

THE ARMENIAN-TURKISH ETHNO-CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC RELATIONS ACCORDING TO THE POPULAR TESTIMONIES

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After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Fatih Sultan Mohamet II proclaimed it as the capital of the Ottoman State and renamed it Istanbul.

The monarch transferred there the families of the Armenian masters from the inner provinces of the Turkish Empire, who not only increased the number of the flourishing Armenian community, but also imparted beauty and radiance to the newly-established capital with the ability of their minds and their hands.

Under the immediate supervision of Sultan Fatih Mohamet, the Armenians found a true atmosphere of activity and, due to the religious freedom afforded, founded the Armenian Patriarchate of Turkey in the new capital in 1461, to which the Sultan granted certain ecclesiastic and communal rights.

There were at that time about one thousand Armenian families in Istanbul. During the subsequent years the number of Armenians in Istanbul grew gradually as a result of the migration of people from the provinces in search of work. The Armenian jewelers, silk-spinners and other craftsmen enjoyed a great reputation. The wealthy class was composed of money-changers, money-lenders and tradesmen, who, owing to their capital and enterprising efficiency, had gained influential positions, had established ties with the Sultan's Court and played an active role in the economic and political life of Turkey.

The important state functions of the Sultan's Court had been entrusted to the Armenians, who conducted them devotedly and by inheritance, from generation to generation. Thus, Harutyun Amira Bezjian was the Sultan's counselor, the Duzians governed the jeweler's art and the mintage, the Dadians were leaders in gunpowder manufacture, the Balian were distinguished in architecture, etc. The Armenians have had also ministers of the Post, the Telegraph, the Public Constructions, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs in the government of the Ottoman Empire and subsequently, deputies of the Ottoman Parliament as well.

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The commission merchants were also among the wealthy class and greatly fostered the developing trade between Turkey and Europe. The Armenian community in Istanbul also included famous intellectuals, artists and architects, who had an active participation not only in the Palace, but also in the public and political progress of the country¹.

It is difficult to count how many Turkish love-songs and other songs have been composed by Armenians; suffice it to mention that we have had many singing and playing Armenian bards in the palaces of the Sultan. We have written down a number of Turkish-language lullabies, love-songs, ritual and nuptial-festive songs, songs of emigration, of nostalgia and of other nature, the melodic construction of which is frequently supplied with the tuning peculiarities of the medieval Armenian art of singing².

However, the kind attitudes toward the Armenians took a turn for the worse in the subsequent historical and political circumstances.

Referring to the condition of the Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire, the ethnographer-folklorist of the 19th century, Sargis Haykouni, has noted that, the Armenians inhabiting the whole territory surrounding the Black River flowing from Kara-Deré and the neighboring valley, have lived retired into themselves in their inaccessible mountains up to 1700 abstaining from having relations with the external world. However, the fanatic hordes of Turk yenicheris sent from Istanbul, taking advantage of the natural, mountainous position of the Black River, “succeeded in doing whatever they wanted [with the Armenians] like fish caught in a fishing-net³”.

According to S. Haykouni’s testimony, similar intolerable conditions had also been created in Hamshen, where Armenian speech was prohibited by the Turkish mullahs and “seven Armenian words were considered a blasphemy, for which a fine of five sheep was established”⁴. The ravage and plunder, the slaughters and massacres caused by the Ottoman Turks had finally compelled the Armenians to accept a false apostasy. “The people,” wrote S. Haykouni, “were obliged to go to

¹ Սվազլեան Վ., Պոլսահայոց բանահիւսութիւնը, Ե., 2000, էջ 580-581:

² Ibid, pp. 311-315.

³ Հայկունի Ս., Նշխարներ. Կորած ու մոռացուած հայեր. Տրապիզոնի հայ-մահմեդական գիւղերն ու նրանց աւանդութիւնները, Վաղարշապատ, 1895, էջ 240:

⁴ Ibid, p. 297.

the mosque, to openly pray there and once in a year, to perform the rites of their beloved religion secretly in the caves”⁵.

The bloody policy of the Ottoman Empire had spread also over the Armenians of Cilicia deprived of their magnificent three hundred-year-old statehood.

Not excluding the mutual influences of the spiritual cultures of both nations in the course of a prolonged coexistence, the following should be noted. With reference to the Turkish speech of the Armenian population of Cilicia, Grigor Galoustian has pointed out, that: “Not only the schools intended for educating the young Armenian generation were prohibited, but those who uttered an Armenian word had their tongues cut and therefore the Armenians living in the Cilician towns (Sis, Adana, Tarson, Ayntap and its environs) had lost their mother-tongue and had become Turkish-speaking”⁶.

Speaking about the condition of the Armenians of Ayntap of that time, Gevorg Sarafian, too, has noted that “the oppression and the persecutions by the Turks became so severe that the Armenian-speaking town of Ayntap became Turkish-speaking like other great towns of Asia Minor. And the last sharp and terrible blow to the Armenian speech of the inhabitants of Ayntap was delivered by the yenicheris who mutilated the tongue of those speaking Armenian. The forcibly Turkified Armenians took away with them the Armenian words, expressions and the Armenian customs”⁷.

Thus, the Turks have forced by fire and sword the Armenian inhabitants of those localities to renounce their Christian faith and their mother tongue and to adopt Mohammedanism. Consequently a great part of the Armenians living in those regions have become Turkish-speaking.

