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THE SWORD WITH THE SLEEVE CROSS-GUARD IN THE FRESCO FROM THE CATHEDRAL OF THE HOLY CROSS ON AGHTAMAR ISLAND

Abstract. There is an indisputable fact that in Medieval Armenia, as in most countries of the Middle Ages, the sword was a popular (but expensive) type of weapon. However, what did these “swords” look like? The aim of the article is to analyse one internal fresco called “Massacre of the Innocents” from Aghtamar Church (915–921), where a depiction of the sword with the sleeve cross-guard could be found.

Comparisons of the known archaeological finds of “Byzantine” type swords from Eastern Europe and Near East have been made, proving the idea that such type of swords actually existed. The authors, with the following analysis, would like to support the idea that medieval figurative sources are a very accurate for studying medieval military history.

Keywords: Bagratid Armenia, Vaspurakan kingdom, Aghtamar, Msho Arakelots, Iran, Byzantine/Roman Empire, Muslim world, weapon, sword, sleeve cross-guard, Garabonc

Introduction

The Cathedral of the Holy Cross on Aghtamar island (modern Eastern Turkey, Figs. 1–3) is one of the best examples of Armenian medieval art. Built in 915–921 by Vaspurakan king Gagik Artsruni (908–943)¹ the Cathedral became a residence and a palatine church for the kings of Vaspurakan (908–1021)², and

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¹ On King Gagik, see C. TOUMANOFF, *Les dynasties de la Caucasic Chrétienne: de l'Antiquité jusqu'au XIX^e siècle*, Roma 1990, p. 102sq, 505, 520.

² Kingdom of Vaspurakan (908–1021) – independent Armenian kingdom ruled by Artsruni dynasty, which was separated from Bagratid kingdom (884/886–1045/1064) in 908 as the result of the struggle between these two families for the control of the country.

later serving as the seat of the Catholicosate of Aghtamar. The Cathedral was decorated with many external reliefs and internal frescoes, where biblical and daily life scenes were portrayed along with the images of military and civil costumes, and logically weapons. Our attention was drawn to one depiction of a sword with the sleeve cross-guard depicted on the internal fresco “Massacre of the Innocents” (Figs. 4–6), which will be the object of our research.

The task of the research is to reconstruct the real view of the sword through comparisons with the well-known East-Roman and Muslim archaeological elements and figurative sources. Located between two civilizations (Byzantium and Muslim) Armenians adopted the best military solutions from both sides, creating their own culture³. Special attention will be paid to the relief on the door from the Msho Arakelots monastery (1134) too, as another example of Armenian art where is represented a further depiction of a sword with the sleeve cross-guard.

The originality of the article lies in fact that it will be the first analysis of the representation of the swords of the Aghtamar from the military point of view. Obtained results will be valuable for Armenian, Byzantine, Georgian and Muslim arms and armour studies, showing some patterns and connections between them.

Historiography and sources

The Aghtamar Church was the object of the study for many art historians: Lynn Jones⁴, John Davies⁵, Sirarpie Der Nersessian⁶, Josef Orbeli⁷, Christina Maranci⁸, Lilit Mikayelyan, Armen Kazaryan⁹, Thomas Mathews¹⁰, Connie Waltz¹¹, Sasha

³ On the topic, see D. NICOLLE, *The Armies of Islam 7th–11th Centuries*, Oxford 1982, p. 19–20, 22–23; IDEM, *Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era: 1050–1350. Islam, Eastern Europe, Asia*, London 1999, p. 67sq.

⁴ L. JONES, *The Visual Expression of Power and Piety in Medieval Armenia: The Palace and Palace Church at Aghtamar*, [in:] *Eastern Approaches to Byzantium*, ed. A. EASTMOND, Aldershot 2001, p. 221–241; IDEM, *Between Islam and Byzantium*, Aldershot 2007.

⁵ J. DAVIES, *Medieval Armenian Art and Architecture. Church of the Holy Cross, Aght'amar*, London 1991.

⁶ S. DER NERSESSIAN, *Aght'amar. Church of the Holy Cross*, Cambridge 1965; IDEM, *Documents of Armenian Architecture*, vol. VIII, *Aght'amar*, Milan 1974; IDEM, *Achtamar*, Venice 1987.

⁷ И. ОРБЕЛИ, *Избранные труды*, vol. I, Москва 1968.

⁸ C. MARANCI, *The Art of Armenia. An Introduction*, Oxford 2018.

⁹ L. MIKAYELYAN, A. KAZARYAN, *Architectural Decoration of the Armenian Churches of the 7th and the 10th–11th Centuries and their Presumably Sasanian Sources*, [in:] *Sasanidische Spuren in der byzantinischen, kaukasischen und islamischen Kunst und Kultur / Sasanian Elements in Byzantine, Caucasian and Islamic Art and Culture*, ed. F. DAIM, N. ASUTAY-EFFENBERGER, Mainz 2019 [= BOO, 15], p. 75–93.

¹⁰ T. MATHEWS, *The Genesis Frescoes of Aht'amar*, REArm 16, 1982, p. 245–257.

¹¹ C. WALTZ, *Sources and Iconography of the Figural Sculpture of the Church of the Holy Cross at Aght'amar*, Columbus 1986 (unpublished PhD dissertation).

Grishin¹², Mazhar İpşiroğlu¹³, Stepan Mnats'akanian¹⁴, Takeko Harada¹⁵ and others¹⁶. However, nobody of them has deeply analysed the different types of arms and armours depicted on reliefs or frescoes¹⁷. Moreover, the same situation is concerned with the Armenian medieval miniatures and artworks, which generally have not been studied from the military angle of view¹⁸.

This can be explained by the fact that military history of Medieval Armenia is almost unresearched. Only a few historians and archaeologists did researches related to the Medieval Armenian arms and armours studies: Armen Aivazian¹⁹, Michał Chlipała²⁰, Valentina Abramian²¹, Babken Arakelian²², Maria Romanova²³,

¹² S. GRISHIN, *The Aght'amar Wall Paintings: Some New Observations*, Parer 3, 1985, p. 39–51.

¹³ M. İPŞIROĞLU, *Die Kirche von Achtamar. Bauplastik im Leben des Lichtes*, Berlin 1963.

¹⁴ С. МНАЦАКАНЯН, *Ахтамар*, Ереван 1986.

¹⁵ T. HARADA, *The Book of Ahtmar Reliefs*, Istanbul 2003.

¹⁶ On the history of the church, see the *préambule* of Jean-Pierre Mahé in the compendium of articles and essays recently published by Zara Pogossian and Edda Vardanyan – *The Church of the Holy Cross of Aht'amar*, ed. Z. POGOSSIAN, E. VARDANYAN, Leiden 2019, p. XVI–XXIII.

¹⁷ For example S. Grishin comments the scene of the massacre of the innocents without referring to the sword or to the soldier brandishing it. – S. GRISHIN, *The Aght'amar...*, p. 43, 47. Also, Thomas Sinclair describes *a soldier with upraised sword*, without further comments or illustrations. – T. SINCLAIR, *Eastern Turkey. An Architectural and Archaeological Survey*, vol. I, London 1987, p. 199.

