

ՄԱՍԻՍ ԱՐԱՐԱՏԵԱՆ (ՎԱՉԱԳԱՆ ԱՒԱԳԵԱՆ)

Բանասիրական գիտ. թեկնածու, ԵՊՀ

ՀԱՅՐԵՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹԻՒՆԸ ՀԱՅ ՀԵՂԻՆԱԿՆԵՐԻ ԵՐԿԵՐՈՒՄ (ՉԱԲԱՆՔ)¹

Չաւախքի բանաստեղծների գործերին նուիրուած այս յօդուածով սկսում ենք «Հայ բանաստեղծների հայերնասիրական քնարը» շարքը:

MASIS ARARATEAN (VACHAGAN AVAGEAN)

PhD in Philology, YSU

PATRIOTISM IN THE WORKS OF ARMENIAN WRITERS (JAVAKHQ)

Armenians have inhabited their ancestral homeland since time immemorial. Throughout the centuries, various civilizations have referred to this land by different names; yet all have identified the same people and the same geographical space—designating it, in turn, as the Armenian Highlands, the Land of the Gods, the Land of Paradise, the Realm of the Ark, the Mountain of Salvation, the Kingdom of Ararat, the House of Togarmah, Armenia, and other cognate appellations. Armenians themselves have traditionally called their homeland *Hayq* (Hayk¹), after their legendary forefather Hayk, or *Hayastan*, a name derived from the same ancient root.

Armenian history spans many millennia. Although this long historical trajectory has rarely been free from hardship—war and devastation having persistently accompanied the nation—its very existence was placed in unprecedented peril in the twentieth

¹* Ստացուել է՝ 6.12.2025, գրախօսուել է՝ 6.01.2026: Էլ. հասցէ՝ MasisAraratean@gmail.com, avagyan.vachik@yandex.com: Խմբագիր՝ Գեւորգ Սարեան:

century, when Armenian history was violently fractured into “before the Genocide” and “after the Genocide.” An entire people was subjected to systematic annihilation in the very provinces and settlements of their ancestors, targeted solely on the basis of their Armenian identity and their enduring presence in their ancestral homeland—a land that others sought to appropriate and claim as their own through violence and dispossession.

Meanwhile, the self-proclaimed civilized world—the ostensibly humanistic and Christian Europe and the United States of the period—largely adopted a stance of indifference, effectively turning a blind eye to unfolding events. A comparable pattern may be observed in more recent times, revealing a disquieting continuity: geopolitical and economic interests have frequently been accorded greater weight in the moral calculus of international actors than the lives of hundreds of thousands of Armenians of Artsakh—men and women, the elderly and children alike.

Just as the Genocide cleaved Armenian history, it likewise fractured Armenian literature—dispossessing Western Armenians of their homeland and transforming them into a dispersed diaspora, while leaving only a small remnant of the nation to survive on scarcely one-tenth of its historical territory within what later emerged as Soviet Armenia following the collapse of the Russian Empire.

It is this historical experience that accounts for the central place of patriotism in Armenian literature, where it functions not merely as a thematic motif but as a formative force that shapes both its spirit and its sustaining vitality. In the poetry of the Western Armenian poet *Petros Durean* (1851–1872), personal suffering recedes before a deeper anguish: the awareness that he must leave this world at so young an age, without having had the opportunity to devote himself fully to his people and his homeland.

