



## Architecture at the Foot of Mount Ararat (AĞRI)

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### Abstract

Mount Ararat (Ağrı) is a dormant volcano in the far east of Türkiye. It is an invaluable natural resource that generates life to such an extent that it can be considered the 'mother of Armenia'. No nation in the world has identified its being with one mountain to such an extent as the Armenians do with Ararat. Looking at life in Armenia, this is completely rational since Ararat provides water for Armenian rivers, fertile volcanic soil and inexhaustible amounts of volcanic stone for construction. The empirical dimensions of Ararat are superimposed on the legend (which is also mentioned in the Holy Books - the Bible and the Qur'an) according to which Ararat was the last refuge of Prophet Noah (Noah), his family, his chosen friends (believers) and several domestic animals during the great flood. This paper is one of a series of the Author's works (university textbooks, scientific books, studies, scientific papers) in which the Author tests his theory "Architecturally defined space".

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### 1. Introduction

Mount Ararat (Ağrı) forms almost a quadripoint between Turkey, Iran, Armenia and the Nakhchivan enclave of Azerbaijan (Geographic coordinates: 39°42'24.91"N, 44°17'38.36"E, Elevation: 5137 m). The Iranian-Turkish border stretches east of Little Ararat. The Turkish name of Mount Ağrı (Ağrı Dağı; Ottoman Turkish: اعر طاع, Romanized: Āğır Ṭāğ) has been known since the late Middle Ages. Ağrı means 'pain' or 'sorrow' in Turkish, and the name translates as 'mountain of pain' or 'painful mountain', suggesting the difficulty of the climb. According to official Turkish sources, it is derived from the earlier name 'Ağır Dağ' which translates as 'heavy mountain'. The Kurdish name of the mountain is 'Çiyayê Agirî', which translates as 'mountain of fire'. From the 16th century until 1828, the mountain range was part of the Ottoman-Persian border; the summit of Greater Ararat and the northern slopes, along with the eastern slopes of Lesser Ararat, were under Persian control. After the Russo-Persian War of 1826–1828 and the Treaty of Turkmenchay, the territory under Persian control was ceded to the Russian Empire. Lesser Ararat became the point where the Turkish, Persian, and Russian imperial borders met<sup>[1]</sup>. The current international borders were formed during the 20th century. The mountain came under Turkish control during the Turkish invasion of Armenia in 1920. It formally became part of Turkey under the Treaties of Moscow and Kara from 1921<sup>[2]</sup>. In the late 1920s, Turkey crossed the Iranian border and occupied the eastern flank of Little Ararat as part of its efforts to quell the Kurdish rebellion on Ararat, during which Kurdish rebels used the area as a safe haven from the Turkish state. Iran eventually agreed to cede the area to Turkey in a territorial exchange. According to legend, Mount Ararat is the site of two of the most important events in the history of mankind. In the holy land of Eden, which Armenian legend places at its foot, the first human life was born; and on its lonely summit the last human life was saved from the all-gathering flood. The extraordinary geographical position of Mount Ararat seems to justify the Armenian view that it is the center of the world. It is on the longest line running through the Old World from the Cape of Good Hope to the Bering Strait; it also lies on the line of great deserts and inland seas which extends from Gibraltar to Lake Baikal in Siberia—a line of continuous depressions; it is equidistant from the Black and Caspian Seas and the Mesopotamian Plain, whose three basins are now fed by three distinct river systems that rise in the immediate vicinity of Mount Ararat. No other region has

seen or heard so much of human history. In its somber presence, empires have come and gone; cities have risen and fallen; human life has soared on the wings of hope and crashed against the rocks of despair. The mountain was not called Ararat until the Middle Ages; early Armenian historians believed that the biblical Ararat was located in Corduena <sup>[3]</sup>. It is known in European languages as Ararat, however, none of the indigenous peoples traditionally called it by that name. Ultimately, Ararat is the biblical Hebrew name for the Iron Age kingdom of Urartu <sup>[4]</sup>. Urartu, the Assyrian/Babylonian name of the kingdom, was suggested by Archibald Henry Sayce (1845-1933) to mean 'plateau' <sup>[5]</sup>. Ayrarat, a central province of ancient Armenia, is associated with the same name. Robert William Thomson (1822–1873) suggested that the mountain was called Ararat "out of confusion with Ayrarat, the name of the province" <sup>[6]</sup>. Most Christians, including most of Western Christianity <sup>[7]</sup>, identifies Mount Ararat with the biblical mountains of Ararat "mainly because it would have been the first peak to emerge from the receding flood waters". In an 1878 article for the Royal Geographical Society, James Bryce (1838-1922) wrote that Noah's ark came to rest on "a mountain in the region known to the Hebrews as Ararat or Armenia," and added that the biblical writer must have had Mount Ararat in mind because it is "so much higher, more conspicuous, and more magnificent than any other peak in Armenia" <sup>[8]</sup>. In pre-Christian Armenian mythology, where Zoroastrianism dominated, mountains like Ararat were sacred <sup>[9]</sup>. Folklore said that the Vishapi, mythological dragon-like creatures who live in Ararat and Aragats, fight every two years, "perhaps inspired by the traditional rivalry believed to exist between the two volcanic peaks themselves" <sup>[9]</sup>. In Europe, the mountain has been called Ararat since the Middle Ages, as it has come to be identified with the "Mountains of Ararat" described in the Bible as the resting place of Noah's Ark, despite the claim that Genesis 8:4 does not specifically refer to Mount Ararat. Although it lies outside the borders of modern Armenia, the mountain is a major national symbol of Armenia and is considered a sacred mountain by Armenians. It features prominently in Armenian literature and art, and is

an icon of Armenian nationalism. It is depicted on the coat of arms of Armenia along with Noah's Ark. This paper is one of a series of the Author's works (university textbooks, scientific books, studies, scientific papers) in which the Author tests his theory "Architecturally defined space" <sup>[10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23]</sup>. With the same goal, the author visited many cities: in the Balkans <sup>[24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34,35,36,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45,46,47]</sup>, in Europe <sup>[48,49,50,51,52,53,54,55,56]</sup>, in the Mediterranean <sup>[57,58,59,60,61,62,63]</sup> and in Asia <sup>[64,65,66,67,68,69,70,71,72,73,74,75,76,77,78,79,80]</sup>. When he was in his second year of studies (1978), the Author came across a book by Kevin Andrew Lynch (1918-1984) entitled "The Image of the City" (1960) and was delighted with its contents. At that time, he also wrote a student paper entitled "Image of the Sarajevo City" which delighted his professor Aleksander Trumic. Since the Author traveled a lot, he always tried to "capture" an image of a city and memorize it. The Tomb of the Prophet Noah (Turkish: Hz. Nuh Türbesi) in Cizre, Turkey, is located in the courtyard of the Nebi Nuh Mosque and serves as a significant, albeit symbolic, pilgrimage site believed by local tradition to be the final resting place of Noah (Nuh) and his family. The site contains a restored mausoleum with a wooden sarcophagus, which is often visited along the nearby Cudi Mountain, a candidate for the landing site of the Ark. Cizre is historically associated with the aftermath of the flood. The nearby village of Heştan is believed to be where 80 survivors established their settlement, and Şırnak itself is often interpreted as "Noah's City" (Shahr-i Nuh). The tomb has a large, covered sarcophagus. The site was restored by the Noah Nebi Building and Surviving Association. Although locally revered and historically mentioned by travelers such as Evlija Celebi, the tomb is considered a cenotaph (symbolic monument) rather than a confirmed burial site, as multiple sites throughout the Middle East claim to contain Noah's remains. The location is near Cudi Mountain (Cudi Dağ), which is identified in Islamic tradition as the landing place of the Ark. Other traditional sites for Noah's tomb include Nakhchivan in Azerbaijan and Al-Karak in Jordan <sup>[81]</sup> (Figs 1,2).