Subsequently, the same policy was adopted by Abdul Hamid, who ordered the closure of Armenian schools, organized the massacre of the Armenians in 1894–1896 and later, in 1909, the massacre of the Armenians of Adana and of its neighboring villages.

However, the violation of the human rights and the religious and linguistic assimilation of the Armenians reached their culmination in XX century when, in the days of the Armenian Genocide in 1915 organized by the Young Turk leaders, Talaat, Enver and Jemal, millions of Armenians were forcibly driven from their

⁵ Ibid, p. 242.

⁶ **Գալուստեան Գր.**, Մարաշ կամ Գերմանիկ եւ հերոս Չէյթուն, Նիւ Եորք, 1934, էջ 697:

⁷ **Սարաֆեան Գ.**, Պատմութիւն Անթապի Հայոց, Կ. Ա, Լոս Անճելէս, 1953, էջ 5:

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ancestral cradles and ruthlessly exterminated. This was testified also in the memoirs we have written down from the eyewitness survivors who were forcibly deported from Western Armenia, Cilicia and Anatolia and were miraculously saved from death; many of them have testified that the Armenians of Keutahia, Bursa, Adana, Kayseri, Eskishehir and other localities were mostly Turkish-speaking.

According to the testimony of the eyewitness survivor **Mikayel Keshishian** (born in 1904), from Adana: *“It was already forbidden to speak or to study Armenian and infringers not only had their tongues cut, but hot eggs were placed in their armpits to make them confess that they were teaching Armenian to others, and if they confessed, they were sent to the gallows or killed”*⁸.

The following fragment of a popular Armenian song we have written down also testifies to that fact; it was communicated to us by the survivor from Konia, **Satenik Gouyoumdjian** (born in 1902):

*“They entered the school and caught the school-mistress,
Ah, alas!
They opened her mouth and cut her tongue,
Ah, alas!”* [T. 446, p. 565]

Since the school-mistress had dared to teach Armenian to the Armenian children. During the deportation and on the roads of exile, these strict measures had been reinforced. Therefore, the Western Armenians were compelled to express their grief and affliction in the Turkish language as well.

Taking into account the public-political aspects of this sad phenomenon representing the initial level of linguistic assimilation, we have not failed, along with the materials recorded in various dialects, to pay attention also to the popular historical and epic songs in the Turkish language (but explicitly of Armenian origin). Though the latter were created by Armenians and not with a perfect knowledge of the Turkish language (Armenian words and expressions, Armenian names of people and localities are often mentioned, grammatical and phonetic errors are noted), in terms of their ideological content they have an important historical and cognitive value. The Turkish-language songs have been presented, along with the dialectal originals, in their literary English translations.

⁸ **Svazlian V.**, The Armenian Genocide. Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors. Yerevan, 2011, Testimony (henceforth: T.) 241, p. 421. Henceforth the citation data from this book will be presented near the cited material, in brackets [T., p.].

It is clear, therefore, why the popular oral folklore creations of the Western Armenians and especially of those of Cilicia and Anatolia were also composed in the Turkish language, and though their words are Turkish, their essence has remained Armenian-spirited.

Here are a few examples:

A saying: “Sip haç – yorganini al içeri kaç” (Holy Cross [in Arm.] – take your guilt and run inside)⁹.

A malediction: “Satayel [in Arm.] görsün senin yuzünü” (May the devil see your face)¹⁰.

A benediction: “Allah seni Türkin eline bırakmasın” (May the Lord not let you fall in the hand of the Turk)¹¹.

Or the following Christian prayer:

<i>“Yattım, Allah, kaldır beni!</i>	<i>“I go to sleep, My Lord, protect me!</i>
<i>Surb merona* daldır beni,</i>	<i>Dip me in the Holy Chrism!</i>
<i>Gece-gündüz dua ederim,</i>	<i>I’ll pray morning and night</i>
<i>Cennetine gönder beni.</i>	<i>To be worthy of Your Paradise.</i>
<i>Yattım sağ yanima,</i>	<i>I lay on my right side,</i>
<i>Döndüm sol yanima,</i>	<i>I turned to my left side;</i>
<i>Hreştaklar** gelecek,</i>	<i>The angels will come</i>
<i>Günahimi affedecek. Amen.”</i>	<i>And forgive me my sins.Amen¹².”</i>

Among the Turkish-language materials we have written down, the popular songs of historical nature composed about the important historical events and characters are by far greater in number.

Referring to the history it should be noted that after the overthrow of Sultan Abdul Hamid and the declaration of the 1908 Constitution, the party of the Young Turks, “İttihat ve Terakki” (Unity and Progress – Turk.), which formed the government, adopted Sultan Hamid’s massacre policy and, professing the Pan-Turkish and Pan-Islamic ideologies, endeavored not only to preserve the Ottoman

⁹ Սվազլյան Վ., Կիլիկիա. Արևմտահայոց բանավոր վկայություններ, Ե., 1994, էջ 228:

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 241.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 243.

* The Armenian word “Sourb Meron” (Holy Chrism) has been used in the Turkish language song.

** The Armenian word “Hreshtak” (Angel) has been used in the Turkish language song.

¹² Սվազլյան Վ., Կիլիկիա. Արևմտահայոց բանավոր վկայություններ, էջ 249:

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Empire, but also to brutally annihilate or to amalgamate and forcefully Turkify the Armenians and the other subject Christian peoples and to create a universal Pan-Turanic, Pan-Islamic state extending from the Mediterranean Sea to the Altai territory.

