

RELICS OF THE ORAL TRADITION OF THE ARTSAKH-ARMENIANS EMIGRATED TO PYATIGORSK

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Abstract

In the summer of 1964, the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of Armenia had sent me on an academic mission to the town of Pyatigorsk in the territory of Stavropol, Russia to study the lifestyle and folklore of the Armenian ethnic group living there.

When I arrived at Pyatigorsk, I was informed that Armenians emigrated from Karabakh (Artsakh) were living in a separate district. In those years Karabakh was inaccessible for the armenologist-intellectuals. The Azeri authorities did not allow the Armenian archaeologists to go there and make excavations, inasmuch as they were terrified from the fact that they would bring to light numerous and irrefutable proofs testifying that that marvelous territory, bestowed on them in 1921, was of a native Armenian origin.

But for me, as a folklorist-ethnographer, it was interesting to know when and whence they had migrated to Pyatigorsk, what changes they had undergone under the conditions of coexistence with the native people, whether they remained sincere to the traditions of their cradle, etc.

Keywords: Pyatigorsk, Karabagh, Artsakh, Russia, narrator, oral tradition, epic, lyric and saying folklore, Armenian dialect

The Artsakhtsi Narrators of Pyatigorsk

Among the representatives of the Armenian community, living in a separate quarter of the town of Pyatigorsk, the first to attract my attention were the elderly Artsakh-Armenian women seated at the doors of their cottages, the spindle in their hands, who spun wool in order to knit colored and beautiful rugs, according to the tradition of their cradle. They were wearing the distinctive Karabakh costume, in black and green, also with a harmonious combination of black and violet. Their frontal ornaments were adorned with silver coins, and the sleeves of their blouses and costumes were fitted in figured silver small bells. These elderly women wore around their waist silver belts which constantly kept tight the posture of even the aged women. My very first impression was pleasing and reassuring. I was thinking that these women who had externally maintained the local shade of their cradle would, undoubtedly, have also kept in the abysses of their soul and mind, the spiritual values bequeathed by their ancestors.

During our heart-to-heart talk, it became evident that many of them had emigrated from Gandzak and Artsakh still in 1905-1906, as a consequence of Tatar-Azerbaijani encroaching, interracial clashes and, subsequently, in 1921, when the authorities of the Soviet Union granted Nakhidjevan and Karabakh to Azerbaijan, the situation of the Armenians began to deteriorate with every passing day, giving rise to new waves of exodus. Although the display of national discrimination was excluded by the Soviet constitution, however, the fact was that, as a consequence of the Armenian-hating policy, conducted by the Azeris, the territories of Nakhidjevan and Artsakh were gradually being deprived of Armenians. In the hope of finding work and conditions of safe life, many Armenians migrated to Baku, Sumgayit, as well as Russia. That well-planned and attractive Armenian district in the neighborhood of Pyatigorsk the natives called "Armenian New York."

Still in the second half of the XIX century there existed in Pyatigorsk an Armenian community. The Armenian St. Translators' Church was built. The Armenian population was engaged primarily in commerce.

While already in the second half of the XX century, in 1964, when I made their acquaintance, the Artsakh-Armenian emigrants lived there modestly, but with an honorable Armenian-spirited life. They lived assembled, they avoided mixed marriages, although some cases were observed. Though the children studied at the nearby Russian school, however, the spoken language at home continued to be the powerful Artsakh dialect. The men worked at the local factories or at the collective farms, hence my narrators were exclusively housewives of the senior generation, aged from 70 to 90 years old, as an exception were the 3-year-old *Margarita* and *Angela Avagiants* twin sisters who were babbling in the Artsakh dialect.

In the 20 days of the scientific expedition I had the opportunity to get acquainted and to take notes from 12 narrators of the senior generation whose concise biography and particular details of their verbal skill (100 units) I have written down, noting the day and place of the recording.

