

# ARMENIAN HISTORY TIMELINE

## Key Dates

### 1. Formative Era and the Kingdom of Ararat

- 5000 BC Armenian language becomes a separate Indo-European language
- 2700 BC First mention of Haya in Akkadian inscriptions
- 2260 BC First mention of Armenia in Sumerian inscriptions
- 1300 BC **Founding of Kingdom of Ararat (Urartu)**
- 782 BC Founding of Erebuni/Erevan
- 585 BC **Yervandian Dynasty (570-200) established when Kingdom of Ararat falls to Persians (Medes)**
- 520 BC *Armenia* translated as *Urartu* on Behistun Inscription commemorating Darius' Persian Empire
- 336 BC Alexander the Great, Armenia incorporated into Seleucid Kingdom

### 2. Artashesian Kingdom

- 189 BC **Artashes I – Consolidated Armenian State, founds Armenian dynasty that reaches its height under Tigran the Great and rules until 31 AD**
- 95 BC Tigran the Great consolidates Armenian state with neighbors against Rome
- 0 **Birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ**
- 33 **The Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ**
- 35-60 The Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew bring Christianity to Armenia

### 3. Arshakuni Kingdom

- 66 **Trdat I crowned King – founding Arshakuni dynasty that ruled Armenia through 428 during Armenia's conversion to Christianity**

### 4. Adoption of Christianity, Golden Age

- 301 **St. Grigor (Gregory the Illuminator) converts King Trdat to Christianity and Armenia becomes the first Christian nation**
- 303 Etchmiadzin (meaning the only-begotten descended) is established after St. Gregory has a vision
- 325 The First Ecumenical Council is held in Nicea; the Nicene Creed is formulated, St. Aristakes (St. Gregory's son, later catholicos, attends from Armenia)
- 353 St. Nerses the Great (-373), St. Gregory's great grandson, establishes schools, hospitals, orphanages, monasteries
- 354 St. Augustine
- 381 The Second Ecumenical Council held in Constantinople
- 387 Partition of Armenia between Byzantium/Rome and Persia
- 404-6 **The Armenian alphabet is created thanks to Catholicos Sahag and vardapet Mesrob, who lead a group of Holy Translators in rendering the Bible and Armenian Church services into Armenian, ushering in the Golden Age of Armenian Culture.**
- 431 The Third Ecumenical Council is held in Ephesus (the basic dogmas and teachings of the Armenian Church are based on the declarations of the three ecumenical councils (1st Nicea 325, 2nd Constantinople 381))
- 451 **The Battle of Avarayr is fought against the Persians in defense of Christianity; led by St. Vartan, who is martyred. Armenia proves its commitment to the Christian faith. The Fourth Ecumenical Council is held at Chalcedon, which the Armenian Church does not attend**
- 476 **Fall of Rome**
- 484 The Treaty of Nvarsak is signed with the Persians, restoring Armenian local autonomy and guaranteeing Armenia's religious freedom.
- 607 The Armenian Church formally objects to the Council of Chalcedon's formulation about Christ's human and divine nature

## 8. Search for Statehood: Armenia between Turks and Persians

- 1400 Turkomans invade Armenia; Tamerlane devastates Armenia
- 1441 The Holy See moved back to the monastery of Etchmiadzin in Vagharshapat by decision of a church council, with as many as 700 clergy and laity participating
- 1492 Columbus discovers America
- 1512 First Armenian printed book in Venice by Hakob Meghapart (cf. Gutenberg Bible (1455))
- 1517 Martin Luther begins Protestant Movement, Machiavelli writes *The Prince*
- 1555 Armenia divided between Ottoman Empire and Persia
- 1605 Shah Abbas (1587-1629) Persian King resettles Armenians to Isfahan from Eastern Armenia
- 1618 First Armenian in America – Martin the Armenian, silk producer
- 1629 St. Movses of Tatev (-1632) reformed and revived the Church, protecting it from Muslim repression
- 1651 At the Council of Jerusalem, Pilipos I Aghbaketsi Catholicos of All Armenians and Nerses Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, meet and set canons defining the limits of the jurisdiction of the two Sees
- 1666 First printed Armenian Bible (Amsterdam) by Voskan vardapet
- 1701 Israel Ori meets with Russian Tsar Peter the Great to seek Russian assistance in liberating Armenia from the Persians
- 1701 A Benedictine order founded by Mkhitar Sebastatsi, who is invited by Roman Catholic Church to settle on the island of San Lazzaro in Venice; the order's scholarship and education helps fuel the Armenian 19th century renaissance
- 1715 Hovhannes Kolot Baghishetsi becomes Patriarch of Constantinople, founds schools, publishes Armenian classics
- 1717 Grigor Shirvantsi accepts the position of Patriarch of Jerusalem. called "shghtayakir" ("chain bearer") because he wears a chain around his neck until the debts of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem are fully paid
- 1722 Davit Bek leads successful rebellion against Persians and Ottomans in Siunik
- 1760 Hovsep Emin, merchant of Calcutta, who solicited the support of England and Russia for the liberation of Armenia
- 1790 Catholicos Simeon Yerevantsi founds first printing press at Etchmiadzin, introduces *Der Voghormya* into the Badarak, reorganizes the Church Calendar