Source: <https://www.bismilhaber.com.tr/sirnakin-gezilecek-tarihi-ve-dogal-guzellikleri>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Fig 1:** Prophet Noah Mosque (Turkish: Hz. Nuh Cami) in Cizre, Turkiye



Source: <https://kulturenvanteri.com/en/yer/hz-nuh-makami/>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

Source: <https://www.bismilhaber.com.tr/sirnakin-gezilecek-tarihi-ve-dogal-guzellikleri>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Fig 2:** Noah's Tomb (Turkish: Hz. Nuh Türbesi) in Cizre, Türkiye

## 2. Natural reSources and sights

Mount Ararat (officially Mount Ağrı) or also known as Masis, is a snowy and dormant complex volcano in the far east of Turkey. It consists of two main volcanic cones: Greater Ararat and Lesser Ararat [82]. Greater Ararat is the highest peak in Turkey and the Armenian Plateau with an elevation of 5137 m; the elevation of Lesser Ararat is 3896 m [83]. The Ararat massif is about 35 km wide at its base. The first recorded attempts to summit Ararat were made in the Middle Ages, and Friedrich Parrot (1791–1841), Khachatur Abovian (1809–1848) and four others made the first recorded ascent in 1829. Mount Ararat is a polygenetic, complex stratovolcano. It covers an area of 1,100 km<sup>2</sup> and is the largest volcanic structure in the region. Along its long axis, which runs from northwest to southeast, Mount Ararat is about 45 km long, and along its short axis about 30 km. It consists of about 1,150 km<sup>3</sup> of dacite and rhyolite pyroclastic debris and dacite, rhyolite and basaltic lavas [83]. Some religions believe that Mount Ararat is the place where Noah's Ark came to rest after the Flood described in the Bible. The connection between Noah's Ark and Mount Ararat dates back to the 11th century AD. Mount Ararat is also sacred to Armenians, some of whom believe that their ancestors were the first people to appear after the Flood. There was once a village on the slopes of Mount Ararat, where some believe Noah built an altar. Above the village, a monastery was built for St. Jacob in honor of his many efforts to climb the summit of Mount Ararat while searching for the Ark. An eruption in 1840 resulted in a landslide that destroyed the city and monastery and killed at least 1,600 people.

Yerevan has a cold semi-arid climate (type BSk, according to the Köppen-Geiger climate classification), characterized by long, hot, dry summers and short, cold, snowy winters. Summers (June–September) are very hot, sunny, and dry, with temperatures often reaching 30°C–40°C. Winters (December–March) are cold and often snowy, with temperatures sometimes dropping to -20°C. Spring and autumn are mild but short. The Ararat Plain, where Yerevan is located, has a climate characterized by hot summers and low rainfall, which places it in the category of dry continental climate, transitioning to cold steppe [84]. Doğubayazıt, located in eastern Turkey, has a cold semi-arid climate (type BSk according to the Köppen-Geiger climate classification), which often transitions to a humid continental climate due to its high altitude and inland location. Winters are icy and snowy, with temperatures often falling below 0°C. Summers

are warm to hot, dry, and clear. Temperatures can range from -9°C in winter to 29°C in summer. The average annual rainfall is about 665 mm. The wettest month is usually May, while September is the driest. The city's climate is strongly influenced by its location on a plain surrounded by high mountains, including Mount Ararat [85]. The area at the foot of Mount Ararat is known as the Ararat Valley or Aras Plain, which serves as the main agricultural center of the region. The valley is located at the foot of the 5,137-meter-high Greater Ararat and the 3,896-meter-high Lesser Ararat, on the border with Armenia and Turkey. Known for its rich agricultural production, the area is filled with apple, cherry, and plum trees in spring. The foothills are mainly characterized by grassy pastures, steppe vegetation, and rocky terrain, with sparse forest patches. The area is biologically diverse, with fossil evidence indicating that the area had palm fronds in past geological periods, suggesting a warmer, coastal climate in ancient times. The Durupinar site, a 162-meter-long ship-shaped formation that some often associate with Noah's Ark, is located near the mountain at an elevation of approximately 2,000 meters. The surrounding mountains (e.g. Mount Ilkassar) contain unique and rare alpine plant species. The lower slopes and plains are dominated by grassy vegetation, especially in spring.

Mount Ararat has a foothills that are located at an altitude of approximately 600–900 meters above sea level. The surrounding foothills, especially on the Aras River plain, are arid but support a diverse fauna, including Anatolian ground squirrels, various reptiles (such as Strauch's runner) and numerous bird species. The region is particularly home to Anatolian ground squirrels, which prefer dry areas. Other mammals found in the surrounding steppes and rocky areas include wolves, foxes and various rodents. The plains around the foothills of Mount Ararat and the Aras Valley contain specific reptile species, such as *Eremias strauchi* (Strauch's runner) and other lizard species. The area serves as a habitat for many birds, especially near the wetlands and water Sources of the National Park. The middle zones and foothills (1500–3300 meters) are used for grazing, with sheep and goats, with minimal forest areas. The lower areas and foothills are mostly arid and sparsely vegetated, with a few birch groves on Little Ararat. The area is mostly treeless, with rocky ridges and grassy pastures. The surrounding area is protected within the Ararat National Park, which is known for its rich biodiversity (Figs 3,4).



*Source:* <https://araratours.com/mount-ararat-info>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

*Source:* <https://www.mitchellk-photos.com/photo-diary/2015/10/15/mount-ararat-sheep-crossing-and-the-welcoming-kurds>  
Accessed: May 11, 2026.

*Source:* <https://exploreatolia.com/mount-ararat-turkey-travel/>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

*Source:* [https://leonmauldin.blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/ararat\\_dsc\\_9650lmauldin.png](https://leonmauldin.blog/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/ararat_dsc_9650lmauldin.png), Accessed: May 11, 2026.

*Source:* <https://www.airpano.com/360article/armenia-1/>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

**Fig 3:** Mount Ararat







**Source:** <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/mount-ararat-home-to-rare-species-squirrels-131686>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Source:** <https://www.worldatlas.com/mountains/mount-ararat.html>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Source:** <https://depositphotos.com/photos/ararat-mountains-in-turkey.html>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Source:** <https://en.elamusplass.ee/reisikalender/ararat2024>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Source:** <https://www.vaildaily.com/news/ground-squirrels-eagle-county/>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Fig:** Flora and fauna at the foot of Mount Ararat

The Ararat region (Armenia/Ararat Valley) relies on groundwater, natural springs, and snowmelt, although these are currently overexploited. It is a major agricultural center with vineyards, orchards, and high-value crops (Figs 5,6). The area is rich in volcanic deposits, including basalt, tufa, marble, agate, and obsidian. The region is home to gold and silver deposits. Located on the fertile Ararat Plain, the province contributes 15% of Armenia's total annual agricultural output. About 75% (1,567 km<sup>2</sup>) of the province's total area is arable land. Orchards mainly produce grapes, apricots, and peaches. Other products include pears, apples, melons, watermelons, eggplants, grains, and dried seeds.

