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*DOI: 10.54503/978-5-8080-1587-6-435*

## **ABOUT THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF AVETIK ISAHAKYAN'S POEM**

**Keywords:** Avetik Isaakyan, Alice Blackwell, Geneva, “Hey, jan”, “Songs of the Haiduk”, translation.

### **Abstract**

The reason for this study was the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Av. Isahakyan's birth, and the subject was the poem “Hey, jan” from the cycle “Songs of the Haiduk”, which became one of the fundamental poems in the poet's patriotic lyrics and its translation into English. The purpose of the study is to identify the reasons that prompted the very young poet to create in 1890s a collection of the “Songs of the Haiduk” and to publish it, signed with the pseudonym **Armenian Bard**. The research methodology is determined by a comprehensive (historical, comparative, literary, etc.) approach to the analysis of the poem and its translation into English. The methodology of this study is determined by the necessity to solve the above-mentioned problems and is based on a comparative and descriptive approaches. The novelty of the article lies in the fact that this topic has not yet been comprehensively and thoroughly studied.

The results of the study are presented in the conclusion.

## **ՔՐԻՍՏԻՆԵ ԲԵՋԱՆՅԱՆ**

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## **ԱՎԵՏԻՔ ԻՍԱՀԱԿՅԱՆԻ ԲԱՆԱՍՏԵՂԾՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԱՆԳԼԵՐԵՆ ԹԱՐԳՄԱՆՈՒԹՅԱՆ ՄԱՍԻՆ**

**Բանալի բառեր** - Ավետիք Իսահակյան, Ալիս Բլեքվել, Ժնև, «Է՛յ, ջան», «Հայրուկի երգեր», թարգմանություն:

### **Ամփոփում**

Այս ուսումնասիրության առիթը եղավ Ավ. Իսահակյանի ծննդյան 150-ամյակը: Թեման «Հայրուկի երգեր» շարքի «Հեյ, ջան» բանաստեղծությունն է, որը պոետի հայրենասիրական քնարերգության հիմնարար բանաստեղծություններից մեկն է, և դրա անգլերեն թարգմանությունը: Ուսումնասիրության նպատակն է բացահայտել այն պատճառները, որոնք դրդել են այն ժամանակ դեռ շատ երիտասարդ բանաստեղծին ստեղծել «Հայրուկի երգեր» ժողովածուն և հրատարակել այն «Հայ-Գուսան» կեղծանվամբ: Հետազոտության մեթոդները պայմանավորված են բանաստեղծության և դրա անգլերեն թարգմանության վերլուծության համապարփակ (պատմական, համեմատական, գրական և այլն) քննությամբ: Այս ուսումնասիրության մեթոդաբանությունը որոշվում է վերը նշված խնդիրները լուծելու անհրաժեշտությամբ և հիմնված է համեմատական և նկարագրական մոտեցումների վրա: Հոդվածի նորությունն այն է, որ այս թեման դեռևս համակողմանի և ամբողջական ուսումնասիրության առարկա չի դարձել:

Ուսումնասիրության արդյունքները ներկայացված են եզրակացության մեջ:

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## **ОБ АНГЛИЙСКОМ ПЕРЕВОДЕ СТИХОТВОРЕНИЯ АВЕТИКА ИСААКЯНА**

**Ключевые слова:** Аветик Исаакян, Элис Блэквелл, Женева, «Эй, джан», «Песни гайдука», перевод.

### **Аннотация**

Причиной для данного исследования послужило 150-летие со дня рождения А.В. Исаакяна, а предметом – стихотворение «Эй, джан» из цикла «Песни гайдука», ставшее одним из основополагающих в патриотической лирике поэта, и его перевод на английский язык. Цель исследования – выявить причины, побудившие совсем молодого поэта создать сборник «Песни гайдука» и опубликовать его под псевдонимом «Армянский бард».

Методика исследования определяется комплексным (историческим, сравнительно-сопоставительным, литературоведческим и т. п.) подходом к анализу стихотворения и его перевода на английский язык. Методология данной работы обусловлена необходимостью решения указанных задач и основывается на сопоставительно-описательном подходе. Новизна статьи состоит в том, что данная тема в совокупности её разных аспектов до этого в литературоведении не рассматривалась.

Результаты проделанного исследования представлены в заключении.