*With sacred thirst I wander on,
No spring I find, no healing balm—
A fragile flower, scarcely born;
Yet none of this is mortal harm.
No fiery kiss has warmed my brow,
So pale it lies in silent calm;
They lay me in the waiting earth—
Yet none of this is mortal harm.
No living flame, no gentle face,
No tender form of mortal charm*

*Has held my hand before the grave—
 Yet none of this is mortal harm.
 No quiet dream has crowned my rest,
 No cooling hush, no saving balm;
 I sleep beneath the weight of dust—
 Yet none of this is mortal harm.
 To bear the outcast's bitter name,
 To breathe a hut's imprisoned calm,
 To ache unceasing night and day—
 Yet none of this is mortal harm.
 For I, a fragile branch of Hayk,
 Still have a homeland, storm-worn, warm;
 To die and never serve her hope—
 This, this alone is mortal harm.*

From the creation of the Armenian alphabet by Mesrop Mashtots to the present day, patriotism has remained a constant and defining feature of Armenian literature. The reason is evident: whereas writers of numerically large and geopolitically secure nations—shielded by demographic weight and political power—are often free to choose any subject for artistic expression, whether in painting, sculpture, music, or literature, Armenian authors have consistently placed devotion to the homeland at the forefront of their work. This patriotism is not merely an expression of sentiment, but a formative force intended to educate and inspire successive generations, shaping them into conscious and committed members of their nation.

This tendency is clearly evident, for example, in the poetry of Yervand Petrosyan, who reflects on the idea of great and powerful homelands, yet ultimately accords primacy to his own God-blessed homeland—Armenia, embodied in the image of Masis—Ararat.

*Fortunate is he whose homeland stands
 So firm and mighty, broad and high;
 Whose dawn breaks bright on faithful lands,
 Whose hope needs neither shield nor lie.
 He walks unburdened, calm of mind,
 Untroubled by tomorrow's call,*

*And leaves his cares and fears behind—
A man who fears no fate at all.
Fortunate is he whose native ground
Has known no wound, no ancient cry;
Where no betrayed or broken sound
Turns living days to years gone by.
No secret hand within betrays,
No outer foe deceives his trust;
His homeland dwells in peaceful days,
Unshadowed, steadfast, wise, and just.
Yet who is happier? Judge you then:
The child of kingdoms vast and strong?
Or he whose hills, since Eden's ken,
Have borne mankind's first right and wrong—
Where Adam, exiled, frail, and worn,
Found refuge when all gates were sealed;
Where dawn for humankind was born
And mercy's bow in light revealed.
For Ararat still crowns the sky,
The mount where humankind restored;
Where life anew began to rise,
Where peace returned, by God outpoured.
There first the world was cleansed and raised,
And covenant and hope were cast;
From Ararat the future blazed
Upon the ruins of the past.
And happier still that ancient line
Whom God once summoned, stern and clear,
To rise against proud Babylon
And break its arrogance and fear.
That same high call shall sound once more
When modern Babylon shall fall;
The Maker then will yet restore*

*The Araratians, one and all*².

Armenian poets have articulated their patriotic sensibilities through a wide range of images and poetic devices. At times, the sacred mountain revered by all Armenians—Masis—Ararat³—emerges as the primary symbol of the Homeland; at others, the figure of Grigor Narekatsi, the foremost poet of the Armenian tradition and a saint venerated throughout Christendom, comes to embody the very contours of the native land. In other instances, love for the Homeland is expressed through intimate recollections of the ancestral home or through the tenderness associated with a mother's embrace. Yet, in shaping the poetic image of the Homeland, Armenian poets most frequently turn to mountains as their central and unifying symbol, as may be observed in the following poem by Yervand Petrosyan.

*We are the children of the height;
The mountains rocked us into being.
They were our cradle, firm and bright,
Our first horizon, dawn's first seeing.

So deep they pulse within our veins,
Their echoes flow through every part,
That when on foreign plains we glimpse
A distant peak—it wakes the heart—
It feels as though a kindred soul*

² In connection with the concluding stanzas, it is worth recalling an important exegetical nuance within the biblical tradition. Scholars have observed that the verse “And the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat” (Gen. 8:4) need not be understood as referring exclusively to a single, clearly defined peak, but may also be interpreted more broadly as denoting one of the mountains of the Araratian land. In this regard, the commentary of **R. H. Charles** on Book of Jubilees is particularly illuminating.