The eyewitness survivors of the Armenian Genocide (1915–1923), who, for the most part are no longer alive presently, remembered in every detail, during my recordings, the historico-political circumstances of the first genocide perpetrated in XX century. The representatives of the senior generation even remembered the establishment of the Turkish Constitution in 1908, which had the motto: “Hürriyet, Adalet, Müsavat, Yaşasin Millet” (Liberty, Justice, Equality, Long Live the People – Turk.). A nationwide exultation prevailed in the country, since equal rights were to be secured by law for all the nations living in Turkey.

Nevertheless, a year had not elapsed since the declaration of the Turkish Constitution, when the town of Adana and the neighboring Armenian-inhabited villages, which had been saved from Abdul Hamid’s massacres, became the target of the hatred of the İttihat officials.

During the Holy Week of 1909, from the 1st to the 3rd of April, Adana and its environs were on fire. The blood thirsty crowd attacked the Armenian-inhabited quarters of Adana and the neighboring villages, plundered all the shops, slaughtered the unarmed and unprotected Armenians, not sparing even women and children.

The following popular Turkish-language song saturated with expressive depth and descriptiveness has been created under the immediate impressions of Adana massacre of 1909:

<i>“Hey, çamlar, çamlar, alni-açık çamlar!</i>	“Hey, cedars, cedars, variegated cedars!
<i>Her güneş vurunca sakiz damlar,</i>	The resin drips whenever the sun strikes,
<i>Sakiz damlarsa: yüreğim ağlar:</i>	When the resin drips, my heart sheds tears,
<i>Adana ırmağı sel gibi akar,</i>	The Adana River flows like a torrent,
<i>İşte geldim sana, kiyma Adana!</i>	I’ve come to see you, slaughtered Adana!
<i>Of, of, işte gördüm sizi, kiyma çocuklar!”</i>	Alas! I’ve seen you, massacred children!”

[T. 434, p. 413]

In actual fact, that was the beginning of the Armenian Genocide, when the Young Turks, following the decisions of the secret meeting, organized in 1911, in Salonica, by the party “İttihat ve Terakki,” feverishly prepared the total extermination of the Armenian nation, waiting for a propitious occasion. That

occasion presented itself when the First World War broke out. Turkey entered into the war, having expansionistic objectives and a monstrous scheme of realizing the annihilation of the Armenians.

That invasive war has also been reflected in the following popular song:

<i>“Pencereden kar geliyor,</i>	<i>“Snow is penetrating through the window,</i>
<i>Bak dışarı kim geliyor?</i>	<i>Look who is coming from outside?</i>
<i>Ölüm bana zor geliyor,</i>	<i>Death is hard to bear for me,</i>
<i>Uyan, sultan, zalim sultan!</i>	<i>Wake up, sultan, cruel sultan!</i>
<i>Kan ağlıyor bütün cihan!</i>	<i>The whole world is weeping blood!</i>
<i>Aman! Aman! Mayrik!*”</i>	<i>Alas! Alas! Mayrik!”</i>

[T. 432, p. 561]

The bitter frost of the snow-covered winter is compared with the horror of death (war), while the ruler of the country (*zalim sultan*) is indifferent to the people’s fate, even at a time when “the whole world is weeping blood.”

In February 1915, the party of “Unity and Progress” created a special commission entitled “Three-membered Executive Committee” (Behaeddin Shakir, Doctor Nazim, Midhat Shukri) to organize the deportation and massacre of the Armenians of Turkey. The Committee elaborated plans concerning the dates and routes of the forcible deportations of the Armenians, the places of extermination, the mode of action of the slaughterers, the release of criminals from the prisons, the formation of gangs of robbers (under the name of “Teşkilati mahsuse” – special organization) operating under the command of Young Turk chieftains, that were to realize the genocide of the Armenians.

On April 15, 1915 a secret order signed by the minister of Internal Affairs of the Turkish government, Talaat pasha, the war minister, Enver pasha and the general secretary of Ittihat and minister of education, Doctor Nazim, was sent to the authorities concerning the deportation and the extermination of the Armenians. And Talaat pasha warned with violent hatred: “We have to square accounts with the Armenians,” and promised to spare nothing for that purpose¹³.

During one of the sessions of the executive committee of Ittihat, Behaeddin Shakir had declared that it was necessary to immediately begin and finish the deportation of the Armenians and, in the meantime, massacre the people. “We are at war,” he had added, “there is no fear of interference from Europe and the

* The Armenian word “mayrik” (mother) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

¹³ Անտոնեան Ա., Մեծ ոճիրը, Պոսթըն, 1921, էջ 232:

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Great States, the world press also cannot raise any protest and, even if it does, it will be without much result and, in the future, it will be considered as a fait accompli.”¹⁴

The minister of Internal Affairs of the government of Young Turks, Talaat pasha, had issued a special order: “The Armenians’ right of living and working on the Turkish soil is completely removed. In accordance with this, the government orders not to spare even the infants in the cradle...”¹⁵

The executive committee of Ittihat had foreseen to carry out the deportation and the massacre of the Armenians without the help of the army or the police, entrusting the job to the criminals and murderers released from the prisons, as well as to the Kurds, the Circassians and the Chechens.

