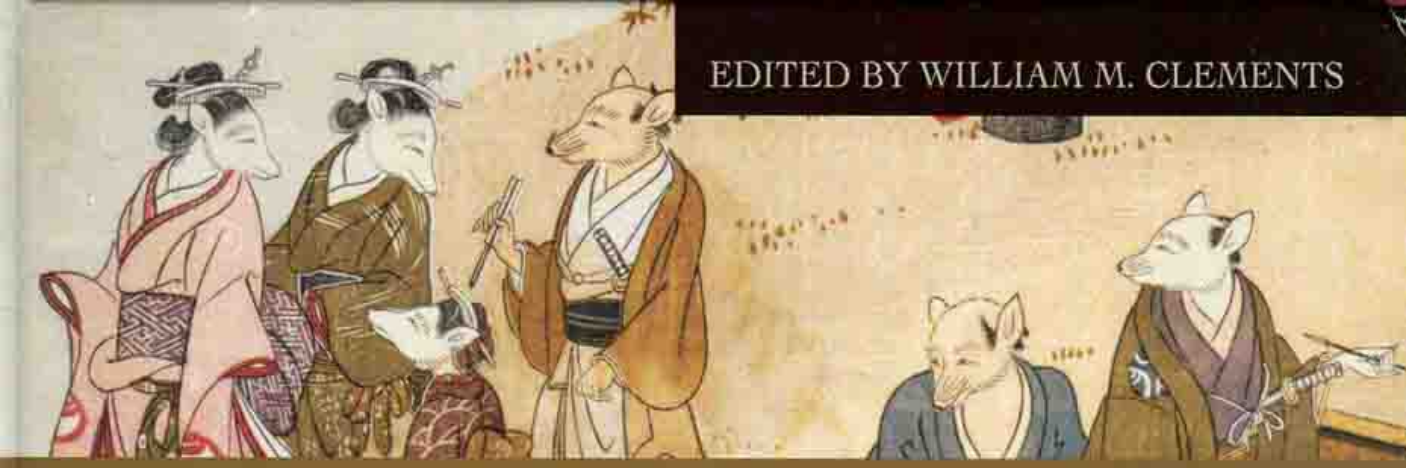
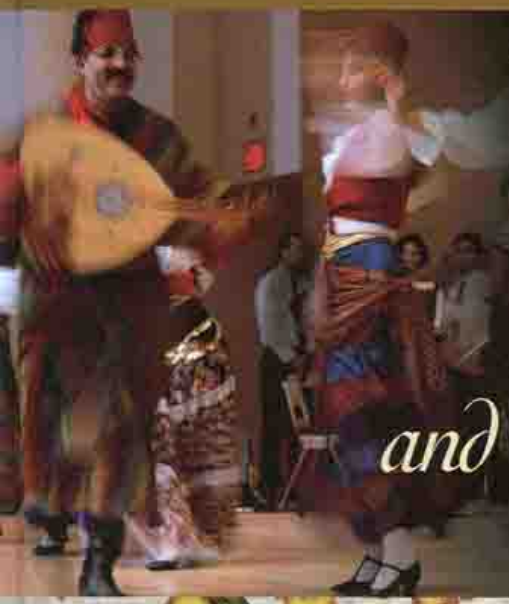


EDITED BY WILLIAM M. CLEMENTS

THE GREENWOOD ENCYCLOPEDIA OF

WORLD FOLKLORE *and* FOLKLIFE



VOLUME two

SOUTHEAST ASIA *and* INDIA, CENTRAL *and* EAST ASIA, MIDDLE EAST

The Greenwood Encyclopedia of World Folklore and Folklife

Volume 2
Southeast Asia and India, Central and East Asia, Middle East

The Greenwood Encyclopedia
of World Folklore and Folklife

VOLUME 1
Topics and Themes, Africa, Australia and Oceania

VOLUME 2
Southeast Asia and India, Central and East Asia, Middle East

VOLUME 3
Europe

VOLUME 4
North and South America

The Greenwood Encyclopedia of World Folklore and Folklife

VOLUME 2
Southeast Asia and India,
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Edited by William M. Clements

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Editorial Advisory Board

Contents

Foreword ix
Thomas A. Green

Preface xi

Acknowledgments xv

Comprehensive List of Entries xvii

Southeast Asia and the Indian Subcontinent 1

India: States and Regions **1**

India Overview 1
Assam 17
Bihar 24
Gaddi 30
Haryana 39
Karnataka 46
Kashmir 58
Khasi-Jaintia 65
Nagaland 73
Orissa 79
Uttar Pradesh 88

South Asia **95**

Bangladesh 95
Bhutan 105
Nepal 113
Sri Lanka 123

Southeast Asia **131**

Isaan 131
Malay 141
Semai 145

East Indies 152
Bali 152
Duna 165
Iban 171
Kadazandusun 176
Kaliai 183
Kewa 189
Maluku 197
Tairora 203

Central and East Asia 211

China and East Asia 211
China Overview 211
Chinese Abroad 233
Manchu 245
Mongol 252
Taiwan (Republic of China) 260

Japan and Korea 271
Japan Overview 271
Ainu (Japan) 285
Korea 294

Central Asia and Siberia 306
Kazakh 306
Siberia 315
Tajik 325
Uyghur 335
Uzbek 348

Middle East 357

Armenia 357
Israel 372
Kurds 383
Lebanon 392
Palestine 400
Persia 413
Turkey 429
Yemen 439

Cumulative Index 445

Foreword

In many ways, *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of World Folklore and Folklife* represents the completion of a two-volume work published in 1997, *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music, and Art*. As editor of that encyclopedia, I endeavored to bring together a set of general entries on folklore forms, methods, and theories. Attempting to confine such diverse topics within a two-volume work often compelled those of us who took on the task to violate a guiding principle of folkloristics—the consideration of cultural contexts. To paraphrase a disclaimer included in the Preface to *Folklore*: the variety and wealth of the world's traditions demanded a severely abridged treatment of the subjects.

This concern returned to haunt me in the person of my former editor, Gary Kuris, who had changed presses and saw the opportunity to build on our earlier collaboration. Other obligations compelled me to pass along the editorial duties to William Clements, who had played a major role in the original project. Unable to resist involvement in such an ambitious and meaningful enterprise, I accepted the role of advisory editor. Thanks to Bill, this role has allowed me to be associated with what I believe will prove to be an extraordinary research tool, while requiring very little effort on my part.

Thus, almost a decade after the publication of *Folklore*, Greenwood Publishing Group, in this four-volume *Greenwood Encyclopedia of World Folklore and Folklife*, has provided a venue for redressing the omissions of that earlier project. These volumes flesh out the relatively economical treatments of concepts, forms, and theories with specific discussions of folklore in context; comparisons of art forms and lifeways within the various culture areas of the world; and consideration of topics that transcend cultural, social, and disciplinary borders. As such, the vision of folklore as a culturally situated phenomenon, arising from and contributing to the lives of its bearers, becomes fully apparent.

THOMAS A. GREEN
Texas A&M University

Preface

The term "folk-lore" entered the English language in 1846 when William J. Thoms, writing as Ambrose Merton, proposed it as a "good Saxon substitute" for the Latinate "popular antiquities," which British enthusiasts for the beliefs, behaviors, and objects of the "olden time" were using to denominate their interest. Thoms's contribution was a word (one that had been occasionally in use before his coinage); what it referred to already existed. And, in fact, other European languages had already found their own words for what Thoms was calling "folklore." (The hyphen disappeared in the twentieth century.) Germans were already studying *Volkskunde*, for example, by the time "folklore" appeared over the name Ambrose Merton.

