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## MULTILINGUALISM AND IDENTITY IN THE ARMENIAN BARD TRADITION IN LIGHT OF KOMITAS’S PERCEPTIONS

The concept of identity in recent musicological research studies has been regarded mainly as an ever-changing, multifaceted phenomenon, in the same vein as the views on cultural realities developed by different ethnic communities, including the Armenian Diaspora. In their cultural discourse, the Diasporic researchers base their definitions of ‘Armenianness’ on their long-standing, ethnic-cultural perceptions replete with real, virtual, mythical, and historical concepts of home and motherland. This approach has extended to other emotional fields and has given birth to the notion “from being to feeling Armenian.”<sup>1</sup>

A number of questions raised in these research studies help to evaluate the multilingual legacy of the Armenian bards in the context of multinational cultural traditions of Anatolia and identify their role within the common Eastern musical canon.

The focus of the vast majority of worldwide publications on the Armenian identity is the founder of the Armenian professional music school Komitas Vardapet (Archimandrite), whose comprehensive activity has made him a cultural hero in the esthetic and patriotic perceptions of the Armenians all over the world.

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<sup>1</sup> See **A. Bakalian**, *Armenian Identity in the United States among Second Generation Cohorts*, PhD, City University of New York, 2001, p. 21; **A. Bakalian**, *Armenian Americans: From Being to Feeling Armenian*, New Brunswick & London, Transaction Publishers, 2011.

Neither his comparative studies, nor the greatest extent of his research work, nor the unique principles he developed with the aim of identifying folklore materials have been properly examined within the contemporary ethnomusicological studies. His research and considerable expertise in different Eastern musical traditions, which went beyond Armenian music to embrace Turkish, Kurdish, and Persian music, have yet to be appreciated. It was due to the extensive range of his activity as a singer and conductor, composer and ethnographer that different nations in the Ottoman Empire began to acknowledge their national musical legacy.<sup>1</sup>

The multilingual works created by Armenian bards have not been fully evaluated within the framework of Armenian national musical culture studies. The bards' foreign nicknames, the terminology used by them and the overall tendency to ascribe their foreign language songs to Muslim Éculture have given rise to controversial and somewhat reserved statements, thereby alienating the rich musical–poetic legacy of Turkish–language bards from Armenian culture. However, the significance and social role of their art has been so vital that it attracted constant attention of the intellectual elite, prominent clergymen and musicologists. The elucidation of this specific phenomenon of Armenian bard art in the light of multi–layered interpretations of exponentially growing concept of identity in the contemporary ethnomusicology helps understand the reasons for objective and subjective approaches, which address the phenomenon of multilingualism represented in the Armenian and Western studies. It also sheds light on the controversial and vague statements that Komitas Vardapet occasionally put out about Armenian bard art and urban folk music. Bard music takes very little part in Komitas's impressive musical ethnographic legacy. In the early stages of

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<sup>1</sup> **S. Poladian**, Komitas Vardapet and his Contribution to Ethnomusicology, *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 16, No. 1, Jan., University of Illinois Press, 1972, p. 82–97.

his ethnomusicological activity, Komitas recorded and harmonized samples of bard and urban folk songs, but did not, understandably, view them as characteristic expressions of a national unified style, attaching no particular attention to them therefore in his theoretical considerations.

A professional of multiple creative interests, Komitas did not restrict his research activity to peasant and spiritual music: his research encompassed samples of medieval minstrel, bard and urban folk music. Even though Komitas did not engage in a special study of *ashugh* art, he used the prominent Armenian *ashughs'* songs in his unfinished compositions, such as the operas *Anush*, *Perils of Politeness*, *Daredevils of Sasoun*, and others, which in their own way motivated their further implications in the works of Armenian composers. There is also evidence that he appreciated Shirin, Jivani, Sheram, the great masters of the national school of Armenian bard art, who were his contemporaries, and Komitas was also known for his masterly performance of their songs. Moreover, it can be implied from the study of his unpublished materials concerning his musical conceptions that he intended to use two so-called Eastern songs recorded in his native village of Kütahya as prayers for “Vardanants Liberation Battle,” which was left unaccomplished. Nevertheless, Komitas used the name “Eastern-Turkish melodies” rather than “Armenian-Turkish” for the songs he recorded from the singing of his relatives in his native village, probably on language grounds. There is a similar inconsistency between Komitas’s ideas about urban art, which can be traced back to the diversity of stylistic and melodic sources, and his activity as a collector and performer.

However, the interpretations of cultural realia in the new light of identity issues make it possible to reevaluate the phenomenon in its proper historical-cultural context and pave the way for new insights.

Actually, few specialists know that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Komitas recorded one of the most ancient versions of the famous song called *Ay Kyoroghly, jan Kyoroghly* in Turkish; he used the Armenian

version of the epic *Kyoroghly* hugely popular in the Middle East. It is worth mentioning that this stable rhythmic–intonational model has been used by bards belonging to different generations ever since its first recording by Komitas.<sup>1</sup> Interestingly enough, the schematic version of the song was notated in Azerbaijan in 1938 from its Turkish performance by the Armenian *ashugh* Avag Azaryan.<sup>2</sup> This melody, called *Uja Taghlarn* (*Kyorogly*), was notated in European notation in Vagharshapat (Ejmiatsin, the “Holy city” or “Spiritual capital” of Armenia).<sup>3</sup> The renowned scholar R. Atayan included it in the section of *ashugh* songs of Volume Fourteen of Komitas’s Complete Works as a sample of Armenian epic music.<sup>4</sup> *Uja taghlarn bashynda* means “High up the Majestic Mountains.” A lyrical poem authored by Tuskish Armenian Ashugh Gharib Gutuchu begins with the same words, was enclosed in Kh. Amiryanyan’s work “Turkish–Language Armenian Bards”, thus adding up to the materials relating to the heroic epic *Kyoroghly*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> **L. Երնջակյան**, Նորահայտ էջեր հայ–թուրքական երաժշտական աղերսների պատմությունից, *Հայ արվեստի հարցեր*, հատ. 2, Երևան, «Գիտություն» հրատ., 2009, էջ 58 (**L. Yernjakyan**, Newly Discovered Pages on the History of Armenian–Turkish Musical Relationships, in: *Issues of Armenian Art*, Vol. 2, Yerevan, “Gitutyun” publishing, 2009, p. 58).

<sup>2</sup> **Э. Эльдарова**, *Искусство ашугов Азербайджана*, Баку, 1984, с. 62–64 (**E. Eldarova**, *The Art of Azerbaijani Ashuq*, Baku, 1984, p. 62–64)

<sup>3</sup> See **Կոմիտաս**, *Երկերի ժողովածու*, հատ. 14. Երաժշտական ազգագրական ժառանգություն, գիրք 6, Հայկական ժողովրդական և աշուղական երգեր և նվագներ, խմբ. Ռ. Աթայան և Գ. Գյոդակյան, Երևան, «Գիտություն» հրատ., 2006, էջ 62 (**Komitas**, *The Complete Works*, Volume 14, Musical Ethnographic Heritage, Book 6, Armenian Folk and Ashugh Songs and Instrumental Melodies, Turkish Songs, Kurdish Songs and Instrumental Melodies, ed. R. Atayan and G. Gyodakyan, Yerevan, “Gitutyun” publishing, 2006, p. 82).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid* p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> **Kh. Amiryanyan**, Turkish–Speaking Armenian Bards, *Ottoman Empire. 16–20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, J. Kasparian, Aulnay–sus–Bois, Paris, 1989, p. 60.