My 12 narrators, who were born in Karabakh (Artsakh) and were living in Pyatigorsk, are the following:

ANNA BAGDASSAROVNA AKOPOVA (b. 1876), 88 years old,

MOTHER MAYKO (b. 1897), 67 years old,

VARSENIK POGHOSSIAN (b. 1904), 60 years old,

AREVHAT VARDANIAN (b. 1905), 59 years old,

LOUSSIK SARGSIAN (b. 1904), 60 years old,

SONIA DANIELIAN (b. 1904), 60 years old,

VARDANOUSH GRIGORIAN (b. 1904), 60 years old,

TANKE (TANKAGIN) SARGSIAN (b. 1903), 61 years old,

ASHKHEN MOUSSAYEL VANILOVA (b. 1904), 60 years old,

MARGARIT ROUBEN AVAGIANTS (b. 1961), 3 years old,

ANGELA ROUBEN AVAGIANTS (b. 1961), 3 years old.



Woman from Artsakh (Karabagh)

The Genre and Thematic Peculiarities of the Folklore of the Artsakh-Armenians Emigrated to Pyatigorsk

In only 20 days I have written down from the 2.000 Armenian community of Pyatigorsk, folklore materials in their dialectal nuances.¹

The said materials are of **epic**, **lyric** and **saying** characters:

I. Epic Folklore – *Fantastic fairy tales* (6), *Realistic fairy tales* (4), *fables* (2),

II. Lyric Folklore – *Lullabies* (10), *Love songs* (20), *Festive songs* (3), *Wedding ceremony and song* (1), *Labor songs* (4), *Comic songs* (3), *Patriotic and Soldier songs* (10),

III. Saying Folklore – *Baby talk* (2), *Riddles* (7), *Proverbs* (12), *Tongue-twisters* (4), *Wishes* (5), *Benedictions* (7).

¹ The dialectal nuances of the folklore materials were proven by **Rouben Grigoryan** – the journalist, poet of Artsakh origin.

I. In the section of **Epic Folklore**, the *fantastic* and the *realistic fairy tales* with their subject content and their motive system, have a significant bearing on the Armenian folk tales of historic Armenia and Cilicia.² Inasmuch as the migration of Armenians from the Armenian-inhabited localities of Greater Armenia, also from Artsakh, in the 11th-13th centuries, to Cilicia had attained huge proportions,³ the following fairy tales “*The snake boy*” (Օխց տղան), “*The water of immortality*” (Անմահական ճփորը), “*The fairy tale of the three brothers*” (Իրեք ախպոր հեքիաթը), “*The King’s daughter*” (Թաքավերեն ախշիզը), “*The hunter Piroum*” (Օվշի Փիրուսը), etc., are noteworthy in this respect, which have also their parallel in the tales of Mother Armenia.

The *fantastic fairy tales* of the Armenians of Artsakh usually started with the traditional phrase “*Once upon a time*” (Ի՛շ Լ ա, չի՛շ Լ), however, they not always ended with the conclusive expression “*Three apples fell from the sky*” (Երկնքից ընկավ երեք խնձոր), but more tersely, with any action, such as, “*They tied that boy to the horse’s tail and let them free in the open fields*” (Էն տղեն կապըմ ըն ծիանը հ՛ք քյվան, պեց թողըմ հ՛ք ըզ՛ք Կ դաշտերը) or shorter, like “*That is all*” (Վոն ի վոյր), by the Russian expression. Undoubtedly, this is the influence of the new Russian environment which has also been the cause, to a considerable extent, of the permeation of loanwords and expressions, for instance, “*moment*”-«մոմենտ» (moment), “*stol*”-«ստոլ» (table), “*ouzhe*”-«ռժե» (already), “*campania*”-«կամպանիա» (company), “*kukla*”-«կոկլա» (doll), “*kakraz*”-«կակռազ» (that very), “*predanié*”-«պրեդանիե» (dowry), “*yeli-yeli*”-«յելի-յելի» (hardly), “*magharich*”-«մաղարիչ» (gift), “*karaoul*”-«կառաուլ» (watchman), etc. Similar permeations are natural, particularly, in the daily lifestyle and linguistic culture of peoples living in coexistence during long years.