Ararat is among the leading wine-producing provinces of Armenia in terms of grape cultivation and wine exports (along with Ararat and Vayots Dzor provinces). The province's irrigation infrastructure is quite developed. About 90% of agricultural land is irrigated, mainly by canals opened from the Vedi and Azat rivers. The village of Geghanist has a specialized plant for the production of fertilizers and the design of irrigation systems. The province has 2 large poultry farms in the village of Kaghtsrashen and the town of Masis. Recently, fish farming has developed significantly in the province. The largest fish farming ponds are located near the village of Armash.



**Source:** <https://www.magnific.com/free-photos-vectors/ararat-valley>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Fig 5:** Ararat valley

Ararat National Park (Turkish: Ağrı Dağı Milli Parkı) is located in eastern Turkey, near the borders with Iran, Armenia, and the exclave of Azerbaijan (Fig 6). Mount Ararat, also known as Mount Ağrı, is a dormant snow-capped volcano and the park's main feature. Some Christians and religious historians believe that this peak is the place where Noah's Ark came to rest after the Flood described in the Bible. There are 12 named peaks in the park, the highest and most prominent of which is Mount Ararat (5,137 m). The human history of the area dates back to the nearby city of Yerevan. People have inhabited the region since the eighth century BC, making Yerevan one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Historians call the Armenian Plateau the "Epicenter of the Iron Age" because some of the first metallurgy occurred in the region around 2000 BC. King Argishti I of Urartu founded the Erebuni Fortress in 782 BC, marking the earliest recorded history in present-day Yerevan. Erebuni served as the military, political, and economic center of Urartu and continued to exist after the fall of Urartu. Various empires and groups ruled the Armenian Highlands over the following centuries. The Seljuk Turks arrived in the highlands around 1040, eventually conquering most of the peninsula. This rapid expansion culminated in the creation of

the Ottoman Empire in 1299. Karluk and Kharazmi peoples began to settle in the region during the 13th century as the Mongol Empire advanced. The Safavids brought the highlands under Iranian rule in 1502, followed by the Ottoman Turks in 1514. Shortly thereafter, in 1516, all of present-day Armenia fell under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. Numerous wars raged over the region as the Iranian Safavids and the Ottoman Empire fought for control. After World War I, the Sykes–Picot Agreement led to the partition of the Ottoman Empire. Its former territory now encompasses parts of Turkey, Iran, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Turkey established Ararat National Park in 2004<sup>[86]</sup>. Despite the annual snowfall within the park, the surrounding area receives minimal rainfall, making it difficult for many plant species to grow. The plateau and foothills in the park are populated by low grasses and shrubs. Common plant species include white rose, red clover, wild clover, wild vetch, foxtail, wild barley, rye, and wheat. Small forest patches often support populations of spruce, hornbeam, and birch. The Süphan lizard, which is endemic to Turkey, can be found in the park. Other animals in the park include the Apollo butterfly, bearded vulture, spotted partridge, rock badger, wild boar, wild sheep, fox, wolf, and hare<sup>[86]</sup>.



Source: <https://peakvisor.com/park/mount-ararat-national-park.html>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

**Fig 6:** Mount Ararat National Park

### 3. Architectural cultural and historical heritage

The architecture at the foot of Mount Ararat is characterized by a mixture of ancient, religiously significant sites in Armenia and opulent Ottoman-Persian buildings in Turkey. Key examples include the 4th-century Khor Virap Monastery (Armenia) and the 17th-century İshak Pasha Palace (Turkey), which demonstrate the area's deep religious history and strategic, multicultural crossroads. Khor Virap Monastery (Armenia) is located in the Ararat Plain, an iconic monastery known for its dramatic backdrop of Mount Ararat. It has great spiritual significance as the place where Saint Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned, marking the point from which Christianity spread to Armenia. İshak Pasha Palace (Turkey) is a 17th-century Ottoman palace with 116 rooms located in

Doğubayazıt, displaying a unique blend of Ottoman, Persian, and Armenian architectural styles. The Charents Arch (Armenia) was built in 1957. This monument was specifically designed to frame a panoramic view of Mount Ararat. Dambat/Tambat (Iran) is an archaeological site on the southeastern slopes of Little Ararat (Maku County) characterized by medieval stone architecture, including residential areas, underground shelters, and defensive structures. The area contains functional structures from the 1970s and 80s, such as sanatoriums and the Yerevan Cascade Complex. The architecture here highlights the enduring legacy of Armenian cultural identity and its historical role in trade routes and spiritual life (Fig 7).

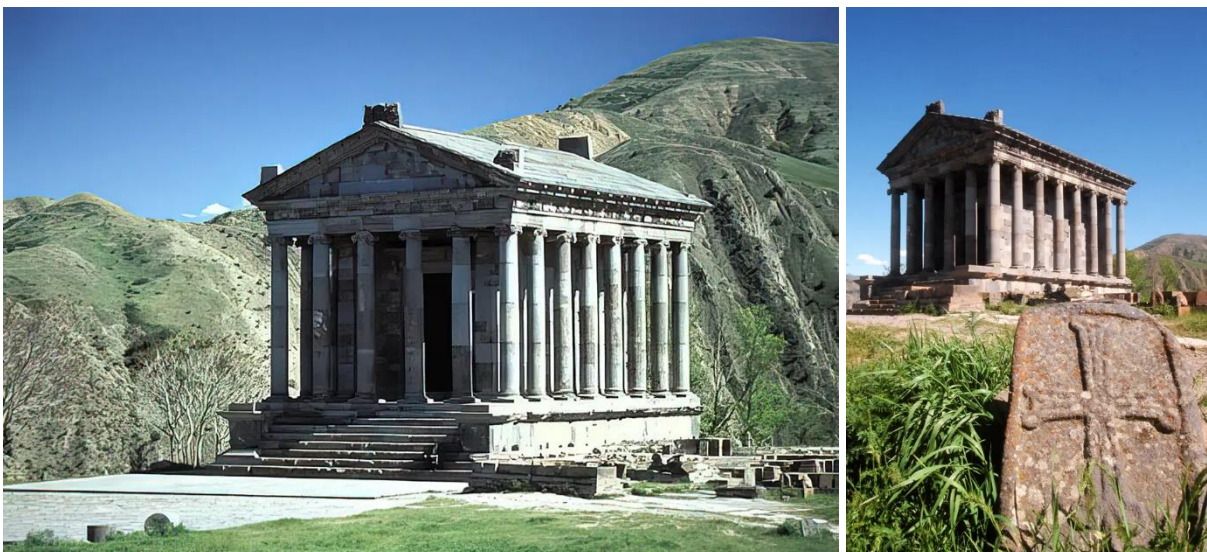


Source: <https://georgia.to/en/places-to-go/armenia/mount-ararat/>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