*Every true writer is the passport of his nation.*

**Paruyr Sevak<sup>1</sup>** (Sevak 2014, 56)

## Introduction

There seems to be no need to introduce Avetik Isaakyan<sup>2</sup> to a contemporary reader. Few people could be found who are not familiar with his glorious, but full of difficulties biography. Everyone knows this name. And not only in Armenia, but also far beyond its borders. For example, a well-known English literary critic, writer, academic and professor in poetry Cecil Bowra<sup>3</sup> once confessed that «Isahakyan's poetry

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<sup>1</sup> Ամեն ճշմարիտ գրող իր ժողովրդի անձնագիրն է: // (Սևակ. 2014, 56)

<sup>2</sup> Biographical data are given, in general, according to the book of the poet's grandson: Isahakyan A. Selected. Poems. Legends and ballads. Fables. Poems. Yerevan. “Varpet”. 2006. Pp. 7-47, 443-470. (Исаакян а 2006, С. 7-47, 443-470).

<sup>3</sup> Cecil Maurice Bowra (08.04.1898, China – 04.07.1971, England) – English memoirist, classical scholar, philologist and translator, known mainly for his works on ancient Greek literature, one of the leading specialists in classical literature of the 20th century. It is known that in 1916 he spent a month in Petrograd, where, thanks to his friend Robert Wilton, he met lots of prominent Russian writers. It was Korney Chukovsky who first let him get acquainted with the poetry of Boris Pasternak and Vladimir Mayakovsky. Later, Bowra became a translator of some Russian poets of the Silver Age, wrote about Pasternak and other Russian writers, corresponded with Vyacheslav Ivanov (See: Vyacheslav Ivanov 2006, 32.). Apparently, it was the latter, who told him about the Armenian poet and, most likely, Bowra read his works in Russian translations, since according to literary databases and biographical sources, there is no indication of his knowledge of the Armenian language or literature, as well as his translations from Armenian. Leslie Mitchell considered that «Bowra had travelled by the Trans-Siberian Railway to take part in the Great War, spending time in Russia on the way and improving his skill in the Russian language, which he had first heard as a boy in Manchuria. He mastered Latin, Greek (ancient and modern), French, German, Spanish and Italian, and read with astonishing application in all those languages as well as in English, heading always for what he characteristically called “the big stuff”. He wrote about Pindar and Homer and the Greeks, about European epic from Virgil to Milton, about Periclean Athens, about Provençal, Persian and Georgian poetry of the twelfth century, about the songs of the bushmen of the Kalahari, of the Veddas of Sri Lanka, and of the pygmies of Gabon, and much more besides. He had met Henry James while still a boy and read all his work, loved and felt a strong affinity with the writings of Thomas Hardy, admired and befriended both Yeats and Eliot. He translated the poetry of Alexander Blok and Rainer Maria Rilke, and championed the work of Boris Pasternak and Anna Akhmatova. He

was a revelation to me. He is one of the greatest poets living in the world today, and I was deeply impressed by the depth and power of his talent»<sup>4</sup>. Plenty of outstanding writers, poets, just readers admire him: some value him as a poet, others as a prose writer, some are attracted to him as a critic and socio-political figure, others – as a translator or as a devoted son of his fatherland, whom one wants to emulate.

A very famous Russian poet and literary critic Korney Chukovsky after their first meeting in Kislovodsk in 1928 wrote in his diary:

«I've just had a visit from four Armenians, one of whom, Avetik Isaakyan, is a well-known poet. I can't tell you what a nice man he is: modest, quiet, completely unaffected. He spent a fortnight here without anyone's knowing who he was.

Yet his fame is such that when I mentioned him to our Armenian barber, he immediately beamed and started reciting his poetry in Armenian. The shoeshine man had the same reaction: "Avetik! Avetik!" He has a sad, absent look about him. They say the regime (which pays him a small pension) won't let him visit his family abroad.

I was surprised to find that he was unable to recite even four lines of his verse in Armenian when I asked him to: he's forgotten everything. And when we had an Armenian evening and his poems were read from the podium he just sat there in the audience, hunched forward, his hands over his face. He refused to go out on the podium or utter a single word»<sup>5</sup>.

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introduced many writers not just to Oxford but to the English-speaking world, promoting Stefan Georg and Paul Valéry in the 1920s, and Octavio Paz and Pablo Neruda in the 1960s, when their work was scarcely known in England» (See (35), (34), (6), Mitchell 2009, 28).

<sup>4</sup> See Поэзия Исаакяна для меня явилась открытием. Он один из величайших поэтов, ныне живущих в мире, и на меня большое впечатление произвели глубина и сила его таланта (34).

<sup>5</sup> Сейчас у меня были 4 армянина, из них один — Аветик Исаакян, знаменитый поэт. Невозможно передать, до чего симпатичен этот человек. Скромен, молчалив, без малейшей позы, он жил среди нас 2 недели, и никто не знал, кто он такой. Между тем слава его такова, что когда я заговорил о нем с парикмахером-армянином (на Тополевой улице), он сейчас же проявился лицом и по-армянски стал цити-

To this we can just add the words of a prominent Russian composer Georgy Sviridov who confessed that he especially loved Avetik Isaakyan and considered him one of the greatest poets of the time. He wrote music to plenty of his poems<sup>6</sup>.

