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THE RELICS OF THE ORAL TRADITION OF THE ARMENIANS OF NOR-NAKHIDJEVAN

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Historical Outline

In the years 1768–1774, following the triumphant end of the Russian-Turkish war, the authority of Russia had increased even more. Therefore, the Crimean Armenians, who had come under the yoke of the Turkish-Tatar rule, turned their eyes to Russia.

In the summer of 1778, the emigration of 12,600 Armenians of the Crimea to the Russian Empire was organized under the leadership of General A. V. Suvorov, and Nor-Nakhidjevan was founded on the bank of the River Don. By the edict of November 14, 1779 by the Empress Ekaterina II, written in the Russian and

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Armenian languages, numerous privileges were granted to the newly-established Armenian population¹.

Nor-Nakhidjevan was constructed according to the designed and approved plan of the well-known Russian architect I. Y. Starov. The town had centripetal streets, with a square in the center, surrounded by shops and stalls owned by tradesmen and artisans (tailors, jewelers, carpenters, farriers, leather-dressers, masons, etc.). Not far from the town, the villages of Chalther, Topti, Great Sala, Sultan Sala and Nesvetay (Nesvitay) had been set up, which formed an inseparable part of the Armenian community².

The Armenian community had obtained the right of self-government, it had a municipal “Duma” composed of 24 people and the office of an Armenian Mayor. The Armenian magistracy had embodied the rights of the local law-court with police and executive authorities. In 1811, elective posts of landlords were established in Armenian villages and a council of aldermen composed of 5 people was set up. The Coat of Arms of Nor-Nakhidjevan was designed with bees and beehives on it, symbolizing the Armenians’ diligence.³

Nor-Nakhidjevan has been one of the famous and lucrative towns of Novorossiia.

In 1812, the town had 8,484 Armenian inhabitants, while 2,633 Armenians lived in the surrounding villages, and subsequently, grew in number and prospered.

The wayfarers, who visited Nor-Nakhidjevan mentioned with admiration in their diaries, that it was a town making major advances in economy and culture.

At the end of the XVIII century, the Holy Cross Church and then also six other churches were built: St. Gregory the Illuminator, St. Nikoghayos, St. Gevorg, St. Karapet, St. Theodoros and St. Ascension Churches. Armenian schools were established, where literary-theatrical groups also functioned. The first Armenian school was opened in Nor-Nakhidjevan in 1784, contiguous to St. Cross Church. In 1811, the Armenian Spiritual College was founded and, later on, a parish and a provincial school were established. In 1857, the first girls’ school was opened. In 1880, by the efforts of the writer Rafael Patkanian a vocational school was founded in the town, and in 1881 – the Parish vocational school.

¹ Բարխուդարյան 1967, 70–71:

² Բարխուդարյան 1967, 55.

³ Բարխուդարյան 1967, 75.

Armenian parish schools were also established in villages. The “Khaldarian” Printing House, transferred from St. Petersburg, started to function from 1789 in St. Cross Monastery, by the efforts of Archbishop Hovsep Arghoutian. A number of Armenian and Russian books and periodicals were published at the printing house which functioned for about 6 years. (See the attached photographs). In the 1830s, the Armenian Theater was founded by the efforts of Theodoros Khadarnian and Sargis Tigranian. All this was achieved by the noble Prince Hovhannes Lazarian’s assistance and Archbishop Hovsep Arghoutian’s tireless efforts. From the very first day, the latter initiated drafting a list of about 300 manuscripts, ecclesiastical objects and vessels brought from the Crimea and undertook the task of satisfying the daily requirements of the emigrants with great affection⁴.

The lively economic, cultural and public activities favored the appearance of prominent figures such as the poet, national and clerical figure Haroutiun Alamdarian, the writer-publicist Mikayel Nalbandian, the poet Rafayel Patkanian, the political figures Alexander Myasnikian, Simon Vratsian, Sargis Srapionian (Loukashin), the historian and the art critic Alexey Djivelegov, the Catholicos of All Armenians Gevorg VI Chorenkian, the writer Marietta Shahinian, the artists Martiros Sarian, Grigor Sheldian, Seyran Khatlamadjian, Mkrtich Gizgizian, the architect Mark Grigorian, the lawyer Grigor and the publicist Yeghia Choubarians and many others.

The national bodies of municipal and rural administration in Nor-Nakhidjevan were maintained until 1880; subsequently, the “Philanthropic” (1868), “The Ecclesiastical Charitable Trusteeship of the Nor-Nakhidjevan Armenians” (1889), “Benevolent” and other societies were founded, which implemented the self-government of the Armenian Community of the Don.