**Fig 7:** Mount Ararat: A majestic peak with a legendary history

The Temple of Garni in Armenia is a historical site that offers a deep and rich history [87]. As the only surviving pagan temple in the country, built in 76 AD, Garni attracts visitors with its stunning Hellenistic architecture and surrounding gorge (Fig 8). In addition to the temple, the complex includes the ruins of a two-story royal palace and Roman-style baths built in the late 3rd century. Built in honor of the sun goddess Mithras, the temple exhibits a design influenced by Hellenistic styles and bears similarities to the ancient Armenian temple of Musasir, dedicated to the god Haldi from the 9th century BC. The facade of the Garni Temple is decorated with 24 columns, said to represent the 24 hours of the day, and a triangular roof with lion heads on the edges. The intricate carvings and decorations made of hard basalt stone demonstrate the sophistication of ancient Armenian culture and architecture. Over the years, the Garni Temple has faced destruction from earthquakes, the most significant

of which was in 1679. After careful collection and study of the temple remains, it was restored over 11 years using the same techniques and attention to detail, preserving its original appearance. The temple complex is protected by a deep gorge on three sides, offering scenic views of the Azat River and the diamond-shaped rocks known as the Symphony of Stones. The gorge leads to the Khosrov National Reserve, where visitors can explore various geological wonders, including granite, basalt, slag and andesite. After Armenia adopted Christianity, the Garni Temple and Palace were used as a summer residence for royal families. Today, the Garni Temple represents an outstanding historical and architectural monument of the Hellenistic and early Christian eras, attracting visitors from all over the world. In 2011, the complex was awarded the prestigious UNESCO Melina Mercouri International Prize.



Source: [https://sacredsites.com/europe/armenia/sacred\\_sites\\_of\\_armenia.html](https://sacredsites.com/europe/armenia/sacred_sites_of_armenia.html), Accessed: May 11, 2026.

**Fig 8:** Temple of Garni

Khor Virap Monastery<sup>[88]</sup>, an iconic symbol of Armenian spiritual heritage, it is located in Ararat, offering a breathtaking view of Mount Ararat (Fig 9). With a history dating back to the adoption of Christianity in Armenia, Khor Virap remains one of the most revered pilgrimage sites in the country. The origins of Khor Virap can be traced back to the 4th century, when Armenian King Trdat III adopted Christianity as the state religion. The monastery played a key role in the conversion of the nation due to its connection to Saint Gregory the Illuminator, whom King Trdat III imprisoned in a deep pit within the complex for 13 years. Miraculously, the king later freed Saint Gregory and converted to Christianity after the saint cured him of a mysterious illness. The present-day monastery complex consists of two churches, Saint Gevorg and Saint Astvacatsin, both built during the 17th century. The Church of St. Gevorg

is built on top of the pit where St. Gregory was imprisoned, allowing visitors to descend into the underground chamber and experience the spiritual power of the place firsthand. The Church of St. Astvacatsin, decorated with intricate khachkars (cross stones) and frescoes, is located nearby, showcasing the beauty of traditional Armenian architecture. Khor Virap, with its deep ties to the early years of Christianity in Armenia, attracts thousands of pilgrims and tourists each year. The monastery's stunning location in the shadow of Mount Ararat adds to its appeal, as the mountain is a symbol of Armenian identity and historical significance. Visitors can reach Khor Virap by car or one of the frequent minibuses from Yerevan. The journey offers a glimpse into the picturesque Armenian countryside, making it an unforgettable excursion for those wishing to experience the spiritual heritage and natural beauty of this remarkable nation.



Source: [https://sacredsites.com/europe/armenia/sacred\\_sites\\_of\\_armenia.html](https://sacredsites.com/europe/armenia/sacred_sites_of_armenia.html), Accessed: May 11, 2026.

**Fig 9:** Khor Virap Monastery

Zvartnots Cathedral, a celestial masterpiece of medieval Armenian architecture, stands in evocative ruins near Vagharshapat, Armenia. Built during the 7th century under the leadership of Catholicos Nerses III the Builder (in service 641-661)<sup>[89]</sup>. The cathedral was dedicated to St. Gregory the Illuminator. Its unique circular exterior and multi-story interior structure supported by columns crowned with a dome set it apart in Armenian architecture. During the turbulent times of Muslim Arab attacks on Byzantine and Sasanian territories, construction of Zvartnots Cathedral began in 643. Despite the chaotic era, the cathedral was completed and consecrated in 652. It stood for 320 years before collapsing in the 10th century. The cause of its collapse is still debated, with scholars suggesting either an earthquake or repeated Arab attacks as the culprits. The ruins of the once-magnificent cathedral were buried until the 20th century, when they were excavated and partially reconstructed. The

polygonal shape of the cathedral, with numerous columns supporting carved arches, offers visitors a glimpse of its former glory. Interesting sculptural remains, such as the eagle capital, surround the main building, showing the influence of Syrian and northern Mesopotamian architecture. A museum located within the site exhibits artifacts discovered during the excavations and provides informative panels on medieval Armenian architecture. Also within the grounds are the ruins of the Palace of the Catholicos and a medieval winery with a wine press and stone tanks. Today, Zvartnots Cathedral is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (since 2000) and attracts visitors from all over the world. It is located near the village of Ptghunk, 17 km from Yerevan and 4 km from Vagharshapat. Exploring the ruins of this celestial masterpiece provides a unique opportunity to delve into the rich architectural history of Armenia (Fig 10).



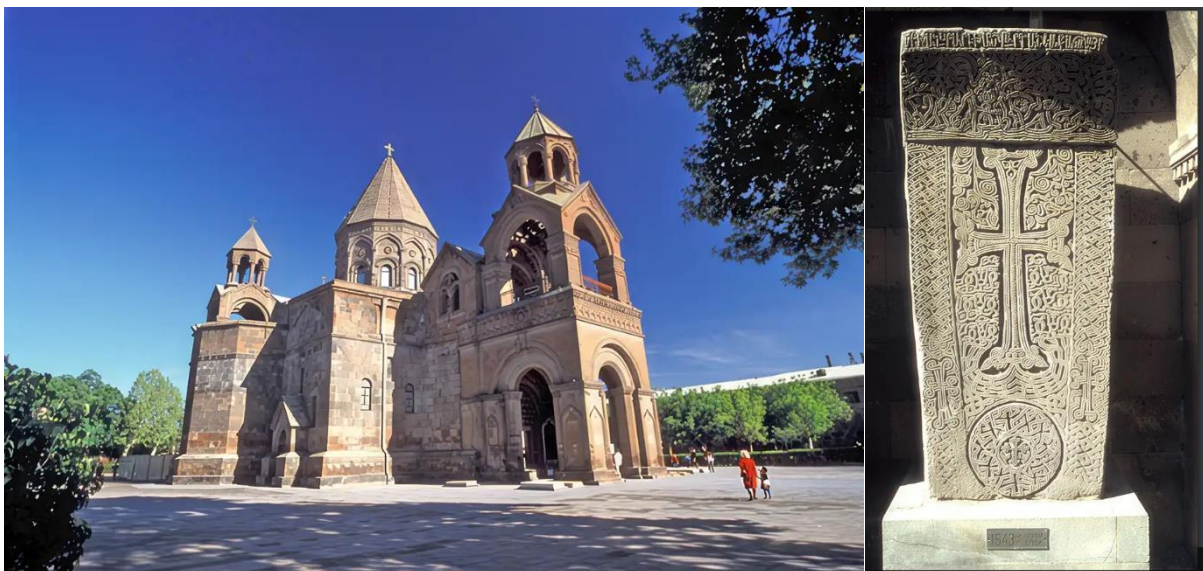
**Source:** [https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction\\_Review-g666440-d12875258-Reviews-Zvartnots\\_Temple-Vagharshapat\\_Armavir\\_Province.html](https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g666440-d12875258-Reviews-Zvartnots_Temple-Vagharshapat_Armavir_Province.html), Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Source:** <https://armeniahiddengems.aua.am/monument/zvartnots/>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Fig 10:** Zvartnots Cathedral