Under these historical and political circumstances, the general mobilization (*Seferberlik* – Turk.) had become the greatest evil for the Christian nations living in the Ottoman Empire, including the Armenians. Under the pretense of recruitment to military service, Armenian males aged 18–45 were drafted to serve in labor battalions (*Amelé tabour* – Turk.) and according to the special order of the war minister, Enver pasha, were taken to secluded places and were killed out of the viewers’ sight.

“...In 1914 Turkey declared a general mobilization,” a survivor from Harpoot, **Sargis Khachatryan** (born in 1903), has narrated, “and drafted the Armenian young men into the Turkish army. They took them and made them work in the “Amelé tabour” and then they killed them all”. [T. 116, p. 264]

The mobilization in Turkey was followed by the collection of the arms. That was accompanied by ubiquitous round-ups, during which, on the pretext of collecting “arms,” the Turkish policemen ravaged the houses of the Armenians, plundered their properties, arrested and killed many of them.

The same survivor, **Veronica Berberian**, has added: “Before the Genocide the Turkish policemen came to collect the arms. The son of the rich Karapet agha had said: “We have no arms.” The policemen had searched and found a weapon. They had pulled out his fingernails and they had placed hot boiled eggs in his armpits and tied him. After that, they had not left behind even a simple kitchen knife”. [T. 177, p. 360]

¹⁴ Մերոպ Լ., Տէր Զոր, հ. Բ, Փարիզ, 1955, էջ 258:

¹⁵ Ներսիսյան Մ., Հայերի ցեղասպանությունը Օսմանյան կայսրությունում (փաստաթղթերի և նյութերի ժողովածու), Ե., 1991, էջ 564–565:

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The Armenian youth who had received the call-up papers (*vesica* – Turk.) and was forcibly drafted to the Turkish army had the presentiment that “*that was the road to death*” and in fact “*lots and lots of Armenians were there.*”

<i>“Ana, uyandır beni, gideyim talime, Aynalı-martini alayım elime, Gitmeye doğru vatan yoluna, Buna ölüm yolu, derler, Allah saklasın! Ermeniler çokdur, derler, Allah kurtarsın!”</i>	<i>“Mother, wake me up, let me go to the training, Let me take in hand my mirrored-rifle, And go straight on the road of the homeland, This, they say, is the road to death, God, protect us! There, they say, are lots of Armenians, God, save us!”</i>
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[T. 395, pp. 552–553]

If, in this song, the Armenian youngster was ready to serve in the Turkish army and to perform his civil duties in regard to the native land (*vatan* – Turk.) he was living on, he subsequently became aware that the “mobilization” was a pretext to isolate him from his kinsfolk.

There were at that time special instructions in Turkey to isolate the Christians serving in the army from their regiments without any offense and to shoot them in secluded places, away from the public eye, or to make them starve to death in prisons.

Besides the prison and the dungeon, death awaited the Armenian soldier every moment:

<i>“Varin, söyleyin anama: damda yatmasın; Oğlum Toros* gelir diye: yola bakmasın, Anama deyin: bohçam açmasın; Çuha şalvarıma uçkur takmasın, Gayri ben silama varamaz oldum, İskuhi* nişanlim göremez oldum, Daracık sokakdan geçemez oldum.”</i>	<i>“Tell my mother not to sleep on the roof, Not to gaze at the road expecting her son Toros,” Tell my mother not to open my bundle of clothes, And not to pass a cord to my woolen breeches, I am already not able to arrive home, Unable to see my fiancée Iskoohi*, And not able to come out of this narrow path.”</i>
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[T. 429, p. 560]

* Armenian name.

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And the mother of the Armenian soldier cursed the mobilization, which was more like a massacre, since the young Armenians went away with the spring roses and nightingales, only forever:

<i>“Atimi bağladım delikli taş,**</i>	<i>“I tied my horse to the hollow stone,**</i>
<i>Kör olasin sen, Enver Paşa!</i>	<i>May you lose your sight, Enver pasha!</i>
<i>Ermeni cahil kalmadı,</i>	<i>No more Armenian youths were left,</i>
<i>Gitti gül, gitti bülbül, ne diyelim!</i>	<i>The rose and the nightingale went away,</i>
<i>İstersen ağla, istersen gül,</i>	<i>what should I say!</i>
<i>ne diyelim!”</i>	<i>You may cry, you may laugh, what should I say!”</i>

[T. 542, p. 579.]

The arrest of the Armenian intellectuals followed the mobilization and the arms collection; it pursued the purpose of depriving the Armenian nation not only of its fighting force, but also of its leading minds. On Saturday, April 24, at midnight, hundreds of Armenian notables of Constantinople were forcibly taken to police quarters and subsequently were sent to the deserts of Mesopotamia and exterminated.

The deportation and massacre of the Armenian population started in the spring of 1915. One after another, Western Armenia, Cilicia and Armenian-inhabited localities of Anatolia were deserted.

<i>“Sürgünlük çıktı, köy boşaldı,</i>	<i>“The exile started, the village was deserted,</i>
<i>Benim kıymetli malim Türklere kaldı,</i>	<i>My valuable possessions were left to the Turks,</i>
<i>Çoluk-çocuk yolci oldi,</i>	<i>The infant and old took the road,</i>
<i>Alan-talanı başladı.”</i>	<i>Robbery and plunder started.” [T. 460, p. 568]</i>

On the roads of the deportation, the ruthless policemen and the criminals and murderers, set free from the prisons and wearing military uniforms, plundered and robbed everybody, ravished and dishonored the women and the girls.