Remarkable among the *realistic fairy tales* is chiefly, “*The gray-haired old man’s answer to Shah Abas*” (Յընվերի պաղասխանը Շահ Աբասին). On the way back from his predatory invasions, Shah Abas made fun of the gray-haired old man, who was planting a palm-tree, saying that he would not live long to taste the fruit of the planted tree, since his death, was not far away. The gray-haired Artsakhtsi gives a wise answer: “*Hey, brother! Now I shall make fun of you myself. Our ancestors have planted those trees and we eat the fruits. Now, we plant the trees and our descendants will eat the fruits*” (Ա՛յ, ախպե՛ր, մըհենզ էլ ես ծըծաղըմ քեզ յրա: Մըր պապերը ծառ ըն տնգալ, մոնք բարը կերալ ընք: Մհենզ էլ մոնք բրդի տնգիկը, հանցո՛ւ մըր հետազաները օտին).

The recorded two *fables*, such as “*The skunk and the mouse*” (Վըրթեսն ու մոկոկոնը) and “*The aunt skunk*” (Վըրթես մոքիրը) are well-known all-Armenian topics, in which only the animal characters have changed, in other words, they have been localized and adapted to the fauna of Artsakh.

II. The assortment of the **Lytic Folklore** is also multifarious in character and is consonant with the pan-Armenian nature. The motives in this section relate to the

² A series of fantastic and realistic fairy tales of Artsakh has been also published in the 5-7 academic volumes of “*Armenian Folk Tales*” (Yerevan, 1966-1979), including: “*Artsakh-Outik*” (Shoushi, Artsakh, Gandzak). 1973. “*Armenian Folk Tales*.” Compiled by Nazinian A., Svazlian V., Vol. 6, Yerevan: Publishing House of AS ASSR (in Arm.).

³ Svazlian 1994: 11-12.

nature, lullabies, love, nuptial, ritual, emigration, labor songs, comic songs, as well as patriotic and soldier's songs.

In these lyric songs, the beauties of the nature of the Homeland, the various aspects of the daily life and demeanor are artistically depicted:

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| «Քսի՛ր ու աճի՛ր, | “Sleep and grow up |
| Շուտ արա, բալե՛ւ, | Rapidly, my child, |
| Կռուկներն էկան, | The cranes came |
| Թողին մըր երկիր | And left our country |
| Սև ամպով պատած: | Overcast by black clouds. |

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| Քսի՛ր ու աճի՛ր, | Sleep and grow up, |
| Դարդերս քշիր, | Drive off my worries |
| Շուտ արա, բալե՛ւ: | Rapidly, my child, |
| Հովուկնք եմ կապել, | I have tied glass beads |
| Կախել օրոցքից, | To your cradle, |
| Քո զար աչքերից | In order that your beautiful eyes |
| Որ հեռու մնա | Be saved from the foe's evil eye.” |
| Թշնամու աչքից»: | |

It is noteworthy that the character of the enemy has been reflected even in the infant **lullaby**, when the mother frightened the baby, who failed to sleep, with the image of the fierce Khan:

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| «Լա՛յ-լա՛յ-լա՛յ արա, քո՛ն իլ, | “Bye, bye, bye, sleep my dear, |
| Ձելիմ խանը կիկյա՝ քեզ տանե. | The Zelim Khan will come and take you away. |
| Բա՛յ, բալա՛, բա՛յ, կուկլա բալա, | Bye, bye, bye, my dear koukla, |
| Բա՛յ, բալա ջան, բա՛յ, ջա՛ն, բալա՛»: | Bye, dear baby, bye, dear baby!” |

While the refrain with the words “*koukla*” (doll – in Russ.) and “*Bye*” (hushaby – in Russ.) in the lullaby reveals the Russian influence.

Here is an example of the **love song**:

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| «Նազի՛կ, Նազի՛կ, նազ մի՛ անի, | “Nazik, Nazik, don't put on airs, |
| Չուխեդ քաշի, թոզ մի՛ անի»: | Put on your mantle, don't be so haughty.” |

The following lines of the love song recorded unwillingly reminds us the similar picture of the dance song of Cilician Kessab:⁴

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| «Ամա՛ն, իշգե՛յն, ծիր վաթանը յօ՞ գըննւ. | “Hey, young girl, where is your |
| Շյուղ մը՛ ժգըղվա չախշօրիտ մըրօդ գըննւ»: ⁵ | homeland? |
| | Don't move that much, your hem will |
| | get dusty.” |

This similarity testifies about the same popular roots.

