

The Christian martyrs in Armenia: Three portraits, three fates

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The article describes hagiographical stories about three Christian martyrs, who were killed in Great Armenia under pagan rule during first three centuries — St. Sandukht, St. Sukias and St. Hripsime. The author focuses on the reports about them in the texts of Armenian historians — Moses Khorenatsi, Hovhannes Draskhanakertsi and Agathangelos. According to the legend of the Armenian Apostolic Church, the holy virgin-princess Sandukht was christianized by Apostle Thaddeus and executed by the order of her father, after many attempts to persuade her to renounce new faith. Holy Sukias with his companions had been killed for the Christian faith by Alani warlord king after years of reclusion in the mountains of Armenia, and the holy martyr Hripsime, who did not want to lose her chastity, with her friends and mentor Gayane were killed by the servants of the king Tiridates the Great at the beginning of the 4th century shortly before the adoption of Christianity as the national religion. While martyrs Sukias and Hripsime with their friends are the general Christian saints, St. Sandukht isn't known in Orthodox and Catholic Churches. The author retells and analyses content of the considered legends, and raises the question of the historicity of the characters. The researcher focuses on the St. Hripsime image, studying it in comparison with the images of such chaste virgins as St. Irina and St. Agnes.



Key words: [martyr](#), [Great Armenia](#), [Christianity](#), [Sandukht](#), [Sukias](#), [Hripsime](#)

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