¹⁸ A notable exception are the studies of English scholars Ian Heath, Timothy Dawson and David Nicolle, who based their visual reconstructions of the medieval Armenian warriors on the Aghtamar reliefs and other sources. – I. HEATH, *Armies and Enemies of the Crusades, 1096–1291 AD*, Worthing 1978, p. 73–74; IDEM, *Armies of the Dark Ages, 600–1066 AD*, Worthing 1980, p. 100–101; IDEM, *Armies of the Middle Ages*, vol. II, Worthing 1984, p. 122–123; D. NICOLLE, *The Military Technology of Classical Islam*, vol. I–III, Edinburg 1982 (unpublished PhD dissertation), p. 289–290; IDEM, *Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era: 1050–1350*, vol. I–II, New York 1988, p. 54–64; IDEM, *Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era: 1050–1350. Islam, Eastern Europe...*, p. 67–79; T. DAWSON, *Armour Never Wears: Scale and Lamellar Armour in the West, from the Bronze Age to the 19th Century*, Cheltenham 2013, p. 87–89. For more information, see: D. ДУМЫДУК, *The Relief on the Door of the Msho Arakelots Monastery (1134) as a Source for Studying Arms and Armour of Medieval Armenian Warriors*, SCer 9, 2019, p. 209–210.

¹⁹ А. АЙВАЗЯН, *Армяно-персидская война 449–451 гг. Кампании и сражения*, Санкт-Петербург 2017.

²⁰ M. CHLIPIAŁA, *Wojskowość królestwa Armenii cylicyjskiej w czasach wypraw krzyżowych*, Tarnowskie Góry 2013.

²¹ Վ. ԱՐԲԱՍԵԱՆ, *Արհեստները եւ հանքարական կազմակերպությունները Հայաստանում IX–XIII դդ.*, Երևան 1946; IDEM, *Միջնադարյան Հայաստանի զենքերի տեսակները*, ՊՊԹ 2, 1950, p. 37–98; IDEM, *Արհեստները Հայաստանում IV–XVIII դդ.*, Երևան 1956.

²² Բ. ԱՌԱԲԵՅԱՆ, *Քաղաքները և արհեստները Հայաստանում IX–XIII դդ.*, Երևան 1958; IDEM, Բ. ԱՌԱԲԵՅԱՆ, *Արհեստների զարգացումը: Ֆեոդալական քաղաքի ձևակերպումը*, [in:] *Հայ Տորպիլրի Պատմություն*, vol. III, ed. IDEM, Երևան 1976, p. 187–209; Б. АРАКЕЛЯН, *Армения в IX–XIII вв.*, [in:] *Крым, Северо-Восточное Причерноморье и Закавказье в эпоху средневековья IV–XIII века*, ed. С. ПЛЕТНЕВА, Москва 2003, p. 335–351.

²³ M. РОМАНОВА, *Вооружение и обмундирование армянского Киликийского воина (1073–1375)*, [in:] *Հայոց պատմության հարցեր*, ed. Ա. ՄԵԼՔՆՅԱՆ, Երևան 2011, p. 64–81.

Ripsime Djanpoladian, Anatoliy Kirpichnikov²⁴, Aram Kalantarian²⁵ and one of the authors of this article²⁶.

It is worth noting that Armenian historian Karine Voskanian was the only person who defended dissertation on the military organization of the Bagratid era (9th–11th centuries)²⁷. The researcher partially analysed arms and armour of the Bagratid Armenia but did not use reliefs and frescoes from Aghtamar Church at all (except for the relief “David and Goliath” (Figs. 7–9)²⁸, which makes this topic interesting and relevant for us, because it has not been researched at all).

Unfortunately, the situation with Armenian archaeological and written sources does not look better. Armenian chronicles are less useful for the study of the blade weapons because they give only general information about them without a detailed description²⁹. Furthermore, many terminological problems concerning

²⁴ Р. Джанполадян, А. Кирпичников, *Средневековая сабля с армянской надписью, найденная в Приполярном Урале*, Эп 21, 1972, р. 23–29; R. DJANPOLADIAN, A. KIRPICHNIKOV, *Mittelalterlicher Säbel mit einer Armenischen Inschrift, gefunden im Subpolaren Ural*, Gla 10, 1972, р. 15–23.

²⁵ Ա. ՔԱԼԱՆՏԱՐԻԱՆ, *Պաշտպանական սպարազինությունը միջնադարյան հայաստանում*, ԳԱՏ ՀԳ 10, 1965, р. 68–74; IDEM, *Չհերերը V–VIII դարերում (Ըստ Գլխի հնագիտական պեղումների)*, ՊԲՀ 4, 1965, р. 241–248.

²⁶ Д. ДИМИДУК, *Озброєння вірменського воїна (IX–XI ст.)*, НЗТНПУСІ 1/2, 2017, р. 3–12; IDEM, *Лук і стріла у Вірменії епохи Багратидів (кінець IX – середина XI ст.)*, ПІВІВМ 1, 2018, р. 7–33; IDEM, *Существовали ли кривые клинки в Армении Багратидов (конец IX – середина XI вв.)?*, [in:] *Արևիկյան սիրտը և հիմնադրությունը և պատմությունը իս դարասրբի Հայաստանում*, ed. Ա. ԲՈՂՈՅԱՆ, Երևան 2019, р. 25–27; IDEM, *Холодное оружие в армянских хрониках эпохи Багратидов (конец IX – середина XI вв.): терминология вопроса*, ՊՄՀՀ 2, 2019, р. 33–48; D. DUMYDUK, *Broń biała w Armenii epoki Bagratydów (koniec IX – połowa XI w.): problem interpretacji i badania niektórych źródeł graficznych*, ПІВІВМ 2, 2019, р. 7–31; IDEM, *Mace in Bagratid Armenia (End of IX – Middle of XI c.)*, [in:] *Shirak Historical and Cultural Heritage. Contemporary Issues of Armenology*, vol. X, ed. А. НАՅՐԱՔԵԿՅԱՆ, Yerevan 2019, р. 122–124; IDEM, *The Relief on the Door...*, р. 205–248. In connection with the Armenians inside the Roman Medieval Army, see also R. D'AMATO, *Old and New Evidence on the East-Roman Helmets from the 9 to the 12 Centuries*, AMM 11, 2015, р. 67 (n. 40), 139–140 (n. 124, 127).

²⁷ Շ. ՈՍԿԱՆԻԱՆ, *Հայոց բանակը Բագրատունյաց շրջանում (IX–XI դարեր)*, Երևան 2010 (unpublished PhD dissertation).

²⁸ It is worth noting that the sword depicted on the relief “David and Goliath”, of which we will speak again later, was the subject of study by many military historians. For more information on the subject, see: D. DUMYDUK, *Broń biała...*, р. 10–14.

²⁹ We can assume that in the Bagratid era, the word “սուր” (sur) probably meant a simple double-edged sword, and together with the word “սուսեր” (suser) they were the most popular in medieval Armenian chronicles, while the word “թուր” (tur) was used rarely. In order to clarify the information about on what the swords looked like, chroniclers could use additional words like “երկասյր” (yerk-sayr – double-edged) or “միասուն” (miaser – single-edged). In order to emphasize quality of the swords the word “պողովաժ” (poghovat) could be used what means tempered steel or bulat steel. Please note, that in those times chronicles did not contain any information which would indicate the curvature of the blades. See: D. DUMYDUK, *Холодное оружие...*, р. 33–48.

names of the bladed weapons, differences between them, interdependences of their use and their physical characteristics remain unresolved³⁰.

On the other hand, only a few artefacts of arms and armours from Bagratid era (9th–11th centuries) and adjacent periods (8th and 12th–13th centuries) have survived to this day³¹, most of which were poorly researched and undated³². We know only one archaeological find of a sword from Ani, which was dated to the 10th century³³ or 11th–12th centuries³⁴. However, the sword was lost in mysterious circumstances and until our times what was left of it was just a drawing, which was published in the previously mentioned works (Fig. 10)³⁵.