The term may be English and of fairly recent coinage, but the kind of cultural material that it has come to encompass exists in every society, and many societies have been taking an interest in their folklore (by whatever name they refer to it) for quite some time. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of World Folklore and Folklife* is an attempt to assess this cultural material on an international basis and also to provide some idea of what has been done in each of the represented groups by both group members and outsiders to document, analyze, preserve, and revitalize it.

Like language, religion, politics, and economics, folklore is a cultural universal found everywhere in the world. That fact—and the fact that the materials of folklore often show remarkable similarities in different places and at different times—makes a survey of folklore materials on a worldwide basis especially relevant. Moreover, although the foundations of folklore study—at least in Europe—lay in romantic nationalism, a tradition of internationalism also exists. One need only think of such compendiums as Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890 and many subsequent editions), which, although driven by a view of culture that few serious folklorists would endorse today, nevertheless brings together a vast amount of folklore material from all over the world. The first edition of Stith Thompson's monumental *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (1932–1937; 2nd edition, 1955–1958) catalogued narrative elements from a range of traditional genres from throughout the world. The *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* (1949)—famous among folklorists for its twenty-one different definitions of the term "folklore"—has unsystematic worldwide coverage. Beginning in the 1960s, the University of Chicago Press's Folktales of the World series also adopted the globe as its bailiwick. Each of the twenty or so volumes in that series focuses on the narrative traditions of a particular country (for example, Japan, China, Mexico, France, England, Israel, and India). In 1961, Richard M. Dorson edited *Folklore Research around the World*, a collection of essays that assessed the state of folklore scholarship in several different countries. When he

inaugurated the *Journal of the Folklore Institute* (now *Journal of Folklore Research*) at Indiana University, he intended that its coverage be international. Of course, these few examples do not exhaust the attempts by folklorists to highlight what Dorson, in an essay entitled "The Techniques of the Folklorist," called "international relations" in folklore. They do, however, suggest the academic tradition out of which the current work emerges. As far as I know, a vision such as that of Thomas Green and the editors of Greenwood Publishing Group has not found expression in any previous work; the purpose of these four volumes is to survey the world's folklore heritages in a way that emphasizes the international nature of folklore in general and of specific folklore materials, while placing folklore within particular cultural milieus.

The aim of this encyclopedia is to examine folklore within the broad contexts of culture areas and the more narrow contexts of specific societies. To that end, the goal was to sample from every continent and subcontinent and to represent as many of the specific societies on those land masses as seemed feasible. The result is a series of substantial essays by specialists in the folklore of particular groups.

Given that both the specific nature of the folklore and the availability of resources on each topic vary from society to society, contributors had considerable latitude in what they felt to be important to represent the folklore of their societies and in how they decided to present it. However, they were given the following template—intended to be more suggestive than prescriptive—with ten areas that they might attend to in their essays:

1. *Geographical Setting*. The topography, climate, and other features of the physical and natural environment that help to shape the society's culture.
2. *Sociocultural Features*. Subsistence activities, political organization, social organization, and other aspects of the culture that will help readers understand how folklore works in the society.
3. *Ethnohistorical Information*. Migration patterns, political developments, watershed events, and interactions with other societies.
4. *Belief System*. Worldview and traditional religion (including medical practices).
5. *Verbal Art*. Myth, legend, folktale, and other oral forms, approached from an indigenous perspective.
6. *Musical Art*. Vocal and instrumental.
7. *Sports and Games*.
8. *Graphic and Plastic Arts*. Arts, crafts, architecture, clothing, and foodways.
9. *Effects of Modernization and Globalization*.
10. *References and Bibliographical Essay*. A brief history of the study of the society's folklore with a list of works from which the entry has drawn and recommendations for additional reading.

Contributors were encouraged to think not just in terms of folklore "texts" but of the processes of storytelling, singing, and performing folklore.

The four-volume *Greenwood Encyclopedia of World Folklore and Folklife* contains 205 entries written by more than 200 folklore scholars from around the world. To

facilitate the comparison of geographically related countries and cultures, the volumes are broken down into the following regional subdivisions:

Volume 1: Topics and Themes, Africa, Australia and Oceania
Volume 2: Southeast Asia and India, Central and East Asia, Middle East
Volume 3: Europe
Volume 4: North and South America

Volume 1 opens with an alphabetically arranged collection of thirty-nine short essays on processes, research tools, social and intellectual movements, and concepts important for understanding folklore on an international, intercultural basis. These introductory entries should equip the reader to appreciate the dynamic nature of folklore through time and as it passes across cultural boundaries. Volume 1 then proceeds to a series of entries on the peoples and cultures of Africa, Australia, and Oceania, which, like all the entries in the other three volumes, are listed alphabetically within a series of regional subdivisions (e.g., Southern Africa, Western and Central Africa, Polynesia).

Most entries run between 3,000 and 5,000 words, although those for older and more complex cultures and societies (e.g., China, India) are often longer. Useful subheads (e.g., Geography and History; Myths, Legends, and Folktales; Music and Songs; Challenges of the Modern World) divide the entries into topical sections, allowing readers quickly to find the aspect or genre of a group's folklore that may be of most interest to them. Written in a clear, readable style, the entries are also based on the best and latest scholarship, offering detailed, current information on the folklore and folklife of particular peoples and cultures. The *Encyclopedia* can thus serve a variety of users, from students (both high school and undergraduate) requiring information for projects and papers in a wide variety of subjects and interdisciplinary classes, to general readers or travelers interested in knowing more about a particular culture or custom, to folklore specialists needing to stay current with the latest work on peoples and cultures beyond or related to their own areas of expertise. By promoting cultural diversity and stressing the interconnectedness of peoples and cultures around the globe, the *Encyclopedia* can also help any user who wishes better to understand his or her own cultural heritage and the influences neighboring and even more distant groups have had on its development. Most entries also help readers understand how the emerging global society and economy have and are affecting the customs and beliefs of peoples around the world.

The *Encyclopedia* also contains maps located at the start of the relevant geographical section and numerous photographs of the peoples and artifacts of a culture. Volume 4 contains a number of additional features, including a glossary that briefly defines some of the terms that recur throughout the entries. The purpose of the glossary is to give the reader a point of departure for understanding some of the language of folklore studies and anthropology used by the authors, and most of these terms merit the much more extended treatments they have received elsewhere, in such works as Thomas A. Green's *Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales,*

Music, and Art (1997). Volume 4 also includes a geographical guide of peoples and cultures to help readers put an unfamiliar culture in geographical context, and a highly selective general bibliography that identifies works offering intercultural perspectives on folklore.

Besides concluding with extensive bibliographies of important information resources, the entries are also cross-referenced, with entry names highlighted in **boldface** type when they are first mentioned in the entry or listed in a "See also" line at the end of the text. To make the cross-references useful across the set, each volume contains a listing of the entries found in the other volumes so that users can quickly identify where to find the entry for a highlighted reference. Each volume also contains a volume-specific table of contents and a complete subject index to the set.