## Musical example 1

*Uja Taghlaryn (Kyoroghly)* recorded by Komitas

Moderato

Ու-ջա տաղ-լա - րըն բա - շըն տա, ու-ջա տաղ-լա - րըն բա - շըն-տա,  
 նեմ-լյու, նեմ - լյու, գար գեո - րյու - նյուր և- յի, և - յի,  
 հայ և - յի, և - յի, մն - նըմ բու - սը ջըր գեօզ - լյու-մն,  
 ա - լյու-գեօզ - լյու յար գեո - րյու - նյուր, հայ,  
 յար գեո - րյու - նյուր: հայ, յար գեո - րյու - նյուր:

The bilingual versions of the song “High up the Majestic Mountains” recorded by Armenian musicologists (K. Kushnaryan, A. Kocharyan) in Armenia and Georgia at the beginning of the past century are some of the imitations of the song written down by Komitas.<sup>1</sup> Available evidence points to the existence of canonized bilingual, Armenian or Turkish mixed versions of a number of canonic songs, which are the core of the Armenian version of *Kyoroghly*. All these are traditional samples of Armenian epic music, which enjoy widespread popularity and have survived in folk–professional music in Turkey and Transcaucasia owing to both Armenian–language and Turkish–language bards, who contributed enormously to the melodic patterns of Turkish–language art music. In

<sup>1</sup> The comparative study of the musical–poetic episodes of the epic *Kyoroghly* can be found in **L. Երնջակյան**, *Աշուղական սիրավեպը մերձավորարևելյան երաժշտական առնչությունների համարեքստում*, Երևան, «Գիտություն» հրատ., 2009, էջ 128–138 (**L. Yernjakyan**, *Ashugh Love Romance in the Context of Neareastern Musical Interrelations*, Yerevan, “Gitutyun” Publishing House, 2009, p. 128–138).

these and other versions, considerable significance is attached to typical Eastern exclamations and repetitions used to describe ‘the native land’ and ‘yar’ (loved one). It is natural, therefore, that Komitas was attracted to this melody, which had distinct features and formulaic basis, proportionate combination of melodic and recitative thinking, so characteristically familiar from the lyrical songs of the Armenian rural and folk–professional music.

Musical example 2

*Uja Taghlaryn (Kyoroghly)* recorded by K. Kushnaryan, 1927

Ու - ջա դադլա - ռըն բա - շըն-դա, ու - ջա-դադ - լա -  
րըն բա - շըն - դա, ւեյ - լի, ւե - լը - լի գոր - գե - ռի -  
նի, ց - ռի, ե - ռի, յար, նի - գար ե -  
րի, Նա-նեմ գուս - տե մըր - գե նեվ - ռի - մա,  
ա - լա-գեզ - լի, յար ց - ռի - միտ, հայ, յար ե - ռի - միտ,  
հայ, յար ե - ռի-միտ:

*Musical example 3*

Kyoroghly recorded by A. Kocharyan

Յարն ե - ռե - վաց վա՛յ, յարն ե - ռե - վաց, վա՛յ...  
 յարն ե - ռե - վաց: Սի մը-տա-ծիլ դու իմ մա-սին. օ՛յ. օ՛յ. օ՛յ. օ՛յ.  
 օ՛յ, օ՛յ, օ՛յ, օ՛յ իմ գո-վե - լի յարն ե - ռե - վաց վա՛յ...  
 յարն ե - ռե - վաց: Քա-դա-քից ե - ռե - վաց գյու - դը հա՛յ, քա - դա - քից ե -  
 ռե - վաց գյու - դը: Յա - ռիս ձեռ - քի վար - դի ճյու - դը.  
 ե - ռի, ե - ռի, Այ Բառ-դան ե - ռի, բաց ա - ռա ե -  
 ռե-սի ջո-դը, այն սի - թուն պատ - կերն ե - ռե - վաց, վա՛յ,  
 այն ե - ռե - վաց, վա՛յ., այն ե - ռե - վաց:  
 Ջան թյոռ-օլ - լի, ն ջա ջան թյոռ - օլ - լի  
 այն ե - ռե - վաց վա՛յ., այն ե - ռե - վաց:

Another remarkable example is the call to prayer *Azan*. It was notated during a performance in the Turkish mosque in Yerevan in 1905; Komitas called it “Yerevan melody,” emphasizing the influence of musical

environment on the melodic structure of the traditional spiritual–ritual melody. The recitative style of this ancient melody has a particular significance for comparative studies of folk–ritualistic features.<sup>1</sup>

*Musical example 4*

*Azan recorded by Komitas*

The musical score consists of eight systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The vocal line is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 2/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment is written in a bass clef. The lyrics are in Armenian and are placed below the vocal line. The score is numbered 1 through 8.

1. Ալ - լահ  
հակ - պար.

2. Աշ - հա դու ան լա հլ - լա - - - հա  
հլ - լալ լահ.

3. Աշ - հա դու ան ճա մու - համ - մաղ - դան  
յա - սուլ ուլ լահ.

4. Ֆայ յա  
ա - լաա սահ - լահ.

5. Ֆայ յա  
ա - լալ Ֆա - լակ.

6. Ֆայ յա ա - լա  
խեյ - բուզ լա - մալ.

7. Ալ - լահ  
հակ - պար.

8. լա  
հլ - լա հա հլ - լալ լահ:

<sup>1</sup> See R. Atayan, Preface to Komitas, *The Complete Works*, Vol. 14, p. 22–23.



This melody, which Komitas recorded at the request of Emin Ter-Grigoryan, the author of the play *Sword and Fire* (episodes from Armenian–Tatar conflicts), was played at those performances. The author attached four recordings by Komitas to the Russian publication of the play (1908), the first of which is the *Azan*.<sup>1</sup>

In terms of both chronological and musicological aspects, of exceptional interest are the Kurdish songs and fragments from love stories notated by Komitas, four of which he presented in Berlin in 1899.<sup>2</sup> The Kurdish recordings made by Komitas are a great asset to the study of Kurdish musical folklore, and according to the Kurdish musicologist Nure Jauari, some of them can be called Armenian–Kurdish songs.<sup>3</sup>

Komitas's contribution to ethnomusicology is outstanding for his comparative methods, for his emphasis on the social–cultural context, in which folk songs were composed, for disclosure of the cultural interactions, and for the practical steps he took in the field of genre typology of folklore and musical dialectology. A founding member of the Berlin International Music Society, Komitas was guided by his own theoretical findings and principles, which differed from those of his contemporaries, namely Carl Stumpf (1848–1936), Erich von Hornbostel

<sup>1</sup> **Բ. Հովակիմյան**, Կոմիտասի թատերական աշխարհը, *Կոմիտասական* 2, խմբ.՝ Մ. Մոխրադյան, Երևան, Հայկական ՍՍՀ ԳԱ հրատ. էջ 254–255 (**B. Hovakimyan**, Komitas's Theatrical World, in: *Komitasakan* 2, ed. M. Muradyan, Yerevan, Publication of Academy of Sciences of Arm. SSR, 1981, p. 254–255).

<sup>2</sup> **Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ**, *Քրդական եղանակներ, Հմինեան ազգագրական ժողովածու*, Մոսկրոա–Վաղարշապատ, 1904, № 5. էջ 1–12 (**Komitas Vardapet**, *Kurdish Melodies, Eminian Ethnographic Collection*, Moscow–Vagharshapat, 1904, № 5. p. 1–12).

<sup>3</sup> **Ն. Զաուարի**, *Քրդական ժողովրդական երգարվեստը*, Երևան, ՀՍՍՀ ԳԱ հրատ., 1976, էջ 24 (**N. Jauari**, *Kurdish Folk Song Art*, Yerevan, publication of Academy of Sciences of Arm. SSR, 1976, p. 24). In respect of revealing the regularities of epic, musical–poetic thinking of different Near–Eastern nations, the comparative investigation of the Armenian–Kurdish musical epic genres presents special research interest. Among published materials, a small collection of “Kurdish Melodies Recorded by Archimandrite Komitas” occupies a significant place.