Discussing Noah's act of thanksgiving after the Flood, Charles notes that Noah “built an altar on that mountain,” adding: “Cf. Gen. viii. 20. The mountain is Lubar. According to Bereshit Rabbah 34, Noah offered this sacrifice in Jerusalem. In the Targum of Jonathan on Gen. viii. 20, the place is not mentioned, but the altar is identified with that which Adam built.” This exegetical tradition underscores the idea of cultic continuity from Adam to Noah and lends theological depth to the image of Ararat as a locus of refuge, restoration, and renewed communion between humanity and God. See **R. H. Charles** (trans. and ed.), *The Book of Jubilees, or The Little Genesis*, London, 1902, p. 59.

³ One of the names attributed to the mountain, mentioned in the preceding footnote, is Lubar, which corresponds to the form Ghubar. For a detailed discussion of the various names of the mountain, see *Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Adjacent Regions*, Yerevan, 1986, vol. 3, p. 703.

*Steps forth from memory's hidden land,
A long-lost presence making whole,
A mountain like a brother's hand.*

Another recurrent and highly significant image of the Homeland is the Armenian Church—the world's oldest state-recognized Christian church, distinguished from other Christian traditions by its creed, liturgical heritage, and architectural forms. Within this symbolic framework, Jivani reflects on his national Church, placing particular emphasis on the *sharakan*, the sacred hymns of the Armenian tradition. This focus is far from incidental, for Jivani himself was a consummate master of both poetic expression and musical composition.

*We have one Church—our own and ever true,
So ancient, pure in faith and form;
No modern rite can shift its view,
No newly fashioned ways transform.
Its hymns are gentle, soft in tone;
They lift and guard the yearning soul.
No chant that passing ages own
Outshines the sharakan we intone.*

Vahan Tekeyan (1878–1945), a leading figure of the Armenian Diaspora and a distinguished writer, evokes in his poem “*The Armenian Church*” the historical memory, patriotism, and longing of an entire people—condensing these dimensions into the two words of its title and unfolding them through a sequence of resonant stanzas.

*The Church of mine, Armenian born, the cradle of my soul,
A cavern vast—both dark and bright—serene, yet deep and whole.
With welcoming halls, a spacious shrine, afar its altar gleams,
Like some great seafaring vessel vast that sails through sacred dreams.
The Church of mine, Armenian, I see with eyes shut tight;
I breathe its air, I hear its hymns—the Child of Jesus bright.
Its altar breathes with clouds of myrrh that curl and rise and wane,
And shakes its walls with fervent prayers, like thunder after rain.
The Church of mine, Armenian, my fathers' fortress high,
They raised it stone by stone from earth beneath the boundless sky;*

*They drew it down from heaven's clouds, with mist and dew entwined,
 Then slept within its peaceful shade, all humble, pure, resigned.
 The Church of mine, Armenian, a woven veil divine,
 Behind whose folds, in secret depth, descends God's light benign;
 Before its face my nation kneels, in reverent accord,
 To share the bread and sacred wine, in memory of the Lord.
 The Church of mine, Armenian, a harbor calm and sure,
 Before the stormy, raging sea—a flame in nights obscure;
 And in the scorching noon it stands, a forest cool and wide,
 Where lilies bloom by psalm-filled streams that through the meadows glide.
 The Church of mine, Armenian—beneath each stone, each clod,
 A hidden path ascends unseen, that leads the soul to God.
 The Church of mine, Armenian—both body's and soul's guard,
 Its shining cross a sword of light, its bells the battle's bard;
 And through its hymns eternal rings the triumph of the Lord.*

Here we present a selection of patriotic works by poets from Javakhk—the historic district of Gugarq in Greater Armenia. Several of these poems appear in English translation for the first time. The people of this land are proud and steadfast like their mountains, rugged like their native cliffs, yet never cold or harsh like the highland winds; rather, their hearts and souls remain gentle and deeply responsive—a quality vividly captured by *Mkrtich Sargsyan* in his poem *Javakhq*.