The disarmed, leaderless and helpless Armenian people were driven, with tearful eyes, from their native flourishing homes under the strokes of whips and bayonets. The genocidal policy initiated by the Turkish government had embraced almost all the Armenian-inhabited localities.

^{**} Delikli taş (hollow stone) – a stone ring fitted to the wall near the entrance of Armenian country houses to tie the horse reins.

“The forcible deportation of the Armenians was only a fraudulently veiled death sentence,” the French publicist René Pinon has written in his published work entitled “La suppression des Arméniens. Méthode allemande – travail turc” (*“The Extermination of the Armenians: German Method – Turkish Work”*)¹⁶.

The extermination of the Armenians was realized both on the spot and in the places of deportation, in the vast deserts of Mesopotamia, especially in Rakka, Havran, Ras-ul-Ayn, Meskené, Surudj and Deir-el-Zor and elsewhere. And since it was prohibited to speak Armenian, they had to express their sorrow and affliction mostly in the Turkish language.

I have written down these popular songs, which have a great historico-factual value, in different periods, from survivors of different localities and in different versions, a fact which testifies that the aforementioned songs, being the immediate reflection of those historical events, were of a nationwide character. Meanwhile, those quatrains of epic character entitled “*In the Desert of Der-Zor*” (more than 100 in number) are linked to each other by their thematic similarity and their refrains, objectively depicting the inexpressible sufferings endured by the Armenians.

The Genocide survivor, **Yeghissabet Kalashian** (born in 1888), from Moussa Dag, who is my first Turkish-language song performer, has narrated her mournful past: “...*In 1915, when we were in the Arabian desert; we were living like animals – no clothes, no manner of life, no washing, no drinking. Even during the fulfillment of our natural needs the gendarmes stood by, showing an indecent behavior to women and girls. Food? What food? We gathered grass, we grazed on grass like animals. If we found salt, we ate grass with salt. Sometimes Arabs were seen in the distance. The Arab Bedevis (Bedouins) had a lot of sheep but they had no houses and lived in tents. These Arabs took pity on us and occasionally gave us some pilaf, which we ate voraciously, since life is sweet.... My three little children died on the roads of exile. That is why I am all alone at this age...*” [T. 282, p. 465]

This woman, aged seventy in 1956, who lived in the district of Vardashen, in Yerevan, was the first to communicate me the quatrains of the Turkish-language Derzorian series of songs created by the Western Armenians. She sang these,

¹⁶ **Pinon R.**, *La Suppression Des Arméniens. Méthode Allemande – Travail*. Paris, 1916, p. 27.

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recalling her miserable past, the children she had lost, while the tears ran down incessantly from her eyes, her voice coarsened and she could not sing; she took a breath, started to sing anew and cry again.

During the past decades many of the eyewitnesses I met began to narrate and to sing with moans and tearful sobs, reliving their tragic past and gradually remembering new episode-quatrain series of the harrowing Deir-el-Zor song series.

In 1915, on the roads of exile to the desert of Deir-el-Zor, the Turkish gendarmes accompanying the exhausted Armenians did not even permit the latter to drink water from a spring; it was all the more forbidden to speak Armenian. That is why the people were compelled to express their distress and affliction also in the enemy's language. Every one of these vivid quatrains is a bewildering scene of the great tragedy:

According to the information provided by my narrators, the massacre began in April, on Easter Sunday, so that the Armenians, too, would be worthy of the Passion of Christ and dye their Easter eggs with their own blood. The affliction of the Armenians, turned into a song, resounded in a heart-breaking manner:

<i>"Zatik-Kiraki" çadır söktüler,</i>	"They dismantled the tents on Zatik-Kiraki,"
<i>Bütün Ermenileri çöle döktüler,</i>	They drove all the Armenians into the desert,
<i>Keçi gibi Ermenileri kestiler,</i>	They slaughtered the Armenians like goats,
<i>Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!"</i>	Armenians dying for the sake of faith!"

[T. 480, p. 571]

And the Derzorian indescribable tortures of the Armenians began:

<i>"Ağaçlardan kuş uçu,</i>	"The birds flew away from the trees,
<i>Yandı yürek tutuştu:</i>	My heart is on fire, blazing:
<i>Yanma, yüreğim, yanma!</i>	Don't burn, my heart, don't be afire!
<i>Bu ayrılık bize düştü,</i>	This separation was our fate,
<i>Bu muhacirlik bize düştü,</i>	This emigration was our fate,
<i>Bu Derzorlik** bize düştü."</i>	This derzorlik** was our fate."

[T. 461, p. 568]

Since the desert of Deir-el-Zor had become the living cemetery of the Armenian Genocide, where there was no hope of salvation:

* The Armenian words "Zatik-Kiraki" (Easter Sunday) have been used in the Turkish-language song.

** Exile to Deir-el-Zor.

Svazlian V.