Etchmiadzin Cathedral, located in the city of Etchmiadzin (also known as Vagharshapat) in the Armenian province of Armavir, is the spiritual center of the Armenian people and the administrative heart of the Armenian Apostolic Church [90]. Often referred to by Armenians as the "Mother Cathedral of Echmiadzin", this holy site is one of the oldest examples of Christian architecture in the world. Many believe it to be the oldest Christian cathedral in existence, and in recognition of its significance in Armenian religious and cultural history, it was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2000 [91]. The area around the Etchmiadzin Cathedral has a rich history, with archaeological sites dating back to the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages. The city of Vagharshapat, now known as Etchmiadzin, was founded during the reign of the Arsacid king Vagharsha I (reigned 117–140 AD). Although it was once the capital of Armenia, it was later replaced as the political capital by Dvin in the 4th century. The construction of the Etchmiadzin Cathedral is attributed to Saint Gregory the Illuminator (c. 239–c. 330 AD), who, according to

Armenian legends and historians, had a vision of Jesus Christ instructing him to build a cathedral in the ancient city. Construction began around 303 AD and was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and the name "Etchmiadzin" means "descent (echnel) of the only begotten (miatsin)". From the 5th to the mid-7th centuries, Echmiadzin flourished as a center of culture and pilgrimage, with various church buildings built in the vicinity of the cathedral. Over the centuries, the cathedral has undergone numerous renovations, displaying a mix of Armenian architectural styles. Of particular interest are the reliefs on the north wall of the cathedral depicting Saint Paul the Apostle (c. 5-67 AD?) and Saint Thecla (c. 30-? AD?). The resilience of the Echmiadzin Cathedral is evident in its survival through multiple invasions, occupations, and hardships, and the Armenian Apostolic Church restored a catholicosate on the site in the mid-15th century. Today, the cathedral remains the "Holy Mother of All Armenians", a testament to its enduring importance in Armenian religious and cultural history (Fig 11).



**Source:** [https://sacredsites.com/europe/armenia/sacred\\_sites\\_of\\_armenia.html](https://sacredsites.com/europe/armenia/sacred_sites_of_armenia.html), Accessed: May 11, 2026

**Fig 11:** Etchmiadzin Cathedral

Noravank is a 13th-century Armenian monastery located 122 km from Yerevan in a narrow gorge formed by the Amaghu River, near the town of Yeghegnadzor in Armenia. The gorge is known for its high, steep, brick-red cliffs, directly opposite the monastery. The monastery is best known for its two-story church of Surb Astvacatsin (Holy Mother of God), which provides access to the second floor by a narrow stone staircase protruding from the facade of the building. The monastery is sometimes called Noravank near Amaghu,

Amaghu being the name of the small and now abandoned village above the canyon, to distinguish it from Bgheno-Noravanka, near Goris. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the monastery became the residence of the bishops of Syunik and, consequently, an important religious and later cultural center of Armenia, closely associated with many local centers of learning, especially the famous university and library at Gladzor (Fig 12).



Source: <https://www.airpano.com/gallery.php?gallery=370&photo=15231>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

**Fig 12:** Noravank Monastery

Tatev Monastery is a 9th-century Armenian Apostolic Christian monastery located on a large basalt plateau near the village of Tatev in the Syunik Province of southeastern Armenia (Fig 13). The term 'Tatev' usually refers to the monastery. The monastery ensemble stands on the edge of a deep gorge of the Vorotan River. Tatev is known as the seat of the Syunik Diocese and has played a significant role in the history of the region as a center of economic, political, spiritual, and cultural activity. Tatev Monastery has been described as one of the two most famous monasteries in Armenia, along with Noravank in the Vayots Dzor Province [92]. In the 14th and 15th centuries, the monastery hosted one

of the most important Armenian medieval universities, the University of Tatev, which contributed to the advancement of science, religion and philosophy, the reproduction of books and the development of miniature painting. The scholars of Tatev University contributed to the preservation of Armenian culture and religion during one of the most turbulent periods in its history. The restoration of the monastery, the reestablishment of its educational heritage and the revival of monastic life in Tatev is one of the main goals of the Tatev Revival Program, part of which is the Wings of Tatev cable car, from Tatev to the village of Halidzor, opened in October 2010.

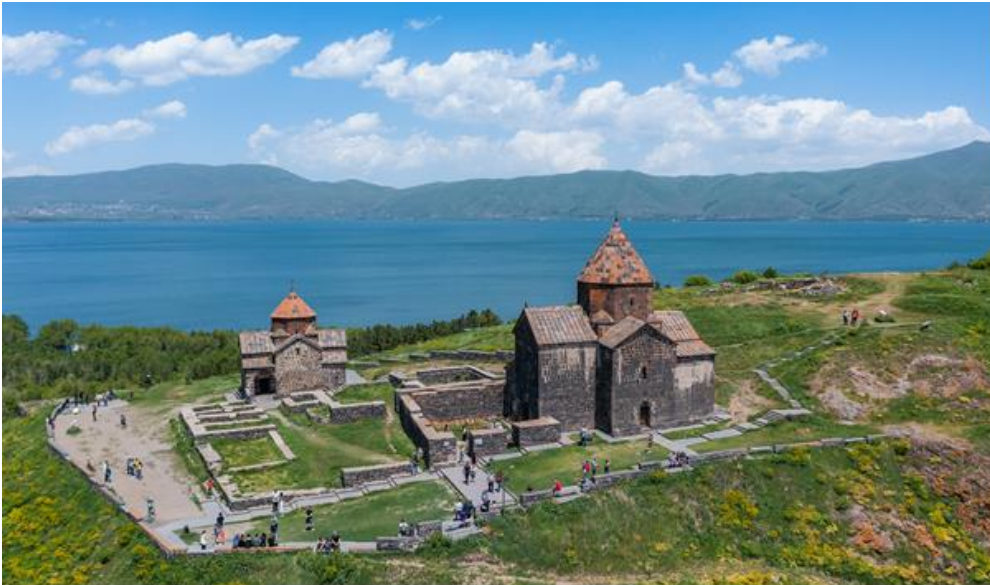


Source: <https://www.airpano.com/gallery.php?gallery=370&photo=15233>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

**Fig 13:** Tatev Monastery

Sevanavank Monastery, located on a rocky peninsula on Lake Sevan in Armenia, is a beautiful example of medieval Armenian architecture<sup>[93]</sup>. Originally, the peninsula was an island, separated from the coast by clear water rich in fish. The monks arrived in the late 8th century, building a modest chapel and cells. Thanks to its favorable location, the monastery expanded over time, adding walls, watchtowers, churches, and other buildings. Today, only two temples remain of the 9th-century monastery - Surb Arakelots and Surb Astvatsatsin - standing among numerous khachkars. Built of black tuff, these cross-shaped churches display intricate masonry and are known for their distinctive tambourines, eaves, and arches. Inside the main church, a unique khachkar of Jesus Christ with Mongolian features

displays the artistic styles of the 12th and 13th centuries. Throughout its history, the Sevanavank Monastery has withstood invasions by Arab armies, Timur's forces, and others. After the last monk left in 1930, the monastery ceased to exist. Now the black temples of Sevan stand guard over the ancient lake, offering breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains and waters. The history of the Sevanavank Monastery is shrouded in legend, including one involving Mashtot Egvardetsi and Princess Mariam. In 874, Mariam founded the monastery after being inspired by Mashtot's vision of the 12 apostles who instructed him to build a church in their name. Today, Sevanavank is a popular tourist destination and an important historical and cultural site in Armenia (Fig 14).