In the years of the Soviet power, the teaching of the Armenian language was maintained in the rural schools, bilingual Armenian and Russian regional newspapers were published.

Subsequently, under the conditions of extensive literacy in the Soviet Motherland, the Armenians of Nor-Nakhidjevan with their abstruse Crimean dialect could not keep their erstwhile oral tradition immaculate. Consequently, in 1959, my narrators were prevalingly representatives of the senior generation,

⁴ Leo 1973, 331.

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since the youth did not even speak their mother dialect. In those years, the technical means were not yet available, and I had to use a pen to write down my observations.

The Armenians of Nor-Nakhidjevan were engaged in *agriculture* (cultivating grain, vine-growing, sheep-breeding, silkworm-breeding), *craftsmanship* (leather-dressing, jewelry, blacksmith's work, farrier's job, tailoring), *production* (lard-, wool-, silk-, brick-, tobacco-production) and *trade*. The Armenian merchants of Nor-Nakhidjevan traded in Rostov-on-Don, Novocherkask, Taganrog, Nizhni-Novgorod, Stavropol, Ekaterinodar and elsewhere. They exported wheat, lard, wool, vegetable oil, caviar, tobacco and other products to a number of countries in Asia and Europe.

The Narrators of Nor-Nakhidjevan

In September 1959, the Department of Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of Soviet Armenia had organized a complex scientific expedition to Nor-Nakhidjevan (the Proletarian Region) in Rostov-on-Don province of the Russian SFSR. It involved 16 scientific workers from various Institutes of the Academy of Sciences and Republican Museums of Armenia.

In the 20 days of the scientific expedition I had the opportunity to get acquainted with 15 *narrators* of the senior generation, talk to them and take notes.

My narrators were:

Anoush Barashian (b. 1878, Great Sala v.) – housewife;

Tagouhi Torpoudjian (b. 1881, Chalder v.) – midwife, healer by prayers;

Yeghia Torpoudjian (b. 1881, Chalder v.) – pensioner;

Lousseghen Gyourdjian (b. 1884, Great Sala v.) – pensioner;

Manvel Soghomonian (b. 1886, Topti v.) – watchman at the collective farm;

Geghetsik Dsekhyayan (b. 1887, Chalder v.) – housewife;

Khasbika Malkhassian (b. 1893, Great Sala v.) – housewife;

Ghazaros Khachginanian (b. 1893, Topti v.) – wood-cutter;

Hayk Soghomonian (b. 1899, Leninavan v.) – accountant at the collective farm;

Rouben Louledjian (b. 1900, Chalder v.) – performer of songs;

Yevginé Chobanian (b. 1907, Great Sala v.) – housewife;

Mkrtich Louledjian (b. 1921, Chalder v.) – music teacher.

Astghik Louledjian (b. 1922, Chalder v.) – cashier at the collective farm.

Shahen Shahinian (b. 1928, Chalder v.) – editor-in-chief of the “Communar” newspaper.

Lousseghen Chibichian (b. 1870, Chalder v.) – pensioner.

I have written down more than 161 units of popular folk materials from the said narrators, which have not been published to date.

The Genre and Thematic Peculiarities of the Nor-Nakhidjevan Folklore

The oral tradition of the Armenians of Nor-Nakhidjevan, being the constituent part of the oral culture of the Armenian people, has persisted by the general precepts of the national folklore, however, along with the generalities and similarities, it has also included extremely distinctive local and original peculiarities, which are attributed to their past and present historical circumstances and public life. For instance, in the ancient “*Song of the Crimea*” (*Խրհմի յէրբը*), they recalled their past life in the locality of Khara Sou (Black Water) of the Crimea, their houses and their orchards.

Subsequently, the peculiar folklore of the Armenians of that locality of Nor-Nakhidjevan artistically reflects their public, economic conditions, the local nature with its fauna and flora, the neighboring villages and towns with their multinational population and peculiar dialects.

Thus, for instance, in one of the fairy tales, the coal-seller’s actions are closely linked with Rostov-on-Don (Nor-Nakhidjevan) and its neighboring Armenian-inhabited villages of Topti, Chalder and Great Sala. Or, the riddle “*Kirman’s cap – with a hollow top*” (*Քիրմանի կրագ՝ թէ՛կէն ծագ*) gives an idea about the Kerosene lamp, which is compared with the eccentric hat (*Kirman’s cap – Քիրմանի կրագ*) worn by the inhabitants of the town of Novocherkassk.