Acknowledgments

Obviously, this work is a team effort. Most of the members of that team are named in the Editors and Contributors section in Volume 4 and appear with their contributions throughout the work. I want to call special attention here to individuals whose contributions might otherwise be unclear and underestimated: Thomas A. Green, who had the idea for this encyclopedia; Gary Kuris, vice president, Editorial, and George Butler, senior acquisitions editor, of Greenwood Publishing Group, who contacted me and helped to devise the formal proposal for the project; John Wagner, senior development editor at Greenwood Publishing Group, who has been the principal editor for this project, with whom I have been in almost daily contact for the last several years, and whose influence is felt in every aspect of the work; Charles R. Carr and Clyde A. Milner II, administrators at Arkansas State University, who arranged for me to have help from graduate assistants and other amenities; William Allen, Jennifer Majors, Cliff Stamp, and Diane Unger, who provided technical assistance; and Frances M. Malpezzi, who helped to keep the work focused during the three years that it has been the major professional aspect of my life. I would also like to thank Tom Brennan for preparation of the maps. The production staff at Westchester Book Group also deserves thanks: production editors Rebecca A. Homiski and Carla L. Talmadge; copyeditors Jamie Nan Thaman, Frank Saunders, Carol Lucas, and Krystyna Budd; and Enid Zafran, who prepared the index.

I also believe I was particularly fortunate in my formal folklore education in having instructors whose view of folklore was truly international. These include Richard M. Dorson, who, though an Americanist, never lost sight of the importance of thinking of folklore globally; Warren E. Roberts, whose work in historic-geographic folktale studies and in material folk culture had a strong international flavor; Linda Dégh, who brought a continental perspective to the Indiana University Folklore Institute in the late 1960s; and John C. Messenger, an anthropologist whose fieldwork has taken him to Nigeria and to the west of Ireland. They and others reminded us that folklore cannot be understood only by looking at it within the context of a single culture. I hope that this work will impress that point on its readers.

Comprehensive List of Entries

VOLUME 1
Topics and Themes, Africa, Australia and Oceania

Topics and Themes in World Folklore
Antiquarianism
Archives
Bibliography
Colonialism
Creolization
Cultural Evolution
Cultural Relativism
Culture Area
Diaspora
Diffusion
Ethnicity
Ethnography
Ethnopoetics
Fieldwork
Folklorism
Frontier
Gender
Globalization
Hero
Hybridity
Invented Tradition
Modernization
Motif
Museums
Nationalism
Nativism
Oikotypification
Performance Theory
Popular Culture
Primitivism
Public Folklore
Race
Repertoire
Text
Tourism
Translation
Trickster
Type
Worldview

Africa
Abanyole
Baule
Benin
Berber
Ga
Igbo
Ijo
Jie
Lunda
Madagascar and the Comoros
Mascarene Islands
Nuer
San
Shona
Swahili
Tuareg
Wolof
Xhosa
Yoruba
Zande
Zulu

Australia and Oceania
Australia (British)
Australian Aborigines
Guam
Hawai'i
Kiribati
Malaita
Marquesas Islands
Marshall Islands
New Caledonia
Palau
Samoa
Tonga
Trobriand Islands
Tuvalu
Vanuatu

VOLUME 2
Southeast Asia and India, Central and East Asia, Middle East

Southeast Asia and India
Assam
Bali
Bangladesh
Bhutan
Bihar
Duna
Gaddi
Haryana
Iban
India Overview
Isaan
Kadazandusun
Kaliai
Karnataka
Kashmir
Kewa
Khasi-Jaintia
Malay
Maluku
Nagaland
Nepal
Orissa
Semai
Sri Lanka
Tairora
Uttar Pradesh

Central and East Asia
Ainu (Japan)
China Overview
Chinese Abroad
Japan Overview
Kazakh
Korea
Manchu
Mongol
Siberia
Taiwan (Republic of China)
Tajik
Uyghur
Uzbek

Middle East
Armenia
Israel
Kurds
Lebanon
Palestine
Persia
Turkey
Yemen

VOLUME 3
Europe

Europe
Albania
Ashkenazim
Austria
Basque
Brittany
Catalan
Croatia
Denmark
England
Finland
Finnish-Swedish
Flanders (Belgium)
France Overview
Galicia
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Greenland
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Isle of Man
Italy Overview
Latvia
Macedonia
Malta
Norway
Piedmont and Val d'Aosta
Poland
Roma
Russia
Sámi
Scotland
Sephardim
Serbia
Sicily
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain Overview
Sweden
Switzerland
The Netherlands
Ukraine
Wales

VOLUME 4
North and South America

North America
African American
Apache
Appalachia
Cherokee
Cheyenne
Choctaw
Haida
Hopi
Iroquois
Kiowa
Lakota
Mississippi Delta
Navajo
Nez Perce
Ojibwe
Seminole
Tlingit
Western Inuit and Yupik

South and Central America and the Caribbean
Caipira (Brazil)
Candoshi
Cuba
Ecuador
Haiti
Island Carib (Dominica)
Jamaica
Kaingang
Maya
Mexico
Nahua
Otomí
Peru
Quechua
Rarámuri
Sertão (Brazil)
Shuar
Sibundoy
Suriname Maroon
Xavante
Yanomami

Southeast Asia and the Indian Subcontinent

India: States and Regions

INDIA OVERVIEW

Geography

The Indian subcontinent is often conceived as a mixing bowl (or rather "curry pot"), shaped by the southern oceans (the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal) and covered with a lid formed by the northern mountain ranges (the Himalayan range, the Karakoram range, and the Hindu Kush). These impressive geographical features have not, however, constituted a barrier to either external influences on India or the influence of Indian tradition on the neighboring regions, but they did allow the people of the subcontinent to catch, retain, and nurture with their own distinctive character a large, diverse, and continuing repository of cultural tradition over the past 5,000 years or more. Over this long period of cultural history India continued reciprocal exchange with an ever-increasing circle of surrounding territories extending from Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Asia to the Middle East and Western Europe.

Factors Shaping Indian Folklore

Ethnographically speaking, India is a cultural meeting place where four language and culture "families"—the Dravidian, the Indo-European, the Sino-Tibetan, and the Munda (Austro-Asiatic)—came into contact with one another, mingled and mixed over several millennia, and, to some extent, merged. The Munda lingual/cultural group seems to have been present the longest but appears to have arrived and settled as a set of independent tribal populations, and in that level of social organization they largely remain today in eastern India (**Orissa** and West Bengal). Then, we know from firm archeological evidence that some time around 2500 B.C.E. a level of socioeconomic integration approaching civilization based in urban administrative and rural agricultural production was established along the Indus River system. This set the stage for a folk-urban distinction and many of the sociological features such as the caste system that have played a major role in the development of what distinguishes Indian folk traditions. Although we have no conclusive knowledge as to when or from where Dravidian lingual and cultural groups migrated and settled in southern Asia, many authorities hold that these developments were the product of Dravidian cultural influences. Recently, however, a number of Indian scholars dispute this. Just as the urban-based civilization arose and flourished during a period of about a thousand years from 2500 to 1500 B.C.E., the precursors to Indo-Aryan languages and culture brought with them new worldviews, a pantheon of new gods, and