Due to the lack of archaeological finds of swords from the territory of Medieval Armenia and terminological problems in chronicles, special attention should be paid to the figurative sources such as the fresco “Massacre of the Innocents” from Aghtamar Church. However, it should be noted that the question of the possibility of using medieval figurative sources for the reconstruction of medieval weapons remains open³⁶. The problem arisen by some scholars is that the frescoes were

³⁰ Armenian terms for the blade weapons: “սուր” (sur), “սուսեր” (suser), “թուր” (tur), “վաղակ” (vaghak), “նրան” (nran), etc. – D. ДУМЫДУК, *Холодное оружие...*, p. 33–48; Ч. ПУЧУБЭВ, *Հայրիքային...*, p. 121–125.

³¹ P. ДЖАНПОЛАДЯН, А. КИРПИЧНИКОВ, *Средневековая сабля...*, p. 28; D. NICOLLE, *Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era: 1050–1350. Islam, Eastern Europe...*, p. 72, fig. 125; D. ДУМЫДУК, *The Relief on the Door...*, p. 208.

³² Due to the Short Term Travel Grant from Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and permission from the History Museum of Armenia administration (Yerevan), one of the authors of this article – Dmytro Dymydyuk, was able to work with the museum funds in September 2019 looking for archaeological artefacts of arms and armours from 9th–13th centuries. Unfortunately, he found only a few artefacts of axes, spearheads and several dozen remains of arrowheads, knives and daggers, interpretation of which is complicated because of their poor state; some weapons, the frescoes of Ani and the depots of East-Roman grenades from Ani were investigated in the Museum of Kars by Dr. D’Amato and Dr. Theotokis, and will be soon object of an extensive publication about arms and armours of Byzantium from the nowadays Turkish territories.

³³ Ч. ЦАРՇԱՅԱՆ, *Միջնադարյան Հայաստանի...*, p. 67, fig. 5.

³⁴ Б. АРАКЕЛЯН, *Армения в IX–XIII вв...*, p. 342–343, fig. 156.1.

³⁵ During the work with the museum funds of the History Museum of Armenia D. Dymydyuk could not find the sword from Ani. In addition, there is no information about it in the museum catalogue. – Ե. ՍՈՒՐԵԱՅԱՆ, *Անի քաղաքի պեղումներից հայտնաբերված ամսրիկաները*, Երևան 1982. Most likely, this sword was lost during the hasty evacuation of archaeological materials from Ani in 1918 through the Turkish offensive on the Caucasus front or in other mysterious circumstances.

³⁶ R. D’AMATO, *The Betrayal: Military Iconography and Archaeology in the Byzantine Paintings of XI–XV Centuries AD Representing the Arrest of Our Lord, [in:] Weapons Bring Peace? Warfare in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. L. MAREK, Wrocław 2010, p. 70–71, 93; IDEM, *A Prōtopatharios, Magistros, and Strategos Autokrator of 11th c.: the Equipment of Georgios Maniakes and his Army according to the Skylitzes Matritensis Miniatures and other Artistic Sources of the Middle Byzantine Period*, Porph 4, 2005, p. 5sqq; P. GROTOWSKI, *Arms and Armour of the Warrior Saints. Tradition and Innovation in Byzantine Iconography (843–1261)*, Leiden 2010 [= MMe, 87], p. 3–4.

made by clergy, whose knowledge of armaments could have been negligible. From the other side can be opposed to this conception that not all the frescoes of the churches were painted by priests or monks, but also by professional painters³⁷, laymen who knew very well the material culture of their own time: and by the way, even when the painters were Church people, their knowledge of the contemporary weaponry was not necessarily negligible, because many monks were ex-warriors and in any case they saw often the soldiers of their age with their eyes.

Some scholars propose to be cautious because painters frequently used biblical descriptions and borrowings from older works, which might have distorted the real look of the presented weapons³⁸. On the other hand, it cannot be excluded that these authors were good observers and faithfully presented the reality surrounding them³⁹.

Thus, despite all these reservations, we believe that visual art could be a valuable and relatively objective source that – after critical analysis and comparisons with other sources – should be used to reconstruct the armament of the warriors of Medieval Armenia⁴⁰.

³⁷ A layman was for example Manuel Panselinos, one of the most proficient painters of 13th–14th centuries Byzantium (ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΕΚ ΦΟΥΡΝΑ, *Ερημνεία της ζωγραφικής τέχνης: εκ χειρογράφου του η' αιώνος εκδοθείσα κατά το πρωτότυπον αυτής κείμενον*, ed. Α. ΠΑΠΑΔΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ-ΚΕΡΑΜΕΥΣ, Αγία Πετρούπολη 1900, p. 3) or the famous painters of Ohrid Perivleptos, Michael Astrapas and his father Eutychios, 13th century painters from Thessaloniki whose signed works literally take your breath away. See for instance: Μ. ΜΑΡΚΟΒΙĆ, *The Painter Eutychios – Father of Michael Astrapas and Protomaster of the Frescoes in the Church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid*, ЗМСЛУ 38, 2010, p. 19–20, 31 (n. 45–46).

³⁸ Τ. ΚΟΛΙΑΣ, *Byzantinische Waffen. Ein Beitrag zur byzantinischen Waffenkunde von den Anfängen bis zur lateinischen Eroberung*, Wien 1988 [= BV, 17], p. 33.

³⁹ R. D'AMATO, *The Betrayal...*, p. 69; IDEM, *A Prōtopatharios...*, p. 5–7; Վ. ՄԱՐԿՍՅԱՆ, *Միջնադարյան Հայաստանի...*, p. 64, 77.

⁴⁰ Such method of research, fully or partially, was and is used by many historians who studied Byzantine or Muslim arms and armours studies: Г. БАРАНОВ, *Новая находка перекрестья и навершия рукояти византийского меча с территории Черкасского района Черкасской области Украины*, МАИАСК 7, 2015, p. 87–105; IDEM, *Византийские (средиземноморские) мечи с перекрестьями с муфтой IX–XI вв.*, МАИАСК 9, 2017, p. 248–283; IDEM, *Византийский меч с территории Украины*, [in:] *Война и оружие. Новые исследования и материалы*, vol. I, ed. С. ЕФИМОВ, Санкт-Петербург 2017, p. 171–177; IDEM, *Новые данные о находке византийского меча на территории Харьковской области*, His 8, 2019, p. 91–98; R. D'AMATO, *The Eastern Romans 330–1461 AD*, Hong Kong 2007; IDEM, *The Varangian Guard (988–1453)*, Oxford 2010; IDEM, *Σιδηροράβδιον, βαρδούκιον, ματζούκιον, κορύνη. The War-mace of Byzantium, 9th–15th c. AD: New Evidence from the Balkans in the Collection of the World Museum of Man, Florida*, AMM 7, 2011, p. 7–48; IDEM, *Byzantine Imperial Guardsmen, 925–1025*, Oxford 2012; IDEM, *Old and New Evidence...*, p. 27–157; IDEM, *The Betrayal...*, p. 69–95; T. DAWSON, *Banded Lamellar – a Solution*, VaV 23, 1992, p. 16; IDEM, *Kremas-mata, Kabadion, Klibanion: Some Aspects of Middle Byzantine Military Equipment Reconsidered*, BMGS 22, 1998, p. 38–50; IDEM, *Klivanion Revisited: an Evolutionary Typology and Catalogue of Middle Byzantine Lamellar*, JRMES 12/13, 2001/2002, p. 89–95; IDEM, *Byzantine Infantryman. Eastern Roman Empire c. 900–1204*, Oxford 2007; IDEM, *'Fit for the Task': Equipment Sizes and the Transmis-*