However, we need to refer to some biographical facts to reveal the subject of this study more thoroughly.

### **A Few Words About the Biography and Creative Work of the Poet**

Thus, it is known that in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the poet's father bought an old mill in Kazarapat, where a few years later the future poet was born.<sup>7</sup> At school he used to hear the songs and tales of the old miller, later recalling that time as the happiest time of his life. At the age of 18, he studied at the University of Leipzig, attending lectures on

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рывать его стихи. Заговорил с чистильщиком сапог, он тоже: “Аветик, Аветик”. Лицо у него рассеянное и грустное. Говорят, что советская власть (которая выдает ему небольшую пенсию) не пускает его за границу к семье. Поразительно, что когда я попросил его прочитать по-армянски хотя бы четыре строчки какого-нибудь его стихотворения, он не мог, все забыл, а когда мы устроили армянский вечер и с эстрады читали его стихи, он сидел среди публики, пригнувшись и прикрывая лицо. На эстраду ни за что не вышел и не произнес вслух ни одного слова. Армяне живут так сплоченно, что он чистил себе сапоги у чистильщика-армянина, стригся у парикмахера — армянина, ездил на извозчике-армянине, ходил пить чай к армянину — архитектору Хаджиеву и проч. и проч. Ко мне он как будто привязался и рассказывал, что в Армении очень хорошо переведены мои детские книги. // <https://nv.am/4-19/> (Chukovsky 2005)

<sup>6</sup> Особенно я люблю Аветика Исаакяна и считаю его одним из величайших поэтов нашего времени. На его стихи я написал музыку (34).

<sup>7</sup> In October 19, 1875. His father, Sahak Isahakyan, was the son of the settlers from Old Bayazet, who in 1828 were forced to leave their home for the Shirak Valley. Little Avo was brought up by his grandmother Pari (on his father's side) and his mother Almast, or as the poet affectionately called her Apla (in maidenhood née Glitchyan, the daughter of one of the most influential merchants of his time, Gabriel Hadji Agha, who, together with his wife, Nazeri Hadji Ana, moved from Kars to Alexandropol in the 20s of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and their daughter was born there in 1833). As the poet often stated later, they personified for him the ideal of a woman from an ordinary Armenian patriarchal family, i.e., infinitely devoted to her family, ready to endure any hardships for the sake of the well-being of her relatives). Both they sang him songs, told fairy tales, legends that became the basis for the best of his books.

history, ethnography, anthropology, philosophy, and philology, and of course, literature. As his grandson, a famous Armenian literary scholar, philologist and writer, almost his namesake Avik Isahakyan, writes, this was an exceptional period in his life, «which from the first to the last day was filled with “service” to science and literature. Nineteen-year-old Isahakyan painfully reflects on his poetic evocation»<sup>8</sup>, the awakening of which, according to some biographers, he truly felt during his years of study at Gevorgian Theological seminary (in Echmiadzin 1889-1892), although he began writing poetry when he was eleven or twelve years old. However, it was here that he got his ambition and wrote in his diary: “A genius, a hero is a pure crystal of a nation, in which the peculiarities of a given nation are reflected – both advantages and errors. One hero, one genius is an entire nation, the leader of a nation, and that is precisely why he must rule and lead his people to his ideal».<sup>9</sup>

It was at that time when the poet was convinced that serving his people meant devoting himself entirely not only to his national literature, but also to the cause of the national liberation movement. This became the reason for his first arrest in May, 1896.<sup>10</sup> After spending almost a year in Yerevan prison, he was released, but again arrested in April 1898. This time he was sent to Odessa, which he left for Switzerland,

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<sup>8</sup> который с первого до последнего дня был наполнен «служением» науке и литературе. Девятнадцатилетний Исаакян мучительно размышляет о своем поэтическом призвании (Исаакян 2006, 11).

<sup>9</sup> «Гений, герой – чистый кристалл нации, в котором отражаются особенности данной нации – и преимущества, и заблуждения. Один герой, один гений – целая нация, предводитель нации, именно потому он должен властвовать и вести свой народ к своему идеалу». // Ibid. P. 12.

<sup>10</sup> To be more correct, for the activities directed against tsarism and membership in the Dashnaktsutyun party. It should be noted that just during the uprising of 1905-1907, the motives of the struggle against national and social oppression could be revealed in his works (i.e. in the poems “The Bell of Freedom”, “And the Holy Malice, “Hell of Vengeance”).