ARMENIA

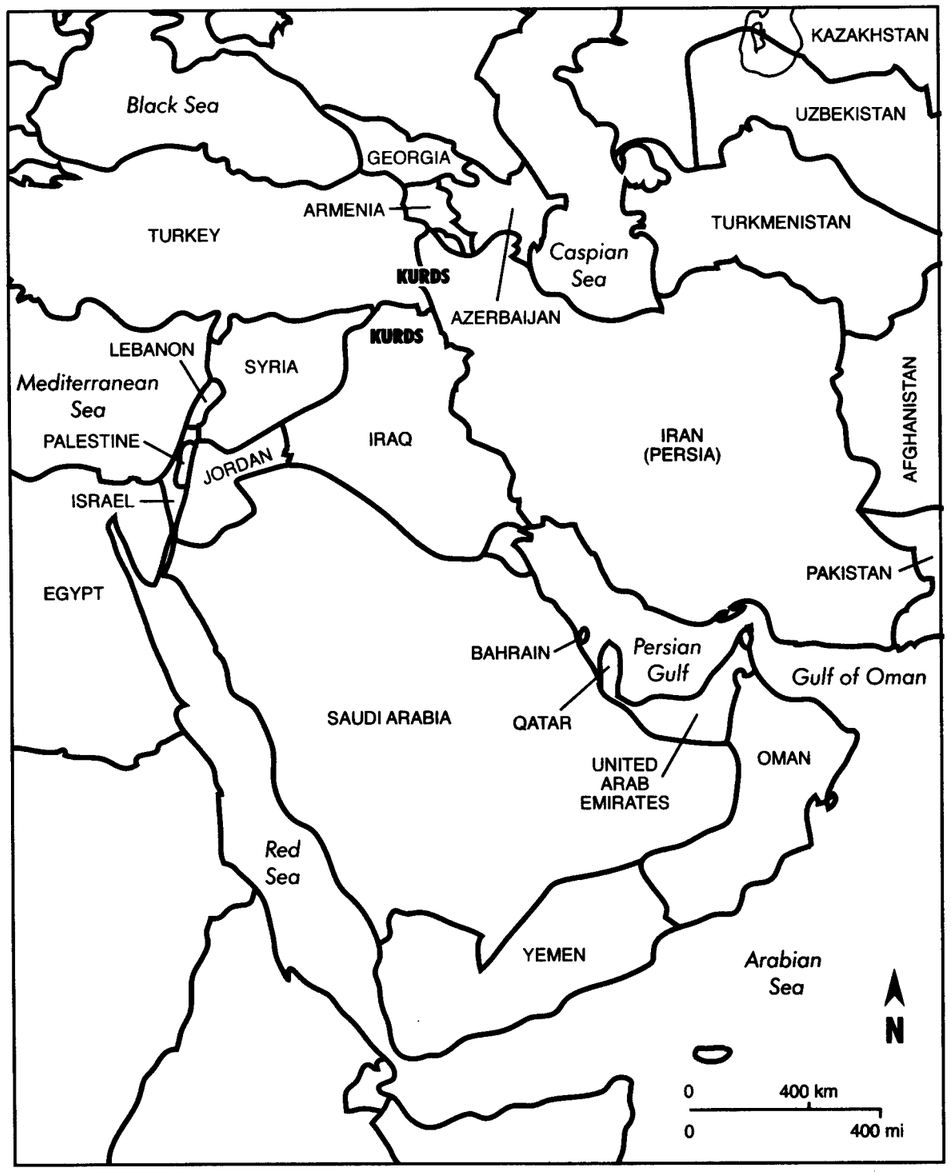
Geography and History

The roots of Armenian culture are contemporary with the ancient Sumerian-Babylonian and Egyptian civilizations, making Armenia one of the cradles of civilization. Given its situation between Asia Minor, the Black Sea, the Kur River basin, the Iranian Plateau, and Mesopotamia, the Armenian Highland is a mountainous country that has served as a crossroads between East and West since ancient times. Ararat, where biblical legend holds that Noah's ark rested after the Flood, is the symbol of the Armenian nation and the most picturesque mountain of the Armenian Highland. The climate of Armenia is dry and continental: hot in summer and cold in winter. Grapes, apricots, peaches, pomegranates, figs, and other fruits as well as grain grow there. The mountain ranges of Armenia divide the country into a number of closed climatic, economic, and ethnographic regions. The inhabitants of the varied regions (*ashkharner* in Armenian) differ from each other in their occupations, customs, costumes, and dialects. At present, the Republic of Armenia covers an area of 30,000 square kilometers, equivalent to one-tenth of the former historic Armenia.

The Armenians are a people of Indo-European origin who in the third millennium B.C.E., according to linguistic and dialect studies, broke off from the main branch of the Indo-European people. The first historic information concerning the Armenian Highland dates from the twenty-eighth century B.C.E. in the form of a Sumerian inscription concerning the state of "Aratta," the biblical Ararat.

According to early Armenian belief, the mountains, animals, plants, and many phenomena of nature were initially people transformed by a supernatural force. Armenian mountains have been personified as brothers, sisters, giants, bulls, and dragons often at conflict with each other, while the sun was represented as a bird shaped like a fiery girl holding a ring in its beak, the moon as a nascent and dying infant, and the stars and the constellations as tracks left by various people or animals. Elements of nature were objects of worship. Fire was regarded as sacred, a persecutor of evil. The worship of water was observed in tales about miraculous fish and in the fish-shaped stone monuments (*dragons*) erected near springs and irrigation ditches. The deification of heaven and earth originated in the period of Indo-European unity. Time was personified in tales as an old man sitting atop a mountain, while dawn was the disperser of night and a persecutor of evil spirits in the form of an immaculate virgin. Concurrent were beliefs regarding magic, witchcraft, and evil spirits as the source of disease and misfortune. To avert or cure such evils, ancient Armenians practiced, since prehistoric times, a variety of bewitching ceremonies and conjurations, which were eventually forbidden when Christianity became the state religion in 301.

For centuries folklore has been the fundamental means of educating people as



Middle East.

well as the means by which their artistic and spiritual demands were met. Though Armenia could boast of a written language some three millennia before Mesrop Mashtsots invented his alphabet (which is still used today) in the early fifth century, it was not until the late Middle Ages that folklore exerted much influence upon the many genres of Armenian belles-lettres—riddles, fables, songs, and tales. A few myths, legends, epics, and songs were preserved in the fifth-century works of Movses Khorenatsi, Pavstos Buzand, Agathangelos, Sebeos, and Hovhan Mamikonian, and the seventh-century writer Anania Shirkatsi elaborated upon then-current riddles. However, not until the twelfth and thirteenth centuries did collections of fables, *hayrens* (medieval secular poems), magical formulas, and ritual songs really begin to emerge.

Khachkars (cross-stones) are distinctive to Armenia, where they may adorn churches, serve as gravemarkers, or commemorate important historical events. This example is found in Noratus, in the Gegharkunik region (ninth to seventeenth centuries C.E.).

Epics and Historical Narratives

The epic is the first of the great genres of Armenian folklore to be reported. The father of Armenian historiography, Movses Khorenatsi (fifth century C.E.) mentioned in his book, *Patmutiun Hayots* (History of Armenians), a number of types of epic. *Vipassank* is the collective name given to the epics of the pre-Christian period. In the ancient Armenian language, *vipassank* referred to both the tales and their performers. *Tveliats yerg* (Song of numbers) was a historical song, in which events were narrated chronologically. *Goghtan erger* (Songs of Goghtn) are ancient historical songs, tales, and legends, created and preserved for centuries by the *Goossans* (Bards), the popular poet-singers of the Goghtn Region who played the *bandore* as they sang and narrated. *Zrooyts* (stories, tales) are descriptive and narrative creations in verse or prose. According to Movses Khorenatsi, they can be "real and historical" or "false and mythical" such as the myths about the powerful Tork Angegh, Ara the Fair, and various dragons.