(1877–1935) and Robert Lachmann (1892–1939), the famous musicologists of the German School. The latter paid special attention to the intervallic structure, different quantitative data, as well as the relationship of half-tones and quarter tones of comparative tables of Arab–Persian modal systems. However, they all also shared a common goal, i.e. to collect and preserve folk musical legacy embodied in rural songs as a highly valuable traditional component of both everyday life and national culture; their inestimable contribution in forms of recordings are kept in the Berlin Phonogramm–Archiv.<sup>1</sup> A similar perception of peasant songs characterizes the ethnomusicological work of the renowned Hungarian composer Béla Bartók, whose long-term fieldwork in rural areas was carried out with discovery and command of “musical language” of folk songs and with his pantheistic statements about the national musical spirit.<sup>2</sup>

It is common knowledge that the concept of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century musical model was anchored in songs characterized by typical melodic–rhythmic and modal features: they were abundantly collected, notated and published through the efforts of ethnomusicologists, composers and philologists. The classification and presentation of these songs gave the opportunity to the politically dependent nations to voice their identity by dint of their own national language.

The research activity conducted by Komitas was inspired by the same purpose – to find and process the samples of pure Armenian folk songs. Passionately eager to separate Armenian and foreign, Middle–Eastern musical features, and present pure Armenian folk music entirely devoid of any distortions and deviations, he was at the same time resolving the fundamental issue concerning revealing the true nature of Armenian monody based on church and folk music as the two main representative

<sup>1</sup> At present it is called Berlin Ethnomusical Department.

<sup>2</sup> **J. Frigyesi**, *Béla Bartók and Turn-of-the-Century Budapest*, University of California Press, 1998, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, p. 77–81.

expressions of Armenian musical identity. Urban and bard music were left out of the scope of his research, as they were believed to belong to a different system of esthetic values, a deep-rooted Middle-Eastern artistic tradition, hence the emergence of the contradictory concepts of foreign ‘Eastern’ and native ‘Armenian’ music at a certain period of Armenian musicology. The commonly shared Anatolian culture and multilingual legacy of Armenian bards were ignored and alienated due to the historical circumstances, such as revival of national identity issues, or more specifically post-Genocide reaction. At the same time, in some countries of the Middle East, as well as in Greece and Egypt, the traditional Eastern classical musical genres – *mughams*, *semayis*, *sharkis*, etc. – were decried as being a Turkish musical-esthetic phenomenon. The fact, however, remains that this art was formed with the contribution of Turks, Armenians, Jews, Greeks and other nations of the Ottoman Empire. It is a curious paradox that with the fall of the Ottoman Empire its musical culture was also criticized for its ‘foreign’ nature and esthetic core.<sup>1</sup>

The rejection and criticism of the music created in the Ottoman Empire constituted part of the purification of Turkish national culture. In his work “The Principles of Turkism,” Ziya Gökalp, a sociologist and political-cultural activist, states that the Turkish classical traditional music does not belong to the Turks, but to the Greeks, Byzantines, Arabs and Persians and lacks national character. “There is yet another reason we cannot call it Islamic,” continues the author, “for it is used not only by Muslim nations, but also by orthodox nations: Armenians and Greeks.”<sup>2</sup>

In the studies primarily based on national and nationalistic theories it is not uncommon to notice predominantly subjective and biased interpretations of the origin and identification of the Middle-Eastern folk

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<sup>1</sup> **W. Feldman**, Cultural Authority and Authenticity in the Turkish Repertoire, in: *Asian Music*, Vol. XII, number 1, Fall/Winter, 1990/1991, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> **Ziya Gökalp**, *The Principles of Turkism*, Leiden, Brill Archive, 1968, p. 426.

professional music, as well as of bard and urban genres.<sup>1</sup> This necessitates the development of more coherent and acceptable concepts in order to comprehend the true nature of identity manifested in cultural interactions in a certain period of time in a multinational area.

In bard art, identity is first of all suggestive of complex and syncretic professional identity: singer, poet, instrumentalist, narrator and improvising artist. Bard art was clearly targeted at religiously and ethnically non-homogeneous audiences. In the classical period of bard art (16<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> centuries), its essential character was not national pathos: bards' skill and popularity were determined by non-national criteria and their international acclaim. This is true of dozens of generations of Armenian bards living and creating in the Middle East and neighboring countries: their real identity was not limited to their national language as the most recognizable component of the traditional national paradigm. In the case of bard art, the absolutization of language issues did not characterize the essential nature of the master-bard, who was revered for his divine gift, for his high spiritual values and ability to keep a multi-lingual audience in suspense.

As a result of historical-political developments in different historical periods, a great number of Armenians had to abandon their homeland and emigrate to other countries. That is why many representatives of Armenian culture had to live and create in different multi-national cultural centers like Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz, Istanbul and Tiflis. In such a historically intricate cross-cultural and artistic context, Armenian musicians tried to make their art understood in foreign, mostly Islamic environment. They started to theoretically correlate Armenian *oktoechos*

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<sup>1</sup> See **L. Երնջակյան**, Հայ երաժշտարվեստի աղավաղումը թուրք-ադրբեջանական հետազոտություններում, Հայկական բանակ հանդես, հավելված 4 (16), աշխատանքային տետրեր, Երևան, 2010, էջ 91–104 (**L. Yernjakyan**, The Distortion of Armenian Art Music by Turkish-Azeri Studies, in: *The Armenian Army Military Journal*, Appendix 4 (16), Yerevan, 2010, p. 91–104).

(Medieval Church Modes’ System) with Persian and Arabic modal systems, apply foreign terminology and create Armenian lettered Turkish songs as well as melodies in the “eastern” melismatic style and shading. The establishment of Armenian ashugh schools in the 17<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> centuries was a unique phenomenon with its special requirements and certificates to prove the professional skills of Armenian ashughs and standards in the given area. Having originated in a foreign environment, the Armenian ashugh art resulted in the Armenian – Persian (17<sup>th</sup> century), Armenian – Turkish (18<sup>th</sup> century), and Armenian – Georgian (18<sup>th</sup> century) institutional formation.<sup>1</sup>

The thematic scale of multilingual Armenian bards contains Middle–Eastern canonic motifs, religious paradigmatic utterances and patterned linguistic style, all of which demonstrate their professional identity. However, their art is predominantly about Armenian reality.

In the above–mentioned book on Turkish–speaking Armenian bards, Kh. Amiryan included over 50 translations of Turkish songs written in Armenian letters in comparison with the original. Lyrical, meditative–instructional, religious–ritual, national–patriotic and other thematic songs written in different poetic and metrical forms constitute very valuable material, which together with other sources give a clear

<sup>1</sup> See **Գ. Լևոնյան**, *Աշուղները և նրանց արվեստը*, Երևան, Հայպետհրատ, 1944, էջ 34–35 (**G. Levonyan**, *The Ashughs and Their Art*, Yerevan, Arm. state edition, 1944, p. 34–35). The Armenian musicologist Garegin Levonyan, the renowned ashugh Jivani’s son, probably was the first to address the problem of the three major bard schools, yet not overshadowing the existence of Yerevan, Alexandrapol, Erzurum, Kars and other schools. It should be said that the concept of “school” is more encompassing and goes beyond linguistic–geographical boundaries. The features which can be ascribed to the influence of local dialects and somewhat to musical folklore do not cover the full meaning and status of “school”. See **Լ. Երնջակյան**, Սայաթ–Նովայի խաղերի երաժշտագեղագիտական հիմքերը, *Սայաթ–Նովա–300*, Երևան, «Գիտություն» հրատ., 2012, էջ 17 (**L. Yernjakyan**, Musical–Aesthetic Foundations of Sayat–Nova’s Songs, in: *Sayat–Nova 300*, Yerevan, NAS RA “Gityun” publishing, 2012, p. 17).

understanding of the use of a foreign language or multilingualism as a powerful means of expressing identity, which can reflect and voice the national problems and emotions.