The sword on the fresco from the Aghtamar Church

The sword that is interesting for us is depicted on the fresco “Massacre of the Innocents” (Fig. 4–6)⁴¹ on the west exedra of the Aghtamar Church⁴². On the left side of the fresco sits crowned Herod the Great, on a high, decorative throne, wearing a crown and dressed in a long tunic and *chlamys* fastened by a brooch on the right side of the body⁴³. Around him there are various children, and in front of him stands a tall crowned warrior⁴⁴ who grabbed a child by his leg and raised a sword to

sion of Military Lore, Sixth to Tenth Centuries, BMGS 31, 2007, p. 1–12; IDEM, *Byzantine Cavalryman c. 900–1204*, Oxford 2009; IDEM, *Armour Never Wears...*; D. DYMIDYUK, *The Relief on the Door...*, p. 205–248; P. GROTHOWSKI, *Arms and Armour...*; I. HEATH, *Armies of the Dark...*; A. HOFFMEYER, *Military Equipment in the Byzantine Manuscript of Scylitzes in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid*, GlA 5, 1966, p. 1–160; K. JARA, M. GLINIANOWICZ, P. KOTOWICZ, *Ikony ze zbiorów sanockich muzeów jako źródło do poznania uzbrojenia pogranicza Małopolski i Rusi Czerwonej w późnym średniowieczu*, [in:] *Cum Arma per Aeva. Uzbrojenie indywidualne na przestrzeni wieków*, ed. P. KUCYPERA, P. PUDEŁO, Toruń 2011, p. 222–273; D. NICOLLE, *Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era: 1050–1350. Islam, Eastern Europe...*; IDEM, *The Military Technology...*; IDEM, *Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era...*; IDEM, *Byzantine and Islamic Arms and Armour: Evidence for Mutual Influence*, GA 4, 1991, p. 299–325; S. AL-SARRAF, *Close Combat Weapons in the Early Abbasid Period*, [in:] *A Companion to Medieval Arms and Armour*, ed. D. NICOLLE, Woodbridge 2002, p. 149–178; M. TSURTSUMIA, *The Evolution of Splint Armour in Georgia and Byzantium: Lamellar and Scale Armour in the 10th–12th Centuries*, ВСУМ 21, 2011, p. 65–99; V. YOTOV, *Byzantine Time Swords (10–11 c.)*, SUC 1, 2011, p. 35–45; IDEM, *A New Byzantine Type of Swords (7th–11th Centuries)*, [in:] *Niš and Byzantium*, vol. IX, ed. M. RAKOCIJA, Niš 2011, p. 113–124; IDEM, *Byzantine Weaponry and Military Equipment in the Homilies of St Gregory of Nazianzus (Paris, Gr. 510)*, FAH 30, 2017, p. 153–163; B. ЙОТОВ, *Въоръжението и снаряжението от българското средновековие (VII–XI век)*, Варна 2004.

⁴¹ In the New Testament, the Massacre of the Innocents is the incident in the Nativity narrative of the Gospel of Matthew, in which Herod the Great, king of Judea, orders the execution of all male children aged two and under in the vicinity of Bethlehem. In such way, Herod tried to protect himself against a possible competitor – Jesus, a new Jewish king, who was just born. – Bible: Mt 2: 16–18 (see: *The Gospel according to Matthew*, ed. L. MORRIS, Grand Rapids 1992).

⁴² In all probability, it is one of the first depictions of such scene known to us in Armenian art.

⁴³ The garments of the King echoes the royal regalia gifted to the Bagratids by the Baghdad and Byzantium’s Court: in AD 890 the Emperor Leo VI sent to King Smbat I *beautiful weapons, ornaments, robes wrought with gold, goblets, and cups, and girdles of pure gold studded with gems* to confirm his status in the eyes of the Byzantine court – YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC’I, *History of Armenia*, trans. K. MAKSOUDIAN, Atlanta 1987, p. 138. And already in 862 AD the Caliph had sent to the King Ashot I in 884 for its investiture to Kingship “a royal crown”, which was formally presented to Ashot together with royal robes, horses, weapons, and ornaments (see A. EASTMOND, L. JONES, *Robing, Power, and Legitimacy in Armenia and Georgia*, [in:] *Robes and Honor. The Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. S. GORDON, New York–Basingstoke 2001 [= NMA], p. 150, 152; L. JONES, *Between Islam...*, p. 21).

⁴⁴ The soldier show to be more similar to a Muslim warrior than to a Roman one: he wears an extremely long cloth, typical of Muslim fashion in Sāmānid Armies, and it is virtually identical to the dress worn by Perseus in the miniature of the Kitāb-Al-Sufār (Book of the Stars) of Abd Al Raḥmān Al Sūfi, made in Egypt, Iraq or Iran in around 1009 AD (Fig. 11). – D. NICOLLE, *Armies of the Caliphates (862–1098)*, Oxford 1998, p. 42, 44. In this miniature (Bodleian Library, Ms. 144, f. 111)

kill him. The Warrior is represented without any armour, only in a hat and a tunic, and with an empty scabbard hanging from his waist belt⁴⁵.

On the fresco we could see a straight two-edged sword with unusual sleeve cross-guard with a Π -shaped sleeve facing to the blade (Figs. 4–6). According to the righteous remark made by the Bulgarian historian Valery Yotov *the typology of swords is often a typology of the sword-guards*⁴⁶.

The swords with the sleeve cross-guards are one of the “Byzantine”⁴⁷ types of swords which were identified and researched by Valery Yotov⁴⁸, Gennady Baranov⁴⁹, Deyan Rabovyanov⁵⁰, Marko Aleksić⁵¹, Samuil Kamburov⁵², Raffaele D’Amato⁵³, etc. These types of cross-guards were popular in the 8th–11th centuries in Kyivan Rus (Figs. 18–19), Balkan Peninsula, Middle East and Byzantium⁵⁴.

the tunic’s sleeve is pulled up like in the fresco of Aghtamar. The crown-helmet of the fresco in the Holy Cross Church shows Iranian influences and it is similar to a specimen recently found in a post-Islamic conquest grave from Beirut (Figs. 12–15), belonging to a man, maybe leader of the Christian community, killed by an arrow; this tiara helmet was found on the 9 August 2001 and it shows, exactly as in the fresco, an upper crown and a lower decorated rim.

⁴⁵ S. DER NERSESSIAN, *Aghtamar. Church...*, p. 39, fig. 64–66. The “Massacre of the Innocents” was a popular scene in Christian art since the 4th century AD, and especially in the Eastern Roman and Armenian ones. On frescoes and miniatures warriors, who kill children, were mainly portrayed with the swords, *Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus*, National Library of France, gr.Basil I510, f. 137r, 215v (Fig. 16–17); *Four Gospels*, Freer Gallery of Art, Ms. 32.18, f. 17v (see S. DER NERSESSIAN, *Armenian manuscripts in the Freer Gallery of Art*, Washington 1963, fig. 205); *Theodore Psalter*, British Library, Add. 19.352, f. 123r (see D. NICOLLE, *Arms and Armour of the Crusading Era: 1050–1350. Islam, Eastern Europe...*, fig. 33J); *Ardjesh Gospel*, Matenadaran, Ms. 4052, f. 1b (H. HAKOPIAN, *Armenian Miniature. Vaspurakan*, Yerevan 1978, fig. 5).

⁴⁶ V. YOTOV, *A New Byzantine...*, p. 115.

⁴⁷ The Romans in the Middle Age, nowadays conventionally referred to as the “Byzantines”, borrowed many types of weapons from neighbouring states, and consequently it is not possible to determine beyond all doubt which types of swords were created by them. The term “Byzantine swords” can be used conventionally to indicate a type of sword produced inside the Eastern Roman Empire or, perhaps, in Abbasid Caliphate which went for export to neighbouring countries. However, the origin of swords with sleeve cross-guards is unknown – С. КАМБУРОВ, “Арабски” ранносредновековни мечове в днешните български земи, *Ист* 25.3, 2017, p. 271; R. D’AMATO, *Byzantine Imperial...*, p. 5, 43–44; V. YOTOV, *A New Byzantine...*, p. 115.