The epic tale *Hayk and Bel* tells the story of Hayk, a giant descended from Noah's son, Habet, who refused to submit to the rule of Bel, another giant, and so left the land of Babylon for settlement in Ararat. Furious, Bel came with a large army to conquer Hayk's country but was killed by his opponent. Where he fell, Hayk built a castle named after himself, and for that reason the district is now called *Hayots dzor*, "the valley of the Armenians," just as the entire country is called *Hayastan* by Armenians, who deified Hayk long ago, naming the constellation Orion after the hero who laid the foundation of the Armenian state.

The tribal groups of the Armenian Highland were often subject to attacks from the powerful Babylonian, Assyrian, and Hittite Kingdoms. The Armenian realms of Nairi, Armin, and Uruatri situated on the southern part of the Armenian Highland rallied more closely and defended their country. The consolidation of these forces near Lake Van produced the first unified Armenian state, the Kingdom of Van (Biainili) (ninth to sixth centuries B.C.E.). The first rulers of the Kingdom of Van,

Aramé and Sardoori I, founded the capital of Tushpa/Van (at present in Turkey) on the shore of the lake. The country developed and became stronger during the reign of Aramé and subsequent kings.

The historical tale *Haykian Aram* narrates the historic events from Hayk to Aramé, concerning the protracted formation of the Armenian identity. Forefather Aram (860–840 B.C.E.) is mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions as "Aramu the Urartian." Thanks to Aram, the name of Urartu-Ararat spread all over the Armenian Highland as an equivalent to Hayastan (Armenia). Aram repulsed the incursions of the Median King Nyukar Mades, the Semite Barsham, Papayis Kaaghia, and other foreign invaders. King Argishti I and his successors expanded their territory, secured their borders against the Medes in the east, Assyria in the south, and Cappadocia in the west and consolidated and centralized their power. Aram ordered the inhabitants of conquered nations to learn the Armenian language. In the reign of Aram, the Kingdom of Van became the most powerful state in Progressive Asia. While Armenians consider their name (*Hay*) to be derived from Hayk, then the foreigners call them "Armens" and the country Armenia after the name of Aram.

The Kingdom of Van suffered a decline as a result of attacks by the Median Empire. Beginning in the sixth century B.C.E., Armenia was governed by the Yervandians. In 521 B.C.E., Armenia fell under the rule of Akkemenian Persia, becoming one of its satrapies, but in 331 B.C.E. the Yervandians managed to reinstate independence to Greater and Lesser Armenia. However, the Seleucid Persians soon managed to conquer portions of Greater Armenia, though in 189 B.C.E. the Armenians managed to reverse this situation, founding the Artashessian Dynasty under the leadership of King Artashes (189 B.C.E.–1 C.E.).

The memory of those historic events is preserved in the epic poem *Artashes and Satenik*, dating from the second and first centuries B.C.E. The poem praises Artashes's battles against a variety of enemies: the Seleucids, Yervand IV, and the Caucasian Alans. When the Alans attacked Armenia, Artashes took their king's son hostage. The king's daughter Satenik (the principal heroine of the Nard epic) stood on the opposite bank of the Kur River and implored Artashes to set her brother free:

> I say to you, valiant Artashes,
> That you have conquered the brave nation of the Alans.
> Come, consent to the request of the beautiful-eyed Alan princess
> To give up the youth.
> For it is not right for heroes
> To take the lives of the progeny
> Of other heroes for the sake of vengeance,
> Or by subjecting them to keep them in the rank
> Of slaves and perpetuate eternal enmity
> Between two brave nations.

Listening to Satenik's wise speech, Artashes decided to marry her and to establish friendship between the two peoples: "A shower of gold rained down at the marriage of Artashes; / It rained pearls at the wedding of Satenik."

Artashes and Artavazd is a mythological epic poem, the main theme of which is the relation between father and son and the power of a father's curse. It was said that when Artavazd was born, the *Vishapazunk* (descendants of dragons) stole him and replaced him with a devil: "The descendants of the dragon stole the child Artavazd / And put a *dev* [evil spirit] in his place."

Because of his work to build up the Armenian nation, Artashes was greatly loved by his people. During his funeral, many voluntary human offerings were made. They buried with him his riches and his servants. The soldiers surrounded his coffin and blew brass horns as if they were marching to war. A crowd of lamenting women and warriors followed his coffin, crying and wailing. Envious of his father's glory, Artavazd exclaimed: "Since you went and took all the land with you, / To what purpose shall I reign over these ruins?" Artashes cursed him, therefore, with these words:

> If you go hunting up on Noble Massis,
> The spirits will seize you and take you up to Noble Massis;
> There you will remain and no more see the light.

His father's curse was later fulfilled. Artavazd remained shackled in a cave. The sound of the blacksmith's sledgehammer was said to make his fetters even firmer, so Armenian blacksmiths developed the custom of striking their hammer thrice upon an anvil, even on Sunday, to punish Artavazd by making his chains stronger. Variations of this legend, however, hold Artavazd to be a Promethean figure who will one day return and renew the world.

The Artashessian Dynasty reached its zenith in the days of Tigran II the Great (95–55 B.C.E.). The popular historical tale *Tigran and Azhdahak*, which covers some five centuries of history, relates that the Median King Ashdahak was troubled that King Tigran Yervandian and the Persian King Cyrus should conclude a treaty. In his dreams, Azhdahak saw a beautiful-eyed woman sitting atop ice-covered Mount Ararat, giving birth to three giants, one of which mounted an enormous dragon and attacked his country. Azhdahak's advisors interpreted his dream as a sign of danger, that he could expect an attack from King Tigran, and that he should effect a false friendship by marrying Tigran's sister, Tigranouhi. However, Tigranouhi soon discovered a plot to kill her brother and warned him. Not only did Tigran succeed in killing the Median king; he also brought Azhdahak's first wife, Anoosh, and a multitude of their people to the foot of Mount Ararat, where he forced them to settle. As he worked to unify Armenia and expand its borders over the next twenty-five years, he deported and resettled a number of peoples, assimilating them into Armenian culture. What Artashes did not accomplish himself, his grandson, Tigran the Great, realized in different historical circumstances.

According to popular legend, Tigran the Great's son was Vahagn, about whom a beautiful mythological song "Vahagn's Birth" has been composed. Movses Khorenatsi had heard it from Armenian bards of the Goghtn Province, who sang it to *bandore* accompaniment. The song tells of the birth of the young god with fiery hair, flaming beard, and sun-lit eyes. It symbolizes thunder and lightning:

The sky is turbulent, turbulent the earth,
Turbulent the purple sea,
And turbulent also the red reed in the sea.
Smoke curled out of the reed,
Flame leaped out of the reed,
And out of the reed a fair child came forth.
His hair glowed,
His beard flamed,
And his eyes were suns.

In another version, Vahagn's fight with the dragons and his victory over them are described. Consequently he was called "Vishapakagh" (Dragon-Collector). According to ancient belief, the dragon is the evil personification of the thunderstorm, which rises to the sky as a tempest in a dense cloud, attacks the sun, and covers it. At the moment the good god of storm and lightning, the beautiful young god with fiery hair, is born and begins his fight against the evil dragon. He kills it, liberates the sun, and illuminates the earth. Traces of this mythology exist in popular belief as the dragon rises to the sky during the storm with the evil spirits and ties up the clouds to prevent the rain from falling. Or it swallows the sun. The sun is represented in Armenian folktales as a beautiful girl. The dragon obstructs the flow of water and, unless a girl is sacrificed, will not release it. Dragons with the sun's disk in their mouths also appear in ancient Armenian rock art. To propitiate the dragon, ancient Armenians sculpted statues called "Vishapakars" (Dragon-Stones). In another legend, Vahagn has become the ancestor of the Armenian nation.