Source: <https://www.airpano.com/gallery.php?gallery=370&photo=15187>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

Fig 14: Sevanavank Monastery

The Maku region, located in the northwestern corner of Iran, has historically been a key crossroads between major empires, including the Persian, Armenian, and Turkish. Despite its strategic importance, the region's challenging geography, characterized by rugged mountains and difficult terrain, has contributed to its marginalization in both Eastern and Western scholarly research. The archaeological site of Dambat, formerly known in the literature as Kharabe Zar (Dombad), occupies a vast area on the southeastern slopes of

Little Ararat, near the Iranian-Turkish border. The site contains extensive stone architecture, including defensive walls, storage wells, and underground shelters, suggesting a pastoralist community. Initial findings indicate a society that combined agricultural and defensive strategies, although further archaeological excavations are necessary to more fully uncover the historical and cultural significance of the settlement and to understand its role in the broader context of regional trade and interaction (Fig 15).



Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/perspectives/armenia-mt-ararat>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

Fig 15: Map of the Holy Land with Armenia (detail)

Church of the Virgin Mary (Geghard Monastery) is located above the Azat River Canyon, thirty kilometers east of Yerevan and nine kilometers beyond the Garni Temple (Fig 16). Centuries before the arrival of Christianity, hermits withdrew from the world and took refuge in the natural caves of the region. According to tradition, Saint Gregory the Illuminator converted these hermits and founded the first monastery in the early 4th century. No buildings have survived from this time, and the oldest existing structure is the Church of the Virgin Mary, called Astvatsatsin, built in 1215 by the Zakarian family. In the past, the monastery was known as the 'Monastery of the Seven Churches', the 'Monastery of the Forty Altars' and Ayrivank, the 'Monastery of the Caves'. Each of these names gives an indication of the

large monastic community that developed as the hermits' dwellings were carved into the soft rock of the Azat Canyon. The monastery's current name, Geghardavank, means 'Monastery of the Holy Spear' and refers to one of the spears that is said to have pierced the body of Christ. This spear was once kept in Geghard, but is now in the treasury of Etchmiadzin (the other spear, the Spear of Longinus, is kept in the Weltliche Schatzkammer of the Hofburg in Vienna, Austria). Next to the Church of the Virgin Mary is a rock-hewn church with a natural spring that was known as a holy place long before the construction of the Geghard complex; its waters are believed to keep the skin young [94]. Church of the Virgin Mary (Geghard Monastery) has been on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2000 [95].



Source: [https://sacredsites.com/europe/armenia/sacred\\_sites\\_of\\_armenia.html](https://sacredsites.com/europe/armenia/sacred_sites_of_armenia.html), Accessed: May 11, 2026.

**Fig 16:** Church of the Virgin Mary (Geghard Monastery)

The biggest attraction of Doğubayazıt is the Ishak Pasha Palace, located in Old Bayazıt. Construction of the palace began in 1685 under the leadership of Çolak Abdi Pasha, a local Kurdish lord. Work continued under Mahmud Pasha

from 1720 to 1768, and was finally completed in 1784 by his nephew Ishak Pasha (died 1799/1800), who gave the palace his name (Fig 17).



Source: <https://peakvisor.com/park/mount-ararat-national-park.html>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

**Fig 17:** Ishak Pasha Palace

Ayanis Temple Susi. Ayanis was an Urartian fortress and city northwest of Van Kalesi on the shores of Lake Van. The fortress is located on a rocky hill covering an area of 6 hectares and rising 200 m above the lake level. The ancient name of Ayanis was Rusahinili Eidurukai ("Rusahinili in front of Mount Eiduru"), named after the Urartian king Rusi II (c. 678–654 BC) who built it. Excavators have discovered a pillared hall and a susi temple, or temple with a tower.

Noah's Ark is one of the most significant biblical stories (Figs 18,19). It involves God's punishment for human wickedness in the form of a flood that washes away much of the known Earth. Society is then able to rebuild. To survive the disaster, God commanded Noah to build an ark for his family and the animals on Earth. His peers mocked him, but the inhabitants of the ark were the only survivors. What happened to the ark after the waters receded is at the heart of the problem. Did it fall apart? Was it dismantled for its materials? Was it

preserved by petrification? The search for the ark is affectionately called "archaeology." Some ancient historians, including Josephus, Epiphanius of Salamis, and John Chrysostom, agreed that the ark was located in Armenia near Mount Ararat. They called the area "the land of the Kurds." Over the centuries, many have claimed to possess parts of the ark. For example, the Assyrian king Sennacherib said he had a beam from the original ark, which he turned into a wooden idol statue. On the other end of the spectrum, some religious Figs have stated that the ark fell apart. In the 19th century, explorers from Europe climbed Mount Ararat and wrote that the ark was there. German explorer and naturalist Friedrich Parrot said that the locals dared not approach the mountaintop for fear of God and disturbing the ark. British politician James Bryce climbed the mountain in 1876 and claimed to have seen the remains of the ark's wood.



Source: <https://explorersweb.com/exploration-mysteries-noahs-ark/>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

**Fig 18:** The mound in Turkey that resembles an ark



Source: <https://explorersweb.com/exploration-mysteries-noahs-ark/>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

**Fig 19:** Reconstruction of the ark on a mountaintop

Isolated villages around Mount Ararat, primarily located in the Doğubayazıt District of Ağrı Province in Turkey, are scattered across the lower slopes and foothills of the mountain (Fig 20). These areas are characterized by harsh conditions, rugged terrain, and traditional, agricultural, and pastoral lifestyles. Villages and areas on/near Mount Ararat: Eli Village (Eli Köyü) is a common starting point for climbers on the southern route of Mount Ararat; Hallaç Village (Hallaç Köyü) is located near Little Ararat, this village is known for its nearby ice cave, which is located at an altitude of about 2,100 meters; Yenidoğan Village (Yenidoğan Köyü) is located near the southeastern part of the mountain, this area is close to the site of the historical village of Ahura, which was buried during the earthquake of 1840; Korhan Plateau (Korhan Yaylası) is located between Big and Little Ararat, this area contains high pastures, which historically contained shepherd's shelters and ruins of ancient settlements; Arghuri (Ahor/Akkori) was historically known as a large Armenian village on the northern slope that served

as a key location for early climbers, but was completely destroyed along with the Monastery of St. Jacob in a major earthquake and rockfall in 1840; Serdarbulak Pass (Serdarbulak Geçidi) is a high pass and pastoral area located at 2,600 meters, connecting the main peak of Ararat with Little Ararat. The slopes below the snow line (4,200 m) consist of volcanic terrain, rocky areas and alpine meadows used for summer grazing. The population is mainly Kurdish shepherds who use the upper areas (visoavan or yajlu) to graze cattle and sheep during the summer months. Access is primarily via dirt roads leading from Doğubayazıt. Life in these settlements is deeply connected to the seasons and the agricultural calendar. In addition to modern settlements, the area includes historical Armenian sites such as the ruins of the Apaven Monastery and the ruins in the Ahura Gorge. These villages are often used as base camps for climbing, offering a glimpse into the traditional way of life of the Agri region, while also being in close proximity to archaeological sites associated with the legend of Noah's Ark.