One can also add the expression “*Let me sit on your brain and go to Dayghan*” (*Խեղճիկս նսնիմ՝ Դայղան էջթամ*), purely of a local character, which, in the dialect of Nor-Nakhidjevan, is expressed as Dayghan, since, according to the transcription of the Crimean dialect $g > gh$, $b > p$, $k > g$, $r > sh$, $ds > z$, etc.²

¹ Dayghan is the neighboring town Taganrog.

² The great linguist, academician Hr. Ajarian notes in his hand-written work “Examination of the Nor-Nakhidjevan (Crimean) Dialect”: “...The consonant system of the colloquial language of the city of Rostov (Nor-Nakhidjevan) and of the villages of Great and Small Salas and Nesvetay is different from the articulation of the villages of Chalder and Topti, which is

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Similarly, in the popular song “*Mariam*” (*Մարիամ*), the beloved person, who is from the neighboring Nesvetay village, comes to her for a night encounter.

«Բազար դարած, նաշխած, պէրած
Մարյամս,

Վաշթ պացվիլ էր գարմիր-ջերմագ
թուշերս

Նեսվեպայէն ընծի յէգած կիշերս»:

“Taken to the market, adorned and brought
back, my Mariam,

The rose had blossomed on your red-white
cheeks

On the night you came to me from
Nesvetay.”

Consequently, the Armenians emigrated from the Crimea, living in the new, Russian environment have become intimate with that locality and the surrounding Russian population. That fact is noticeable in the **realistic fairy tales** they have narrated, where the actions of the characters are not only from Rostov and the neighboring Armenian villages, but also from the Russian towns of Novocherkask, Taganrog and elsewhere. Apart from that, the characters appearing in the tales are not only Armenians, but also Russian noblemen and noblewomen, Cossacks and muzhiks (Russian peasant, man – in Rus.), who had lent a helping hand to the Armenian emigrants.

It is noteworthy that, in the various folklore materials a great number of foreign loans, Turkish words are frequently met, which have been in use in the Crimea in their everyday speech, for example, “*Kopour*” / “*Keopri*” – bridge, “*Sokhakh*” – street, “*Khoum*” – earth, “*Chorvakh*” – fountain, “*Khamchi*” – whip, “*Shamdan*” – candlestick, etc.

If the Turkish-Tatar linguistic loan words in their dialect are of ancient origin, then following their emigration from the Crimea, numerous Russian words have taken root in their vocabulary, such as: “*Kouznets*” – blacksmith, “*Prodovets*” – seller, “*Drog*” – cart, “*Semeystvo*” – family, “*Khazyain*” – landlord, etc., as well as Russian expressions, which were used according to the grammatical rules of the Armenian language, for example, “they made *pozdarovit*” – they greeted us, “he made *akhranyat*” – he protected us, “he has *saglasit*” – he agreed, etc.

In 1959 the popular oral creations of the Armenians of Nor-Nakhidjevan were already almost buried in oblivion, however, my consistent quests have rendered it

exactly similar to the vocal system of the Constantinople dialect. There are only two levels of consonants – tremulous and voiceless spirants (fricatives). The spirant tremulous consonants have disappeared.” (**Ajarian** 1925, 27–28 [hand-written]). It should be noted, that I have written down the originals of the said work primarily in the villages of Chalder and Topti.

possible to write down and save 161 unique relics of their oral tradition from a total loss.

The Armenian popular folklore of Nor-Nakhidjevan is multifarious and multigenre:

- I. Epic Folklore (12 units),
- II. Lyric Folklore (31 units),
- III. Saying Folklore (118 units).

I. The section of **Epic Folklore** comprises the *fantastic* and the *realistic fairy tales*. According to the testimony of the narrators, they no longer gather in the rural sitting-room to listen to fairy tales as in the Crimea.

Among the *fantastic tales*, the one named “*The Bracelet*” (*Արնջանը*) is quite distinctive; its theme develops from motifs of the song of the same name brought from the Crimea. Becoming a subject of a fairy tale, that lyrical-epic love song has undergone a certain development from the viewpoint of the personage and thematic line. In this fairy tale the characters are not only the loving couple, Khamber and Arzou (as in the song), but the old-Sorceress, embodying the evil forces of nature and of the public. Till her death the wicked creature vindictively remembers Khamber, who in his childhood days had broken her water pitcher, and endlessly chastises him, impeding the young couple’s happiness. The fantastic essence and the subsequent development of the thematic line of the fairy tale are attributed to the presence of the character of the old-Sorceress. Of fantastic nature is also “*The Daughter of Mighty King*” (*Շէն թաքավորին ախշիզը*), which is a creative variant of the well-known tale “*The armless girl*” (*Կոնսադ աղջիկը*), adorned with melodious fragments. The armless girl is called a “Dove” as a token of innocence; besides, suffering from the malice of her insidious sister-in-law, she confides her sorrow to her nephew lying in the cradle through the following song:

«Նանի՛գ, նանի՛գ, անուշներով,	“Nanik, nanik, sweet sleep
Օսգիէ՛ բէշիք, արգաթ գամար,	Golden cradle with a silver arch,
Մէջի բառգողը յէսպօրը զավագ:	Lying in it, my brother’s son.
Նանիգ գատի յէսպօրը օշթուն,	Nanik I say to my nephew,
Մագիս թէլէրօվը զըգաբէի,	I’ll bind him up with my hair
Սիրդիս գրագովը զըջօրցնէի,	And dry him off with my heart’s fire,
Նանիգ գատի յէսպօրը օշթուն»:	I’ll say nanik to my nephew.”

The little lullaby having a sorrowful melody, imparts an unusual fascination and emotionality to the fairy tale. However, The Golden Fish helps the Dove,

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which becomes the Queen of another country and restores her former authority, while the malicious daughter-in-law “*was tied to the horse’s tail and let free on a large field, where the daughter-in-law’s head struck by the stones and pebbles of the road, was torn to pieces, leaving her ear as the greatest part of her body.*” The fairy tale, having an educational and edifying nature, is concluded with these words.

Peculiar are also the fairy tales “*The Wicked Mother*” (Փէրապ մարը) and “*The Iron Wolf*” (Էրգաթէ Կալը). In these two fairy tales, a number of animals appear as characters, incarnating sometimes the evil and sometimes the kind forces of the nature and of the public.

The realistic fairy tales, artistically depicting the real characters and events happening frequently in life are of educational and moral-edifying nature. The following realistic tales have been concocted from real events: “*The coal seller*” (Քօմնոր ձախօղը), “*He who Works, Shall Eat*” (Օվ գը պանի, ան ալ գուրէ), “*The Crazy*” (Խէնթուզը), “*The Disgrace of the World*” (Ալէմի ջարհզը), “*Tato and Petrigele*” (Թաթօն յէվ Փէթրիգէլը), “*The Bride, who Made Short Work of her Mother-in-Law*” (Չար քիանային հախէն էգօղ հարսը), “*The Noblewoman’s Brain*” (Բարիւնային խէլը). Noteworthy also is the fairy tale “*The Killer of Forty Souls*” (Քառնուն ջան սրանօղը) which is a variant of the “*Dezhiko*” (Դժիկն) popular tale, where the son, on his way to take the meal to his father, exterminates the flies, perching on his face, and writes on a canvas about his brave deed, altering the word “flies” into “souls.” The short volume and the unexpected solution of the conflict of these realistic fairy tales impart them the form of a popular novel.

II. The songs of **Lyric Folklore** are also of ancient origin, of which only fragments remain today, testifying that the Armenians of that community had also a rich and multifarious lyric culture.

Although few in number, but interesting from the point of view of conception are the **cheerful children’s songs** which are sung to entertain the babies: the “*Child Entertainer’s Songs*” (Դանդաններ), the rhythmic “*Songs Resembling the Hen’s Squealing*” (Հալջիվներ), **tongue-twisters** flooded with witty puns, and **children’s play-songs** having a happy ending.

Remarkable with its ancient nature and descriptiveness is the song “*The Song of the Crimea*” (Խրիսի յէրքը) where they recall the Armenian locality of

Khara Sou (Black Water) of the Crimea, the local attractive houses and the green parks where the lovers used to stroll:

«...Բախաները գրքալեինք,
Մենք դեսօքին գրսիրեինք,
Մեզի գասին՝ խարասուցի,
Մենք ղօնուշմա գրսիրեինք:

“...We strolled in the parks,
We loved the beautiful ones,
They called us “Kharasoutsi,”
We like to talk with people.

Դիմաց-դիմաց խաներս,
Դիմացն ալ՝ խանըթներս,
Դուն՝ հօդէն յէ՛կ, յէս՝ հօսէն.
Թող քօր լան դուշմաններս:

My guesthouses – in front of me,
And facing them are my stores,
You set out from there, I’ll – here:
May my foes lose their eyesight!

Տիմացէն դեսա քեզի,
Ջէրմագ վաշթ կիղցա քեզի,
Ֆօդ անէլու չխըյմիշէցի,
Ուրիշին դվին քեզի...»:

I saw you in front of me,
I took you for a white rose,
I did not dare to smell you,
They gave you to someone else...”