Songs and Legends

In olden times, Armenian popular legends and epic songs were sung and performed as dance and pantomime movements. Armenian bards of the wine-rich Goghtn Province wandered everywhere and staged such performances in town squares, in inns, at palaces, and at festive celebrations such as wedding banquets, bringing the heroic deeds and Armenian kings and heroes to life. Dancing actresses, called *vardzaks*, also performed with the bard groups. Movses Khorenatsi mentioned the *vardzak* Nazenik, "who was very beautiful and who sang with her hand; that is, she danced while singing." In ancient Armenia, children's groups called the *Azaps* not only taught music, songs, and dances to adolescents, but also trained them in athletic games and competitions.

The adoption of Christianity in the fourth century unified the Armenians around one faith. The legend *Trdat and Grigor* (Gregory), which was preserved in the historian Agathangelos's fifth-century *Patmutiun Hayots* ("History of Armenians"), tells that Gregory the Illuminator introduced Christianity to Armenia. He was from the western part of Armenia, which was under the influence of Rome. Grigor's father, Anag, had been sent at one time to Armenia to kill King Khosrov. Khosrov's son, King Trdat III (287–330), learning Grigor's identity, imprisoned him in a deep dungeon, Khor Virap. Soon thereafter, King Trdat was transformed into a wild boar, and his royal court was infected with a strange disease. Trdat's sister, Khosrovitookht, saw in her dream an angel who told her that only Grigor was able to cure her

brother. Released from his dungeon, Grigor baptized the king and his court, at which time they were all healed, Trdat resuming a human shape. The people seeing the miracle adopted Christianity in the year 301.

Rome and **Persia** divided Armenia in 387. After two years, the Western Armenian Kingdom in the Roman part vanished, while the dynasty of the Arshakunis persisted in Eastern Armenia until 428. The popular historical tale *Arshak and Shapuh* reflects the continuing struggle against internal and external oppressors. In response to news that Persia was preparing to attack, King Arshak concluded an alliance with Byzantium and took as a wife Olympia, a member of the imperial family. His advisor Catholicos Nerses assisted Arshak in every possible way, but other ministers endeavored to seize the throne of the Arshakunis. This struggle was organized and kindled by Byzantium and Persia. Their accomplices in the court decided to assassinate Arshak and replace him with either Gnel or Tirit. A clever statesman, King Arshak had these two killed. However, at the end of a thirty-year war with Shapuh, who was aided throughout by Persophile ministers, Arshak was finally captured through a feat of cunning and imprisoned in the fortress of Anhoosh. Though Arshak soon claimed to be a loyal subject of Shapuh, the latter did not believe him and had soil and water from Armenia brought to a temple, where he sprinkled them on part of the ground. Walking upon his native soil, Arshak was filled with pride:

Avetum (Annunciation) by Toro Roslin, 1250, Cilicia.

He rose and cried to King Shapuh:
"Where are you sitting, that is my place.
Away from it, I will sit there myself,
For that is the place of *our* gens!
When I return to my old world,
I shall exact great vengeance from thee."

Following the fall of the Armenian Kingdom in 428, the western regions of Lesser Armenia and Greater Armenia were included in the borders of Byzantium, while Eastern Armenia was transformed into a Persian satrapy. As a consequence of the cruel anti-Armenian and anti-Christian persecutions conducted by the Persian royal court, nationwide revolts broke out in Eastern Armenia. In 451 the Armenians fought under the leadership of Vardan Mamikonian at the battle of Avarayr to preserve their national identity and Christian faith. These struggles continued in the years 482–484 and 571–572. These events gave rise to a number of popular epics such as *The Persian War*, *King Pap*, and *The War of Taron*. Under these sociopolitical circumstances, the creation of the Armenian alphabet in 406 by Mesrop Mashtots

was a propitious event that raised in the people a cultural self-consciousness that allowed them to resist various policies of assimilation as much as it allowed them to import in translation the scholarship of other nations. This period is referred to as Armenia's "Cultural Golden Age."

In the seventh century, the newly emergent Arab caliphate succeeded in conquering the greater part of Armenia, but the Armenians raised a number of rebellions and thus restored their independence in 885. The epic *Sassoontsi Davit* (Davit of Sassoon) was shaped by these events. It existed solely in oral form until 1873, when it was written down (as performed by a narrator named Krpo) by the pioneer Armenian folklorist Garegin Servandztiants, who published it in his collection *Grots-Brots* in 1874. The epic is divided into four parts, focusing upon four successive generations of heroes: the heroes of the first branch are Sanassar and Baghdassar; that of the second branch is Sanassar's son, Great Mher; he is followed by his son, Davit, whose name has been given to the epic; and finally, there is Sassoontsi Davit's son, Little Mher. With each generation, the persecution of the Armenian people intensifies as they are taxed and plundered, villages pillaged, their gold and cattle stolen. The conquerors too ravish Dsovinar, the beautiful daughter of the Armenian King Gagik, and force her to become the wife of the idolatrous king. After drinking a handful and then a half-handful of water from the wonder-working spring of Katnaghbyur, she gives birth to twin boys, Sanassar and Baghdassar, who kill the idolatrous king and set their mother free.

The hero of the second branch of the epic, Great Mher (nicknamed the Lion), continues the struggle for independence against a new idolatrous king, Mesra Melik, who conquered the Armenian land of Sassoon following the deaths of Sanassar and Baghdassar and began to demand egregious taxes from the people:

> The Melik exploded and summoned his lords,
> "Badin, Gozbadin, claim my just rewards,
> Syudin, Charkhadin, set forth straight away,
> Leave no stone unturned, Sassoon has to pay
> A price for its insolence, strike hard and swift,
> Remind my dear subjects that tribute's no gift,
> And bring forty maidens, radiant and bright,
> And bring forty short maids of milling height,
> And bring forty tall ones my camels to load,
> They'll work as my servants and tend my abode."

The struggle for independence gains ground with the eponymous Sassontsi Davit, who finally kills Mesra Melik with his father's miraculous Lightning Sword. In the last branch of epic, Little Mher too struggles for the welfare of not only the Armenians but other oppressed peoples as well, liberating them from cruel tyrants, various fabulous demons, and monsters. However, at the end Little Mher confines himself in the Cave of Van, resolved to stay there until the destruction of "the evil world" and the rebuilding of a new one.

From the ninth to the fourteenth century, Armenian culture attained a high

standard of development. Among the factors which favored this development were independence from Arab control, establishment of the Armenian Bagratuni and Zakarian dynasties in Greater Hayk (884–1045), foundation of the capital Ani, and establishment of the Rubinian Dynasty in Cilicia (eleventh to fourteenth century), the rulers of which greatly encouraged cultural enterprises. Folklore manifested itself at this time in the forms of aphorisms, tales, fables, and stories. In the twelfth century, Nerses Shnorhali and Mkhitar Gosh wrote down and worked out numerous fables. Vardan Aygektsi compiled a collection of fables in the thirteenth century. Meanwhile, material folk art was also reaching a zenith. The art of embroidery was widespread in all the Armenian provinces (Vaspurakan, Shirak, Karin, Syunik, Artsakh, the Ararat Plain, and Cilicia). Though preserving a national style, every ethnographic region has developed its particular forms and kinds of embroidery. The needlework of Van, Marash, Ayntap, Karin, and Tarsus is distinctive. Embroidery was considered a constituent part of the national costume, which was the image of the people and the expressive feature of their lifestyle, mode of life, and esthetic perceptions. The traditional costume has fallen out of use today, has lost its former practical significance, and has become instead a symbol of national culture, performing the role of an ethnic marker during national dances.