It should be noted that many of the Turkish-speaking Armenian bards continued their studies in Ejmiatsin, the Armenians' spiritual and cultural center. For hundreds of Armenian-language and foreign-language Armenian bards, the patron saint and the endower of musical-poetic gift was St. Karapet of Moush (John the Baptist), whose monastery became a pilgrimage site.

The 17<sup>th</sup> century Turkish traveler E. Çelebi reported that during his visit to Moush, he met thousands of pilgrims in the courtyard of St. Karapet Monastery, both Muslim and Christian, from different Arab countries, as well as different regions of Turkey and Iran.<sup>1</sup>

It is worth mentioning that the worship of St. Karapet dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the annals of Armenian history. The Armenologist Theo van Lint writes that the poet Kostandin Yerznkatsi had dream visions of ecstatic ceremony of the Sun's angel's transformation (initiation), which ignited his poetic gift,<sup>2</sup> which can be associated with a well-known phenomenon – initiation dream motive in *ashugh* love romances.<sup>3</sup> After the dream vision, the future ashugh would get a new name and identity, learn a new language, play a musical instrument, and only then become invincible in a contest. The so-called “macaronic,” diversified or mixed poetic form, alternatively using Armenian, Persian, and Turkish

<sup>1</sup> See **Է. ՉԵԼԵԲԻ**, *Օտար աղբյուրները Հայաստանի և հայերի մասին*, Երևան, ՀՍՍՀ ԳԱ հրատ., 1967, էջ 172 (**E. Chelebi**, *Foreign Sources on Armenia and Armenians*, Yerevan, publication of Academy of Sciences of Arm. SSR, 1967, p. 172).

<sup>2</sup> See **Theo Van Lint**, *The Gift of Poetry. Khidr and John the Baptist a Patron Saints of Muslim and Armenian Ashughs*, in: *Redefining Christian Identity. Cultural interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*, Leuven – Paris – Dudley, MA, 2005, p. 355.

<sup>3</sup> **L. Yernjakyan**, *Ashugh Love Romance in the Context of Neareastern Musical Interralations*, p. 169–170.

languages, with its metaphorical system of canonic and patterned motifs is an established phenomenon in the works of Kostandin Yerznkatsi, Grigoris Aghtamartsi and other Armenian medieval poets, who were inspired by the knowledge of Christian ritualistic mysticism and allegorical thinking of Sufi mystical poetry.<sup>1</sup>

The awareness of the Christian lifestyle, worldview and importance of maintaining native law and customs is eloquently expressed in the multilingual songs sung by Armenian bards. Many of their songs, including the ones written in likeness of spiritual songs, offer reflections on Christian faith, and so do the ones written in imitation of the spiritual songs. It is not surprising that they felt for the Christian martyrdom theme recorded in the Armenian history and literature. A perfect example of this is the fact of the martyrdom of the 15<sup>th</sup> century well-known singer–bard Hovhannes Manuk Khlatsi, who refused to convert to another religion.<sup>2</sup>

The famous poem “I Confess with Faith” by the 12<sup>th</sup> century Catholicos of Armenia, musician and poet Nerses Shnorhali (Nerses IV the Gracious) was replicated in the bard art: the song “I believe in My Faith” by *ashugh* Shamchi Melko can be considered to be a kind of answer to the prayer by Shnorhali.<sup>3</sup> Armenian bards, besides expressing worldly emotions and feelings of love, also preached Christian faith

<sup>1</sup> See **Բ. Չուգասյան**, *Հայ–իրանական գրական առնչությունները*, Երևան, Հայկական ՍՍՀ ԳԱ հրատ., 1963 (**B. Chugaszyan**, *Armenian–Iranian Literature Relationships*, Yerevan, publication of Academy of Sciences of Arm. SSR, 1963).

<sup>2</sup> See **Ն. Թահմիզյան**, *Յուշամատյանների հետքերով*. Մեծ Եղեռնը և մեր երաժշտական կորուստները, *Էջմիածին*, 1968, թ. 1, էջ 53–54 (**N. Tahmizyan**, *Tracing the Memorial Records: The Great Genocide and Our Musical Losses*, in: *Ejmiatsin*, 1968, 1, p. 53–54).

<sup>3</sup> See *Հայ աշուղները XVII–XVIII դդ.*, կազմեց Հասմիկ Սահակյան, Երևան, Հայկական ՍՍՀ ԳԱ հրատ., 1961, էջ 407 (*Armenian Bards of the XVII – XVIII Centuries*, compiled by Hasmik Sahakyan, Yerevan, Academy of Sciences of Arm. SSR, 1961, p. 407).

through their religious–philosophical and moral–instructive songs. The praise of the Mother of God was a favourite theme of theirs.

Komitas' views on bard art can be found in his article “Armenian Peasant Music,”<sup>1</sup> as well as in his other significant but unfinished piece entitled “A Prompt Essay on Armenian Folk Music,” published in Paris in 1907.<sup>2</sup> Those observations mostly relate to his impressions of the content, performing style, pronunciation and intonation of bard songs, the use of traditional melodies authored by other bards, and the use of musical instruments. He noted that Armenian bards performed in Arab–Persian–Turkish style.<sup>3</sup> Komitas also observed the Armenian performing style in terms of gender differences: he stated that the unpleasant foreign declamatory style and pronunciation were typical of rural men, while women preserved pure Armenian intonation.<sup>4</sup> In his analysis of some

<sup>1</sup> See **Կոմիտաս**, Հայ գեղջուկ երաժշտութիւն, *Անահիպ*, Փարիզ, 1907, թիւ 3–5, 6–9, էջ 70–73 և 127–130 (**Komitas**, Armenian Peasant Music, in: *Anahit*, Paris, 1907, p. 70–73 and 127–130). The same article republished in **Կոմիտաս**, *Հոդվածներ յեվ ուսումնասիրություններ*, կազմեց Ռ. Թերլեմեզյան, Յերեվան, Հայպետհրատ, 1941, էջ 15–44 (**Komitas**, *Articles and Studies*, Yerevan, State edition, 1941, p. 15–44).

<sup>2</sup> See **Կոմիտաս**, Մի թռուցիկ ակնարկ հայ ժողովրդական երաժշտության վերա, (հրատ. Մ. Մուրադյան), *Սովետական արվեստ*, 1955, №5, էջ 44–50 (**Komitas**, A Prompt Essay on Armenian Folk Music, published by M. Mouradyan, in: *Sovetakan Arvest*, 1955, №5, p. 44–50).

<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that Komitas, on different occasions, expressed his admiration for *sharkis*, folk–urban melodies, mentioning that their authors were geniuses. See **Հ. Աճառյան**, Հուշեր Կոմիտասի մասին, *Ժամանակակիցները Կոմիտասի մասին*, կազմող՝ Գ. Գասպարյան, Երևան, Հայպետհրատ., 1960, էջ 78 (**H. Acharyan**, Memories on Komitas, *Coevals about Komitas*, compiled by G. Gasparyan, Yerevan, Arm. Satet Edition, 1960, p. 78). The relationships between Komitas and bard music are addressed from a different angle by M. Manukyan. See **Մ. Մանուկյան**, Կոմիտասը և հայ աշուղական–գուսանական երգարվեստի հարազատության հարցը, *Կոմիտասական* 2, էջ 227–241 (**M. Manukyan**, Komitas and the Question of Affinity in Armenian Ashugh–Gusan Song Art, in: *Komitasakan* 2, p. 227–241).