<i>“Der Zor’a gidersem, gelemem belki, Ne ekmek, ne su ölüüm belki.”</i>	<i>“If I go to Der-Zor, I won’t return may be, Without bread, without water I’ll die may be.”</i>
	[T. 462, p. 568]

The mass media was silent, while a laborious, creative and most ancient people were martyred and exterminated before the very eyes of the civilized mankind for the only sin of being Armenian:

<i>“Der Zor’a varmadan Ermeni muhaciri oturmuş Hüngür-hüngür ağlıyor...”</i>	<i>“Before getting to Der-Zor, The Armenian exile sat, And cried his heart out...”</i>
	[T. 462, p. 568]

because the condition of the Armenian people was horrible:

<i>“Der Zor çölünde üç ağaç incir, Elimde-kelepçe, boynumda zincir, Zincir kimildadıkça, yüreğim incir: Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	<i>“Three fig-trees in the desert of Der-Zor, Handcuffs on my hands, a chain on my neck, My heart aches every time the chain moves, Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”</i>
	[T. 485, p. 571]

The deported Armenians passed this death road barefoot and bloodstained, with thirsty lips under the scorching sun:

<i>“Der Zor çölünde bitmedi yeşil, Kurşuna dizdiler elli bin kişi: Meraktan döküldü milletin dişi, Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	<i>“Green grass did not grow in the desert of Der-Zor, Fifty thousand people were shot down, The people’s teeth fell down from affliction, Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”</i>
	[T. 481, p. 571]

And everything was stained with the blood of the shot people:

<i>“Der Zor çölleri bürüdü duman, Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman! İnsan ve yeşil boyandı kana Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	<i>“The desert of Der-Zor was covered with mist, Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable, People and grass were stained with blood, Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”</i>
	[T. 464, p. 569]

The Armenian people were exterminated ruthlessly:

<i>“Der Zor çölünde çürüdüm kaldım, Karğalara tahl oldum, kaldım, Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman! Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.”</i>	<i>“I rotted and remained in the desert of Der-Zor, I remained and became a meal for the crows, Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable,”</i>
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At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.”

[T. 503, p. 573]

Whereas the condition of the living was more disconsolate:

<i>“Der Zor çölünde yaralı çoktur, Gelme, doktor, gelme, çaresi yoktur, Allah’dan başka kimsemiz yoktur, Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	<i>“There are many wounded in the desert of Der-Zor, Don’t come, doctor, don’t come, it’s useless, We have no one but the Lord Himself, Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”</i>
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[T. 504, p. 574]

Lonely and helpless were the Armenian people in their distress, and the mournful song of the Armenian people was changed into a prayer to the “*Almighty God*”:

<i>“Çika-çika çıktım yokuş başına, Neler geldi Ermeninin başına! Hizor* Allahım, hizor,* yetiş! Ermeni milletini kurtar, geçir!”</i>	<i>“I climbed and rose to the top of the mountain, So many misfortunes fell on the Armenians! Almighty* God, Almighty,* help us! Deliver the Armenian people, save us!”</i>
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[T. 526, p. 576]

The tragic condition of the people was contrasted with the radiant beauty of nature, in which the indifferent “*Ottoman soldier was oiling his gun*” to kill the Armenians:

<i>“Sabahtan kalktim, güneş parlıyor, Osmanlı askeri silah yağıyor, Ermeniye baktım – yaman ağlıyor, Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	<i>“I got up in the morning; the sun was shining, The Ottoman soldier was oiling his gun, I looked at the Armenians, they were crying bitterly, Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”</i>
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[T. 487, p. 572]

While the desert air was saturated with the stench of corpses:

<i>“Der Zor’un içinde naneler biter, Ölmüşlerin kokusu dünyaya yeter, Bu sürgünlük bize ölümden beter, Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	<i>“Mint has grown in the desert of Der-Zor, The stench of corpses has spread over the world, This exile is worse than death for us, Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”</i>
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[T. 475, p. 570]

Not only was the desert air polluted, but also the water was poisoned:

<i>“Der Zor’in içinde zincirli kuyu, Ermeniler içti zehirli suyu...”</i>	<i>“A well with a chain in Der-Zor, The Armenians drank the poisonous water...”</i>
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* The Armenian word “hizor-hzor” (almighty) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

Svazlian V.

[T. 515, p. 575]

The social evil was also complicated with a natural calamity: the typhoid epidemic:

<i>“Der Zor çölünde bir sıra mişmiş,** Ermeni muhaciri tifoya düşmüş, Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman! Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.”</i>	<i>“A row of apricot-trees” in the desert of Der-Zor, The Armenian exiles were infected with typhoid, Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable, At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.”</i>
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[T. 473, p. 570]

And in another variant:

<i>“Der Zor çölünde bir sıra mişmiş, Ermeni muhaciri açlıktan ölmüş, Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman! Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.”</i>	<i>“A row of apricot-trees in the desert of Der-Zor, The Armenian exiles died of hunger, Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was lamentable, At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.”</i>
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[T. 474, p. 570]

There was no salvation from that widespread evil, since the condition of the living was more inconsolable. Then the bewildering scenes followed one another:

<i>“Der Zor çölünde uzanmış, yatmış, Kellesi yokdur, ki yüzüne bakayım, Ermeniler bu güne ulaşmış, Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	<i>“He lay, sprawling, in the desert of Der-Zor, He had no head, so that I could see his face, The poor Armenians had such a fate, Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”</i>
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[T. 525, p. 576]

And their dull sighs of agony were heard:

<i>“Sivaz’dan çıkdım başım selamet, Der Zor’a varınca koptu kiyamet, Bu kadar muhacir kime emanet? Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	<i>“I came out of Svaz with a serene head, There was a great turmoil in Der-Zor, Who are so many exiles entrusted to? Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”</i>
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[T. 471, p. 570]

The countless corpses of the “*Armenians dying for the sake of faith*” were scattered everywhere, since the Ottoman soldiers had become “*butchers*”:

<i>“Der Zor dedikleri büyük kasaba,</i>	<i>“The place called Der-Zor was a large locality,</i>
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** The Arabic word “mishmish” (apricot or apricot-tree) has been used in the Turkish-language song.