Armenian costume, Vaspurakan region.

During this time period, however, the Armenian people lost their independence. The Seldjukian invasions held back the development of economic life, while the Mongolian invasions and domination in Armenia led the country toward economic decay, hindering the progress of public life. The sixteenth century proved to be a harbinger of rough times ahead, when the Ottoman Turks conquered Byzantium. The Middle East was now controlled by Turkey and Persia. Armenia pinned its hope on the Christian West, sending delegates to Europe and Russia, the latter of which freed a great part of Eastern Armenia from Persian rule, whereupon the Republic of Armenia was formed. It later joined the Soviet Union in 1920. Under the influence of these historical events, epics and memoirs were composed and written about the Armenian heroes Rostom, Loris Melikov, Ter-Ghukassov, and General Andranik as well as the Armenian Genocide (1915–1922), during which 1.5 million Armenians living under Turkish rule in what was formerly Western Armenia were murdered by the Turkish government. Though the Turkish government continues to stamp out Armenian culture in its land, many Armenians have worked hard to preserve the spiritual heritage, which is remembered in the accounts of survivors of these events, for future generations. Armenian folklore often touches upon the themes of preserving national identity or presents criticism of cruel, foreign rulers. One folktale called "Firebird" presents the common trope of the need to protect the country against a foreign invader, though the invader is often a witch. Likewise, a fable about the bat holds that the creature was deprived of the appearance of a bird and of the right to fly in the daytime because it could not pay the tax claimed by the birds and the mice. The subject is concise, the actions of the characters are restricted, but the moral inference is clear. The bat represents a homeless and helpless man bent under heavy

taxes. The characters of the fables are anthropomorphic animals or beasts, and the educational aim of the fables is the improvement of human life and the perfection of man.

Armenian labor songs lyrically express the operations of farming or daily labor such as ploughing, wool-carding, spinning, and pounding the mortar. These songs were performed only during the fulfillment of the particular type of labor. In such songs the farmer besought God to guard his crop against the evil forces of nature. The motif of social injustice is also present. The peasant appealed to his compassionate and faithful friends—the plow, the ox pulling the yoke, the horse, the scythe, the spindle, and the spinning-wheel—to help him provide the daily bread for his large family.

Lullabies express the diverse emotions of the mother regarding her child: joy, affliction, sorrow, and, at the same time, boundless love. The mother compares the child with the celestial luminaries, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the angels. Given the unequal social status of Armenian women, when a girl was born, the mother grew sad that her daughter would suffer like herself, but she was proud of the birth of a son, because a son was considered the pillar of the house, and she paid him homage by singing the following song:

My little boy's eye
Looks like the cross of the church,
My little boy's mouth
Looks like the altar of the church,
My little boy's nose
Looks like the rafter of the church,
My little boy's back
Looks like the door of the church,
My little boy's hands
Look like the books of the church.

Lyric love songs include medieval bardic popular songs called *hayrens*, contemporary love songs, and ditties called *khaghiks*. *Hayrens* had specific metrics and were performed during banquets to the accompaniment of drum, flute, lyre, or horn. They were not the creations of one individual but of many generations, who elaborated upon them through the centuries. These songs praise the beauty of the beloved, because love and women are the forces ennobling and exalting men and inducing them to heroism. The eternal struggle between life and death is presented in these songs by means of philosophical meditations:

Come! Beloved, come!
Do not be aggrieved;
The goods of the world
Will not remain to me or you.

The praise of love resounds also in contemporary love songs, though these may be sadder, as the lover does not always attain his beloved. Such songs may also address

the disproportionate burdens placed upon subjugated Armenian women. Popular ditties (*khaghiks*) are small quatrains, but they express a whole conception. They are exclusively rural songs, which were sung by young girls on the holidays of Ascension or Transfiguration with the purpose of drawing lots and fortune-telling:

You are an apple on the tree,
You are a flower on the mountain,
You, a nightingale singing a sweet song,
Are perching on a store.

Love here is not presented as a transient feeling, nor is the woman a temporary object of pleasure. Love may acquire a certain social meaning in the ditties, as when an enamored peasant girl might prefer to remain faithful to her poor herdsman sweetheart, refusing the gold offered by a rich suitor: "Your gold does not tempt me; / I remain in the hope of my sweetheart."

Nuptial songs are wedding ritual songs performed during most every part of the wedding ceremony. Ancient songs (for example, *Artashes and Satenik*) reflect many traditions linked to wedding rituals such as taking the bride away and strewing gold coins and pearls—subsequently replaced by dried fruits and raisins or money and sweets—over the heads of the bride and bridegroom. The nuptial rites and songs preserve remnants of totemism and other beliefs such as the bride's breaking a plate when crossing the threshold to her bridegroom's house, which aimed to protect the newlyweds from evil forces and also promote fertility. The bride is the main figure in nuptial songs. She is the "queen" of the day, who is compared to the sun as the source of life, which is consonant with the tree of life. The bride is to be the "golden column of the house," the labor friend of the "king," and the assistant to the mother-in-law. The best proof for this is the song "Come Out, You, the King's Mother," in which the bride is introduced to her mother-in-law as a "laundress," "dough-kneader," "weeder," "sheep-milker," "wool-carder," "distaff-spinner," and with other terms denoting domestic occupations. Vestiges of ancient customs have also been preserved in the songs which assert that the bride should, for the sake of family solidarity, be obedient and silent, whatever happens, The second main figure in the nuptial songs and rituals is the bridegroom, the "king," whom the songs liken to the moon. They dress the bride and the bridegroom with songs describing them as a blossoming tree (which symbolizes the mythological space tree) and as the grapevine so that they will bear fruit in the same way. This similarity substantiates the idea of the perpetuation of the family, of the nation, and of humanity.

Produced by the continual wanderings and migrations that characterize the nation's history, emigration songs typify the Armenian national experience. The forced deportation of the Armenian people began as early as the sixth century by the Byzantine Empire, which aimed to conquer Western Armenia. The Arab caliphate replicated this activity from the eighth to the eleventh century as the two powers struggled for domination over the land. Other deportations were carried out by the Seljuks, the Persian Shahs, and the Turkish Sultans, who in the early twentieth century would accomplish the extirpation of the Armenian people that culminated in

genocide and massive deportation. These songs reflect the horrible persecutions which the Armenian people experienced. That is testified by the songs "How Unfortunate You Are, Poor Armenian People" and "The Partridge's Lament," where the partridge symbolizes the child-deprived mother country, Armenia. It grieves for the loss of its children:

> How can I stop crying
> When they have taken my offspring away:
> They have taken away my offspring from their nest,
> They have set fire to my heart.

Other songs focus upon the peasant, who often worked during the whole year but remained indebted to the usurious creditor. The lyric hero complains in the emigration songs that he has resorted to emigration not by his own will but out of necessity. Melancholy and yearning are prominent in his songs. They describe the emigrant's farewell: "I go to alien countries—have pity on me!" He cherishes hope in the beginning that he will go, work there, become rich, and help his family. But upon arrival at his destination, he feels the coldness of foreigners and is convinced that he is perishing both physically and morally, because "the emigrant's pillow is made of stone, the bread he eats is bitter, and the water he drinks is foul." He remembers with yearning his native home and kinsfolk and his new bride who longs for him. And he appeals to the cloud, the moon, and the flying crane, begging them to bring news to him:

> Crane, where do you come from?
> I'm eager to hear your voice.
> Crane, don't you have any news
> From our native land?