## 9. Regaining Autonomy: Russian and Ottoman Empires

- 1813 Treaty of Gulistan – Russia annexes large parts of Georgia and Karabagh/Artsakh from Persia, including Elizavetpol (Gandzak, Karabagh)
- 1828 Treaty of Turkmenchai – Russia annexes Yerevan, Nakhichevan from Persia. Archbishop Nerses Ashtaraketsi (future catholicos) led the Armenian contingents fighting under the Russian flag. Catholicos Nerses established Nersisian Jemaran in Tiflis, where many Armenian cultural figures studied, e.g., Hovhannes Toumanian, Nikol Aghbalian, Derenik Demirchian
- 1829 Treaty of Adrianopolis, whereby Mt. Ararat became part of the Armenian provinces of the Russian Empire and Bayazit, Kars and Erzerum became part of the Ottoman Empire
- 1836 Polozhenie ("statute") adopted by Tsarist Regime to regulate Armenian Church
- 1863 Constitution adopted by the Ottoman Court to govern Armenian Community (Millet) in the Ottoman Empire
- 1869 Bishop Mkrtych Khrimian elected Patriarch of Constantinople, later Catholicos (1892-1907); Khrimian Hayrig captured the imagination of the nation through his writings, patriotism, humility and spiritual leadership
- 1878 Treaties of San Stefano and Berlin. Kars and Ardahan ceded by Ottoman Empire to Russian Empire.
- 1882 Egypt separated from Ottoman Empire, becomes British Protectorate
- 1894-6 Sultan Hamid's Massacres of Armenians, 300,000 Armenians die, from Constantinople to Sasun to Trebizond to Van and Urfa; some resistance in Zeitun, but largely attacks on defenseless civilian population
- 1898 The Diocese of the Armenian Church in America is established by Catholicos Mkrtych Khrimian (its jurisdiction covers No. and So. America)

- human and divine nature
- 614 The Persians destroy many of the over 70 Armenian churches and monasteries in Jerusalem. Many of these are never rebuilt
- 625 Catholicos Komitas Aghtsetsi rebuilds upper parts of Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin and replaces old chapel of St. Hripsimé with a sanctuary that is still extant, writes hymns, including him to the Martyred Virgins

### 5. First Encounter with Islam

- 640 The first Arab invasion of Armenia, Armenians retain local autonomy as vassals of the Arabs
- 717 St. Hovhan Odznetsi (St. John of Odzun) (-728) – Canonbook, Theology, Hymns
- 850 Vikings invade England
- 850 Cyril and Methodius create Cyrillic Alphabet, convert Russia

### 6. Kingdom of Ani

- 885 Kingdom of Ani – Armenian self-rule established by Ashot I Bagratuni, consolidated by Ashot II Yerkat ('Iron') Bagratuni
- ca. 900 David of Sassoon epic (England – *Beowulf*, Japan – *Tale of Genji*) (10th Cent.)
- 915 Aghtamar is built in Lake Van by architect Manuel
- 947 The Catholicos Anania moves the See from Varag to Argina (near Ani). During Anania's pontificate, monasteries such as Sanahin and Narek are built
- 951 St. Grigor Narekatsi (St. Gregory of Narek) (-1003), *Book of Prayer* (also known as *Book of Lamentations*), wrote many hymns, odes used in the Armenian Church
- 990 Gagik I becomes King. Under Gagik I, the Bagratuni capital of Ani reaches its zenith and is renowned as "the city of 1,001 churches," with the mother cathedral designed by the architect Trdat. Armenian architecture enters its golden age and its influence is felt as far as western Europe
- 1054 Great Schism between Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches
- 1071 Battle of Manzikert (Manazgerd) – Turks invade Armenia, Fall of Ani (1064)
- 1097 First Crusade, assisted by the Armenians of Caesarea, Cilicia, and Syria, in their efforts to capture the Holy Land from Islam. For the next three centuries, the Armenians take part in the Crusade