Vienna, Venice<sup>11</sup>, Zurich, where he had opportunity to attend lectures on literature and history of philosophy. He could return to Armenia only in 1901, but very soon was obliged to move to Tiflis, where he was again convicted in December, 1908 and sent to Metekha Prison<sup>12</sup>. After six months of imprisonment, Isahakyan was freed on bail. However, staying in the Caucasus was no longer safe nor possible and the young poet had to emigrate abroad in 1911. He returned to Soviet Armenia only in 1926, although another 10 years<sup>13</sup> had to pass before he could reside here permanently.

Being exiled, he wrote eastern legends and poems (“Lilith,” “Li-Tai-Po”, lyrical poems conveying the poet’s longing for his homeland). At the same time, while staying abroad, he began to work on the novel “Usta Karo” (Master Karo), which remained unfinished<sup>14</sup>. This work had accompanied the writer through all his life and the master himself used to say that «Usta Karo will be done on the day when the Armenian cause is resolved» (32). Ishakyan could not get used the idea of a dissected and disjointed Armenia. With a bottomless open pain and bitterness that filled his heart, he continued to believe that a time would come when the Armenians would return to their native land.

In 1909-1911 Isahakyan created the philosophical poem “Abu-Lala Mahari”, in which he expressed the tragedy of a lonely strong

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<sup>11</sup> Where he had the opportunity to work in the richest book depositories of the Mkhitarist brotherhood. It was here that he met the famous Western Armenian scholar, historian and poet Ghevond Alishan.

<sup>12</sup> At this time, Hovhannes Tumanyan was in the next cell along with 158 other Armenian public figures.

<sup>13</sup> The poet with his family returned from Paris to his homeland forever in 1936, where he created cycles of new poems (“Our Historians and Our Gusans”, 1939, “To My Homeland”, 1940, “Abusive Cry”, 1941, “My Heart on the Mountain Tops”, 1941, “Eternal Memory of S. G. Zakian”, 1942, “The Day of the Great Victory”, 1945).

The poet died on October 17, 1957 in Yerevan, where he is buried in the Komitas Pantheon. (Biographical data mainly see (33)).

<sup>14</sup> During the years of the First World War 1914-18, the historical ballad “Our Ancestors” (Geneva, 1917) was written about the immortality of the people. In the poem “Sasna Mher” (Geneva, 1919), the image of Mher the hero, the protector of the disadvantaged, was created.



personality. The publication of the poem was prohibited by the tsarist censorship. But it was translated into Russian by Valery Brusov who stated that there was «... a breakdown, a strain in Isahakyan's work... And this gives his poems a special poignancy... His poems are painfully restless and impulsive. Isahakyan's literary wealth can be divided into two halves. The first consists of his songs, in which the poet came so close to the structure of folk lyrics that other poems seem to be the creations of nameless singers, a new series of folk songs. All the usual motifs of folk lyrics are used here with all the skill that the newest poetic technique gives to the poet. This kind of poems connect Isahakyan with the poetry of Ioannisian and Tumanyan, making him a typical representative of the "Russian Armenians" school, a continuer of the best traditions of the past of Armenian literature.

The other half of Isahakyan's work is made up of his reflective poems and his long poem "Abu-Lala Mahari" ... Here Isahakyan acts as one of the European poets, setting himself the same or similar tasks that lyricists of other nations – French, German, Russian – strive to solve... From these poems, one can judge what a great master Armenian literature has in the person of Avetik Isahakyan»<sup>15</sup>.

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15 В творчестве Исаакяна есть надлом, надрыв... И это сообщает его стихам особую остроту... Его стихи- страдальчески беспокойны и порывисты. Литературное богатство Исаакяна можно разделить на две половины. Первую составляют его песни, в которых поэт так близко подошел к складу народной лирики, что иные стихотворения кажутся созданиями безымянных певцов, новой серией народных песен.

Все обычные мотивы народной лирики использованы здесь со всем тем мастерством, которое дает в руки поэту новейшая стихотворная техника.

Этого рода стихотворения связывают Исаакяна с поэзией Иоаннисиана и Туманяна, делая его характерным представителем школы "русских армян", продолжателем лучших традиций прошлого армянской литературы.

Другую половину творчества Исаакяна образуют его рефлексивные стихотворения и его большая поэма "Абу- Лала Маари"... Здесь Исаакян выступает как один из европейских поэтов, ставя себе те же или сходные задачи, разрешить которые стремятся и лирики других народов- французские, немецкие, русские...

По этим стихам можно судить, какого большого мастера имеет армянская литература в лице Аветика Исаакяна (35).

The Great Soviet Encyclopedia categorized his creative work as «filled with humanism, and a great respect for human dignity» and «deeply connected with the history and culture of the Armenian people, embracing the best traditions of Russian and world literature» (19). For example, in 1916 it was Alexander Blok who gave such a characterization to Isahakyan regarded him as a «first class poet, fresh and simple, whom one, perhaps, cannot find in Europe anymore»<sup>16</sup>.