Mourning songs are very ancient. People participated in the funeral ceremony by weeping, singing, playing a musical instrument, clapping hands, and dancing face to face. Although Christianity has forbidden the lament over the deceased, traditional crying and wailing are still practiced particularly in the villages. The deceased is personified and animated in the mourning songs. People "talk" with him, ask him questions, and answer in place of him. They bid him to transmit news to the other deceased. Thus, the deceased becomes a sort of link between the real world and that beyond the grave. The musical text in the funeral ritual is complicated and original. The lament-praises are impromptu, and their object is to eulogize and do the deceased homage, to console the kinsfolk, to evoke memories, and to move those present to tears and regret. The song genre is widespread in rural regions, while the song-instrumental form is practiced in urban areas. The lament-praises are performed in the house of the deceased, in the yard, and at the graveyard on the day following the burial, on the seventh and the fortieth days after the burial, on its anniversary, on memorial days, and on the holidays of the Cross. The deceased's kin or hired singers perform funeral marches, and sad melodies are performed on the

duduk (the Armenian national musical pipe), the clarinet, the *zourna* (type of flute), and the drum. Impromptu monologues are performed, accompanied by cries and wails of the mourners. The woman-mourner begins to praise the virtues of the deceased. She characterizes him as an individual, citizen, and member of the family and describes the cause of death and complains of his fate. In urban life nowadays the mourners have relinquished their places to the popular singers, professional string quartets, or even tape-recordings, which perform soulful Armenian sacred music or classical music.

Challenges of the Modern World

The traditional genres of folklore have been gradually disappearing from people's memory, but a certain traditionalism is still noticeable during feasts such as New Year's Day, Christmas, Candlemas, Carnival, Easter, harvest festivals, and Memorial Day. Armenians in the mother country remember and still respect those Christian holidays of pagan origin, observing as much as possible the traditions inherited from their ancestors. During those holidays, nationwide festivals, festive performances, sporting events, exhibitions of various popular arts, theatrical performances with the participation of masked or made-up buffoons, and exhibitions of tightrope-walkers or of other sportsmen are organized. The largest part of the Armenian people, living in the **diaspora**, are making every effort, under the conditions of **globalization**, not to lose their language, traditions, and national identity. *See also* **Persia**; **Turkey**.

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ISRAEL

Folklore in Israel is best analyzed from a three-tiered perspective: the long and richly documented historical perspective, the traditions of various localities in the country, and the diverse national, religious, linguistic, and ethnic groups.

All three perspectives are suffused in the area shared by the state of Israel as well as **Palestine** and parts of the kingdom of Jordan as the Holy Land of the three major monotheistic religions. Much of the local folklore is thus infused with traditions that are strongly linked with the canonical heritage of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Many places are associated with the life stories and the deeds of persons from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qu'ran. Much of the folklore—both that directly derived from the various canonical sources which are intimately related to each other and that which has no direct relationship to these canonical sources—is, however, shared by the various groups.

Biblical, Rabbinic, and Early Christian Texts

The historical perspective is reflected in the long chronology of the texts that can be consulted for information from the Hebrew Bible onwards. Still older sources are supplied by rich archeological finds. Thus a poetical calendar listing the months of the year with their typical works carved on stone from circa tenth century B.C.E. discloses an ancient representation of the annual cycle, constituting together with the life cycle the two basic conceptual structures of folk culture. The Hebrew Bible includes a rich array of folk literary genres. The creation narrative in Genesis 2 frames the creation of the woman from the rib between two proverbs. One is implied—"It is not good that the man should be alone" (2:18), which serves as a proverb even in contemporary Hebrew and in translation in a number of other languages, and the other is explicitly formulated as a proverb—"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (2:24). Proverbs are also to be found in the canonical book by that name as well as in Ecclesiastes and in the apocryphal Ben-Sira. From the nineteenth century onwards, biblical scholarship had already discerned novellas in the stories about the patriarchs in Genesis, especially the biography of Joseph. Non-narrative folklore is also richly represented in the Bible. Annual festivals and fertility cults are described in detail both in prescriptive and descriptive modes. Medical magic is practiced by Moses in the desert with the help of the famous copper serpent (Numbers 21:9). The woman of En-Dor conjures the dead soul of Samuel with her secret knowledge (I Samuel 28:11–20).

Rabbinic literature and early Christian literature also provide ample examples of folkloristic practices and texts. The writings of the Rabbis of the Roman and the Byzantine eras in Palestine, are collected mainly in the Mishnah (edited in Galilee circa 220 C.E.), the Palestinian Talmud (edited circa 420 in Galilee), the Babylonian Talmud (edited circa 450 in Babylonia, though recording much Palestinian material), and other related works, among them notably the Midrash compilations related to the Pentateuch (the Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) and the Five Scrolls (Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Esther). While the term "Midrash" refers to a corpus of texts as indicated above, it also means a specific creative mode, taking off from biblical texts but ending up almost anywhere, very often in tales and proverbs as well as other folkloristic materials. It is through the elaborations of both Talmud and Midrash that we are introduced to the rich ethnographic discourse that enables us to learn so much about these aspects of life of the period, whereas the same texts are largely oblivious to historical events of the time. Early Christian authors (notably Eusebius, Jerome, and Epiphanius) likewise recorded instances of the folklore of the inhabitants of the Holy Land, whether as practiced within the framework of Christian rituals and texts or branded as heresies or deviations therefrom.

Among the explicitly folkloristic compilations of texts in the classical Rabbinic corpus is a long text on the interpretation of dreams (Babylonian Talmud, tractate Berakhot ["blessings"], ff. 55–58); several collections of contextualized proverbs (for example, Babylonian Talmud, tractate Bava Qamma ["first gate of property law"], ff. 92–93); a cycle of riddle tales and tales of riddling (Lamentations Rabbah, chapter 1); and numerous cycles of hagiographical legends (for example, Babylonian Talmud, tractate Taanith ["fasts"], ff. 23–25) and historical legends (for example, Babylonian Talmud, tractate Gittin ["divorce laws"], ff. 95–98). Eusebius (260–339, Bishop of Caesarea Maritima) provides many examples of local folklore in his annotated list of names of settlements and communities, the *Onomasticon*, while Epiphanius (310–403, Bishop of Salamis, Cyprus) describes ritual and everyday practices in his inventory of heresies, the *Panarion*.

Holy Land for Three Religions

The multicultural, pluralistic conditions of the Holy Land prevailed also after Islam became the dominant religion in all of the Middle East by the end of the seventh century. One can say that these conditions characterize Israeli folklore to the present, as the state is inhabited by religiously and linguistically divergent groups, whose variance is further amplified by massive immigration from all over the world.

Due to its status as Holy Land, Israel has through the ages served as the goal of pilgrimage for the adherents of the three monotheistic religions. The pilgrimage tradition in Israel has its identifiable roots in the decree in which God tells Moses to institute a pilgrimage for the people of Israel three times a year to the site of the Ark of the Covenant and consequently to the Temple in Jerusalem (Exodus 23:17; 34:24). The dynamics of center (Jerusalem) and periphery (all other places) have given rise to a number of interesting mediating cases where sanctuaries were built elsewhere

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