⁴⁸ V. YOTOV, *Byzantine Time...*, p. 35–45; ИДЕМ, *A New Byzantine...*, p. 113–124; ИДЕМ, *Byzantine Weaponry...*, p. 153–163; В. ЙОТОВ, *Въоръжението и снаряжението...*

⁴⁹ Г. БАРАНОВ, *Новая находка...*, p. 87–105; ИДЕМ, *Византийские (средиземноморские)...*, p. 248–283; ИДЕМ, *Византийский меч...*, p. 171–177; ИДЕМ, *Новые данные...*, p. 91–98.

⁵⁰ D. RABOVYANOV, *Early Medieval Sword Guards from Bulgaria*, *ABu* 2, 2011, p. 73–86.

⁵¹ M. ALEKSIĆ, *Some Typological Features of Byzantine Spatha*, *ЗРВИ* 47, 2010, p. 121–138.

⁵² С. КАМБУРОВ, “Арабски” ранносредновековни..., p. 271.

⁵³ R. D’AMATO, *Byzantine Imperial...*, p. 5, 43–44.

⁵⁴ Note that under the typology of Byzantine swords suggested by T. Dawson (which was based on the miniatures of Basil’s Menologion), the sleeve cross-guard was presented under number 2 – T. DAWSON, *Byzantine Cavalryman...*, p. 5.

According to the typology of V. Yotov⁵⁵ and G. Baranov⁵⁶ done on the basis of several archaeological finds from Central-Eastern Europe and Near East, we can assume that on the fresco from Aghtamar Church is depicted the so-called “Garabonc” type of sleeve cross-guards (Figs. 20–21).

Currently, this is the most representative type of “Byzantine” cross-guards in terms of the number of archaeological finds and iconography⁵⁷. A specific feature of these guards is the presence of a Ω -shaped sleeve, which is fixed to the \perp -shaped throat of a scabbard, due to which the chance of losing the sword during the battle was decreasing⁵⁸. Sleeve cross-guards were created in order to protect the joint between the edge and the hilt from breaking⁵⁹.

According to another theory, the appearance of the sleeve cross-guards was connected with the way of grasping called “Italian grip”, realized when the swordsman’s index finger covers the stop and rests on the heel of the blade (*ricasso*)⁶⁰, and prevented also entering moisture and pollution inside the scabbard; and a further function during the fighting was the possibility to grasp with the extension the blade the enemy’s sword and in such a way decreasing the energy of the blow⁶¹.

The dissemination area of the “Garabonc” type of cross-guards was very wide (Fig. 21). We know archaeological finds from Hungary (Garabonc-I)⁶², Ukraine (Kharkiv, Vinnytsia and Cherkasy oblasts)⁶³ as well as a hilt of the unknown origin (most likely from Iran) from the Furusiyya Art Foundation Collection⁶⁴ which is clearly the most similar to the weapon of the Aghtamar fresco (Figs. 27–28). These findings were dated to the second half of the 8th–9th centuries. The average length of these swords is 84–90 cm, the blade width 3,5–4,8 cm, the sleeve width 6–7 cm⁶⁵.

⁵⁵ V. YOTOV, *A New Byzantine...*, p. 116–117; IDEM, *Byzantine Weaponry...*, p. 155–156, fig. 3–4.

⁵⁶ Г. БАРАНОВ, *Византийские (средиземноморские)...*, p. 251, fig. 21.

⁵⁷ Apart from the already quoted artworks, such swords with sleeve guards are visible on the 9th–11th centuries Cappadocian frescoes, like those of the “Dark Church” (Karanlik Kilise, second half of the 11th century). See: Figs. 22–24 (Saint Michail); Fig. 25 (Longinos at the Crucifixion); Fig. 26 (Saint George). In Byzantium, beside the other three types of sleeve-guards classified by Baranov, the modified “Garabonc” type survived until at least the 12th century (Fig. 30) (see n. 29).

⁵⁸ Г. БАРАНОВ, *Византийские (средиземноморские)...*, p. 258.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 251, 265.

⁶⁰ D. NICOLLE, *Byzantine and Islamic...*, p. 305. It needs to be noticed that the “Italian grip” existed already in the times of the Sasanian Empire – K. FARROKH, G. KARAMIAN, K. МАКСЫМУК, *A Synopsis of Sasanian Military Organization and Combat Units*, Siedlce–Tehran 2018, p. 35–36, fig. 32–34.

⁶¹ Г. БАРАНОВ, *Византийские (средиземноморские)...*, p. 250; IDEM, *Византийский меч...*, p. 171.

⁶² For more information, see: Á. BÍRÓ, *Fegyverek a 10–11. századi Kárpát-medencében*, Budapest 2012 (unpublished PhD dissertation), p. 276–280, 291–292; B. SZŐKE, *Karoling-kori szolgálónépi temetkezések Mosaburg/Zalavár vonzáskörzetében: Garabonc-Ófalu III*, ZM 5, 1994, p. 263.

⁶³ We think that the cross-guard of the sword from the territory of Cherkasy oblast is the less similar to Aghtamar’s cross-guard because of the presence of a decorative figure in the arch of the sleeve, which resembles a “heraldic lily”. – Г. БАРАНОВ, *Византийские (средиземноморские)...*, p. 252.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, fig. 2–6.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 251–252, 260; V. YOTOV, *Byzantine Weaponry...*, p. 155–156, fig. 3–4.

Although it is difficult to state any exact information about their origin or centre of production, the most part of the quoted scholars agree on the circumstance that this kind of swords were of Eastern Roman origin, and probably produced in the military workshops of the Eastern Roman Empire.

As we have already mentioned, the pictorial evidence of similar type of sleeve cross-guards is widely observable in the Byzantium's pictorial sources from 9th to 11th centuries (Figs. 16–17, 22–26).

To add a further example, on the miniature “The Martyrdom of St. Cyprian” (Fig. 29) from *Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus* (879–882)⁶⁶ a warrior drawing out his sword from the scabbard is depicted holding such kind of sword. On this miniature the sleeve of the cross-guard is presented in the form of two lines, which grasp the blade from both sides, exactly like the “Garabonc” type⁶⁷.

Moreover, on the miniatures from the Menologion of Basil II (end of the 10th century) the “Garabonc” type of sleeve cross-guard can be seen (Figs. 33–34)⁶⁸ together with the developed “Garabonc” type (Figs. 35–37)⁶⁹ illustrated also on the Cappadocian frescoes (Fig. 22)⁷⁰.

The use of such swords by Armenian warriors of Bagratid Era is further attested in the very famous Goliath sculpture from the Aghtamar Church. A very detailed observation of the cross-guard of the sword of Goliath, in comparison with the swords of the Executioners depicted in the *Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus* (Figs. 16–17)⁷¹ reveals as the “Garabonc” type with the extension shaped like a lily flower could be possibly identified on the relief of Aghtamar too, which is therefore representing a further sleeved cross-guard of “Byzantine” typology (Fig. 38).

There is no doubt that the sword of Goliath belongs to the categories of the straight double-edged sword. The problem is if really, as supposed in previous works, the quillons (cross-guard) are turned down towards the blade or if what we think to be the quillons are in reality the extension of the sleeve cross-guard, like in the swords of the Paris Manuscript (Figs. 16–17). Contemporary swords

⁶⁶ Г. БАРАНОВ, *Византийские (средиземноморские)...*, p. 272; V. УОТОВ, *Byzantine Weaponry...*, p. 155–156, fig. 3–4.