⁴ Kessab – An Armenian-populated town in Syria.

⁵ Svazlian 1994: 127. Cholakian 1998: 497-498.

The Artsakh-Armenians of Pyatigorsk remembered and sang also the **festive song** “We wish you a Happy Shrovetide, and you wish us a Happy Easter” (*Ձեզի՝ Բարեկենդան, մեզ՝ բարի Չառիկ*). Although the ritual holidays were no longer thoroughly celebrated as in the past.

Whereas, they remembered and performed a few quatrains sung on **Ascension Day**, the analogous variants of which are present in the Armenian folkloric art:

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| «Ախչի, ո՞ւր ես, դուն հուր ես, | “You, pretty girl, where are you, you are passionate, |
| ես ծարավ եմ, դուն ջուր ես, | I am thirsty, and you are the water I need, |
| Համբարձում օրը ո՞ւր ես, | Where will you be on Ascension Day, |
| Արի ըստեղ պար բռնենք: | Come, let’s dance right here. |
| Հայլո՛ ջան, հայլո՛, | Haylo! Dear haylo! |
| Համբարձում, հայլո՛»: | It’s Ascension Day, haylo!” |

The Artsakh-Armenians of Pyatigorsk nostalgically recalled their patrimonial song and dance performed hand in hand in their native cradle during Ascension Day. They yearned for them, since they no longer performed similar collective celebrations in their new environment.

The **wedding ritual** in narrow circles still retained some traditional shades, such as strewing sugar, dried fruits or coins over the bride’s head or the custom of breaking a plate under the bride’s foot, etc. I have written down the ritual ceremony in detail, quoting also the related songs. Stirring is the bride’s parting song in her paternal home:

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| «Վա՛յ, ազի ջա՛ն, տանըմ ըն, | “Oh, dear mother, they are taking me away, |
| Հորաս, մորաս հանըմ ըն, | They’re taking me away from my father and mother, |
| Վա՛յ, ազի ջա՛ն, տանըմ ըն, | Oh, dear mother, they are taking me away, |
| Ազիզ մորաս հանըմ ըն...»: | They are taking me away from my dear mother...” |

In Artsakh, when the bride trod on the doorstep of the bridegroom’s home, they performed a candle-lighting rite and presented it to the bridegroom, singing:

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| «Վա՛յ, ազի ջան, աշքդ լձօս, | “Oh, dear mother, congratulations, |
| Տղեդ պերենք, հարսդ պերենք, | We brought you your son and daughter-in-law, |
| Եկած պարեկամներիդ աշքդ լձօս»: | Congratulations to all the relatives.” |

The narrator Anna Akopova has told: “In Artsakh they sit round the festive dinner table, they eat and drink, the musician plays, and the bridegroom’s relatives present their gifts, such as: furniture, wooden trunks, pots, household utensils and money, about which the drummer announces in a loud voice. When the bride enters, they break a plate under her feet and drink to the health of the newly-weds and of the in-laws...”

The **labor songs** are also, on the whole, of a pan-Armenian, traditional nature: “Draw, my dear ox!” (*Ձիզ տուր, քաշի, ա՛յ եզն*), “Freshen up, dear Jeyran!” (*Հոնկ արա, Ջեյրան ջա՛ն*) or the song of the butter churning “*Motal⁶ butter, motal butter, dear motal!*” (*Մոթալ, մոթալ, ջա՛ն մոթալ*).

⁶ Motal - Cheese prepared by a special method.