The ritual songs also had almost disappeared and only fragments were remembered. The traditional songs and dances were no longer ritually performed during the Armenian weddings. Only due to my consistent searches I have managed to write down some ancient songs, which were sung while dressing the bride and the bridegroom. The Armenians of this locality had, in ancient times, a special dance, songs or customs, during which they sang:

«Այսօրիկ իս նօր,
Այսօրիկ թաքաւօր իս նօրիկ...
Փէսին գառէթան էգաւ, գայնէցաւ,
Փէսան քաշից մէջքը թուրը,
Փէսին կրակը գաթույր մօշթի.
Այսօր հասար մուրադիկ, օշթի՛»:

“Today you are new,
Today you are a new King...
The groom’s coach came and stopped,
The groom tied the sword to his waist,
The groom’s cap is of blue fur,
Today you attained your goal, son!”

While the bride sang upon coming out of her father’s house:

«...Հայրի՛կ, մայրի՛կ, տուք պարեւ գէցիք,
Տուք ալ պարեւ գէցիք. զիս առին, դարին,
Էմջէնէ՛ր, յանգանէ՛ր, տուք ալ պարեւ գէցիք.
Տուք ալ պարեւ գէցիք. զիս առին, դարին:

“...Father, mother farewell,
You keep well, they took me away,
Uncles, aunts, you also stay well,
You too keep well, they took me away.

Հօրքուրնէ՛ր, մօրքուրնէ՛ր, դուք ալ պարեւ գէցիք,
Տուք ալ պարեւ գէցիք. զիս առին, դարին,
Մնացէք պարեւ, սիրեզան քույրեր,
Դարօսը ցէր աչքին...»:

Aunties and dames you too stay well,
You too keep well, they took me away.
Dear sisters, you also stay well
I wish you the same happiness...”

And the wedding guests answered:

«Գէշթաս մէզմէն շաղ չուզելօվ,

“You leave us somewhat unwillingly,

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Անդէղ գերածոյ չամիչօվ թուզ է, Աչքը գուլա, սիրողը գուզէ. Հօրմէն, մօրմէն պարնվիլ չուզէր...»:	Raisins and figs are awaiting you there, Your eyes are weeping but your heart desires, You don't want to part with father and mother..."
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Only the memory of all this was preserved in 1959; neither the rites, nor the corresponding songs and dances were performed. Nonetheless, the local senior Armenians still remembered fragments of the ritual songs of the past.

The **domestic life songs** are also old; they are woven by the artistic recollection of real events and people. For instance, the song created about the wealthiest Armenian mayor of Nor-Nakhidjevan Haroutyoun Khalibian, who had ruthlessly expropriated the lands of the Armenian emigrants and was satiated with their earnings:

«Շաղ գուլում մաշթ էր Խալիբ Աղան՝ Մէր քաղաքի գալում գալական...»:	"Khalib Agha was a very harsh man, The cruel head of our town..."
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Similar songs provide us grounds to assume that the Armenians of this locality had also epic songs composed about the real historical events.

It seems that the brush of a painter has portrayed the character of the rich Ato Simon's daughter, her splendid outfit and luxurious adornment, and ultimately her majestic and self-confident posture.

«Գազ ու գէս ցէպլուշկան վիզդ գախած, Մարքարիդէ խովանը մէքդ գաբած, Խաղա՛, ախի՛գս, խաղա՛, Աթօյի Սիմօնին ախիգն իս. Հէ՛չ ունուորդ է թօղ չիլլա»:	"A yard and a half necklace around your neck, The belt set with pearls around your waist, Dance, my daughter, dance, You are Ato Simon's daughter, Do not worry about anything!"
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The strive for riches and money is evident in the following song:

«Դէսօք թօղ լա, թօղ չիլլա, Թէք ըսդագը բօ՛լ թօղ լա, Իդա ախչգանը մարը Իմիս քիանաս թօղ լա»:	"She may be beautiful or not, Let only her money be plentiful, Let that girl's mother Become my mother-in-law!"
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In the lengthy domestic song "*Ha! Hark! Daughter-in-Law*" the mother-in-law, familiarly addressing the new daughter-in-law, gives her endless new assignments, at the base of which lies the propensity for wealth and possessions. According to an unwritten law, the new daughter-in-law is obliged to pay homage to the successive guests, to her godfather, her father and mother, to the educated official in order to win their gifts, namely, the gold coins promised by her father's will, her mother's valuable necklace, her father-in-law's sheep, the tongue-opener gift of the educated official. All these picturesque episodes are presented with the

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description of the recognized propriety of the post-nuptial customary ceremony, in constantly changing situations and with the appearance of new typical characters, circumstances in which this ancient song brought from the Crimea has become lively and dynamic, picturesque and expressive, not only of a domestic, but also of a ritual nature.