And almost half a century after him another outstanding Russian poet, one of Isahakyan's translators, Nikolai Tikhonov wrote in the preface to the collection of the works: «The soul of true great poetry lives in the picturesque diversity of Isahakyan's poems. His work is a song about the past, present and future of Armenia. There is a soft, warm light on all of Isahakyan's poems, they are permeated with this light, her sadness is bright, as Pushkin would say, the world of his poetic pictures is bright, the sun never sets in this world. Not a single contemporary knew such a combination of spiritual revelation with lyrical spontaneity. Grief and anger never turned into darkness and malice in him. The eternal youth of the country speak in him, the eternal youth of that nature that created that unique phenomenon that we call Armenia»<sup>17</sup>.

### **Some Excursion to the History of Creation of «Songs of the Haiduk»**

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid. / «... поэт Исаакян – первоклассный; может быть, такого свежего и непосредственного таланта теперь во всей Европе нет» // (Blok, 1963, p. 455-56).

<sup>17</sup> В живописном многообразии стихов Исаакяна живет душа настоящей большой поэзии.

В его творчестве- песня о прошлом, настоящем и будущем Армении. На всех стихах Исаакяна лежит мягкий, теплый свет, они пронизаны этим светом, печаль ее светла, как сказал бы Пушкин, мир его поэтических картин светел, солнце в этом мире не заходит. Такого сочетания душевного откровения с лирической непосредственностью не знал ни один современник. Скорбь и гнев никогда не переходили у него в мрак и злобу. В нем говорит вечная молодость страны, вечная молодость той природы, которая создала то неповторимое явление, которое мы называем Арменией (35). See also (31).

But long before these events, the author had compiled his first poetry collection from poems written previously, which, entitled “*Songs and Wounds*”, was published in Alexandropol in 1897<sup>18</sup>. The lyricism, emotionality, and melodiousness of Isahakyan's poems immediately made his name popular. The best works of this small collection (only 64 pages) are full of sorrowful and painful reflections on the fate of people, on the injustice of the life, imbued with love for the homeland (for example, “Winter is over, spring is coming...”, “You won't understand,” etc.).

It should be noted that most of the poet's patriotic poems were presented here, which were written by him in the period from 1899-1906 and were mainly published signed with the pseudonym Armenian Bard<sup>19</sup>. This also included the very first poem dedicated to the liberator soldiers, “Hey, jan, fatherland...” which Isahakyan would later include in the cycle “*Songs of the Haiduk*” which became one of the foundational poems in his first collection. After its publication Nikol Agbalyan<sup>20</sup> would write: «The 22-year-old poet was able to feel like the people, to live with the heart of the people».<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> See the first compilation – Isahakyan Avetik, “*Songs and Wounds*”, Alexandropol. “Gevorg Sanoyeants” printing house. 1897. 64p.

Between 1899 and 1906 he wrote “*Songs of the Haiduk*”, a compilation of poems that became the first creation within classical Armenian poetry dedicated to the Armenian struggle for liberty. (30), (Իսահակյան, ա, 1897, 64).

<sup>19</sup> Հայ-Գուսան

<sup>20</sup> one of the most prominent Armenian literary critics of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a statesman and teacher is considered to be Isahakyan's first critic.

<sup>21</sup> And what does it mean to feel like the people? It means to feel in similar mental states what a man of the people would feel. Do you love or hate, is there sorrow in your heart or joy, are you mourning lost love or are you filled with longing? If you feel what a man of the people would feel, then you feel like the people and therefore your songs are folk, remaining your own” (20) – 22-ամյա բանաստեղծը կարողացել է «ժողովրդի պես զգալ, նրա սրտով ապրել: Իսկ ի՞նչ է նշանակում ժողովրդի պես զգալ. այդ նշանակում է համանման հոգեկան դրություններում զգալ այն, ինչը կըզգար ժողովրդի մարդը. սիրում եք դուք, թե ատում, վիշտ կա ձեր սրտում, թե ուրախություն, կորցրած սերն եք ողբում, թե խանդադատանքով եք լցված, եթե դուք զգում եք այն, ինչ կըզգար ժողովրդի մարդը, ապա դուք ժողովրդի պես եք զգում և ուրեմն ձեր երգերը ժողովրդական են՝ ձերը մնալով» // (20, № 6) (Translation is mine – **K.B.**)

Conversely, of course, it is absolutely evident and clear that this poem (the pinnacle of the patriotic cycle written three years later) could not have been published in this edition. It is for certain known that “Hey, jan...” was written by the young (yearning for his homeland) poet in 1900 in Geneva. Consequently, it could have been published for the first time in this cycle only in the collection reissued with the same title in Tiflis in 1908<sup>22</sup>, becoming «figuratively speaking, that life-giving» source of Isahakyan’s patriotic poetry, which coincided with «a new stage of the Armenian national liberation struggle»<sup>23</sup>. Imbued with humanism and great respect for human dignity, the poet’s work is deeply connected not only with the history and culture of his people, but with the best traditions of the world literature. This is what Kamsar Grigoryan<sup>24</sup> writes in a note to the latest “Selected Works” of the Master.