Source: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mount-Ararat>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Fig 20:** Doğubayazıt city

Traditional architecture at the foot of Mount Ararat is characterized by ancient Armenian stone monasteries and churches, especially the 7th-century Khor Virap Monastery. These structures are often made of volcanic tuff, reflecting a sacred connection to the landscape. In the nearby Turkish region, the 17th-century İshak Pasha Palace represents Ottoman, Persian, and Seljuk architectural influences. Khor Virap Monastery (Armenia) is a key pilgrimage site near the Armenian-Turkish border, known for its deep dungeon (khor virap) and stonework overlooking the mountain. The nearby Etchmiadzin Cathedral and Hripsime Church (Armenia) are examples of early Christian architecture (7th century and earlier) and are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. İshak Pasha Palace (Dogubayazıt, Turkey) is a stunning, massive 17th-century palace complex located at the foot of the mountain that highlights intricate stonework and a mix of regional

styles. The Charents Arch (Armenia) was designed in 1957. This monument frames a classic view of Mount Ararat, bridging architectural design with landscape significance. Historically, some areas have had structures built to survive harsh conditions, including stone dwellings sometimes built into the terrain. The landscape around Mount Ararat (or Ağrı Dağı) consists of barren volcanic soil where old stone villages were historically located until volcanic activity destroyed them in 1840. The vernacular architecture at the foot of Mount Ararat is deeply rooted in Armenian traditions, often featuring low, sturdy stone houses designed for the harsh mountain climate. The traditional form is the 'glkhatun' (main house), a low stone house with a wooden roof, hard earthen floors, and a yerdik (chimney) to vent smoke. Typical houses are built of local volcanic tuff or basalt, with thick walls to withstand cold winters and hot summers (Figs 21,22,23).





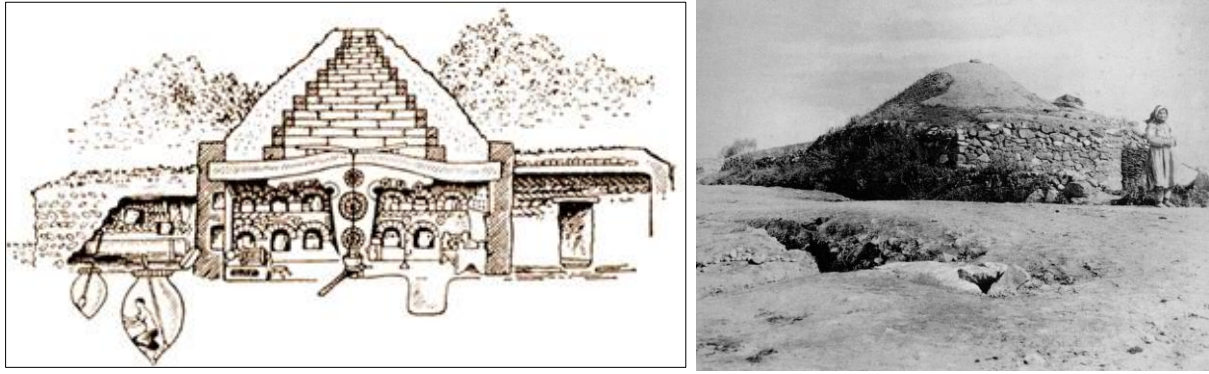
Source: <https://peakvisor.com/park/mount-ararat-national-park.html>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

Source: <https://ourbumble.com/day-34-35-roof-turkey-mount-ararat/#jp-carousel-18612>, Accessed: May 11, 2026.

**Fig 21:** Vernacular houses at the foot of Ararat (Turkiye)

'Glkhatun' (literally 'head house') is an 11th-century style house with a stepped wooden roof supported by wooden pillars, with a yerdik (chimney) serving as the main *Source* of light and ventilation<sup>[96,97]</sup>. This type of architecture is often found in rural areas around the Ararat Valley (Figs 22,23). It emphasizes survival, focusing on insulation and low-profile structures to withstand strong mountain winds. The architecture is often complemented by historic stone monasteries, such as the 7th-century Khor Virap, with dark stone walls and simple geometric structures. These traditional structures are still found in rural villages within the Ararat Plain, reflecting a seamless blend with the surrounding mountain landscape. Vernacular houses in the foothills of Mount Ararat in Armenia were traditionally designed for seismic resistance, thermal regulation, and agricultural lifestyles, often using local mud bricks, stone, and roofs covered with earth. These buildings, which are often found in the Ararat Valley, are characterized by solid construction and a close connection to the landscape. Earthen or thick-walled buildings, traditionally known as khatil, are houses historically built with massive walls of stone or mud bricks to withstand seismic activity. The roofs were constructed using wooden beams covered with a thick, layered soil known as 'blue earth' or clay, which was thoroughly

compacted with heavy cylindrical stones or loggias. Settlements often have a dense, interconnected layout, with homes providing warmth and stability, often blending in with the surrounding topography. Ancient examples of this architectural style are particularly well-preserved near the site of Artashat. Also specific examples and locations are Dambat/Tambat where archaeological excavations have uncovered a medieval Armenian 'city' with stone architecture, storage wells and underground shelters located on the southeastern slopes of Little Ararat. The area around the Khor Virap Monastery offers a glimpse of rural architecture, characterized by vineyards and simple, sturdy dwellings that are part of the wider Ararat Plain. Kond District (Yerevan), although not directly at the foothills, this older district of Yerevan displays the traditional, organic and dense stone building methods that were common in the region. Traditional construction methods paid great attention to seismic safety: earthen roofs were designed to be heavy enough to hold the structure together, while the flexible nature of the wood-earth structure provided better earthquake resistance compared to rigid, all-stone structures. The thick walls served as excellent insulation, keeping the interior warm in winter and cool in the hot Ararat summers.



Source: <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3c/Gikhatun.gif>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

Source: [https://www.arch.hku.hk/research\\_project/the-gikhatun-experiment-international-community-engagement-towards-sustainable-design-and-construction/](https://www.arch.hku.hk/research_project/the-gikhatun-experiment-international-community-engagement-towards-sustainable-design-and-construction/), Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Fig 22:** Gikhatun house



Source: <https://drawingmatter.org/dmj-from-hearths-to-volcanoes-the-armenian-gikhatun/>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Fig 23:** General view of Nerkin Getaschen (Gegharkunik), 1938.