<sup>4</sup> **Komitas**, *Armenian Peasant Music*, p. 16.



samples of bard songs, Komitas sometimes exaggerated Persian–Turkish influences, emphasizing the importance of performative stylistic features with regard to national interpretation. Komitas’ criticism did not refer so much to the bard music in general, but rather to the faulty performative style, to phenomena alien to national perceptions and musical thinking, unnecessary embellishment, palatal and nasal pronunciation and unduly lengthened syllables. Komitas probably had his reasons not to go deep into a sphere filled with political–cultural problems, as this might have hindered his ethnomusicological activity, especially in Anatolia. Clearly formulating the distinction between folk and bard music (it should be noted that Komitas invariably used the Armenian word *gousan* in reference to bards) and distinguishing between educated and uneducated gousans, Komitas did not explain in his brief observations the reasons for the customary practice of foreign language songs; neither did he give any explanation for the usage of folk melodies called *sharki* by Armenian bards. Undoubtedly, Komitas was keenly aware of the circumstances of the creation of *sharki* melodies, which were considered foreign solely on language grounds and therefore strongly disapproved by Komitas. Later, in the first years of the Turkish folklore movement, the *sharkis* were translated and assimilated into Turkish art music under different names. The Turkish authors, when dealing with the sources of this genre, differentiated two types of melodies in the Asian art music: *Türkü*, folk songs sung in Turkish and *sharki*, songs created and sung by other nations, particularly Armenians.<sup>1</sup>

During the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the process of the development of the Armenian spiritual art song in Constantinople did not proceed smoothly either;<sup>2</sup> diverse viewpoints and thoughts were

<sup>1</sup> See **M. K. Gazimihal**, *Anatolian folk songs and Our Musical Revolution*, 2006 (1928), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> See **Ա. Քերովբեան**, *Ձայն Յանապարհի, Եկեղեցական երաժշտութեան բարեկարգումը ժԹ դարու վերջաորութեան*, Փարիզ, Ակն ընկերակցութիւն, 2017,

expressed about the influence of “Eastern” and “Western,” “Turkish” and “Persian” styles and taste in application of foreign stylistic elements, ornaments and trills inappropriate for Armenian spiritual songs.<sup>1</sup> They were reflected in Komitas’ research principles and in his interpretations of bard and urban melodies. Even the Turkish–language songs, which bore the influence of Armenian music and were recorded in his home town of Kütahya through his close people and relatives, who in Komitas’ words were “ a musical clan family by nature,” were cautiously named by Komitas as “Eastern–Turkish melodies.”<sup>2</sup>

As is evident from his theoretical research, Komitas did not define his attitude toward bard music with the same clarity as he did in case of folklore and spiritual song art. His obvious research priorities – which could mainly be explained by political circumstances – and the derogatory implications about the eclectic style, language changes and musical mentality of bard art, gave rise to biased interpretations, misunderstandings, creating the Komitas narrative about Armenian musical culture and identity in the works of diasporic and foreign authors.<sup>3</sup> These works were mainly focused on Komitas’ national perceptions in tune with the time, in the context of nationalistic theories, Komitas’ viewpoint of the absolutization of peasant music as the core of Armenian art and identity, a criterion used by him in order to distinguish native music from foreign music. Undoubtedly, the construction of the paradigm of the Armenian music culture and identity conceived by Komitas can be traced back to the nationalistic theories rampant at the

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էջ 21–25 (A. Kerovbean, *Voice in the Wilderness: The Reform of Church Music at the End of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century*, Paris, Akn Company, 2017, p. 21–25).

<sup>1</sup> Լ. Թահմիզյան, Կոմիտասի 1893 թ. հոգևոր երգերի ժողովածուն, *Կոմիտասական 2*, էջ 93–99 (N. Tahmizyan, The 1893 Komitas’s Collection of Spiritual Songs, in: *Komitasakan 2*, p. 93–99).

<sup>2</sup> Komitas, *The Complete Works*, Vol. 14, p. 19–21.

<sup>3</sup> S. A. Alajaji, *Music and the Armenian Diaspora: Searching for Home in Exile*, 2015, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, p. 25–56.

end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, derived from Herder’s philosophical concepts and language as a key cultural identifier, manifestation of collective identity and national spirit.<sup>1</sup>

The historical annals document the onset of reforms in different cultures embracing romantic ideas of the national spirit, which was claimed to be an integral whole with the very core of the vernacular and was reflected not only in culture and literature, but also, as Benedict Anderson put it, “in the vernacularization of another form of printed page: the score” (i.e. music pages).<sup>2</sup>

The examination of the identity and multilingualism issues in the light of Komitas’ views provides a fresh insight into the negative connotations found in Komitas’ statements about the multilingualism of Armenian bards, making it possible to reveal its significance in a broader historical–political and cultural context.

The highlighted issues have their prehistory in the foundations of cultural policy developed in the last period of the Ottoman Empire and have since been subject to discussions, mainly in reference to the musical culture of Anatolia, also over the destiny of thousands of distorted samples of folk and folk–professional compositions stored in the Turkish archives.<sup>3</sup>

The Ottoman Empire’s musical legacy was multi-layered, so on the ideological level of the conglomerate, ethnic–racial classifications were

<sup>1</sup> See **R. Randhofer**, Komitas and Berlin musicology, *Komitas and Medieval Music Culture*, Yerevan, Komitas Museum–Institute, 2016, p. 13–17.

<sup>2</sup> **B. Anderson**, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition, New York–London, Verso books, 2006, p.75.

<sup>3</sup> There is extensive foreign literature on the further development of those foundations in the first decades of the Turkish Republic. This general overview is motivated by the correlation between this policy and the ruthless censorship of the musical activity by minority nationalities. For detailed discussion, see **Elliot Bates**, *Music in Turkey*, New York, Oxford, 2011. **B. Yildiz**, *Experiencing Armenian Music in Turkey: An Ethnography of Musicultural Memory*, Würzburg, Ergon–Verlag, 2016.

not favoured, and traditional classical music was formed in a common cultural framework. This multi-national and multi-cultural structure resulted in multi-language nations, Armenian-lettered and Greek-lettered Turkish literature, the formation of the repertoire of canonic genres, notated with the new systems of notation and increasing publication activity. The musicians of non-Turkish or non-Muslim communities were fully integrated into the structure and enjoyed the same status. The situation changed dramatically in the period between the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the time span which marked the beginning of the search of the new Turkish identity and its clear definition.

According to the Turkish sociologist Ziya Gökalp, “...*the future of Turkish music should integrate modern Western civilization with the traditional culture of the Turkish people... Eastern music is not only weak and unhealthy, but also unimportant for the Turkish people. The only healthy element is the folk music of Anatolia, which meets the esthetic taste of the Turkish people and its national identity.*”<sup>1</sup> The Turkish philologist Fuad Köprülü, one of the founders of the bard research writes, “*Turkish Minstrel literature, with its pure Turkish works of art dating back to the pre-Islamic era, has never been under Armenian or Christian influence. All the Turkish-language Armenian bards were Alevi, and their Turkish songs were written with Turkish taste and inspiration... Even the name and the musical instrument played by the Armenian Minstrels are taken from Turks.*”<sup>2</sup> This kind of nationalistic and ethnocentric language was considered to be a characteristic feature of the spirit of time.<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that unlike Turks who used the *saz*

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<sup>1</sup> See **Orhan Tekelyoglu**, *The Rise of a Spontaneous Synthesis: The Historical Background of Turkish Popular Music*, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 1996, vol. 32, N 2, p. 197–205.