### **English Translations of Isahakyan's Lyrics.**

We have to state that Avetik Isahakian's *Selected Works Poetry and Prose* translated from the Armenian into English (12) by Mischa Kudian was published in Moscow by Progress Publisher in 1977. However, there is no reference to the poem we examine. That is why we are obliged to admit that the only translation of this poem into English is done by Alice Stone Blackwell<sup>25</sup>. And this is her only translation of Isahakyan's lyrics. It

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<sup>22</sup> See Isahakyan Avetik, Complete Collection of Poems, Tiflis, "M. Martiroseants" Publishing House, 1908, 288 pages. (Իսահակյան թ, 1908).

<sup>23</sup> See: դառնալով Իսահակյանի «պատկերավոր ասած, այն կենսական» աղբյուրը, որը համընկավ «հայ ազգային ազատամարտի նոր փուլի» հետ. (Իսահակյան զ, 2003, 25, 26).

<sup>24</sup> A well-known Soviet Armenian literary critic, PhD, professor, Member of the Union of Writers of the USSR, member of the Union of Writers of St. Petersburg. the editor of the collections of poems and verses of the Armenian poets in Russia: Avetik Isahakyan, Hovhannes Tumanyan, Vahan Teryan, Alexander Tsaturyan.

<sup>25</sup> The only child of Henry Browne Blackwell and Lucy Stone was born on 14, September, 1857 in Orange, New Jersey. Her mother was the first woman to earn a college degree in Massachusetts, the first woman to keep her maiden name when she married and she also was the first woman to speak full-time on woman’s rights. Alice also had an aunt, Elizabeth Blackwell, who was the first woman to graduate from medical school in the United States and who later also “founded The Women’s Medical College” (Balakian,

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Peter. *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003. P. 16. **Hereinafter** – Balakian 16). In 1881, Alice graduated from Boston University. She then went to work as an assistant editor for her parents who founded the *Woman's Journal*, the official magazine for the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA). In 1890, Alice led the movement to reconcile the two competing factions of the woman's suffrage movement – American Woman Suffrage Association and National Woman Suffrage Association – into the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA); she served as the recording secretary of this organization until 1918. In 1893, Alice's "aunt" Isabel Barrows actively involved in the Armenian movement in Boston – met Ohannes Chatschumian, a theology student, in Leipzig, Germany. Isabel persuaded Ohannes to come visit her and her husband in the United States. Alice met Ohannes and «she began to learn in greater detail about the worsening plights of the Armenians» (Balakian 17). «Isabel suggested that Alice and Ohannes collaborate in translating "some of Armenia's touching and beautiful poetry into English verse" and they began working on "*The Tears of Araxes*" by Raphael Patkanian (Balakian 18-19).

In the fall of 1893, Lucy Stone died and Alice took the position as editor-in-chief of the *Woman's Journal*. It was also "the moment she found her self engaged in the Armenian Question" (Balakian 94). Alice and Ohannes created a society known as "Friends of Armenia" and «before long Friends of Armenia expanded and became central to launching America's first international human rights movement» (Balakian 19). «For Alice equal rights for women was the bedrock on which her life rested, and her passion for Armenian human rights had its origin there» (Balakian 94). The society provided information about the Armenians and the Armenian Question to American media. Julia Ward Howe – author of the Battle Hymn of the Republic – was president of the society.

In 1894, while Alice and Ohannes were still translating Armenian poetry, Ohannes decided to return back to Leipzig to finish his studies although his health was deteriorating (Balakian 98). "After Ohannes left for Leipzig, Alice teamed up with Bedros Keljik, who translated the remaining poems with her to finish the anthology" (Balakian 101). Ohannes Chatschumian died in May, 1896, the same year Alice had Armenian Poems published. The anthology presented several dozen poems, most of them by the nineteenth century poets such as Bedros Dourian, Michael Nalbandian, and Raphael Patkanian, who were part of a renaissance in Armenian culture... Well armed with appendices, the book had an introduction about Armenian history and the recent massacres, as well as essays about the Armenian church and the advanced status of Armenian women (Balakian 101). Due to the book's success, the first publication sold out within days. It is most likely the only book in the world to be reprinted fifteen days after it was first published (15). On May 30, 1904, two hundred of Alice Blackwell's friends organized a celebration in her honor for ten years of literary work. During the event her portrait painted by Carnig Eksergian – an Armenian American portraitist – was presented to Alice by her Armenian friends (15). In addition to Armenian Poems, Alice also translated several other volumes of poetry into English from Russian (*Songs of Russia*, 1906), Yiddish (*Songs of Grief and Gladness*, 1907), Spanish (*Some Spanish-American poets*, 1929). In 1917 the second and enlarged edition of Armenian Poetry was published containing 135 poems in total. Atom Yarjanyan