«Հա՛, քա՛, հա՛րսը, յէ՛լ գայնէ, Յէգվօրնէրուն ընթունէ, Առա՛ջ հալալկը փօխէ, Յէդքն ալ՝ ցէդքէրն համկուրէ:	“Ha! Hark! Daughter-in-law, get up And welcome the guests, First change your dress, Then go and kiss their hands.
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Հա՛, քա՛, հա՛րսը, ժողօղվէ, Հանա բաբադ գրգանջէ, Փսագնէրդ բիդ բաքնէ, Միրաս օսգին բիդ բախշէ:	Ha! Hark! Daughter-in-law, gather yourself, Behold! Your father is calling He is going to kiss your wedding crown, And will offer you the bequeathed gold!
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...Հա՛, քա՛, հա՛րսը շուդ արա, Մամադ հանա ցան գուդա, Էրգու թուշէդ բիդ բաքնէ, Գէրդանըրդ բիդ բախշէ:	...Ha! Hark! Daughter-in-law, make haste, Behold! Your mother is calling, She will kiss your two cheeks, And will offer you the necklace!
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...Հարս ես՝ կնա, պաղ չուր պէ՛ր, Լվացվօրին՝ սրփիչ պէ՛ր, Չայը քաշէ՛, շաքար պէ՛ր, Մէգ-մէգ բաժակ չայ ալ պէ՛ր:	...My daughter-in-law, go and get some cold water, Bring also a towel for those, who wash their hands, Strain the tea, get some sugar And serve everyone a cup of tea.
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Հա՛, քա՛, հա՛րսը բադրասդվէ՛, Քօղը վէրուր ու բահէ՛, Աշթըխ ժամը անցած է. Դունն ալ մաքրէ՛ ու ավլէ՛»:	Hey! Daughter-in-law, get ready, Take off your veil and keep it, Time is already up, Clean and sweep the house as well!”
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There are also two pilgrimage songs in this section, which give the reader an idea, that the Crimean fathers had also made a pilgrimage to the Holy Monastery of Sultan St. Karapet of Moosh:

«Խարիբ Մելքոնը օխարը տարի ցալ քաշիլ էր, Սուրբ Գարաբէդ ուխտի հասիլ էր, Մոլանդ առիլ էր...»:	“The emigrant Melkon has endured pain for 7 years, He has made a pilgrimage to St. Karapet And has attained his object...”
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However, the pilgrimage, according to the Crimean Armenians’ rite, was to be followed by the joyful ceremony of “A Visit to the Bride-to-be,” who had to be “good-natured,” with a “beautiful name,” that is, a perfect girl, in all respects.

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A remote likeness exists between the Armenian epic song “*Aslan Agha*” (Ասլան Աղա) and the elegiac song “*Go and Tell My Father*” (Կնացէք, ասացէք բաբայիս); in this song, the son implores his father to sell their house to provide the sum for his release from prison. The father refuses to help his son, and all their relatives behave in the same manner. Only the girl, who loves him, is ready for all kinds of sacrifice. Her resolute decision is imbibed with devotion and true love:

«...Վզիս մէդալիօնը գրծախիմ, Հինք հարուր կրօշ ալ գրշինիմ, Գրշինիմ, սիրէգա՛նս, գրշինիմ, Գրշինիմ, գրհանիմ քէզ պանսրիցը»:	“...I’ll sell the medallion hanging round my neck, I’ll earn also five hundred coins, I’ll earn, my love, I’ll earn and take you out of prison.”
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Remarkable are also the heroes – the mothers of the domestic song “*The Oka and Istir [Istra] Mothers*” (Օկա և Իստիր [Իստրա] մամաները), who symbolize the names of the two rivers, flowing across the territory of Russia. Armenians call their life-giving river “Mother Arax,” and here also the twin mother-rivers, Oka and Istra, have educated whole generations and shaped up their demeanor.

The songs “*Aunt Mariam*” (Մարիամ մորքույնա) and “*Hounan*” (Ունանը) are also interesting. The song “*Whom are you going to Give Me as Wife, Father?*” (Բաբա՛, տուն ինձի վօրի՞ն բիդի դաս) is woven in a ludicrously refined humor. Another variant of this song is also widespread in Armenia, according to which the father gives his lazy daughter in marriage to a zourna (Armenian national woodwind musical instrument) player in order that she always be happy. This same song is sung in the Armenian-populated villages of Nor-Nakhidjevan, however, it is peculiar that the Armenians emigrated from the Crimea not only have adjusted themselves, but they have become intimate with the Russian environment, and the girl prefers to get married to a concertina (Russian musical instrument) player.

