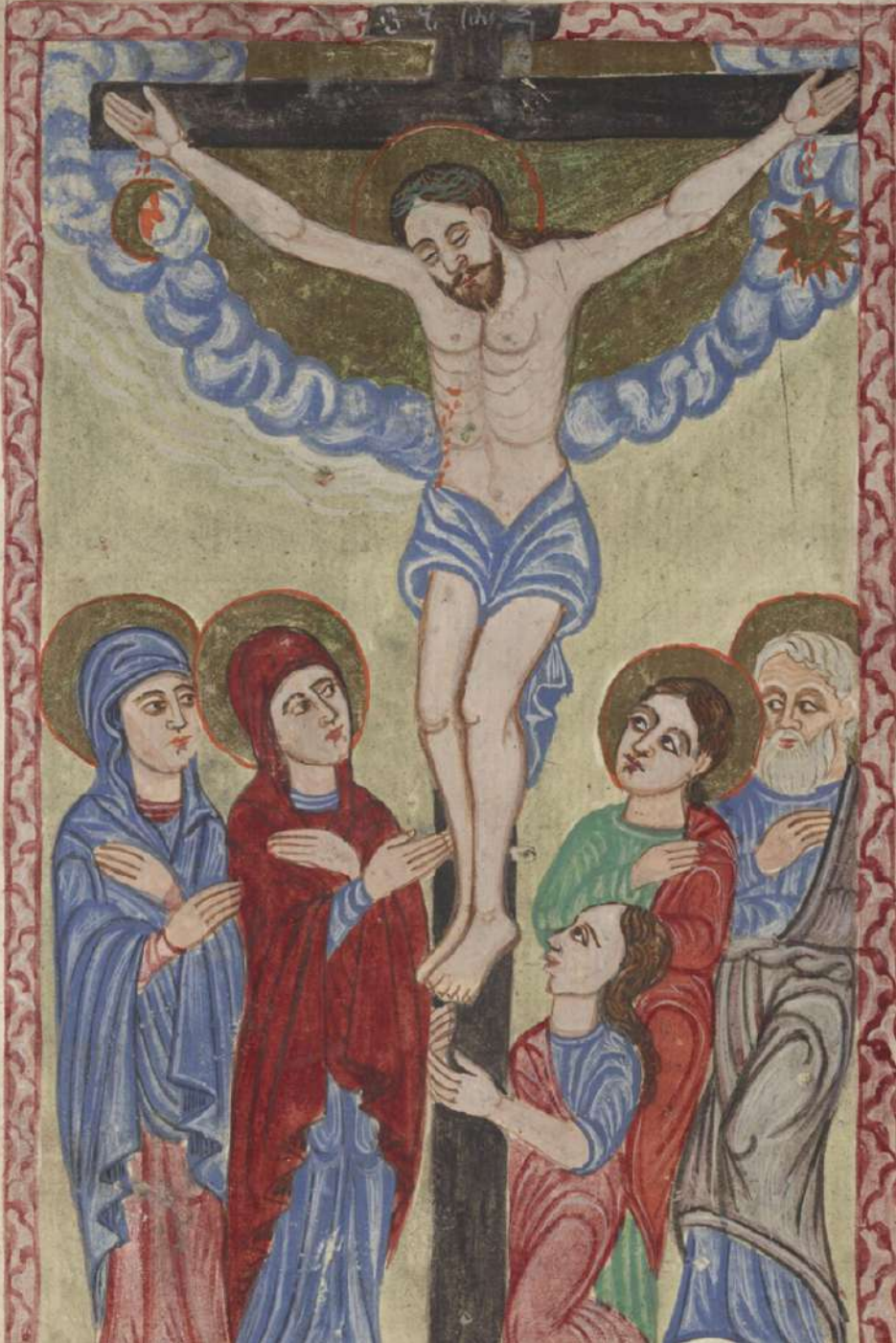


■ Decommunization of the Church involves cleansing church life of its Soviet ideological legacy, removing Soviet symbols, reinterpreting history and moving away from the glorification of Soviet figures. ■ This approach should be broader process of systematic decommunization in Armenia, including the restitution of property rights.

## ALEXANDER MEN

- The concept of new evangelization was central to the ministry of Russian Archpriest Alexander Men.
- Not increasing the number of believers but on achieving a profound spiritual awakening in the country.
- There is a strong desire among people to understand the truths of the Gospel.
- **New Evangelization:** A return to the foundations of Christianity.
- **Culture as a Path to God:** the Churching of people through culture and education.
- **The meaning of life:** To address the "eternal questions" regarding life's purpose





## FORWARD TO THE FATHERS

- The Armenian Church must liberate itself from its historical limitations while using its history as a foundational support.
- It should also seek independence, particularly from external political influences.
- The phrase "Forward to the fathers," coined by Florovsky, well encapsulates this idea.
- The Church should prioritize evangelization and decommunization for spiritual growth.
- Emphasizing systematic theology and humanities education will unlock the immense potential for faith and spiritual revival.



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