⁶⁷ The samples can be multiplied. In the same manuscript, the Garabonc type sword is illustrated in the hands of the executioner of Saint Paul (Fig. 31) and in those of the Archangel Michail (Fig. 32).

⁶⁸ *Menologion of Basil II*, Vatican Library, Ms. Vat. gr. 1613, f. 179, 189; See also f. 49 in: Г. БАРАНОВ, *Новая находка...*, fig. 9.

⁶⁹ *Menologion of Basil II*, f. 18, 33, 122.

⁷⁰ Note that on the mosaic of St. Bacchus (1100) from Daphni Monastery (Athens, Greece) the similar Π -shaped sleeve is presented but with long and narrow quillons with small branches at the ends (Fig. 30). Taking into consideration some subjectivity of figurative sources, it is difficult to say if it is the next stage of development of the “Garabonc” type (what it is highly probable) of sleeve cross-guards or it is a new one. This idea has been suggested to us by the courtesy of G. Baranov (member of the Archaeologia Militaris Scientific Workshop at the Institute of Archaeology by the Russian Academy of Sciences).

⁷¹ *Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus*, National Library of France, gr. 510, f. 137r, 215v.

(10th–11th centuries) with the curved cross-guard were found in Georgia⁷², with all probability also of East-Roman production. Moreover, also the Harbaville triptych (representing military Saints as Roman cataphracts in the middle of 11th century) depicted the same cross-guard (Fig. 39). Both the interpretations can be kept⁷³, however the close-up photo of the Goliath sword seems to focus decisively on the representation, in the sculpture, of a “Garabonc” type sword with the cross-guard sleeve shaped as a lily flower (Fig. 38). This kind of sleeved cross-guard was still in use in the 10th–11th centuries, as proved by a find of a specimens from the fortress of Dinogetia⁷⁴.

The presence of Eastern Roman swords in the Bagratid Armies should not be a surprise. Not only a great number of Armenians enrolled in the Roman army of 10th century and were employed in Roman military outfits⁷⁵, not only did Byzantium, Armenia and Islamic States exchange influences in terms of military equipment⁷⁶, but the sources expressly recorded the gifts of weapons from the Roman Emperors to the Bagratid rulers⁷⁷.

It is worth noting that we know another example of the sleeve cross-guard from the territory of Armenia depicted on the door from Msho Arakelots monastery (1134). In the upper left corner of the door we see two horsemen, one of whom is trying to escape while the other pierces him through with a sword with the sleeve cross-guard (Figs. 40–42).

Again, we are in front of a sword with all probability reflecting the influence of Byzantium. The cross-guard is most similar to the “Galovo” and “Pliska-48” types⁷⁸ specimens of which were found in Central-Eastern Europe and Near East and dated to the 10th–11th centuries⁷⁹ or recently presented in private collections⁸⁰ (Fig. 43–44). Also, they are visible on Eastern Roman miniatures

⁷² M. TSURTSUMIA, *Medieval Sword and Sabre from the Georgian National Museum*, AMM 11, 2015, fig. 1.

⁷³ For more information on the topic, see D. DYMYDYUK, *Broń biała...*, p. 10–14, figs. 8–16.

⁷⁴ G. ȘTEFAN, I. BARNEA, M. COMȘA, E. COMȘA, *Dinogetia, Așezarea feudală timpurie de la Biserica-ța-Garvăn*, București 1967, fig. 35, n. 19.

⁷⁵ One of the greatest Roman Emperors of the 10th century, Iohannes Tzimiskes (969–976), was a member of a leading Armenian aristocratic family – D. NICOLLE, *No Way Overland, Evidence for Byzantine Arms and Armour on the 10th–11th Century Taurus Frontier*, [in:] *Warriors and their Weapons around the Time of the Crusades. Relationships between Byzantium, the West and the Islamic World*, ed. IDEM, London 2002 [= VCSS, CS756], p. 227.

⁷⁶ D. NICOLLE, *Byzantine and Islamic...*, p. 301–302.

⁷⁷ A. EASTMOND, L. JONES, *Robing, Power, and Legitimacy...*, p. 152.

⁷⁸ Г. БАРАНОВ, *Византийские (средиземноморские)...*, p. 255–257; I. NORMAN, *A Likely Byzantine or Fatimid Sword of the Xth–XIth Centuries*, 2019, <http://iainnorman.com/essays/2019/01/a-likely-byzantine-or-fatimid-sword-of-the-xth-xith-centuries/> [30 X 2020]. Unfortunately, it is unclear which of these two types best match the sword depicted on the relief, because the sword on the relief is presented too schematically.

⁷⁹ D. DYMYDYUK, *The Relief on the Door...*, p. 211–213, fig. 2, 8–10.

⁸⁰ I. NORMAN, *A Likely Byzantine...*

from the Theodore Gospel (1066)⁸¹ and the Menologion of Basil II (end of the 10th century)⁸² (Figs. 45–48).

Conclusions

The analysis of the sword depicted on the fresco “Massacre of the Innocents” from the Aghtamar Church enables us to make conclusion that the “Garabonc” type of sleeve cross-guard is presented here. With all probability, also the “Garabonc” type of sleeve cross-guard lily shaped is visible on the Goliath’s sword carved on the outside of the same Church. In the painting of the killing of the Innocents in Aghtamar and in the sword of Goliath from the same church (Fig. 9) we see the first representations of a sleeve cross-guard in the Armenian art⁸³.

These are not only the first representation of a sleeve cross-guard in the Armenian art but, possibly, in South Caucasus region at all, that allow us to include these territories to the areas where such type of cross-guard was spread⁸⁴. This is highly probable considering that the archaeological finds of sleeve cross-guards were found on the territories under Byzantium or Muslim influences (Eastern Europe and Near East) and the Armenia, located between them, was a cross-road vehicle for the military technology adopting the sleeve cross-guard from both sides.

It is worth noting that the hilt from Aghtamar’s fresco (Fig. 5) is the most similar, by its shape, to the hilt from Furusiyya Art Foundation Collection (Iran?) (Figs. 27–28), which allows us to conclude that, perhaps, this kind of sleeve cross-guards came to Armenia from the territory of Iran or Near East⁸⁵. However, this does not exclude the reciprocal influence of Byzantium and Muslim potentates on the diffusion of such weapons in Armenia and Caucasus. The sword of Goliath, instead, shows a more incisive influence from the Byzantine “Garabonc” type 1 of the G. Baranov category⁸⁶.

⁸¹ *Theodore Psalter*, British Library, Add. 19.352, f. 123r, 191.

⁸² *Menologion of Basil II*, fig. f. 7, 135, 247, 311.

⁸³ What it is not wondering, considering that the first representations of such swords in Byzantium’s art began from the 9th century (for example in the mentioned Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus – figs. 16–17).

⁸⁴ Finds of cuffed guards within Europe alone include Bulgaria, Hungary, Serbia, Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia within the Caucasus to Syria, Egypt, Persia, and even in Makurai in modern day Sudan and Nubia (the fresco from the cathedral at Faras, modern day Sudan, Fig. 49) – I. NORMAN, *A Likely Byzantine...*; T. GÓRECKI, *Z problematyki ikonografii świętych wojowników w malarstwie ściennym katedry w Faras*, RMNW 24, 1980, p. 173–259; S. JAKOBIELSKI, *The Murals on Entrance Porch of the Faras Cathedral*, ET.SP 34, 2016, p. 75–94.

⁸⁵ It needs to be noticed that Byzantine swords were more standardized, while Muslim swords were more decorated because they were sold without a cross-guard, which every warrior could attach by himself – Г. БАРАНОВ, *Византийские (средиземноморские)...*, p. 252, 260; B. FEHÉR, *Byzantine Sword Art as Seen by the Arabs*, AA.ASH 41, 2001, p. 161.