In 1779, by a special edict, the Empress Ekaterina II had given permission, to the Armenian emigrants to be exempt from military service, but, subsequently, under altered circumstances, the Armenians were deprived of that privilege, and joining the army («սաղաար գնալը») became a tragedy for the Armenian emigrants.

A number of variants of **soldier’s songs** are included in the series: “*I have Drawn My lot and Went to Get Enrolled in the Army*” (Ես իմ վիջազս հանեցի, էլա սաղաար կնացի) or “*The soldier’s song*” (Սաղաարի յէրքը). Noteworthy also

is the hero soldier's harrowing song created in the days of the Great Patriotic war "*Sambik's Valley*" (*Սամպիկի դերան*), which, however, is imbued, with the optimism of victory.

III. The creations of **Saying Folklore**. The **proverbs** and **sayings** of the local Armenians are products of the profound generalization of the age-old public life-philosophy of the nature and the society, of the objects and phenomena. Those concise and vivid sayings artistically condense their historical life experience, the best attributes of the human character, while the wicked actions are condemned with picturesque and cruel maledictions.

Living with hard work, the praise of handicraft and honest earnings had also been reflected in the sayings "*Forcing out bread from stone*" (*Քարէն հաց քամօն*), "*Handicraft is a golden bracelet*" (*Ձէնահաթըն օսգէ արնջան է*) or "*Doing your work and walking the distance you reach your goal*" (*Պանը՝ պանէլօվ, ջանիան՝ քալէլօվ*). Interesting is also the wise advice given by the elderly people to the young ones: "*Work should be afraid of you, you should not be afraid of work*" (*Կօրծը քէզմէն թօղ վախնա, քուն կօրծէն մի՛ վախնա*).

In the past, in the Crimea the idea of "*honest work*" (*հալալ վաստակ*), "*A white hand loves other people's work*" (*Ձէրմագ ցէոքը ուրիշի աշխատանքը գըսիրէ*) or "*The poor emigrant makes the bear dance and the rich man collects the money*" (*Այուվը խարիբը գըխաղցունէ, թաքախը զէնգինը գպտրցունէ*) was alien to the movers and shakers of the Ottoman society. Similar unfair relations have given birth to popular indignation and protest, since the people's power is unflinching; as the saying goes "*If the people of a village gather together, they can break a log*" (*Կէլ գայնի՛ կէրան գըգօդրէ*). Thus, the Crimean Armenians conjointly moved to Rostov-on-Don, to live a new life: "*In short, we reached Rostov.*"

The **riddles**, too, are seldom mentioned, but the recorded ones, in a ciphered form, give an idea about the past and present life, the everyday lifestyle and peculiar meals of that ethnic group, e. g.:

«Զօրս քօշա քուրսի,	"A quadrangular hearth,
Մէչը իլինք օսգի,	Full of gold inside,
Խնամիները գըկան խօսք»:	The in-laws come there to have a talk."
(Եկեղեցի)	(Church)

Or:

«Զօրս ախալար քարքար գըպոնին.	"Four brothers build a stone wall,
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<p>Չօրս հաղը գըպոնին. Հինկումը՝ մէշէրը գըբըղըղի»: (Գոլպա գործելու հինգ շուղերը)</p>	<p>Four of them build the wall, The fifth revolves inside.” (Five needles for knitting socks)</p>
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Or:

<p>«Տակը՝ տախտակ, վրան՝ տախտակ, Մեջից կեղև քոչոտ աղքատ»: (Կրիա)</p>	<p>“Wood below and wood above, In between a ragged pauper.” (Tortoise)</p>
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The local original pastry called “*Gubati*” or the cake prepared by the Armenian women called “*Khathlama*” present a picturesque comparison with the cabbage:

<p>«Խաթ-խաթ խաթլամա, Մեջն ալ մի հատ մահակ»: (Կաղամբ)</p>	<p>“Layer over layer, And a cudgel in the center.” (Cabbage)</p>
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Widely spread are also a number of **maledictions** and **benedictions**. These popular anathemas strikingly give an idea of how people appreciated the good and the evil deeds of their fellow countrymen. The maledictions, expressing indignation and hatred, resounded with an intensified strength, such as: “*May you become blind, may you lose your eyesight*” (Քօռանաս, աչքի լուսը գորվի), “*May you become crazy, may you bang your head against the wall*” (Խէվնաս, խէվ բադէրը իյնաս), “*May you become rabid and eat your own flesh*” (Գաղղիս՝ միսը ուղիս). In contrast, the popular benedictions reflect the high moral principles of the working Armenian man. In those picturesque sayings, the elements of nature, the celestial and the terrestrial forces have become standards of estimation of kindness and virtue, for example: “*May your star be bright*” (Ասդդը բայձառ թօղ ըլլա), “*May your sun be always shining*” (Արևը չըխաւարի), “*May the earth in your hand be converted into gold*” (Ֆօղ պոնիս՝ օսդի տառնա), “*May you sprout and blossom*” (Ձիս ու ձաղգիս), etc.