*There, like a heart, the mountains open wide,
 And springs run clear, as pure as life inside.
 The flowers glisten, silvered with morning rain,
 The sky is blue—deep blue, like a dreaming plain.
 The azure hills in misty slumber fade,
 A slender cart-track winds across the glade;
 And songs of longing softly seem to rise
 From the bent willow by the brook's replies.*

The people of Javakhq speak the Karin⁴ (Erzurum⁵) dialect, which belongs to the *kə*-branch of the Armenian language, and they have consistently sought to preserve their speech in as pure and uncorrupted a form as possible. A substantial portion of the population was forced to flee its ancestral homeland—Western Armenia—originating from Karin, Ardahan, Van, and numerous other towns and villages. This displacement was driven by the Russo–Turkish wars, recurrent massacres and violence, and the pervasive hostility directed against Armenians, compelling them to seek refuge in regions where life might at least offer a measure of security.

GHUNKIANOS THE SINGER KARNETSI

In this regard, the life of Ghunkianos, known as the Singer Karnetsi (that is, “from Karin”), offers a characteristic example. He was born around 1781 in the city of Karin. At an early age, he moved with his father to Tabriz, where he acquired a knowledge of Persian. Over the course of his prolonged years of wandering, he traveled across numerous regions, gradually gaining proficiency in Turkish and Arabic as well.

His parents later sent him to Lebanon, to the Armenian Catholic Antonian Monastery, in the hope that he would receive a religious education and enter the clergy. Ghunkianos, however, did not take ecclesiastical vows, and upon completing his studies, he left the monastery. He spent several years in Egypt, later attempting to engage in trade; after failing in business, he was once again compelled to resume a life of wandering.

He spent some time in Aleppo and, in 1828, moved to Crimea. From there, he returned to Armenia via Saint Petersburg and Tiflis. During his travels, he visited

⁴ This city was founded by King Karanni of the Hayasa (Hayastan) confederation (early Armenia) in the period 1400–1375 BCE. See e.g., **Nikoghayos Adonts**, *Hystory of Armenia*, Yerevan, 1972 (in Armenian – **Նիկողայոս Ադոնց**, Հայաստանի Պատմություն. Ակունքերը. (Ք. ա. X–VI դդ.), 34–35.

⁵ The name *Erzrum* (Erzurum), applied to Karin, is generally understood as a modified form of the Armenian toponym *Artsn*, which was reconfigured in Ottoman usage as *Artsn-rum* (“*Artsn* of the Romans”). This transformation may be explained, first, by phonetic adaptation, as the original Armenian name *Artsn* posed difficulties for Turkish pronunciation, and, more importantly, by a broader toponymic strategy aimed at obscuring the Armenian provenance of local place-names. In this context, Karin was deliberately rebranded as a “Greek” or “Roman” *Artsn*, insofar as such reclassification served to efface its Armenian origin. See Seylan (Arshak Madoyean), *Hayta-Firat*, Tiflis, 1904, p. 15; cf. Etchmiadzin, 2024, no. 3, p. 168.

Constantinople on several occasions and also stayed briefly in Akhaltsikhe, where he devoted himself to the education of children and to the copying of manuscripts.

He spent the greater part of his life in the village of Varevan in Javakhk (approximately 13 km northwest of Akhalkalaki), where he died in 1841. His compatriots venerated him as a saint, and his grave became a site of pilgrimage (see illustrations), as numerous healings were traditionally believed to have occurred there⁶.

In one of his poems, he recounts the story of his life, with an enduring longing for his native town emerging as the central theme.