⁸⁶ Г. БАРАНОВ, *Византийские (средиземноморские)...*, figs. 1, 7–8, 21.

Furthermore, based on the fact that the Aghtamar church was built in 915–921, we could extend the chronology of existence of the “Garabonc” type of sleeve cross-guards from the 8th–9th to the 8th–10th centuries, and probably even more, considering the “Garabonc” type represented on the Menologion of Basil II (Figs. 33–34, 36–37), the frescoes of Cappadocia (Figs. 22–26) and the mosaics of Daphni Monastery (Fig. 30), these latter very similar to the sword from the Furusiyya Art Foundation Collection.

Taking into consideration the fact that we know another depiction of a sleeve cross-guard (“Galovo” or “Pliska-48” type) on the door from the Msho Arakelots monastery (Figs. 40–42), we can suppose that other types of sleeve cross-guards could have been also popular in Armenia in 8th–11th/12th centuries, always following the influence of Byzantium.

With the help of the comparative analysis we have still again proved the idea that medieval figurative sources are a very accurate material for studying medieval military history. A strong evidence for this is very often the presence of the specific military details (in this case the depiction of a sword with a sleeve cross-guard) on the frescoes or other artworks, which helped us to identify exactly this type of the sword or weapon and fixing its chronology.

We believe that this study offers further research perspectives in terms of a deeper archaeological and graphic analysis of the sources, which will allow a more comprehensive reconstruction of the equipment of the Medieval Armenian warrior.

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ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig. 1. Localization of the Cathedral of the Holy Cross on Aghtamar island (915–921) (lake Van, modern Eastern Turkey).



Fig. 2. The Cathedral of the Holy Cross on Aghtamar island (915–921) (lake Van, modern Eastern Turkey), <https://travelarmenia.org/akhtamar-island-the-church-of-holy-cross/> [3 XI 2020].



Fig. 3. The Cathedral of the Holy Cross on Aghtamar island (915–921) (lake Van, modern Eastern Turkey). Photo courtesy of Dr. B. Kukjalko.



Fig. 4. Fresco “Massacre of the Innocents”, The Cathedral of the Holy Cross on Aghtamar island (915–921) (lake Van, modern Eastern Turkey). Photos by R. D’Amato.



Figs. 5–6. Fresco “Massacre of the Innocents”, The Cathedral of the Holy Cross on Aghtamar island (915–921) (lake Van, modern Eastern Turkey). Photos by R. D’Amato. Redrawing of the sword by Y. Hryshko.



Figs. 7–8. Relief “David and Goliath”, The Cathedral of the Holy Cross on Aghtamar island (915–921) (lake Van, modern Eastern Turkey). Photo courtesy of Dr. B. Kukjalko.



Fig. 9. Detail of the relief “Goliath”, The Cathedral of the Holy Cross on Aghtamar island (915–921) (lake Van, modern Eastern Turkey). Photo by R. D’Amato.



Fig. 10. Sword from Ani (10th–12th centuries) – Վ. ԱՐԱՎԱՅԱՆ, *Միջնադարյան Հայաստանի զենքերի տեսակները*, ՊՊԹ 2, 1950, fig. 5; Б. АРАКЕЛЯН, *Армения в IX–XIII вв.*, [in:] *Крым, Северо-Восточное Причерноморье и Закавказье в эпоху средневековья IV–XIII века*, ed. С. ПЛЕТНЕВА, Москва 2003, p. 342–343, fig. 156.1.



Fig. 11. Miniature “Perseus” (1009) – *Kitāb-Al-Sufār* (*Book of the Stars*) of *Abd Al Raḥmān Al Sūfi*, Bodleian Library, Ms. Marsh 144, f. 111. Library courtesy.



Fig. 12. Bronze headgear helmet or civil Tiara (8th–10th centuries AD) – Beirut American University, Lebanon, inv. U-1583.1. Photo by R. D’Amato, courtesy of the University.



Figs. 13–14. Bronze headgear helmet or civil Tiara (8th–10th centuries AD) – Beirut American University, Lebanon, inv. U-1583.1. Photo by R. D'Amato, courtesy of the University.



Fig. 15. Bronze headgear helmet or civil Tiara (8th–10th centuries AD) – Beirut American University, Lebanon, inv. U-1583.1. Photo by R. D'Amato, courtesy of the University.



Fig. 16. Miniature “The Killing of the innocents” (879–882) – *Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus*, National Library of France, gr. 510, f. 137r. Photo by R. D'Amato.



Fig. 17. Miniature “The Salomon Judgement” (879–882) – *Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus*, National Library of France, gr. 510, f. 215v. Photo by R. D’Amato.



Fig. 18. Fresco “Saint Theodoros” (11th century) – St. Sophia’s Cathedral (Kyiv, Ukraine). Photo by R. D’Amato, courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 19. Detail of the sword of the fresco “Saint Theodoros” (11th century) – St. Sophia’s Cathedral (Kyiv, Ukraine). Photo by R. D’Amato, courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 20. Archaeological finds of “Garabonc” type swords: a – Kharkiv oblast (Ukraine); b – Vynytsia oblast (Ukraine); c – Cherkasy oblast (Ukraine); d – Iran (?); e – Garabonc (Hungary) (8th–9th centuries) – V. YOTOV, *Byzantine Weaponry and Military Equipment in the Homilies of St Gregory of Nazianzus* (Paris, Gr. 510), FAH 30, 2017, p. 156, fig. 3–4.

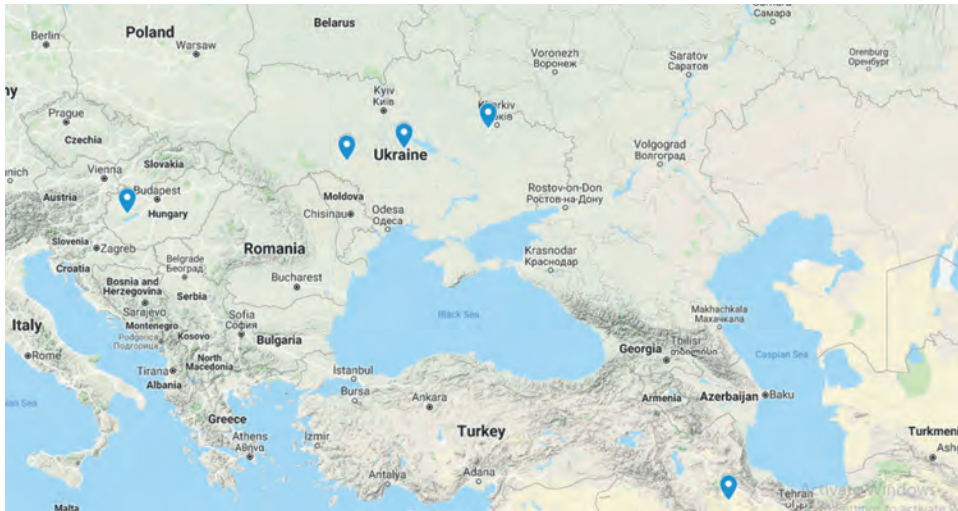


Fig. 21. Map of archaeological findings of “Garabonc” type swords: a – Kharkiv oblast (Ukraine); b – Vynytsia oblast (Ukraine); c – Cherkasy oblast (Ukraine); d – Iran (?); e – Garabonc (Hungary) (8th–9th centuries) – V. Yotov, *Byzantine Weaponry and Military Equipment in the Homilies of St Gregory of Nazianzus* (Paris, Gr. 510), FAH 30, 2017, p. 157, fig. 5.