The monument "Arch of Charents" (Armenia) or "Arch of Ararat" is located at the beginning of the village of Voghjaberd, Kotayk region, on the Yerevan-Garni road. It is located on a hill from which, in good weather, a magnificent view of Mount Ararat opens up magically<sup>[98]</sup>. One day, the famous Armenian architect Rafael Israelyan (1908-1973) was passing through the village of Voghjaberd and his attention was drawn to this beautiful view. He stopped and explored the area. After some time, the famous architect developed a project for this unique monument. In 1957, the

monument was built and named the "Arch of Ararat". It was placed in such a way that Mount Ararat could be seen from inside the arch. The monument is 5 meters high. It is an arched structure built of basalt, but the inside of the arch is lined with orange tuff. Along the entire contour of the arch, a couplet from a poem by the great Armenian writer Yeghische Charents is carved. In honor of Yeghische Charents, the monument eventually became better known as the "Arch of Charents" (Fig 24).

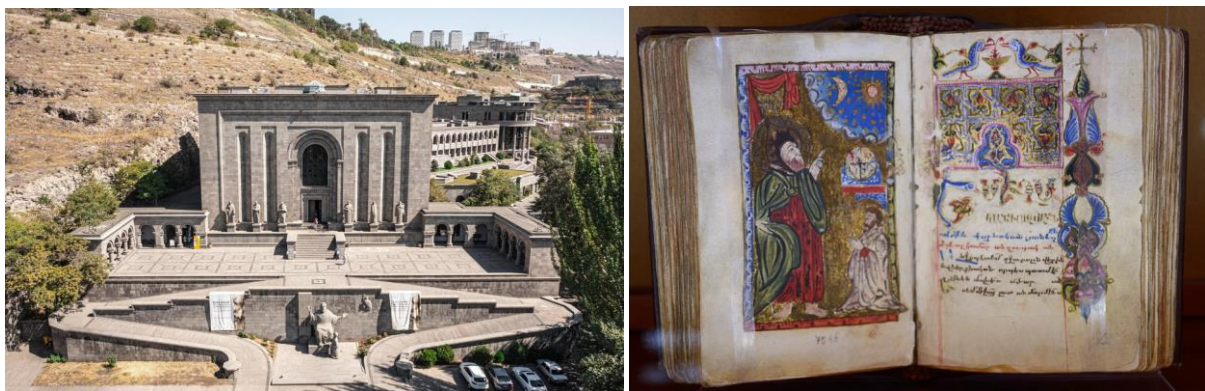


Source: <https://armeniaplanet.com/en/sight/arch-of-charents>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Fig 24:** Arch of Charents“ (Armenia)

Matenadaran, the Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, is home to one of the world's most extensive collections of ancient Armenian manuscripts (Fig 25). Founded in 1959 and named after Mesrop Mashtots, the creator of the Armenian alphabet in the early 5th century, this unique institution contains over 17,000 manuscripts, including 14,500 in Armenian and 2,500 in foreign languages such as Arabic, Assyrian, Persian, Indian, Russian, Georgian, Latin, and Ethiopic. The impressive basalt building, designed by architect Mark Grigoryan, is reminiscent of Armenian medieval architecture. A new building, designed by architect and musician Arthur Meschian, was added in 2011 to house the growing collection. The entrance to the Matenadaran is guarded by statues of Mesrop Mashtots and the 5th-century historian Korjun, while the front arches of the building feature monuments to prominent Armenian cultural figures, such as Movses Khorenatsi, Mkhitar Gosh, Frik, Toros

Roslin, Grigor Tatevatsi, and Anania Shirakatsi. Inside the Matenadaran, visitors can admire the mosaic in the lobby depicting the Battle of Avarayr and the fresco triptych of Armenian History surrounding the staircase, created by the artist Van Khachatur. The institution also conducts research in Armenian writing, textology, *Source* studies, paleography, medieval book painting, and historiography. The Matenadaran's extensive collection includes manuscripts dating back to the 5th and 6th centuries, such as the Echmiadzin Gospel with its oldest illustrations and miniatures. The oldest complete manuscript is the Gospel of Lazarus from 887, while the largest is the Musov Charentir (1200-1202), and the smallest is the Kalendar (1434). Founded in 1921 as the first research center in Armenia, the Matenadaran in Yerevan boasts a rich collection of Armenian and foreign manuscripts, depicting the nation's rich history and cultural heritage from its founding to the 19th century [99].



Source: <https://georgia.to/en/places-to-go/armenia/matenadaran/>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

Source: <https://www.advantour.com/armenia/yerevan/matenadaran.htm>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Fig 25:** Matenadaran, the Mesrop Mashtots Research Institute of Ancient Manuscripts

Erebuni Archaeological Museum, founded in 1968, commemorates the 2750th anniversary of Yerevan [100], capital of Armenia. Located at the foot of the Arin Berd hill, the museum offers a unique opportunity to explore the ancient Urartian fortress of Erebuni, built in 782 BC by Argishti I, king of Urartu. The fortress has been excavated, restored and turned into an open-air museum, allowing visitors to experience the rich history of the citadel. Built primarily of mud brick, the fortress was once surrounded by imposing walls, and at its heart was the temple of the god Khaldi. Numerous frescoes adorned the temple walls, and giant karas (wine storage jars) were buried in the ground. Excavations have uncovered ceramics, potter's wheels and

other artifacts that reveal the daily life and habits of the inhabitants of Erebuni. Today, the Erebuni Museum contains over 12,000 exhibits, including vessels, jugs, bronze bracelets, glass and agate beads. The museum building, designed by architects Baghdasar Arzoumanian and Shmavon Azatian and sculptor A. Harutiunian, reflects the history of the ancient state of Urartu with its sculptural design. The Erebuni Museum also has two branches in Shengavit and Karmir Blur, with additional collections of artifacts. In addition to the permanent exhibition, the Erebuni Historical and Archaeological Reserve-Museum regularly hosts temporary exhibitions to showcase the museum's collection and share the latest archaeological finds from

Erebuni, Karmir Blur and Shengavit. Under the direction of Miqayel Badalyan since 2018, the Erebuni Museum offers a fascinating journey into the ancient history of Yerevan,

providing insights into daily life in the palace of Argishti I and the vibrant culture of the Urartu civilization (Fig 26).



Source: <https://vcity.guide/place/erebuni-historical-archaeological-museum-reserve/?lang=en>, Accessed: May 12, 2026.

**Fig 26:** Erebuni Archaeological Museum

### Conclusion

Mount Ararat (Ağrı) forms an almost quadripoint between Turkey, Iran, Armenia and the Nakhchivan enclave of Azerbaijan. Herodotus of Halicarnassus (around 484 around 425 BC) wrote in his work *Histories* that "Egypt is a gift of the Nile River". Ararat is a dormant volcano, an invaluable natural resource that generates life to such an extent that it can be considered the 'mother of Armenia'. Looking at life in Armenia, this is completely rational since Ararat provides water for Armenian rivers, fertile volcanic soil and inexhaustible amounts of volcanic stone for construction. The empirical dimensions of Ararat are superimposed on the legend (which is also mentioned in the Holy Books - the Bible and the Qur'an) according to which Ararat was the last refuge of Prophet Noah (Noah), his family, his chosen friends (believers) and several domestic animals during the great flood. This work is one of a series of the Author's works in which the Author tests his theory "Architecturally defined space".

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