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<i>Kesilen Ermeni gelmez hesaba,</i>	With innumerable slaughtered Armenians,
<i>Osmanli efradi dönmüş kasaba,</i>	The Ottoman chiefs have become butchers,
<i>Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!"</i>	Armenians dying for the sake of faith!"

[T. 467, p. 569]

The Armenian people were passing their death road in an indescribable suffering:

<i>"Gide-gide, gitmez oldu dizlerim,</i>	"Walking and walking, my legs were unable to
<i>Ağla-ağla, görmez oldu gözlerim,</i>	move,
<i>Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!</i>	Crying and crying, my eyes were unable to see,
<i>Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman."</i>	Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was
	lamentable,
	At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor."

[T. 476, p. 570]

Or something more horrible had happened: the deportees were compelled to leave their aged parents on the road, who were unable to walk, and to continue on their way to death with tearful eyes and under the shower of whip strokes of the Turkish policemen.

It happened also that the Turks kidnapped the children, raped the young brides and the girls and then, tying them up, threw them into the valley or into dried wells and, setting fire to them, burned them all alive:

<i>"Ermenileri mağaraya doldurdular,</i>	"They gathered the Armenians in a cave,
<i>Kireç döküp, ateş verip yaktilar,</i>	They covered them with lime,
<i>Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!</i>	set fire and burned them,
<i>Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman."</i>	Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was
	lamentable,
	At the time we were in the desert of Der-
	Zor."

[T. 484, P. 571]

While the survivors wailed over their losses:

<i>"Hayatin çeşmesi buz gibi akar,</i>	"Ice-cold water is flowing from the fountain in the yard,
<i>Türk bacıları çadırdan bakar,</i>	Turkish women are looking from the tent,
<i>Ermeni geliyor elleri bağlı:</i>	Armenians are coming with hands bound,
<i>Analar ağlıyor – çocuğum diye,</i>	Mothers are crying over their children,
<i>Gelinler ağlıyor – kocam diye,</i>	Brides are crying over their husbands,
<i>Kızlar ağlıyor – namusum diye."</i>	Girls are crying over their honor."

[T. 580, p. 590]

In this infernal turmoil, mothers lost their children; children lost their parents:

<i>“Der Zor çölünde şaşırdım, kaldım,</i>	“I stayed confused in the desert of Der-Zor,
<i>Yitirdim anamı, yitirdim babamı,</i>	I lost my mother and father there,
<i>Oy anam, oy anam, halimiz yaman!</i>	Oh, mother! Oh, mother! Our condition was
<i>Der Zor çölünde kaldığım zaman.”</i>	lamentable,
	At the time we were in the desert of Der-Zor.”

[T. 500, p. 573]

It should be supposed that during this indescribable tumult, the parentless, helpless orphan children themselves have composed songs of this sort:

<i>“Der Zor köprüsü dardır, geçilmez,</i>	“The bridge of Der-Zor is narrow, impassable,
<i>Kan olmuş sular, bir tas içilmez,</i>	The water is bloody; you can't drink a single cup,
<i>Anadan, babadan vazgeçilmez,</i>	It is hard to renounce one's mother and father,
<i>Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”

[T. 516, p. 575]

And mothers lamented:

<i>“Türkler başladı evlat kaçırmaya,</i>	“The Turks started to kidnap children,
<i>Analar kiymadı yüzü öpmeye,</i>	Before mothers had time to kiss their cheeks,
<i>Baktım ki gizlice ağlıyor yaman,</i>	I saw them crying bitterly in secret,
<i>Dininin uğruna ölen Ermeni!”</i>	Armenians dying for the sake of faith!”

[T. 496, p. 573]

There are also a great number of testimonies in the memoirs I have written down from the survivors concerning the murder or the forcible apostasy of Armenian children, since that was the ideological scheme outlined by the government. As Talaat pasha had said: “We have to square accounts with the Armenians”¹⁷. This official ideology was being put into practice by the Young Turk military officer-corps and the policemen, the gendarmes and the bandit gangs. That has also been confirmed by the narrative of **Satenik Doghramadjian** (born in 1903), from Sebastia: “...*They had sent an order to the village saying: 'You must convert all the Armenians of the village to the Islamic religion, if not, you must set them on fire and burn them'*”. [T. 156, p. 328]

¹⁷ Անտոնեան Ա., op. cit., p. 232.

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The sermons of the Mohammedan sheikh were also in harmony with the governmental order. **Garegin Touroudjikian** (born in 1903), from Harpoot, has noted in his memoir: *"Whoever kills seven gâvurs," sheikh* (Muslims' spiritual leader) *Aref had said, "will go to paradise"*. [T. 118, p. 268]

Marie Vardanian (born in 1905), from Malatia, has also testified to the same fact: *"...The Mohammedan Turks said: 'Who kills a gâvur, his soul goes to paradise..."* [T. 132, p. 283]

Besides that, it happened also that the boys were abducted, circumcised, forced to speak only Turkish, while the girls were raped or killed by crucifixion.

The following popular song also testifies to that fact:

Three mullahs dug the ground,

Ah, alas!

They buried the Armenian young man all alive,

Ah, alas! [T. 444, p. 564]

They took away his sister and crucified her,

Ah, alas!