### 7. Cilician Kingdom

- 1080 Kingdom of Cilicia founded, start of Rubinian Dynasty
- 1100 St. Nerses Shnorhali (1173), poet, writer, theologian, ecumenical leader, liturgical reformer, revised *Book of Hours*, wrote many new hymns
- 1130 Mkhitar Gosh (1130-1213) compiled an Armenian Law Code, founded the university at Goshavank, wrote fables
- 1149 The Holy See was moved to Hromkla, meaning 'Roman castle', just outside Cilicia
- 1198 Prince Levon II (1187-), becomes King Levon I, was consecrated King by the Catholicos Grigor VI Apirat on Christmas Day 1199 in Tarsus and received his crown from the King of Germany through the Pope's emissary
- 1200 Zakarians liberate parts of Armenia. They or their vassals (Orbelians, Proshians) built or expanded many monasteries throughout Armenia including Geghard, Kecharis, Haghartsin, Sanahin, Goshavank
- 1226 King Hetum I of Cilicia – Founds dynasty that rules until 1375
- 1236 Mongols capture Ani
- 1292 The Holy See moved to Sis, the capital of the Armenian kingdom in Cilicia
- 1346 St. Grigor Tatevatsi (St. Gregory of Tatev) (-1409), vardapet, philosopher, educator and theologian, is born in Vayots Dzor. Along with Hovhannes Vorotnetsi, his teacher and founder of the university at Tatev, he formulated the theology of the Armenian Church according medieval Western scholastic methods as a defense against proselytizing by Roman Catholic missionaries
- 1375 Egyptian Mamelukes conquer Cilician Kingdom

- 1903 Catholicos Mkrtich resists Russian attempts to confiscate Armenian Church property
- 1908 Adana Massacres – 30,000 Armenian civilians killed by Ottoman Empire
- 1914 WWI (-1918). Armenian-American volunteers participate in combat as legionnaires
- 1915 The first genocide of the 20th century; the Ottoman Empire exterminates the Armenian population in Turkey; nearly 2000 churches destroyed, over 3,000 clergy perish and 1.5 million Armenians killed. The Church commemorates the victims of the Genocide annually on April 24.

### 10. Restored Statehood

- 1918 Catholicos Gevorg V and Bishop Karekin Hovsepian rally the troops at the Battle of Sardarapat (May 24), Bash-Aparan, Karakilisa, ringing the bells of Armenia's churches and the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin
- 1918 Armenia becomes independent Republic after 600 years of statelessness
- 1920 British Mandate over Palestine (based on Balfour Declaration 1917)
- 1920 Armenia is taken over by the Soviets (November 29)
- 1921 Caucasus Bureau of Communist Party transfer Karabagh to Azerbaijan (June 21)
- 1939 WWII (-1945) Armenians around the world participate in the war effort to defeat Nazism.
- 1943 Archbishop Karekin Hovsepian, primate of American Diocese (Eastern) (1940-44) is elected Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia (1943-1952)
- 1945 Catholicos Gevorg VI Chokhchian elected to see vacant from 1938 to 1944 Karekin I of the Great House of Cilicia present. Seminary at Etchmiadzin is reopened.
- 1948 State of Israel founded; Old City Jerusalem remains under Jordanian rule
- 1955 Catholicos Vazken I elected, greatly strengthens Etchmiadzin under the very difficult conditions of Soviet rule, builds ties with diaspora and in 1962 joins World Council of Churches
- 1967 Old City Jerusalem under Israeli rule
- 1983 Catholicos Khoren I dies at Antelias. Karekin II Sarkisian becomes Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia
- 1985 Soviet Reform movement "Glasnost" (openness) and "Perestroika" (reform) begin under Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev
- 1988 Karabagh movement begins February 19; anti-Armenian riots in Sumgait; Spitak – Leninakan (Gyumri) – Kirovakan (Vanadzor) earthquake, December 7
- 1990 Abp. Torkom I Manoogian elected Patriarch of Jerusalem
- 1991 Boris Yeltsin comes to power after August putsch deposes Gorbachev
- 1991 September 21, Armenia votes for independence, freedom to practice Christianity reinstated, church properties restored
- 1991 Levon Ter Petrosyan elected President of Armenia
- 1992 Battle of Shushi (May 9), Armenians go on to liberate Karabagh
- 1994 Vazken I, Catholicos of All Armenians, passes away
- 1995 Karekin II of the Great House of Cilicia is elected Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians at Etchmiadzin
- 1995 Armenia adopts constitution
- 1996 Aram I is elected Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia in Antelias, Lebanon
- 1996 Levon Ter-Petrosyan re-elected President of Armenia
- 1998 Abp. Mesrob II Mutafian elected Patriarch of Constantinople, Turkey
- 1998 Robert Kocharian elected President of Armenia
- 1999 Catholicos Karekin I passes away. Abp. Karekin Nersisian, Primate of the Araratian Diocese, is elected Karekin II Catholicos of All Armenians
- 2001 1700th Anniversary of Armenia's conversion to Christianity; Pope John-Paul II, first Roman Catholic Pope to visit Armenia; His Holiness Bartholomew I, first Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople to visit Armenia
- 2003 Robert Kocharian re-elected President of Armenia
- 2005 Armenia adopts constitutional reforms, permitting dual citizenship, affirming the mission of the Armenian Church as Armenia's national church
- 2008 Serzh Sargsian elected President of Armenia