Figs. 22–23. Fresco “The Arcistrategos Michail” (second half of the 11th century) – Karanlik Kilise (The Dark Church, Cappadocia, Turkey). Photo by R. D’Amato.



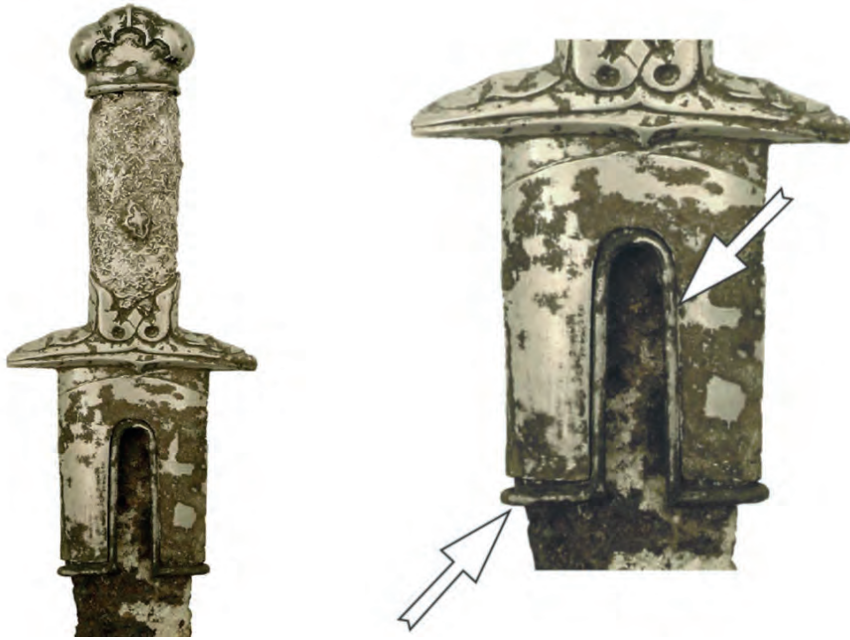
Fig. 24. Fresco “The Arcistrategos Michail” (second half of the 11th century) – Karanlik Kilise (The Dark Church, Cappadocia, Turkey). Photo by R. D’Amato.



Fig. 25. Fresco “Longinos at the Crucifixion” (second half of the 11th century) – Karanlik Kilise (The Dark Church, Cappadocia, Turkey). Photo by R. D’Amato.



Fig. 26. Fresco “Saint Georgios” (second half of the 11th century) – Karanlik Kilise (The Dark Church, Cappadocia, Turkey). Photo by R. D’Amato.



Figs. 27–28. Hilt from the Furusiyya Art Foundation Collection (most likely it came from Iran, 8th–9th centuries) Pointers shows a throat of a scabbard which is located under the sleeve of the sword-guard – Г. БАРАНОВ, *Византийские (средиземноморские) мечи с перекрестьями с муфтой IX–XI вв.*, МАИАСК 9, 2017, fig. 5, 25.



Fig. 29. Miniature “The Martyrdom of St. Cyprian” (879–882) – *Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus*, National Library of France, gr. 510, f. 332v/678v. Redrawing of the sword – V. ЮРОВ, *Byzantine Weaponry and Military Equipment in the Homilies of St Gregory of Nazianzus* (Paris, Gr. 510), FAH 30, 2017, p. 158, fig. 9.



Fig. 30. Mosaic with the picture of St. Bacchus (around 1100) – *Daphni Monastery* (Athens, Greece) – Г. БАРАНОВ, *Византийские (средиземноморские) мечи с перекрестьями с муфтой IX–XI вв.*, МАИАСК 9, 2017, fig. 17).



Fig. 31. Miniature “The execution of Saint Paul” (879–882) – *Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus*, National Library of France, gr. 510, f. 78. Photo by R. D’Amato, courtesy of National Library of France.



Fig. 32. Miniature “The Archangel Michail and Joshua” (879–882) – *Homilies of St. Gregory of Nazianzus*, National Library of France, gr. 510, f. 466. Photo by R. D’Amato, courtesy of National Library of France.



Fig. 33. Miniature “The martyr of Saints Milis and his companions Evor and Evoi” (detail) (c. 1000 AD) – *Menologion of Basil II*, Vatican Library, gr. 1613, f. 179. Courtesy of the Vatican Library.



Fig. 34. Miniature “The martyr of Saint Platon” (detail) (c. 1000 AD) – *Menologion of Basil II*, Vatican Library, gr. 1613, f. 189. Courtesy of the Vatican Library.



Fig. 35. Miniature “The martyr of Saint Evdoxios and companions” (detail) (c. 1000 AD) – *Menologion of Basil II*, facsimile copy in Fanar Library (Istanbul), f. 18. Photo by R. D’Amato, courtesy of the Library.



Fig. 36. Miniature “The martyr of Saints Macrobios and Jordanos” (detail) (c. 1000 AD) – *Menologion of Basil II*, Vatican Library, gr. 1613, f. 33. Courtesy of the Vatican Library.



Fig. 37. Miniature “The martyr of Saint Selot and companions” (detail) (c. 1000 AD) – *Menologion of Basil II*, facsimile copy in Fanar Library (Istanbul), f. 122. Photo by R. D’Amato, courtesy of the Library.



Fig. 38. Comparisons between the swords of figs. 15–16 and that of the Aghtamar Goliath (fig. 9). Photo by R. D’Amato.



Fig. 39. The Tryptich Harbaville (Louvre) (late 10th century AD). Photo by R. D'Amato.



Fig. 40. Relief on the door of Msho Arakelots monastery (AD 1134) – History Museum of Armenia. Photo by D. Dymydyuk, courtesy of the Museum.



Figs. 41–42. Relief on the door of Msho Arakelots monastery (AD 1134) – History Museum of Armenia. Photo by D. Dymydyuk, courtesy of the Museum.



Fig. 43. Sword with sleeve cross-guard from the collection of Dr. Lee Jones (10th–11th centuries) (Syria or Balkans) – I. NORMAN, *A Likely Byzantine or Fatimid Sword of the Xth–XIth Centuries*, 2019, <http://iainnorman.com/essays/2019/01/a-likely-byzantine-or-fatimid-sword-of-the-xth-xith-centuries/> [30 X 2020].



Fig. 44. Sleeve cross-guard from Chernihiv, Ukraine (2018). Finding of grave robbers – D. DYMYDYUK, *The Relief on the Door of the Msho Arakelots Monastery (1134) as a Source for Studying Arms and Armour of Medieval Armenian Warriors*, SCer 9, 2019, fig. 8.



Fig. 45. Miniature “The martyr of Saint Anthimios of Nicomedia” (detail) (c. 1000 AD) – *Menologion of Basil II*, facsimile copy in Fanar Library (Istanbul), f. 7. Photo by R. D’Amato, courtesy of the Library.



Fig. 46. Miniature “The martyr of Saints Aretas and his congregation” (detail) (c. 1000 AD) – *Menologion of Basil II*, Vatican Library, gr. 1613, f. 135. Courtesy of the Vatican Library.



Fig. 47. Miniature “The martyr of Saint Tatiana” (detail) (c. 1000 AD) – *Menologion of Basil II*, Vatican Library, gr. 1613, f. 311. Courtesy of the Vatican Library.



Fig. 48. Miniature “David defeats Goliath” (1066 AD) – *Theodore Gospel*, British Library, Ms. 19.352, f. 191, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=add_ms_19352_f207v [30 VIII 2020].



Fig. 49. Fresco “Sword of Saint Michail Archangel” (detail) (c. 11th/12th century AD) – Faras Cathedral (southern wall of the outer entrance to the Church), National Museum in Warsaw, inv. 149671. Photo by R. D’Amato.