was published in 1917 in the book entitled “*Armenian poems, Rendered into English verse*” published by the Atlantic Publishing Company in the USA. Here she wrote a small biographical entry to each poet and this is what was written for Isahakyan: «Avedik Issahakian was born in Alexandropol in 1875. He received part of his education in Germany. He began to write in 1891. His collected poems, “Songs and Wounds” appeared in 1903» (4).

<p>Է՛յ, ջան - հայրենիք, ինչքա՛ն սիրուն ես,  Սարերդդ կորած երկնի մովի մեջ.  Ջրերդդ անո՛ւշ, հովերդդ անո՛ւշ,  Մենակ բալեքդդ արուն ծովի մեջ:</p> <p>Քու հողին մեռնեմ, անգի՛ն հայրենիք,  Ա՛խ, քիչ է, թե որ մի կյանքով մեռնեմ,  Երենկ ունենամ հազար ու մի կյանք,  Հազա՛րն էլ սըրտանց քեզ մատաղ  անեմ:</p> <p>Ու հազար կյանքով քու դարդին մեռնեմ,  Բալեքիդ մատա՛ղ, մատա՛ղ քու սիրուն.  Մենակ մի կյանքը թո՛ղ ինձի պահեմ, -  Է՛ն էլ՝ քու փառքի գովքը երգելուն, -</p> <p>- Որ արտուտի պես վե՛ր ու վե՛ր  ճախրեմ  Նոր օրվա ծեգիդ, ազի՛զ հայրենիք,  Ու անո՛ւշ երգեմ, բա՛րձր ու զիլ գովեմ  Կանաչ արևդ, ազա՛տ հայրենիք...<sup>26</sup>  1900թ., Ժնև (26)</p>	<p>The Fatherland  <i>(translated by Alice Stone Blackwell)</i></p> <p>HÉ, my fatherland, how lovely thou art;  Thy mountain peaks are lost in the mists of  heaven.  Thy waters are sweet, thy breezes are sweet;</p> <p>Only thy children are in seas of blood.  May I die for thy soil, thou priceless  fatherland!  Oh, it is little if I die with one life!</p> <p>Would that I had a thousand and one lives  To offer thee, all from my heart,  To die for thy sorrow with a thousand lives!  Let me offer myself for thy children, for love  of thee!</p> <p>Let me keep for myself only one life,  That I may sing the praise of thy glory,  That I may soar high like the skylark  On the rising of thy new day, noble</p>
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(Siamanto), Daniel Varoujan, Hovhannes Toumanian – along with many others – are some of the poets added to this second publication. Alice remained the editor in chief of the *Woman’s Journal* for thirty-five years – until 1918 – and then began writing her mother’s biography, *Lucy Stone: Pioneer of Woman’s Rights* which was published in 1930. In 1945, Alice received an L.H.D. degree (Doctorate of Humanities) from Boston University in recognition of her work// (1), (2), (3), (4).

<sup>26</sup> <https://hoonch.am/post/kanayq/hay-grakanutyun/e-y-jan-hayreniq-inchqa-n-sirun-es-avetiq-isahakyan>

	fatherland,  And sing sweetly, praise loudly Thy bright sun, thou free fatherland! (4)
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Avetik Isahakyan's poem "Fatherland" (also known as "My Fatherland"), is a patriotic piece that celebrates the beauty and grandeur of Armenia. The poem uses vivid imagery to depict the country's mountains, waters, and landscapes, emphasizing their natural beauty and spiritual significance. It's a powerful expression of love and devotion to his homeland, reflecting the poet's deep connection to his cultural heritage and his pride in Armenia's enduring spirit. Isahakyan uses rich and evocative imagery to paint a picture of Armenia's natural splendor, drawing the reader into the scene. The poem resonates with themes of home, belonging, and the emotional attachment one feels for their native land. The poem is written in a passionate and emotional style, using vivid imagery and strong language to convey the speaker's feelings.