They brought her down the cross and threw her into the sea,

Ah, alas! [T. 445, p. 564]

Yeghsa Khayadjanian (born in 1900), from Harpoot, who was having frequent convulsions and was bitterly crying while relating her memories to me, also remembered: *"...The Turks asked us: 'Now, will you become Turks or not?' The priest said: 'Pardon us, God.' They killed all the priests, old and young. They cut Mr. Gevorg's tongue: he was an Armenian Protestant teacher, who taught Armenian, and then they cut also his head..."* [T. 114, p. 259]

In his testimony, **Hakob Terzian** (born in 1910), from Shapin-Garahissar, mentioned the joint cooperation of Turkish military men and spiritual leaders, the mullahs, in the realization of the same policy: *"I am already 79 years old. I am from Shapin-Garahissar. When we resisted the Turks, they killed some of us and they took the children of my age to the Turkish orphanage. They stripped us. The officer drew out his sword, put it on our throat and the mullah said: 'I give up the Christian faith and adopt the Islamic religion.' They made us repeat these words."* [T. 100, p. 242]

In 1999, I met by chance **Sargis Saryan** (born in 1911), from Balou (now a citizen of USA), in Paris, in one of the halls of the Louvre Museum, where I wrote down, on the spot, his sorrowful recollections, in which he, too, confirmed and

detailed that same fact, as to how they had forcibly Islamized him and the other males: *"...A mullah came and he changed my name to Sefer. They circumcised me, my uncle and Hovhannes, whom they named Hasso. I remember: I felt a terrible pain. They burnt that part of my body as if by fire, put that excised piece of flesh in the sun to dry and kept it as a proof..."* [T. 131, p. 282]

An 81-year-old survivor, **Harutyun Alboyadjian** (born in 1904), from Fendedjak, also recalled with bitterness his sorrowful childhood: *"...When they killed my parents they took me and other under-age children to the Djemal pasha* Turkish orphanage and Turkified us. My surname was "535" and my name was Shukri. My Armenian friend also became Enver. They circumcised us. There were many others who did not know Turkish, they did not speak for weeks, with a view to hiding their Armenian origin. If the gendarmes knew about it, they would beat them with "falakhas" (heavy club used as an implement of torture – Turk.); the punishment consisted of twenty, thirty or fifty strokes on the soles or looking directly at the sun for hours. They made us pray according to the Islamic custom, after which we were compelled to say three times "Padişahım çok yaşa!" (Long live my King! – Turk.). We were clothed in the Turkish manner, a white robe and a long black, buttonless coat. We had a müdür (head-master – Turk.) and several khojakhanums (women-teachers – Turk.). Djemal pasha had ordered that we should be given proper care and attention, since he appreciated the Armenians' brains and graces and hoped that, in case of victory, thousands of Turkified Armenian children would, in the coming years, ennoble his nation and we would become his future support..."* [T. 247, p. 426]

Thus, the memoirs and the Turkish language songs of historical character communicated by the eyewitness survivors, saved, in this manner, from a total loss and entrusted to the coming generations, open a new page in the field of the Armenian-Turkish ethno-cultural and linguistic relations, since they, too, are the result of the creative mind of the Armenian people, which give an idea about the violation of the human rights of the Armenian people living in the Ottoman Empire. These popular materials, also in Turkish language, owing to their historico-cognitive value, become testimonies elucidating, in a simple popular language, the Armenian-Turkish relations during the historical events. These popular testimonies

* Djemal pasha (1872–1922) – Turkish statesman, one of the leaders of the party "Unity and Progress," a member of the "Triple Leading Committee" (Talaat, Enver, Djemal) of the Young Turks, one of the principal criminals of the Armenian Genocide.

are authentic, objective and documental evidences, which are not only attestations of the past, but are also a warning for the future.

**ՀԱՅ-ԹՈՒՐԲԱԿԱՆ ԷԹՆՈ-ՄՇԱԿՈՒԹԱՅԻՆ ԵՎ
ԼԵՋԱԿԱՆ ԱՌՆՉՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐՆ
ԸՍՏ ԺՈՂՈՎՐԴԱԿԱՆ ՎԿԱՅՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ**

ՍՎԱԶԼՅԱՆ Վ.

Ամփոփում

Օսմանյան Թուրքիան դարերի ընթացքում նպատակ է հետապնդել ճուլել և թուրքացնել հնագույն մշակույթ ունեցող հպատակ ժողովուրդներին, յուրացնել և իրեն վերագրել նրանց մշակութային արժեքները՝ կիրառելով լեզվափոխության և հավատափոխության քաղաքականություն:

Պատմաքաղաքական այդ հանգամանքներով է բացատրվում թուրքերեն խոսակցական լեզվի և թուրքալեզու բանահյուսության առկայությունը արևմտահայ որոշ գավառներում:

**АРМЯНО-ТУРЕЦКИЕ ЭТНОКУЛЬТУРНЫЕ И
ЛИНГВИСТИЧЕСКИЕ СВЯЗИ
СОГЛАСНО НАРОДНЫМ СВИДЕТЕЛЬСТВАМ**

СВАЗЛЯН В.

Резюме

Османская Турция на протяжении веков проводила политику гонений в отношении армян, попирая их элементарные права, уничтожая, присваивая их материальные и культурные ценности.

В силу названных историко-политических обстоятельств в ряде западноармянских районов использовался турецкий язык в качестве разговорного, а также сформировался туркоязычный фольклор.