The process of the daily bread-baking has been interwoven with the emigration of the sweetheart:

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| «Հաց ըմ թըխալ՝ կյարի ա, Իմյարս սափարի ա, | "I have baked bread from the barley, |
| Սափար երթալիդ մըռննիմ, | My sweetheart is a refugee, |
| Խոսքերքդ շաքարի ա»: | When in need, rely on me, |
| | Your speech is sweet as honey." |

In one of the songs recorded, there is, in all probability, an allusion to the strained interracial relations:

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| «Ա՛յ տղա, տոն արի, | "Hey, boy, come home, |
| Վըռններդ շաղովն արի, | Beaming proudly, return home, |
| Էս թաղը դըմըղալ ա, | There is a commotion in this quarter, |
| Երե թաղովն արի»: | Come home by the upper quarter." |

In Artsakh, the relatives did not encourage the males to migrate, especially to the oil-processing center Baku, where a great number of Armenians, worried about their daily bread, went to look for a job:

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| «Ծառի տակը լաքի յա, | "Grass has grown under the bush, |
| Իմյարը Բաքի յա, | My sweetheart is in Baku, |
| Բաքվա սարը թող շուռ գա, | Let the mount of Baku fall into ruin, |
| Գուցե իմյարը տուն գա»: | Perhaps my beloved will come home therein." |

In the repertoire of the Artsakh-Armenians of Pyatigorsk were present also popular songs, in literary language, dedicated to the contemporary **collective farm** life, such as:

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| «Ծլել է արտս, ծփում է արտս, | "My field has sprouted, my field is waving, |
| Կորել է դարդս, ջա՛ն, | My worries are over, my dear, |
| Եկել է նորը, ինդոլթյան օրը, | The new thing has come, the day of joy has come, |
| Գյոգալ տրակտորը, ջա՛ն...»: | The lovely tractor has come, my dear!" |

One of the modern original songs of the Soviet period is the following song dedicated to the **Women's International Day, March 8**.

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| «Լաչակդ բա՛ց, ա՛յ նանի, | "Take off your kerchief, hey, grandmother! |
| Քիթկալդ բա՛ց, ա՛յ նանի, | Take off your nose-kerchief, hey, grandmother! |
| Թող արև տա, չորանա | Let the sun shine and dry, |
| Արցունք ու լաց, ա՛յ նանի: | Your tears and weep, hey, granny! |

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| Էնքան չ՝ ն՝ դ կապ մնաց, | Your jaw has remained tied so much, |
| Տափակել ա, ա՛յ նանի, | It has flattened, hey, grandmother! |
| Քիթ-բերանդ ծռմռվել, | Your nose and mouth have been distorted, |
| Տե՛ս վիճակդ, ա՛յ նանի: | Look at your state, hey, granny! |

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| Հոկտեմբերը քեզ համար | The October Revolution brought you |
| Նոր կյանք բերավ, ա՛յ նանի, | New life, hey, grandmother! |

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| <i>Ցուրտ ձմեռը վերացավ,</i> | The cold winter is over, |
| <i>Գարուն դարձավ, ա՛յ նանի:</i> | It turned into spring, hey, granny! |
| <i>Ականջներդ բա՛ց արա,</i> | Prick up your ears! |
| <i>Էսօր Մարտի 8-ն ա,</i> | Today is the 8 th of March, |
| <i>Շաբաշ կանչի, ծափ արա,</i> | Call the musicians, clap your hands, |
| <i>Կանանց տոնն ա, ա՛յ նանի»:</i> | It's the Women's day, hey, granny!" |

At first glance, the symbol of the feeling of real world life, of the awakening of spring, of the victory over the frosty winter weather is summed up in this song, expressing a new meaning and content. Endowed with numerous functions in the traditional folklore, the Armenian Grandmother, appealing to the women to free themselves of the old superfluous outfit deteriorating the female attractiveness, reestablishes the awakening of spring with songs, dances and feasts and their willingness to welcome the new lifestyle and the Women's Day. It is, at the same time, noticeable here the indissoluble tie with and approach to the nature of the patriarchal Armenian woman, who has regained self-consciousness and has experienced awakening.

In Pyatigorsk one of the widespread **comic songs** is the following:

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| <i>«Քույրիկիս՝ տուփի, կալոշ,</i> | "Shoes and galoshes for my sister, |
| <i>Մայրիկիս՝ կոշիկներ,</i> | A pair of pumps for my mother, |
| <i>Իսկ հայրիկիս՝ մի զույգ տրեխ,</i> | For my father a pair of moccasins, |
| <i>Էն էլ փոկեր չունենա...»:</i> | Of which the straps are lacking..." |

The above-mentioned song, composed with various ludicrous pictures, which was widespread among the Western and, particularly, the Constantinople Armenians,⁷ was also sung by the Artsakh-Armenian young men.