Remarkable among the creations of the saying genre are **prayings**, which are in the first place, “*The Prayer Dedicated to the Virgin Mary*” (Ասդվաճամօր աղոթքը), then those relating to “*The Evil-Spirit*” (Չար նաֆաս), “*The Evil Eye*” (Չար աչք), “*The Measure of the Fear*” (Վախը չափելու) and other ancient, curative, popular **bewitching prayers**.

Pretty and reassuring is the **prayer-wish** directed to the new moon, on which people pin their best expectations in as much as the aging moon is perpetually renewed:

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«- Նոր Լուսին, նոր շնավոր, Իմ ախպարս նոր թաքավոր, Ձեր կնացիր, գէնջ էգար, Ինձ ի՞նչ պէրիր արմաղան: ԼՈՒՍԻՆ. - Յէրէսիտ' քեսպէ՛տ, Սիրողիտ' սո՛ւն, Յէռնիտ' բերէքէ՛թ»:	“New moon, happy new moon, My brother – a new King, You went away old and returned new, What presents did you bring me? MOON: ‘Decency to your face! Strength to your heart! Abundance to your hand!’”
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Conclusion

In conclusion, we should note that the Armenian Community of Nor-Nakhidjevan, despite the influence of the globalization of time and space, was still trying to preserve its native inimitable relics of the Crimean dialect and folklore, which give us an idea about their erstwhile rich and original, popular oral tradition.

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ՆՈՐ ՆԱԽԻՋԵՎԱՆԻ ՀԱՅԵՐԻ ԲԱՆԱՎՈՐ ԱՎԱՆԴՈՒՅԹԻ ՆՇԽԱՐՆԵՐԸ

ՍՎԱԶԼՅԱՆ Վ.

Ամփոփում

Քանալի բառեր՝ Ղրիմ, Դոնի Ռոստով, Նոր Նախիջևան, Ռուսաստան, բանասաց, բանավոր ավանդույթ, հարմարվել:

1959 թ. սեպտեմբերին մեր կողմից գրառված նյութերը վկայում են, որ Նոր Նախիջևանի հայ համայնքը, հակառակ ժամանակի ու տարածության համահարթեցնող ազդեցությունների, տակավին փորձում էր պահպանել Ղրիմի բնիկ բարբառն ու բանահյուսական անկրկնելի նշխարները, որոնք

գաղափար են տալիս նրա երբեմնի հարուստ ու ինքնատիպ ժողովրդական բանավեպերի մասին:

Ղրիմից գաղթած հայերն ընտելացել են նոր՝ ռուսական միջավայրին, որը նրանց հարազատ է դարձել: Դրա վկայությունն են տեղի ժողովրդական ստեղծագործությունները, որոնց հերոսները գործում են ոչ միայն Դոնի Ռուստովում և շրջակա հայկական գյուղերում, այլև՝ ռուսական Նովոչերկասկ և Տաֆանդոք քաղաքներում: Այդ պատմությունների հերոսները ոչ միայն հայեր են, այլ նաև ռուս բարիններն ու բարինյաները, կազակներն ու մուսուլմանները, որոնք ամեն կերպ օգնել են հայ գաղթականներին:

РЕЛИКВИИ УСТНОЙ ТРАДИЦИИ АРМЯН НОВОЙ НАХИЧЕВАНИ

СВАЗЛЯН В.

Резюме

Ключевые слова: Крым, Ростов-на-Дону, Новая Нахичевань, Россия, сказитель, устная традиция, адаптация.

Записанные нами в сентябре 1959 г. материалы свидетельствуют о том, что армянская община Ростова-на-Дону – Новой Нахичевани, несмотря на нивелирующее воздействие пространства и времени, все еще пыталась сохранить и сохранила свой исконный крымский диалект и уникальные фольклорные реликвии, которые дают представление об их некогда богатом, самобытном армянском народном творчестве.

Армяне-переселенцы из Крыма адаптировались в новой, русской среде, которая стала для них родной. Свидетельством тому являются созданные ими народные произведения, действия героев которых сопряжены не только с Ростовом-на-Дону и окрестными армянскими селами, но и с русскими городами Новочеркасск и Таганрог. Героями этих рассказов являются не только армяне, но и русские барыни и барины, казаки и мужики, которые всячески помогали армянским переселенцам.