Here's a summary of the poem's key elements such as the focus on the natural beauty (i.e., the poem highlighted the majestic mountains lost in the clouds, the sweetness of the waters, and the overall beauty of the Armenian landscape) or the expression and declaration of love for the native land, conveying a sense of profound admiration and national pride. The poem reflects Isahakyan's strong patriotic feelings and his deep connection to his Armenian identity<sup>27</sup>.

This poem expresses intense patriotism and a deep love for the speaker's motherland. The speaker's willingness to sacrifice his life for the country and the desire to sing its praises suggest a strong sense of

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<sup>27</sup> While the full English translation of the poem may not be readily available in a single, widely accessible source, its essence is captured in various publications and online resources that discuss Isahakyan's work and Armenian poetry. The poem is a testament to the enduring power of national identity and the sacrifices individuals are willing to make for their country. It is a powerful expression of love and patriotism that resonates with readers of all backgrounds.

national pride. The repeated use of the word «**thousand**» emphasizes the speaker's limitless devotion to his homeland.

This poem, however, has not been always read correctly. However, it should be underlined that only a meticulous analysis of the place and time of publication allows us to understand the true meaning of these sixteen lines. For example, in Isahakyan's book of Selected works (24) this poem appeared in print only in Yerevan in 1943 and is placed on page 101. Here it is followed by the poem «**To the Great Stalin**» preceded by «**Bingyol**» written in Yerevan in 1940<sup>28</sup>.

Thus, it is possible to state that Bingyol here symbolizes the author's homeland. That is why in the notes to this edition it was stated that the poem was written in 1941 in Yerevan (vol. 1, page 679). Though it is followed by «**At blue summer quiet night**» written in Sevan in 1940 (pages 99-100). Then, without any date or author's dedication to «**The Loner**»<sup>29</sup> comes the poem entitled **A black cloud has settled on Botsiku mountain** (pages 100-101) notwithstanding the fact that this poem was written in 1905. According to biographers, the poet himself frequently changed the chronology of his works, frequently publishing the same poem with different dates, often changing the geography. Apparently, he was thus trying to “cover his tracks» and somehow protect himself and his family during that difficult period.

Here we suggest our word-to-word translation and the transliterated text just to compare and «hear» the original:

Oh, dear homeland, how beautiful you are, Your mountains are lost in the blue of the	(E'y, jan - hayrenik', inch'k'a'n sirun yes, Sareryd korats yerkni movi mej. Jreryd ano'ush, hoveyrd ano'ush,
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<sup>28</sup> not in Vienna in 1893, as there are two poems entitled Bingyol. It is well-known that this poem, as the author's subtitle suggests, symbolizes (according to Armenian folk legend) the mountain of a thousand lakes, where the forefather Hayk Nahapet hid his sword to fight Bel (compare this with the first line of the poem dedicated to Stalin, which reads: «**You have raised the terrible sword of history**» (pages 101-102).

<sup>29</sup> the pseudonym of Yegor Arustamyan (Menak means an alone person in Armenian), because the name of any Hayduk should not have been uttered at that time.



<p>sky. Your waters are sweet, your winds are sweet, Only your children are in the sea of blood.</p> <p>I will die for your land, my priceless homeland, Ah, it is not enough for me to die with one life, If only I had a thousand and one lives, I would heartedly sacrifice the thousand to you.</p> <p>And I will die my thousand lives for your sorrow, For your children's sake, for your love's sake. Let me just keep only one life for me, – And that is to sing the praises of your glory, –</p> <p>That I may soar like a skylark, again and again, To the dawn of a new day, my sweet homeland, And sing dearly, praise loudly and sweetly, Your green sun, my free homeland.</p>	<p>Menak balek'yd arun tsovi mej:</p> <p>K'u hoghin merrnem, ang'i'n hayrenik', A'kh, k'ich' e, t'e vor mi kyank'ov merrnem, Yernek unenam hazar u mi kyank', Haza'rn el syrtants' k'ez matagh anem:</p> <p>U hazar kyank'ov k'u dardin merrnem, Balek'id mata'gh, mata'gh k'u sirun. Menak mi kyank'y t'vo'gh indzi pahem, - E'n el' k'u p'arrk'i govk'y yergelun, -</p> <p>Vor artuti pes ve'r u ve'r chakhrem Nor orva tsegid, azi'z hayrenik', U ano'ush yergem, ba'rdzr u zil govem Kanach' arevyd, aza't hayrenik')</p>
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However, we have no intention to analyze the poem and its translation in detail in this article, this will become the subject of another research. At this point, we aimed to present just the history of appearing of this poem in English. Though we have to state that another question has been araised which must have been investigated as well. And this is if the the poet himself was informed of this translation. But this is quite another research as well.

### Conclusion

Coming up to the summarizing conclusions of this research, we have to admit that the history of the poem and its translation into English

and publication was well studied and presented. Consequently, the task has been fulfilled.

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