The Artsakh-Armenians of Pyatigorsk decidedly satirized those features, which were alien and incoherent with their traditional way of life and sang the following song:

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| <i>«Կիսավողսկի օրիորդները</i> | "The young ladies of Kislovodsk, |
| <i>Ժամը տասին ըն գարթնում,</i> | Wake up at ten in the morning, |
| <i>Մաշքը կոտրած կատվի նման</i> | Like a cat with a broken backbone |
| <i>Ման ըն կյ՞ լի բուլվարում»:</i> | They stroll along the boulevard." |

The new Russian environment and the new human relationships also brought about new innovations.

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| <i>«Ծիտը ծառին տիտիկ արավ,</i> | "The bird perched on the tree, |
| <i>Ախտոնիկը ուբիտ արավ,</i> | The hunter shot it, |
| <i>Վըեննան փռնավ, դամոյ տարավ,</i> | He caught it and took it home, |
| <i>Ժարովնիկում ժարիտ արավ,</i> | He fried it in the frying-pan, |
| <i>Նստեց, մի լավ կուշիտ արավ.</i> | He sat and ate it up: |
| <i>Ա՛խ, ա՛խ, ա՛խ, ա՛խ, ա՛խ, ա՛խ»:</i> | Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah, ah!" |

⁷ Svazlian 2000: 427-428.

Some words mixed with Russian words and phrases, were gradually included in their lexicon. However, the Artsakh-Armenians who emigrated to Pyatigorsk did not admit that they were unwillingly influenced by the linguistic loans and told that, on the contrary, they spoke pure Armenian.

Though the lexical structure of the Artsakh-Armenians emigrated to Pyatigorsk had already undergone appreciable influences, in 1964, from the Russian language, however, they continued to hold in high respect their national identity and the dignity of the Artsakh-Armenian. This circumstance has found its artistic reflection, in particular, in the **songs** dedicated to the **Patriotism** and to the **Soldier**.

In the days of my visit, I succeeded in writing down also from the Artsakh-Armenians a fragment of the song dedicated to the important historic event occurred in 1905, in the gorge of Askeran, where it is told, that a cavalry, composed of a huge number of Tatar-Azeri slaughterers, armed with two vanloads of booty, plundered from the Shoushi Armenians, approached Khojalu. Seeing that the place was utterly calm, they decided that they could safely pass through the Askeran gorge; whereas the Armenian warriors, lying in ambush according to the wise strategy elaborated by Hamazasp and under the leadership of the brave Vardan, encircled them and annihilated more than 200 Tatar-Azeris.⁸

«Ինչպես կորյուն քաջ Վարդանը,
Համազասպը քաջանուն
Ասկերանի բերդի միջից
Կոտորեցին թշնամուն»:

“Like lion whelps, the brave Vardan
And the famous Hamazasp
Defeated the enemy
At the Askeran fortress.”

Thus, owing to the victorious battle waged on August 17-21, 1905, under the leadership of Hamazasp, the Artsakh self-defensive forces succeeded in keeping impregnable the gorge of Askeran, having an important strategic significance, and in halting the attacks of the Tatar invaders toward Shoushi.⁹

The following song is a distinctive sample of the soldier's song, where Armenia's heroic past and the Artsakh youth's willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice for the nation are mentioned:

«Սուլեթս տո՛ւր, մայրի՛կ
Սոսինս տո՛ւր, քույրի՛կ,
Հանուն ազգիս թե՛ չզոհվեմ,
Հապա ինչո՞ւ ծնվեցի ես»:

“Give me my sword, mother!
Give me my rifle, sister!
If I do not make the supreme sacrifice
For my nation, then why was I born for?”

The songs created in the years of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) have also their particular place in the repertoire of Artsakh-Armenians:

«Նեմե՛ց, նեմե՛ց, կու՛ղա՛ տի,
Գիդացել ես, թե՛ Բըդըղդորսկը
Հավի բու՛ղ ա՛. դե՛ մին նազադ,
Բոմբը կտամ կնդազադ»:

“German, German, where do you intend to go?
Do you think that Pyatigorsk is a chicken thigh?
Hurry up, go back home,
Otherwise I'll knock you down with a bomb!”

⁸ Stepanian 2016: 110-111.

⁹ Ibid.

Or:

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| «Առավոտյան ժամը ութին | “At eight o’clock in the morning |
| Ինձ վայելկոմատ կանչեցին, | They summoned me to the conscription center, |
| Վեշ մեշոկը շալակս տվին, | They attached a knapsack on my back |
| Դեպի Կերչը հուղարկեցին: | And sent me to Kerch. |
| Երբ որ մտանք Կերչի հողը, | When we reached the land of Kerch, |
| Սիրոս մտավ մահվան դռը...»: | I was horrified to death...” |

At the end of this longish song, the helpless and desperate moribund Armenian soldier requests with his last breath:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| «Ընկերներ ջան, հավաքվեցեք, | “Dear friends, join together, |
| Դուդուկները փչիլ տվեք, | Let the duduks ¹⁰ blow, |
| Գերեզմանիս քարի վրեն | Let the songs of Sayat-Nova ¹¹ |
| Սայաթ-Նովեն երգիլ տվեք»: | Resound over my grave-stone!” |

And he whispers with his last breath.

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| «Չե՛մ մոռանա Մայր Հայաստա՛ն»: | “I won’t forget my Mother Armenia!” |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|

The yearning for Mother Armenia and the native cradle Artsakh has always accompanied the Armenians living in foreign countries, including those Armenians of Artsakh emigrated to Pyatigorsk. Among them were also self-educated creators, such as the 60-year-old Ashkhen Moussayel Vanilova. She expressed her meditations in poetic rhyming and melodious performance. In the concise lines of the *elegy* she sang the unutterable sufferings of the Artsakh-Armenians had endured, and their coercive migration from the native cradle to Pyatigorsk were condensed:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| «Դ՛՛ րդոտ, կարոտ էս կյանքի մեջ | “In this life full of grief and anguish |
| Տանջվեցինք մոռնք անհանգիստ, | We suffered restlessly a great deal, |
| Դադված, Էրված ջիգյարներով | With burned and hurt hearts |
| Մնացինք մոռնք անհանգիստ: | We were left ill at ease. |
| Մոռնք շատ մընծ ցեղ ունեինք, | We had a large extended family, |
| Բոլորին էլ կորցրորինք. | Alas, we lost them all. |
| Էկանք-հասանք Պըտիգորսկ, | We then moved to Pyatigorsk, |
| Նեուժե՛լի մոռնք կարել չընք | Won’t we be able |
| Հանգիստ մնանք տանջանքից: | To put an end to our torture? |
| Բավական է, մեր ծնողներն | Our poor parents already |
| Ինչքա՛ն արյուն թափեցին, | Have shed too much blood, |
| Ժողովրդին մեր փչացրին, | They exterminated our people |
| Մընգ տնավեր արեցին: | And demolished our houses. |

¹⁰ Duduk – Armenian national musical instrument.

¹¹ Sayat-Nova – (Haroutyoun Sayadian, b. 1712, Tiflis - 1795, Haghpat) Armenian poet-bard, founder of the popular bardic new school.

Մենք պիտի կռվենք
 Ինչքան ուժ ունենք,
 Մեր լո՛խ կորուստները
 Փառքով ե՛տ բերենք»:

We will fight
 With all our power,
 To bring back all our losses
 With glory and honor!"

The end of this individual creation is optimistic and bright, something which is typical of every Artsakh-Armenian, as if it were a prayer to God. It is also a wish addressed to all mankind.

«Թող մեր անգին Յայոց ազգին
 Էն ուժն ու պատիվն ինի,
 Որ իլ՛՝ լ ա հին-հին վախտից,
 Թող փրկի Տերը սաղ աշխարհին,
 Լոխ էլ ապրին խաղաղ, երջանիկ»:

"Let the power and honor,
 Which our Armenian nation had
 Since ancient times,
 Be returned back to it,
 May the Lord save the whole world,
 And everybody live in peace and happy!"

III. In the **Section of Saying-Folklore**, the *childish baby-talk* I have recorded from the three-year-old Angela and Margarita Avagiants twin sisters is remarkable. When I asked little Angela her name, she answered in the form of a *tongue-twister*:

«Փըլջմլեցի դեդո Կևանեն ծոռն ըմ, "I am the great-granddaughter of grandfather Kevan of
 Փըլջմլեցի Ղազարեն ծոռն ըմ, Peljmel¹²,
 Փըլջմլեցի Անդրեյեն թոռն ըմ»: I am the great-granddaughter of Ghazare of Peljmel,
 I am the granddaughter of Andrey of Peljmel."

And when I asked her twin sister:

«- Մայրդ որտե՞ղ է աշխատում: "Where does your mother work?
 Նա պատասխանեց. - Ռոդդոմը: She answered: 'At the maternity hospital.'
 - Ի՞նչ է անում: 'What does she do there?'
 - Խոխա ա պըռնըմ»: 'She catches babies,' was the answer."

To the *riddles* of Artsakh-Armenians of Pyatigorsk is peculiar the artistic reflection of the fauna and flora of their cradle, where the appurtenances distinctive of the life and demeanor of the Artsakh people appear in a ciphered form. The prototype of the formulation of the riddles is particularly distinctive:

«Մըեզ մինն օնիւք՝ կըկընանչի,
 Կըծաղկի սիպտակ, կըկյիրմիրի,
 Ետնան ալ կթուխի»:

"We have something that is green at first,
 Then it blossoms in white, then reddens,
 At last it blackens".

(Մռ)

(Blackberry)

Or:

«Մըեզ մինն օնիւք՝
 Աշխարքս շոռ ա կյ՞՝ լիս,
 Ուր՞՞՞՞՞՞՞՞՞՞ կյ՞՞՞՞՞՞՞՞՞՞ մ ա,

"We have something,
 Which wanders around the world
 And comes in the evening

¹² Place.

Տնանը վրեր ընգնում»:

To rest at the doorstep.”

(Տոտի)

(Moccasin)

Notable are the Armenian-spirited **sayings** expressing an allegoric meaning:

«Աշխատած հացն ա հալալ»:

“The earned living is righteous.”

Or:

«Սարը սարին պտահում չի,

“A mountain cannot meet another mountain,

Մարթը մարթին պտահում ա»:

But a man may come across another man.”

Or else:

«Վըշխարեն տմական օ տըմ չըմ,

“I don’t eat the fatty tail of a sheep,

Քմական մոտե ա»:

Since it is close to the buttocks.”

And finally:

«Աշխարքը շոռ ա եկալ՝

“He traveled the world

Դրախտը ուրան վըեղըմը քթալ»:

And found paradise in his land.”

The sayings of the Artsakh-Armenians, with their dialectal pronunciation, acquire a particular fascination, becoming new local variants.

The **benedictions** are endowed with optimism:

«Ազատ, Էրզան կյանք ունենաս»:

“May you have a free and long life!”

Remarkable here is the priority of the idea of freedom, which is very typical of the freedom-loving and optimistic citizens of Artsakh.

«Հինչ տեղութին քաշըմ ըս,

“You are having trouble now,

Վերջըտ բարի թըղ ինի»:

May you have a better life tomorrow!”

The Artsakh-Armenian **wishes** peace and prosperity to the mankind of the whole world:

«Երկրագունդը թըղ բարի ըրագավ ապրի»:

“May the world live in a happy dream!”



Woman from Artsakh (Karabagh)
(Fund of the History Museum of Armenia)

Conclusion

My personal ethnographic recordings and observations, made in 1964, among the Artsakh-Armenians emigrated to Pyatigorsk, provide grounds to conclude that:

1. The folklore of the Artsakh-Armenians is identical by its roots to the cultural precepts of the Armenians of Western Armenia and Cilicia, a circumstance, which testifies to the identity and Armenianness of their traditional national sources.

2. In Pyatigorsk, in the 1960s, the linguistic tendencies of the Artsakh-Armenians, integrating into the new, Russian environment, have already made themselves felt in their speech.

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