<sup>2</sup> **F. Köprülü**, 1986 (1922), p. 268.

<sup>3</sup> See **B. Yildiz**, *Ibid*, p. 49–52.

(a stringed musical instrument), Armenian bards played the kamancheh, tar, kemane, tambour, and santour. As to the Arabic term *ashik–ashugh*, which means “the lover of divine truth and beauty,” it was adopted not only by folk–professional musician–poets of Armenian and Turkish nationality but also by other Middle–Eastern nationalities. The majority of the Armenian bards were followers of The Apostolic Christian Church and even the few of those who followed the Alevi–Bektashi tradition, would combine Christian and Alevi elements in their songs.<sup>1</sup>

Another cultural–political leader, Mahmut Ragip Gazimihal, furthered this nationalistic ideology. “*There is no example of any particular ‘Armenian melody’ in Anatolia... just as the Anatolian Armenians know no language other than Turkish... The Music of the Caucasian Armenians contains some special qualities, which emerged under the influence of Turkish music.*”<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, these authors were familiar with Komitas’s activity in Anatolia, especially his field research involving the collection of Kurdish, Armenian and Turkish songs, and expressed their concern about this, saying that Turkish musicians were late in embarking on the project. Turkish musicians Hüseyin Saadetin B. and Ismail Hakki B. collected a vast number of melodies belonging to

<sup>1</sup> **Kh. Amiryán**, *Ibid*, p. 22–25. In the ritual ceremony of Shia Islam (Alevism is one of its branches) the role and way of listening to music is determined by the Sufi theological theses. (See **A. Schimmel**, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, The University of North Carolina Press, 1975, p. 316–328). The Sufi teaching has made a great influence on the poets, and these poets’ works influenced bard art and especially the Turkish–language bards in Anatolia. Music is a source of inspiration for a true believer, who communicates with the beloved–God (*yar*). The equivocal interpretation of human and divine eternal love, the identification of *yar* and God, becoming a wool–clothed Sufi and travelling from monastery to monastery is one of the traditional themes of bard art. The existence of this gnoseological layer in Armenian bards’ works does not imply they were followers of this sect, as is proclaimed by Köprülü; it is evident that the symbolic images in Sufi mysticism have undergone semantic transformations in songs of Armenian *ashughs*.

<sup>2</sup> **M. Gazimihal**, *Ibid*, p. 57.

various communities. However, their efforts never reached into inner Anatolia. A Greek song collector Pakhtikos (1905) and Armenian musician P. Komitas Vardapet (1905) collected various Greek and Armenian folk songs from Anatolia. "...They worked with the aim of finding new materials to be used in their "political-ethnic" extremist propaganda..."<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly, the research interests and creative goals of Komitas, Pakhtikos<sup>2</sup> and other figures of the time are similar in many respects. In his numerous articles, the Greek musician praised folk songs as reflection of the national spirit, and in his endeavor to locate the source of identity and Hellenism, he emphasized the continuity of Greek musical art and its long road from antique pieces to Byzantine hymns and folk songs. He stressed the necessity of distinguishing authentic, uniquely Greek art from that of other nations, and, most importantly, the necessity of Europeanization of Greek music in accordance with the principles of the German Composers' School.<sup>3</sup>

The above-mentioned "denial" discourse prevailed in historical records of the time, and, regrettably, is still reflected in the contemporary musicological research studies.<sup>4</sup> They are especially evident in the

<sup>1</sup> B. Yildiz, *Ibid.* p.54.

<sup>2</sup> The Greek composer, philologist, folklorist Georgios Pakhtikos was born in Ortokoi, which is in today's Turkey's region of Marmara, in 1869. He studied at the University of Athens and then went on to study at the Conservatoire under the supervision of the renowned musician Alexadros Kantakusenos. His collection-research activity in Anatolia, Thrakia, Macedonia, Aegean Isles and other places resulted in recording and publishing hundreds of Greek folk melodies and writing choir music. See **Merih Erol**, *Greek Orthodox Music in Ottoman Istanbul: Nation and Community in the Era of Reform*, 2015, Indiana University Press, p. 143, 214).

<sup>3</sup> For further reference, see **Siopsi Anastasia**, *Music in the Imaginary Worlds of the Greek Nation: Greek Art Music during the Nineteenth-Century's fin de siècle (1880s-1910s)*, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 8, 2011, p. 17-39.

<sup>4</sup> **L. Երնջակյան**, Հայ երաժշտարվեստի մեկնությունները օտար աղբյուրներում, Հայագիտությունը և արդի ժամանակաշրջանի մարտահրավերները, Երևան, «Գիտություն» հրատ., 2014, էջ 385-388 (**L. Yernjakyán**, *The Interpretations of*

etymological explanations of Armenian bard art, musical instruments and modes and Armenian folk–professional music in general.<sup>1</sup> Many authors build their musical theory and ideology on the statements claiming the ancient origin and precedence of Turkish music.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the fact of Armenian–lettered Turkish songs and multilingual creations of Armenian bards, it is necessary to refer to the ethnomusicologist and art historian Popescu–Judetz, a renowned expert in Turkish musical writings of the Ottoman period. Opposing the so–called “denial” discourse, she writes, “*The compromise of substituting an alphabet with another script underlines the purpose to integrate a double expression of two cultures and to communicate its correspondences to the Armenian national minority. The procedure particularly points to the sustaining endeavor of Western Armenians to keep alive the tradition of Armenian idiom under Ottoman rule by safeguarding literacy among their nationals.*”<sup>3</sup>

The works created by using language parallels, graphical expressive means of different alphabets have their equivalents in the literary tradition of Middle Asia. This phenomenon typical of the musical–poetic art of Anatolia and Transcaucasia makes sense in Armenian and Greek environments.<sup>4</sup> Being a unique principle in terms of the language style and musical thinking, it offered great opportunities especially to the

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Armenian Music in Foreign Sources. *Armenology and Contemporary Challenges*, Yerevan, “Gitutyun” publishing, 2014, p. 385–388).

- <sup>1</sup> See **Simon Broughton and Kim Burton** (eds.), *World Music: The Rough Guide*, London, Rough Guides, 1994, p. 114.
- <sup>2</sup> See **O. Tekelioglu**, The Rise of Spontaneous Synthesis: The Historical Background of Turkish Popular Music, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 32/2, (April), p. 194–216; see also **O. Tekelioglu**, An Inner History of “Turkish Music Revolution”, *Demise of a Music Magazine*, in: *Sufism, Music and Society in Turkey and the Middle East*, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, vol. 10, 2001, p. 100–105.
- <sup>3</sup> See **E. Popescu–Judetz**, *Tanburi Kucuk Artin: A Musical Treatise of the Eighteenth Century*, Istanbul, Pan Yayincilik, 2013, p.12
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

representatives of Armenian–Turkish and Armenian–Georgian schools, and became an important means for intercultural communication. It is also widely known that an Armenian *ashugh* would be able to perform the same melody in different Eastern languages and styles by changing the linguocultural code. In this regard, we cannot fail to refer to the Chinese author Xi Yang's reflections about the multilingual works devised by Armenian bards, and the hybrid or the so-called “macaronic” style, profusely used in their songs.<sup>1</sup> In linguistics, it is equivalent to “code switching” or “translanguaging,” which implies the use of more than one language and dialect (or jargon) in the same written or oral text.<sup>2</sup>