*My native land was Karin fair,
My proud-born city past compare.
But life has changed; beneath the sway
Of foreign rule we fell one day.
Draw near, kind heart, and hear my pain,
The wounds I bore, the loss, the chain.
Hardships descended, sudden, wild,
And left my life all rent and spoiled.
Once rich in goods and honored high,
Now bowed, made poor; brought low am I.
The streets I walked with pride and cheer
Are gone—and leave my soul in fear⁷.*

In another poem, Ghunkianos—deprived of homeland, home, and place—turns to the Mother of God, imploring her to guide him safely through the turbulent waves of life toward a secure harbor.

*Your heart is treasure, Virgin pure—
Grant me a share, my need secure;
Leave not my life to want or fear,*

⁶ See: **V. Bryusov**, *Collected Works in Seven Volumes*, Moscow, 1973, p. 381 (in Russian - **В. Брюсов**, *Собрание сочинений в семи томах* Москва); cf. A. Madoyan, *Great and Marvelous Mystery (Ա. Մաղոյեան, Խորհուրդ Մեծ և սքանչելի)*, Yerevan, 1999, p. 123; Kevork B. Bardakjian, *A Reference Guide to Modern Armenian Literature, 1500–1920*, Wayne State University Press, 2000, pp. 111–112.

⁷ The poems by this author have been taken from *Selections from the Works of Ghunkianos the Singer*, Venice, 1893 (Քերդուածք Դունկիանոս Երգչի Կարնեցոյն).

*Nor let me wander joyless here.
I have no home, no shelter near—
Receive me, keep me ever dear;
I'm tossed on seas of grief and pain,
Bring me to harbor safe again.
How shall I stand untouched by sorrow,
Exiled from my beloved land?
Forsaken, left without a guide—
Lead me to your bright city's strand.*

JIVANI

Next, we turn our attention to one of Javakhk's most distinguished sons, the ashugh Jivani. Born Serob Benkoyean (1846–1909), he came into the world in the family of Gaspar Benkoyents, who had fled from Basen to the village of Kartsakh in Javakhk during the Russo–Turkish War. Soon after Jivani's birth, his father passed away, and shortly thereafter he also lost his mother; Serob and his two brothers were thus left without parental care.

The boys were taken in by their uncle, who did everything he could to ensure that they at least acquired basic literacy, although he was unable to provide them with a regular or comprehensive education. In Jivani's biography, one episode in particular deserves special attention: upon hearing the songs and tales of the itinerant ashughs who visited Kartsakh, his aspiration to become an ashugh took firm root, and he began composing songs of his own.

For five years, he apprenticed under his fellow villager, the ashugh Siayi, mastering and refining the poetic and musical art of the ashugh tradition. Soon after gaining prominence, Jivani formed his own musical ensemble and toured major cities with substantial Armenian populations, giving concerts and achieving wide recognition.

Among Jivani's patriotic works is the well-known song dedicated to Vardan Mamikonian and the heroes of Avarayr, composed in a spirited and distinctly martial tone. By contrast, the song *Mother* is marked by gentleness and deep emotional resonance. Jivani's boundless devotion to the homeland finds its most vivid and sustained expression in the song *Longing*.

* * *

*So many years in foreign lands
 I fade with longing, slow and sore—
 If only all our trials would end...
 Have patience, heart, just patience more.
 A fire rises in my breast,
 It burns in me both night and day;
 No word has come from home as yet—
 Have patience, heart, just patience, pray.
 Far from my homeland have I gone,
 From those I love I'm torn apart;
 Yet sure shall come the day we meet—
 Have patience, patience, O my heart.
 We have a land—our Armenia—
 Why must we wander, exiled still?
 The hope of all our nation lives—
 Have patience, heart, and hold your will.*

Another of Jivani's well-known compositions is the song “*Ah, the Water of My Homeland.*”

*The balm to heal my wound so pure—
 Ah, the water of my homeland's shore!
 Sweeter far than pomegranate wine,
 Ah, the water, homeland mine!
 He who drinks shall long endure,
 Living out a hundred years;
 No such stream on earth is found—
 Ah, my homeland's sacred spring!
 From Byurakn's lofty heights it flows,
 With living soul in every wave;
 From the heart of Heaven's gate—
 Ah, my homeland's stream so brave!
 From an immortal source it came,
 From Eden's ever-burning flame;
 Adam drank and blessed its birth—*

Ah, the water of my earth!
Hayk, my grandsire, drank and rose,
Strength he gained to strike his foes,
Cleansing pain and every blight—
Ah, my homeland's water bright!
Vardan, Vahan, heroes bold,
Shushanik, saintly, strong of soul,
Sandukht, virgin pure, were thine—
Ah, my homeland's sacred wine!
Exiled child of Haik divine,
Think upon thy hearth and shrine;
Milk and honey mingled flow—
Ah, my homeland's waters glow!
Waters strange of foreign land,
Bitter, salt, and harsh they stand;
Shall I drink of them again?
Ah, my homeland's crystal vein!
Darkened now our country lies,
As though fallen were her skies;
Blood once more her fields imbue—
Ah, my homeland's waters true!
Monsters came and trampled there,
Drove her children forth in fear;
Snakes and frogs now drink her dew—
Ah, my homeland's waters true!

* * *

VAHAN TEREAN

Vahan Teryan (Ter-Grigorean, 1885–1920) descended from families originating in **Karin** and **Tokat**, many members of which had served in the clergy. Following the Russo–Turkish War of 1828–1829 and the signing of the subsequent peace treaty, his ancestors—like thousands of other Armenians who shared a similar fate—migrated to

and settled in **Javakhk**, thereby escaping destruction; those members of the family who remained in Karin were massacred by the Turks.

Vahan's family later moved to **Gandza**, where the future poet was born. His father provided him with his initial literacy and elementary education. He subsequently studied at the parish school in Gandza, the city school in **Akhalkalaki**, the gymnasium in **Tiflis**, the **Lazarev Institute** in **Moscow**, the Faculty of History and Philology at **Moscow State University**, and the Faculty of Oriental Studies at **Saint Petersburg University**.

Teryan's lyric poetry addresses both the emotional world of youthful love and the inner life of a sorrowful, contemplative sensibility. His patriotic verse is distinguished by restraint and delicacy; through memories of childhood and the parental home, it restores a vision of the beloved homeland.

*It seems once more I've turned to home,
And all is as it was before:
You sit where once you sat alone,
And turn the spindle as of yore.
You spin, and stories start to flow,
You spin so swift, so endlessly;
I love your voice, so calm and low,
Your worn and slender hands to see.
I watch—and helpless, soft, and still,
My head slips gently to your knee;
Again today, I am your child,
And paradise returns to me.
The sun sinks slowly in the west,
The river breathes a gentler hush;
Your tale goes on without its rest,
Your spindle sings in silver hush.*

By contrast, the poem that follows is imbued with a proud and heroic spirit, evoking the historical past and collective memory of the homeland while at the same time inspiring hope for the future.

*Do not confound us with your beast-born race—
Our land is torn, yet keeps its ancient grace.*

*Like Ararat, through centuries of snow,
Our grief has melted into crystal glow.*

*Old Babylon, our foe, rose fierce and high—
Then passed like mist against the morning sky.*

*Assyria's might in desert dust was laid;
No stone remains, its very echoes fade.*

*But we stand firm, O child of fleeting years;
Our soul has burned through ruins, fire, and spears.*

*Our land has known the flame, the cry, the blow—
Each song a sob, each book a tale of woe.*

*We are but captives—eagles, bound, not slaves;
Our pride stands noble, risen from our graves.*

*Barbarians shall come and drift like rain,
But royal stands our word—it shall remain.*

*Your souls are hollow, foreign, cold, and far;
Our land's a shrine, each stone a sacred star.*

*Though pyramids to dust and shadow turn,
My land, like sun, eternally shall burn.*

*Like Phoenix born from fire, we shall arise,
With brighter crown beneath eternal skies.*

*Be strong, my heart—let faith unshaken stand,
As proud and firm as Masis, bright and grand.*

DERENIK DEMIRCHYAN

Derenik Demirchyan (1877–1956)—Academician of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, Honored Art Worker of the Armenian SSR, and a member of the Writers' Union of the USSR—was born in Akhalkalaki. He received his primary education at the Armenian school in his hometown and, two years later, moved to Ardahan, where he continued his studies. In 1892, he was admitted to the Gevorgian Seminary in Etchmiadzin.

He subsequently continued his education in Tiflis, graduating from the Nersisean School in 1898, after which he returned to Ardahan to work. In 1900, he settled once again in Tiflis and became involved in the activities of the Vernatun (Cenacle) literary circle, founded on the initiative of Hovhannes Tumanyan.

With the intention of studying music, Demirchyan left for Moscow in 1903. From 1905 to 1910, he studied at the Pedagogical Faculty of the University of Geneva. Upon his return to Tiflis, he devoted himself to teaching, and in 1925 he moved to Yerevan.

Although Demirchyan is best known for his prose works, his poetry is no less significant. Indeed, as the second singer of Avarayr—the first being Yeghishe the Historian—he could not but turn to the Avarayr of the modern era: the victory of Sardarapat, which he celebrated in hymns modeled on the canticles dedicated to the warrior-martyr saints.

*Today your victor's feast is bright,
While ours recalls the fallen night.
O marble martyrs, stern and tall,
O Sardarapat, hymned by all,
Brave Martunakan, Aparan's plain—
I yearn to sing your noble strain.*

*But how shall words begin to rise
With grief still burning in my eyes?
For you ascended, pure as flame,
And left our world in widow's shame.
How crown your fearless final stand,
While pain yet shakes my trembling hand,
And lift your glory to the skies
Above the soil for which you rise?*

*Yet how be silent? How refrain?
What wounded lips could still contain
The tale of Sardarapat's stand,
Of Martunakan's valiant band,
Of Aparan's unbroken line
That faced the storm like living pine?*

*I see you still—unbowed, severe,
Like thunder held in battle's veer;
You met black death with death's own might
And shattered darkness into light.*

In another poem, Demirchyan evokes the native soil and rivers as vehicles through which he articulates his longing.

*My highland fields, my homeland streams,
You still are here—alive in dreams;
You flow today as once you flowed,
When childhood's light on all bestowed.*

*I saw you then with heart renewed,
I loved you then—still love you true.
O sing again, my streams, my own,
With all the joy you once had known.*

*Dance as you did in days long fled,
Those golden hours forever shed.
Ah, when shall I return once more?
When stand beside your banks and shore?*

MKRTICH SARGSYAN

Poet and prose writer, Honored Cultural Worker of the Armenian SSR, laureate of the State Prize of the Armenian SSR and the State Prize of the Republic of Artsakh (Karabakh/Gharabagh), and a member of the Writers' Union of the USSR, Mkrtich Sargsyan (1924–2002) was born in the town of Akhalkalaki in Javakhk. From 1931 to 1941, he studied at the Armenian secondary school in his native town.

Between 1942 and 1945, he took part in the Great Patriotic War, serving first as commander of a rifle company and later as deputy commander of a battalion. For his military service, he was awarded the Orders of the Patriotic War, First and Second Class, along with numerous medals.

From 1945 to 1947, he taught Armenian language and literature at the Akhalkalaki secondary school. Between 1947 and 1951, he studied at the Faculty of Philology of the Khachatur Abovyan Pedagogical Institute in Yerevan.

Thereafter, Sargsyan devoted himself primarily to literary work, while also holding various political and public positions. For the people of Akhalkalaki, Mount Abul constitutes a revered local symbol; in Sargsyan's poetry, however, the image of the sacred mountain of the broader Armenian homeland also appears with notable frequency, expanding the local landscape into a national symbolic horizon.

TO ARARAT

*Our boundless love, our endless flame—
Is not the same, is not the same.
Ah, Ararat! What use, what claim,
When now thy lord bears alien name?
With thousand eyes to thee we cling,
With thousand hearts thy praises sing.
Thou charm'st the stranger's soul the same—
But ours, O ours, a deeper flame.
So many peaks the heavens kiss,
So many heights the earth would miss;
Yet only thou, by God's acclaim,
Art holy still—and not the same.*

In another poem by Sargsyan, the ruined monastery of Narek on the shores of Lake Van emerges as a symbol of the homeland—a site where, in centuries past, Gregory of Narek, venerated throughout Christendom, lived, prayed, and created.

Dream

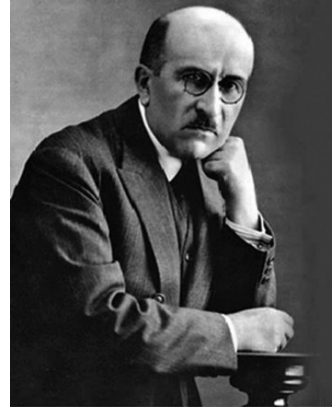
*The ruins of Narek rest beneath the hill's low line,
And Saint Narek stands portrayed upon the church's sign.
The crescent moon drips sorrow, drop by drop of night,
And all the world lies crucified in fright.
A scimitar moon, and stars of molten lead—
O stay, remain, though all around lie dead!
Though they crucify thee a thousand times again,
And snarl at thy genius, mock thy pain—
Thou, our true God, our perilous Christ,
The door of hope shall open—the dawn unpriced.
Resurrection shall come, and evil shall fall,*



Petros Duryan



Jivani



Vahan Tekeyan



Vahan Teryan



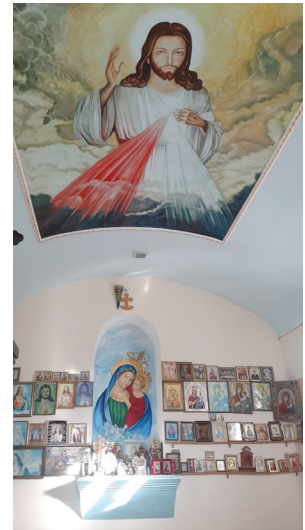
Derenik Demirchyan



Yervand Petrosyan



Mkrtych Sargsyan



The Mortuary Chapel of Ghunkanos Karnetsi, Varevan Village

*Goodness return and redeem us all;
And Armenia's soul, made holy, shall stand
Eternal once more in its sacred land.
Thou, friend of God, enthroned with saints above,
Volcano of spirit, fountain of love,
Storm of thought, the breath of rebellion and death—
Whom God once envied, whom God once wept.*

We conclude our discussion of the patriotic narrative of the poets of Javakhk with lines by Ghunkianos Karnetsi, who, having given voice to his longing for the homeland, turns to the theme of return and affirms his hope in the enduring and eternal life of his country.

*O when will the burden of longing grow light?
The Armenian wanders the world in his plight,
Yet ever he turns toward his homeland's shore—
My radiant homeland, live on evermore.*

This article, devoted to the works of the poets of Javakhk, marks the beginning of the series “The Patriotic Lyric of Armenian Poets.”

ՀԻՄՆԱԲԱՌԵՐ

Patriotism, Armenian literature, Javakhq (Javakhheti), Armenian Genocide, Motherland (Hayastan), Mount Ararat (Masis), Armenian Church, Historical memory, Exile and Longing, Jivani.

РЕЗЮМЕ

Данная статья, посвящённая творчеству поэтов Джавахка, открывает серию «Патриотическая лирика армянских поэтов».