Giving due tribute to prominent Armenian *ashugh* Sayat–Nova's trilingual legacy in Middle Eastern and especially in Transcaucasian bard tradition, appreciating him as a foremost artist of the time, the author also dwells on the indisputable importance of the voluminous Armeno–Turkish bard literature created in Armenian script. Objecting to the above-mentioned groundless statements made by the Turkish philologist F. Köprülü, Xi Yang considers the phenomenon as an Armenian contribution to Turkish literature.<sup>3</sup>

One of the most typical examples of “macaronic” style is Sayat–Nova's quadrilingual Azeri song N36, which consists of eight hemistichs: the beginning of the first and third lines is in Georgian and the end in

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<sup>1</sup> See **Xi Yang**, *Sayat–Nova: Within the Near Eastern Bardic Tradition and Posthumous*, PhD. Diss, 2016, UCLA, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Today the preference is given to the term translanguaging, which is used by researchers to describe different manifestations of multilingualism in literature. See **S. Kellman**, *The Translingual Imagination*, Lincoln, NE, University of Nebraska Press, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> **Xi Yang**, *ibid*, p. 32. In due time these statements were refuted by the Orientalist–Turkologist Gordlevski. See **В. Гордлевский**, Происхождение османского «узан», *Научные труды института народов Востока*, Москва, 1930; *Избранные сочинения*, т. 3, Москва, 1963, с. 264–265 (**V. Gordlevski**, *The Origin of the Ottoman “uzan.”*, in: *Scientific Works of the Institute for Oriental Studies*, Moscow, 1930; *Selected Works*, vol. 3, Moscow, 1963, p. 264–265).



Persian while the second and fourth begin in Turkish and end in Armenian. Each line of the next quatrains was written in Georgian, Persian, Turkish and Armenian respectively.<sup>1</sup>

Es řa momivida? Bibin ř'i k'ardem!  
Var get' boyni burug, tanen dus arac,  
Čkva cavagebine az řeři nardem,  
Divana g[e]ziram, banen dus arac.

(What has happened to me? [*Georgian*] Look what I have done! [*Persian*] Clear off, you hangdog, [*Azeri*] thrown out of house–and–home! [*Armenian*] I have ruined my mind! [*Georgian*] I am spikenard from the bottle. [*Persian*] I wander about, mad, [*Azeri*] bereft of reason! [*Armenian*])

The Chinese author took this illustrative example from the literary critic H. Bakhchinyan's work<sup>2</sup> and put it side by side with its English translation by the Armenologist Ch. Dowsett.<sup>3</sup> This is just one of many examples. Unfortunately, the melodies of Turkish–language or Georgian–language songs by Sayat–Nova and other bards have not survived to enable us to develop an understanding of the musical nature of the phenomenon. Melodies of foreign–language songs may have not been preserved in oral tradition as a result of the performance of multilingual

<sup>1</sup> See **Սայաթ–Նովա**, *Հայերեն վրացերեն և ադրբեջաներեն խաղերի ժողովածու*, կազմեց Մ. Հասրաթյան, Երևան, Հայպետհրատ, 1959, էջ 211, 83 (**Sayat–Nova**, *Collection of Armenian, Georgian and Azeri songs*, compiled by M. Hasratyan, Yerevan, Arm. State edition, 1959, p. 83–211).

<sup>2</sup> See **Հ. Բախչինյան**, *Սայաթ–Նովա, Խաղեր*, Երևան, Երևանի համալսարանի հրատ., 1987, էջ 186–187 (**H. Bakhchinyan**, *Sayat–Nova: Songs*, Yerevan, Yerevan State University Publishing House, 1987, p. 186–187).

<sup>3</sup> **Ch. Dowsett**, Sayat–Nova: An 18<sup>th</sup> Century Troubadour. A Biographical and Literary Study, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, vol. 561, Subsidia Tomus 91, Lovanii: in Aedibus Peeters, 1997, p. 194–195. Sayat–Nova wrote this song in 1758, a year after he was sent away from the court of Herakle II, and it expresses the bard's disturbed mental state.

texts with the same or different melodies or due to being less impressive in terms of artistic value.

The key to understanding the artistic concepts and moral–ethical norms of the musical–poetic texts by Sayat–Nova and other bards is *ashugh's* vocation to unfold the hidden, yet manifest realities, correlated ritual, musical phenomena and the supernatural qualities ascribed to the instrument and Patron saint. It is this very factor that explains the subtleties of their identity: Christian allusions and connotations in Turkish songs, Sufism in Armenian songs, the echoes of the spiritual genres of “Shakhatai” and “Ilahi,” as for example in Sayat–Nova’s songs. The master *ashugh* sings praises to the patron of Shia mysticism, thus emphasizing his knowledge of Sufi poetry and traditional symbols underlying it.<sup>1</sup>

These texts do not contain the glorifying formulae, commonly characteristic of Muslim tradition, but at the same time they express respect for and show knowledge of different religions and faith. At this point, it is worth recalling the words of Komitas about the creative and moral characterization of Armenian bards, which can be extrapolated to each and every other multilingual author, “...*They sang about the horror of alienation and wandering, as well as the urge of both not disrespecting others and not denying one’s nation.*”<sup>2</sup> We learn from this concise, but comprehensive definition about Armenian bards’ patriotism and national identity awareness, as well as their ability to appreciate foreign art.

Regrettably, the conclusions about the Armenian bards’ multilingualism dismiss the research on musical–poetic texts, thus giving

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<sup>1</sup> See **L. Երնջակյան**, *Սայաթ–Նովայի խաղերի երաժշտագեղագիտական հիմքերը*, էջ 9–13 (**L. Yernjakyan**, *The Musical–Aesthetic Foundations of Sayat–Nova’s songs*, p. 9–13).

See **L. Yernjakyan**, *The Musical–Aesthetic Foundations of Sayat–Nova’s songs*, in: *Sayat–Nova–300*, Yerevan, “Gitutyun” Publishing House, 2012, p. 9–13.

<sup>2</sup> **Komitas**, *Complete Works*, Vol. 14, p.15.

rise to arguments based on political, cultural and nationalistic–biased theories. The characteristic use of interlingual tendencies and the phenomenon of unprecedented multilingualism in the works of Armenian bards can be explained by their special ability to easily adapt to polyethnic environments and cross any language barrier. The above–mentioned facts and examples, which demonstrate the realms and expressive rhetoric of thematic and ideological content, reveal a bard’s identity in its national and common Eastern manifestations.

Due to historical–political circumstances, the multilingualism, which was popular in different cultural centers of the Middle East and Caucasus, also played an important role in spreading and popularizing the songs created by Armenian bards. It is a matter of no less significance that this phenomenon promoted and retained Armenian *ashugh* identity, distinguishing their musical poetic art and mission in a broader matrix of the Eastern tradition. Claims of identity by Armenian bards and their ethnoreligious belonging are obvious in the thematic peculiarities of their songs, sometimes expressed indirectly through allusions to Christianity, Sufism and Islam. As a rule, Armenian bards touch upon evangelical motifs as well as religious and national affiliation issues; this is especially true of their Turkish–language songs. According to written sources, Armenian bards of Zeitun composed their musical–poetic epic poems in Turkish to deliver their message of utmost dedication and concerns about their homeland.<sup>1</sup> As to the allegories used in their poetic texts, stylistic imitations of Sufi mystical images, epithets and foreign words, they are mostly to pay tribute to the tradition, the principle of imitation, allusion and answer (*nazira*) established in Eastern and Armenian lyrical poetry.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See **Kh. Amiryan**, *Ibid*, p.38.

<sup>2</sup> See **Ա. Կոզմոյան**, Հայ և պարսից քնարերգության համեմատական պոետիկան (10–16րդ.), Երևան, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատ., 1997, էջ 147–149 (**Ա. Կոզ-**

Thus, the problems of musical identity are not restricted to the analysis of musical poetic texts and examination of structural and intonational–rhythmic peculiarities. They respond to cultural and political challenges, and at a given period of time when the concept of self-cognition of the nation becomes relevant, they are created, edited and presented to the public in the form of official statements, sometimes bearing historical evidence and sometimes calling imagination into play. While searching for the roots of the Turkish identity, the choice fell on Anatolia's multinational and rich musical tradition, which, however, resulted in changing its essence through the application of the ideological paradigm: multiplicity being replaced by unity. Many studies are ordered to draw certain pre-designed conclusions. The culture of multinational and multi-faceted Ottoman Empire was presented as belonging to one nation, excluding the possibility of Greek, Jewish, Armenian and other co-authorship to it.

The national musical identity paradigm built on the logic of self-knowledge is not dogmatic. The examination of neglected, rejected and politicized problems makes it necessary to overview the former definitions of “native” and “foreign,” “Armenian” and “Eastern.” The study of multilingualism in Anatolia and Caucasus highlights the importance of this cultural phenomenon as an identity marker for Armenian bards.

The appreciation of multilingual works by Armenian bards is one of the complicated issues in the Ottoman music culture and Turkish folk-professional music. The dismissal of objective bases of and reasons for cultural realities results in the continuous circulation of biased theories in modern research studies.

The national musical identity paradigm developed by Komitas, being in tune with the ideology of the time, was incompatible with the activity of bards, who composed in different Eastern languages.

A matter of great importance is reevaluation of legacy of hundreds of Armenian bards in the context of past and present national issues while neither overestimating the significance of Turkish–language Armenian bards’ creative work, nor denying their relatedness to the Turkish and Persian bard traditions and obvious borrowings in terms of the genre application, metrical structure and poetic imagery.

### **Abstract**

The multilingual works by Armenian bards have not been fully evaluated within the framework of Armenian national musical studies. The bards’ foreign nicknames, the terminology used by them and the overall tendency to ascribe their foreign language songs to Muslim culture have given rise to controversial and somewhat reserved statements.

The aim of this paper is to elucidate the multilingual legacy of the Armenian bards from the perspective of multilayered interpretations of the concept of identity, as a focal point in modern ethnomusicology. The examination of this specific phenomenon of Armenian bard art in the light of Komitas’s views provides a fresh insight into the negative connotations found in Komitas’s statements, making it possible to reveal its significance in a broader historical–political and cultural context. The national musical identity paradigm developed by Komitas being in tune with the ideology of the time, was incompatible with the activity of bards, who composed in different Eastern languages. Nonetheless, it is worth mentioning that his comparative research and the choice of samples for some unpublished works are beyond his theorizations of national aesthetic values and orientation. The highlighted issues have their prehistory in the foundations of cultural policy developed in the last period of the Ottoman Empire and have since been subject to discussions, mainly in reference to the musical culture of Anatolia.

The dismissal of objective bases of and reasons for cultural realities results in the continuous circulation of biased theories in modern research studies. It can be claimed that multilingualism and translanguaging tendencies available in Armenian

*ashugh* art, conditioned by hystorical political circumstances, greatly stimulated the spread and popularity of their songs. This phenomenon promoted and retained Armenian *ashugh* identity distinguishing their poetic art and mission in a broader matrix of all Eastern tradition.

**Keywords:** multilingualism, identity, Komitas, Armenian bard tradition, Anatolia.

### Լիլիթ Երնջակյան (Հայաստան)

արվեստագիտության դոկտոր, պրոֆեսոր

ՀՀ արվեստի վաստակավոր գործիչ

ՀՀ ԳԱԱ Արվեստի ինստիտուտ

Երևանի Կոմիտասի անվան պետական կոնսերվատորիա

## ԲԱԶՄԱԼԵԶՎՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ԵՎ ԻՆՔՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ ՀԱՅ ԱՇՈՒՂԱԿԱՆ ԱՎԱՆԴՈՒՅԹՈՒՄ ԿՈՄԻՏԱՍԻ ԴՐՈՒՅԹՆԵՐԻ ԼՈՒՅՍԻ ՆԵՐՔՈՒ

### Ամփոփում

Հայ աշուղների բազմալեզու ստեղծագործությունն ազգային երաժշտական մշակույթի անտեսված ոլորտներից է եղել: Աշուղների օտար մականուններն ու օգտագործած եզրաբանությունը, նրանց ստեղծած օտարալեզու երգերը մահմեդական մշակույթին վերագրելու միտումն առի՞ք են տվել տարակարծությունների ու սկզբունքային վերապահումների:

Հոդվածը լուսաբանում է հայ աշուղների բազմալեզու ժառանգությունը արդի էթնոերաժշտագիտության մեջ կիրառվող ինքնության դրույթի բազմաճյուղ մեկնությունների դիտակետից: Հայ աշուղների արվեստում առկա այս առանձնահատուկ երևույթի քննությունը կոմիտասյան դրույթների լույսի ներքո պարզաբանում է նաև հայ աշուղական և քաղաքային ժողովրդական երգարվեստի նկատմամբ Կոմիտասի ունեցած հակասական և անորոշ վերաբերմունքը՝ առաջադրելով այդ արվեստի վերաարժևորումը պատմաքաղաքական և մշակութային առավել լայն համատեքստում:

Հայկական ազգային ինքնության կոմիտասյան հարացույցը՝ հիմնված ֆոլկլորի և եկեղեցական երաժշտության վրա, համահունչ XIX–XX դարերում տիրապետող ազգային գաղափարախոսության տեսություններին, անհամա-

տեղեյի էր տարբեր արևելյան լեզուներով ստեղծագործող հայ աշուղների գործունեության հետ: Այսուհանդերձ, Կոմիտաս Վարդապետի համեմատական երաժշտագիտական աշխատանքներն ու որոշ անավարտ երկերի համար ընտրած նյութերը հատում են ազգային գեղագիտական արժեքների ու կողմնորոշումների նրա տեսական ձևակերպումների սահմանները: Առաջադրված հարցադրումներն ինքնանպատակ չեն, դրանք իրենց նախապատմությունն ունեն Օսմանյան կայսրության վերջին շրջանում ձևավորվող մշակութային քաղաքականության հիմունքներում և շարունակությունը՝ հատկապես անցյալ դարավերջից աշխուժացած ազգային ինքնության նոր ընկալումների և նոր չափանիշների քննարկումներում՝ կենտրոնացած Անատոլիայի երաժշտական մշակույթի վրա:

Մշակութային իրողությունների օբյեկտիվ հիմքերի և դրդապատճառների անտեսումը հանգեցնում է կողմնակալ տեսությունների շարունակական շրջանառմանը ժամանակակից գիտական հետազոտություններում:

Պատմաքաղաքական հանգամանքներով պայմանավորված՝ հայ աշուղական դպրոցների կազմավորումը Մերձավոր Արևելքի և Կովկասի տարբեր մշակութային կենտրոններում նպաստելով եռալեզու, քառալեզու ստեղծագործությանն ու միջլեզվական կիրառություններին՝ մեծապես խթանել է նաև հայ աշուղների երգերի հանրահռչակմանն ու տարածմանը: Երևույթը նպաստել է նաև հայ աշուղական ինքնության պահպանմանը՝ զատորոշելով նրանց երաժշտաբանաստեղծական արվեստն ու առաքելությունը ընդհանուր արևելյան ավանդույթում:

**Հիմնաբառեր՝** բազմալեզվություն, ինքնություն, Կոմիտաս, հայ աշուղական ավանդույթ, Անատոլիա: