

The Armenian Language as a Remembrance and Manifestation of the Islamized Hamshenians' Ethnic Identity



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Language is one of the most important weapons in the struggle for ethnic identity and self-defence. It helps to preserve both the ethnic characteristics and the national borders.¹

It is in the linguistic consciousness, vocabulary and folklore of the nation that ethnicity and indicators of national identity are reflected. It is the language that passes the ethnic culture and national traditions from generation to generation thus performing its ethno-distinctive role as well.

Language and ethnic awareness have always interrelated closely. The Armenian language has probably been the most important factor in the formation of the ethnic consciousness of the nation. It is through the mother tongue that the individual's link to the Armenian ethnos has been distinguished throughout centuries. And it was the unique and solid community that preconditioned the separation of Armenian from its Indoeuropean parent language (Hübschmann 1875). Armenian is the original language of the population of Armenian Highlands. Numerous studies have been successful in proving that (Kapantsian 1968; Jahukian 1987).

Vernacular Armenian is one of such distinctive languages that has consisted of different dialects and subdialects since times immemorial. All the dialects share certain common features with the literary Armenian language and with regional utterances (minor units of a dialect) but differ in phonetic, grammatical and stylistic characteristics. The first mentions of Armenian dialects were made in the works of Armenian historiographers of the 5th century (Jahukian 1972; 16). Certain information and observations of Armenian dialects were recorded by the 8th century Armenian bibliographer, theologian, grammarian and musician Stepanos Siunetsi. He wrote, "And again the language has as peripheral dialects not only those of Mijerkrian and Vostanikian but also those of Korchian and Tayian and Khutian and Chorrord Hayian and Sperian and Siunian and Artsakhian, their prosody and history are important to be learnt, they are not separate languages". It follows that Siunetsi distinguishes the Korchaik, Taik, Khut, Fourth Haik, Sper, Siunik and Artsakh dialects as peripheral (bordering).²

According to the famous Armenian linguist Hr.Acharian, the Hamshen dialect has preserved layers from grabar (old Armenian) (Acharian 1947; 12). These layers are an indication of the ancient origin of the language which was spoken in the Hamshen province, located in the state of Taik (mentioned above by Siunetsi). The Hamshen

principality was founded in the 8th century in the Khaghtik region within the territory of Taik (Great Armenia). The region is considered to be one of the cradles of Armenian ethnicity (Kapaniants 1947; 27, Harutunian 1988, 233-246). The Khaghtik region, due to its important strategical position, had long been a bone of contention between contending Byzantine Empire and Sassanid Persia, Saffian Iran and Ottoman Empire.

The founders of Hamshen principality, Sepuh and Hamam Amatuni, unable to tolerate the tough legal and economic policy of the Arabs, together with 12 thousand Armenians (*History of Ghevond* 1889, 167-169, Khachikian 1999; 122-123), migrated to the Khaghtik region of Byzantine Empire in 789-790 (most probably from the regions of Aragatsotn and Kotaik (Khachikian 1999; 124-125) and settled in the city of Tambur. Hamam soon rebuilt the ruined city and named it Hamamashen (Mamikomyan 194; 284, Mamikomyan 1989; 113).

The Hamshen dialect may have been shaped when the language of the emigrated Armenians merged with the language of the local population. Academician G. Jahukian singles out the Khaghtik (Janik) (* Hamamashen > * Hamshen Armenian) subdialect with its three utterances: *Janik, * Zefanos, * Mala as the 7th subdialect of the Western or Byzantine group of dialects which in its turn represents one of the 32 Armenian dialects of the 5th century. G. Jahukian mentions that he has proceeded from the original geographical names and administrative divisions of the time when trying to identify the names of the dialects. The use of asterisks is explained as follows „there were still no written records of names of some settlements in the 5th century but we can't exclude the possibility that they already existed then“ (Jahukian 1972; 182). This is the reason why the linguist has called the dialect Khaghtik-Hamshen Armenian himself.

The relatively independent Hamshen principality existed for 7 centuries and then appeared under the domination of the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century (Khachikian 1999; 132-138).

After the Turko-Persian peace treaty concluded in Amasia in 1555, the Ottoman Empire initiated the forcible conversion of the population of Western Armenia into Islam. Its far-reaching aim was to crush the rebellious spirit of the Armenians, subjugate the newly conquered land and become the rightful owner of the region.

The process of apostacy was upheavalous in the region throughout the centuries. Up to the 18th century the Hamshen people succeeded in preserving their ethnic identity: language, faith, traditions. The first quarter of the 18th century witnessed the fierce attempts of the Armenians to hold out against conversion. Part of the population was forced to adopt Islam, others made false pretences of adopting it, still others fled the province to find refuge in Trebisond or Samsun (Janik) forests and caves or scattered in the Tchorokh basin and Black Sea coast. The result of a most cruel apostacy of the Hamshen Armenians of Sev Get in 1870 was 100 deserted villages and 10 thousand converted Moslems.³

We too have tried to cover some issues concerning the forcible islamization of Hamshen Armenians, its phases and consequences in our previous paper (Sahakyan 2006; 207-229).

The Ottoman absorption policy was carried out through both forcible and non-

forcible islamization of the Armenian population and linguistic assimilation. Realizing the ethno-distinctive importance of the language, the Ottoman rule focused on converting Armenians to a Turko-lingual stratum, thus achieving its final aim of assimilation. That is why the converted Armenians weren't allowed to speak their native tongue, otherwise they would be punished severely.

The Armenian province of Hamshen in no way avoided this policy of the Ottoman Empire. As P. Tumayeants wrote, the mullahs were on their guard not to let people speak Armenian, „Several thousand Armenian families of Garatere and everybody else in Hamshen were converted to Islam and lost every sign of Christianity managing to preserve only the provincial dialect as their mother tongue. However, they are constantly suppressed by mullahs, who, after some families became Christian within those 12 years, are trying to ban the Armenian language, considering seven Armenian words a curse for a Moslem and thus displacing people and scaring them.“ (Tumayeants 1899; 175) In this connection S. Haikuni also noted that in 1840 in Hamshen and Sev Get the Turkish mullahs suppressed the population cruelly for speaking Armenian, „Saying that seven Armenian words were a curse, they went from house to house and prohibited people from speaking Armenian, the women, feeling hurt, clubbed them away, while the men, fearing that this might lead to manslaughter, gathered at their master's to decide that whoever spoke Armenian would have to pay a fine of seven sheep.“ (Haikuni 1895; 297)

Ethnopsychologist A. Nalchajian, analysing the phenomenon of dominant ethnicity suppressing and threatening the subjected one to assimilate, noted that „the expressions of superpower suppression are the bans on the application of one's native tongue and establishment of national schools, the demands to give up one's ethnic culture and turn away from one's religion, the threats to physical annihilation and its realization to the point of a genocide“ (Nalchajian 2001; 429).

The ruling circles of multinational Ottoman Empire were rather successful in carrying out the assimilation process, though they were aware of the complexity of the process, especially that there was an obvious „ethnopsychological incompatibility“ between the dominant ethnicity and other ethnic groups (Armenians included) (Nalchajian 2001; 429). The author distinguished two principles of ethnopsychological incompatibility: genetic variability and cultural incompatibility (Nalchajian 2001; 427). In the case concerned, the Ottoman Empire realized well that the above mentioned two factors were of utmost importance as stimulators of the self-consciousness of the subjugated ethnicity. Thus, the Ottoman policy (later the policy of the Republic of Turkey) of assimilation and annihilation conditioned the Empire's geopolitical perceptions and its striving to abolish the above mentioned two obstacles.

The islamized Hamshenians in no way avoided violence. During the whole of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century they were constantly persecuted for speaking Armenian. As a result, the Turkish language was gaining the upper hand at the expense of the Armenian. Even those Armenians of Turkey who had only pretended adopting Islam, gave in after some time due to the Turkish environment, the consistency of assimilation policy, fear and persecution. And today the identity of many Hamshenians

is associated with only reminiscences of their genetic origin and some cultural traditions.

The language is most probably the cornerstone of self-consciousness and identity and its forcible abolishment turns out to be fateful for the ethnos.

The German scholar M. Hubner writes that „It is impossible to have a command of one’s identity, it appears spontaneously, even when already obtained, it is still unsafe. There permanently exists the necessity and need to defend it from outsiders“ (Hubner 1996; 23).

Ali Alt who lives in Germany and is Hamshenian by descent, notes that, as a result of the suppression of their language, the Hamshenians gave up their Armenian roots, faith and identity. According to Alt, those who suffered most were the „western Hamshenians“ (Alt 2005; 36).

Most of the Hamshen Christian Armenians, who had survived Ottoman persecution and the genocide, settled on the northern Black Sea coast, managing to preserve their language, faith, and national traditions. Hr. Acharian studied their nominal everyday speech and came to the conclusion that it is a distinct Armenian dialect (Acharian 1947) which belongs to the branch „k“ of the western group of dialects and was spoken in Ardvin, Hamshen, Trebisond, Samson (Janik), Kerasun, Ordu regions, the adjoining districts and settlements of the Tchorokh basin. The Hamshen dialect, depending on the location of the inhabitants, has its peculiarities and differences. The most indigeneous dialect, according to Hr. Acharian, is that of the isolated mountaneous villages, located far away from Trebisond. Those of the urban environs have undergone certain changes. In his opinion it is the inhabitants of the village Mala who speak a most indigeneous language (Acharian 1947; 14-15). As has already been mentioned, there exist certain layers of grabar (old Armenian) in Hamshen dialect, „it is full of such rare words of grabar which are not found in any other dialect“ (Acharian 1947; 12). Hr. Acharyan distinguishes the old words of *ant* or *anut*>*ont*, meaning *bosom, lap, analut*>*onlut*, meaning *deer, voghn*>*eogh, oghon* meaning *long hill*, etc. In general the quality of forming neologisms is noticeably inherent to the dialect (Acharian 1947; 12-13).

Today the Hamshen dialect is spoken by most of the Armenians scattered in different countries of the world, those living on the northern (Caucasian) Black Sea coast, as well as by the descendants of the islamized Armenians inhabiting the Khopa and Borchka districts of Ardvin state.

The Bash-Hamshenians inhabiting Hamshen proper (it includes the minor provinces of Chamlihemish and Pazarhemshin in the Turkish state of Rize) are already Turko-lingual, but have preserved some Armenian traditions and rites, daily practices, songs, dances, and many Armenian words. The Dutch linguist U. Blasing, studying the Armenian layer in the Turkish speech of Bash-Hamshenians, has observed and written out a number of Armenian words: *barav-parav, ahber-aghber, eghbair, telkhash-terkhash, peipu-prpur, pochghush, etmek-potskhel, keinich-kerich, kerendi-gerandi, keltat-geltat, gailatat, harav-harav*, (Blasing 1992, 1995) *vareg-vareg, mozi-mozi, nakhir-nakhir, agos-akos, gosht-kosht, kaghon-kaghan, khenechi-khnotsi, tapich-tapich, getogh-ktogh, getich-ktich, khavich-khavits, khashil-khashil, gaigut-karkut, meshush-mshush, khelez-khlez* (*The Hemshin* 2007; 282, 283, 285, 287, 288, 289, 293) etc. U.

Blasing has also recorded the following initial names: Apel, Avedik, Arakel, Aratinoghlu, Meghdesi-oghlu (The Hemshin 2007; 295). But there also exist a number of other geographical and initial names in the language of the Bash-Hamshenians: Aginchoi, Aghpenoch, Aghvechur, Anushdegh, Aider (Arter), Bucheghachoi, Entipos, Santipos, Hedipos, Ketmech (Getmej), Palakchur (Barakjur), Palovit, Sal, Salechur (Salajur), Ardeshen (Ardashen), Avelor, Jemakdap, Cheimakchur (Tchermakjur), Gghnut (Kaghnut), Galer (Kaler), Koidut, Mike, Mechovit, Meghvor, Pokut, Sokhovit.

The Bash-Hamshenians are also called western Hamshenians while the neighbouring ethnicity of Laz calls them „Armeni. A most common, so-called non-formal way of addressing them is „obstinate Armenian“. The Bash-Hamshenians are especially well-known as the best pastry cooks and bakers. The most famous confectionery cafes and bakeries in large urban centres of Turkey and even in Hakkari belong to the Hamshenians (Biryol 2005).

Today the converted Bash-Hamshenians, though preserving many Armenian words in their language, have none the less forgotten the mother tongue or deny their Armenian origin. The Moslem Hamshenians of Khopa province (or eastern Hamshenians), despite repressions and persecutions, mostly speak the Hamshen dialect (in a peculiar way), which is the only means to preserve the memories of Armenian origin, and feel that they are a distinct ethnic element in the Turkish environment.

In the course of time there have appeared Turkish loan words and phrases in the dialect of Khopa Hamshenians. It has also undergone some phonetic changes under the influence of the Turkish language.

In general the Hamshen dialect with all its utterances (particularly the language of the converted Hamshenians) is considered to be one of the most complex Armenian dialects. It has a specific vocabulary and grammatical structures. According to the observations of the western scholars R. Beninghous and M. Meeker, the eastern Hamshenians have succeeded in preserving their mother tongue. The Armenians of Turkey nearly understand the dialect of Khopa Hamshenians, while the latter themselves don't understand the Armenian of the others at all (Hemshin Gezini 1997; 85, Meeker 1971; 318-345).

The Khopa Hamshenians (Hamshetsi) call themselves Homshetsi (Homshians). They usually avoid speaking about their Armenian descent. They declare themselves to be a distinct ethnic element with a language of its own. According to Bert Vaux, the Hamshenians refer to their language as Homshetsma (The Hemshin 2007; 257-278). One of the students of the language and folklore of converted Hamshenians Sergei Vardanian notes that the Khopa Hamshenians and the Hamshenians exiled to Middle Asia call the language they speak Homshetsnak or Hamshetsnak.

The Turkish press has also referred to the identity and origin of the Hamshenians.

The article „Are Hamshenians Armenian?“ in the well-known Turkish newspaper „Radical“ is a huge step forward. Despite the fact that the Turkish author avoids direct answers to some important questions, the article „is one of the first attempts of the Turkish press to give an objective view“ of the Moslem Hamshenians (Vardanian 2006).

Referring to the information given in the chapter „Hamshenians“ in P.Andrews's

book „Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey“, the author of the article „Are Hamshenians Armenian?“ C.U. Biryol writes that the people living around Khopa-Kemalpasha „recognize themselves as Homshetsi“ (Andrews 1989; 181-184, Biryol 2006, 2007).

The major places of inhabitation of the eastern Hamshenians are located in Ardvin province, on the banks of the river flowing through Khopa and Khemalpasha. In the east the river Chorokh forms a natural border. Hamshen Armenian is the language of the eastern Hamshenians. They also speak the western dialect of Armenian and Turkish. However hard they insist that the language they speak is Hamshenian, actually there doesn't exist such a language. C. Biryol has noticed that there is much in common from the linguistic point of view between the local Hamshenian people and the Armenians who have settled on the eastern Black Sea coast. C. Biryol then concludes that „though the Hamshenians don't consider themselves Armenian today, the language they speak is Armenian and according to some sources, it is an Armenian dialect“ (Biryol 2005, Vardanian 2006).

The Hamshen dialect has its varieties (utterances), which require further scrupulous investigation. However, there is some written material of folklore in Hamshen dialect. In the 1960s the French linguist J. Dumezil recorded the speech of some converted Hamshenians living in Istanbul (Dumezil, J. 1964; 5-52). S. Vardanian in his turn has recorded and published in 1944 some songs and tales of the converted Hamshenians who had been exiled from the bordering villages of Ajaria (close to Khopa) to Middle Asia. He also composed a dictionary related to the above mentioned material (Dzain Hamshenakan 1989; 201-246). S. Vardanian considers the language of these people a distinctive utterance of the Hamshen dialect which „despite the significant differences, is relatively close to the utterance spoken in the neighbouring villages of Trebisond“. The utterance is divided into two branches: „Ardlenian“ and „Turtsevanian“, i.e. the one spoken by the people of the village of Ardala and the other by Turtsevanians (who live outside the village) (Dzain Hamshenakan 1989; 207).

The Turkish authorities, unable to finally eradicate the Armenian speech of Moslem Hamshenians, not only tried to distort and misrepresent the history and the data about the origin of the Hamshenians through official historiographical records but also through notorious M. Sakaoglu's historical falsifications. Both sources spread the information that the Hamshenians had never known any other language but Turkish. Their publications indicate that the Turkish of Hamshenians is a dialect of the ancient Turkish tribe Oghuz or Saka, and that the addition of the sounds „h“ or „kh“ before the initial vowel was typical of that dialect. M. Sakaoglu also reports that a few words were borrowed from the language of the neighbouring Caucasian people (in our opinion he means the Laz) who were in friendly relations with the Hamshenians (Sakaoglu 1990; 53) He adduces examples of such words which are now found in the Turkish speech of the Hamshenians involved in livestock farming with no mention of the fact that most part of these words have originally belonged to the nominal everyday Armenian dialect of the formerly Armenian-speaking Hamshenians: *ovakarovank* (food for cattle cooked in water), *yerak*, *heghez*, *shim* (*shem*), *keteman*, *Palovit*, *esev aspa* (interjection meaning

God), *aghu* (poison), *chemak* (white), *sherad* (the liquid which remains after the cheese is made), *kekanoch* (lavatory), *kogh* (hetching), *ash-chash* (wheat or corn soup), *pelit* (*blit* – a pie made in the big jar dug in the earth in which fire is burning) (Sakaoglu 1990; 54-55).³⁹ Some of these words have found their place also in U. Blasing's list of Armenian words (Blasing 1999).

Another Turkish falsifier M. Krzoghlu, although accepting that the language of Khopa Hamshenians is an Armenian dialect (Kirzioglu 1966), has invented theories of the origin and identity of the people speaking it. These theories as A. Alt testifies, are unfortunately well-known to the Hamshenians and have become an indispensable part of their identity. Some Hamshenians have gone so far as to considering themselves either descendants of the Oghuz, Balkar, Akad Turkish tribes or an ethnicity from Middle Asia or Khorasan (Alt 2005; 39-40). A. Alt notes that the Hamshenians are ready to accept any origin except „Moslem Armenian“ (Alt 2005; 41) and „only a few of them are aware of these differences“ (Alt 2005; 41). He adds that today there is actually not one converted, islamized Hamshenian who considers himself Armenian, „the exclusion of the historical reality, the constant silence and the denial of the origin testify that the loss of self-consciousness and identity is noticeable among the Hamshenians“ (Alt 2005; 39).

The Songs of the Converted Hamshenians

However, during the last few years the present generation of Armenian speaking Moslem people calling themselves Homshentsi or Hoshetsi has shown interest in his roots. A film in Hamshenian called „Mommy“ and 2-3 CDs of songs in Hamshen dialect were produced in Turkey. Of particular value is the one named „Vova“ (who), Hamshin Ezgileri (Hamshenians' Songs) initiated by the Turkish Hamshenians. The booklet attached to it presents in brief two versions of Hamshen history: the one confirming the Armenian origin of the Hamshenians, the other giving the Turkish viewpoint on it. The booklet is composed in three languages: in Hamshen dialect (transliterated into Turkish) and respectively its Turkish and English translations. Noteworthy is the fact that as a result of the transliteration some consonants have been misrepresented, there are also mistranslations of certain words in the Turkish version. We ourselves have initiated the restoration and translation of the texts and songs of the above booklet into modern Armenian.

We express our sincere gratitude to the editor-in-chief of the newspaper „Dzain Hamshenakan“ (Hamshenian Voice) philologist and ethnographer S. Vardanyan for support and assistance and for helpful advice.

Below are some extracts from the texts about the history of Hamshenians translated from the modern Armenian version into English.

They say the ancestors of the Hamshenians' came from Anatolia in 780 A.D. and settled in the upper part of the Black Sea. They built it [a city],⁵ called it Hamamshen after their ruler; today it is Hamshen. The biggest mount was named Khachi kar [a cross-stone, today it is Khachkar.

They say the ancestors of the Hamshenians, the Amatuni [an Armenian noble

dynasty] are the earliest settlers of Anatolia and they are Christian Turks. They were close to neighbouring Armenia, half of them learnt the Armenian language, called themselves Hamshentsi [Hamshenian] and their language Hamshetsnak [Hamshenian]. Then the Turks conquered Anatolia and they became Moslem.

They say the ancestors of the Hamshenians, the Amatuni from Anatolia came to the upper edge of the Black Sea, made it their home. Then half of them moved to the other[opposite] side of the Black Sea, those who remained in Anatolia became Turkish and Moslem. Today the Hamshenians of Khopa can speak Hamshetsnak,⁶ the others can't speak Hamshetsnak. The Hamshenian brothers on the other side of the sea are Christian, they say „we are Hamshen Armenians“.

They say the Hamshenians are hard-working mountainous good [people].

They say this, they say that...

The above linguistic material indicates that the Hamshen dialect is alive today, the Hamshenians continue speaking, composing stories and songs in their native dialect.

Among the Hamshenian songs of exceptional value there are many which the young generation is oblivious of. Most of them were recorded in Ardala, Ardanuch, Makrial, Dzarghina, Khigo, Zurpiji, Chavushni, Chkhala, Zaluna, Khalbasi, Kopriji settlements. In prosody and content these songs remind of Armenian lyric quatrains. They ingeniously express the feelings and emotions of the hero and are mainly about love.

Below are some Hamshenian songs translated from the literary Armenian version. They are an exceedingly important material not only for folklorists but for dialectologists as well. They give another opportunity to study and draw parallels between the languages of the converted and Christian Hamshenians.

You Know we are here

*We are now here on the river edge and now there on the edge of the field,
We are now here on the mountain top and now there in the plain,
We call out, sing and speak,
Mother, father, sister, lover,
We have our home, our work to do,
We have a sea, a mount, a cliff,
We have a way from our heart to yours.*

Go Down Sun, Go Down

*Go down Sun, go down,
Don't stay above the sea,
I'll come with you in the morning.
I'll keep my word.*

*The Sun is very high,
They say „let it not go down“*

*This year till autumn,
They say „let it stay forever“.*

*Mother, I picked the corn leaf,
Who will gather the stalks?
Mother, you'll have to marry me
Even if you keep me back till autumn.*

Speak, You Nobody's, Speak

*Speak, Nobody's, tell me your big grief,
Sometimes you go up the hill for wood
And the gown on you is charmingly blue,
Spring will come to the hills and the cuckoo will cry out
The girls will go up the hill to weed the field,
Summer will come, the flowers will bloom,
Old women will go for water.
You went crying down the church hill,
Hey, girl, you burnt me, you burnt yourself,
You went crying through the Makriyal plain,
You burnt me, you burnt yourself,
You are my Sun in the sky,
It was dusk and you set and disappeared
You are my highland flower,
You were ice, you burnt and you mourned,
Fadi, the shoe on your foot was tight,
Your mother's wail broke my heart,
Fadi, there was a big wedding in your house,
Your mother's wail broke my heart,
Zendid became a church for you,
Zurpiji collapsed into the bottom of the sea,
Ardala collapsed into the bottom of the sea,
Fadi, this world was cruel to us.*

Nenni, Nenni

*Nenni, Nenni, oy, oy
I made wood out of laurel tree,
Nenni, Nenni, my love
I wasn't able to carry the wood on my shoulders,
Nenni, Nenni, oy, oy,
In this abandoned world,
Nenni, Nenni, my love,
I loved you but couldn't marry you.*

*There, in the plain,
A Highland flower has bloomed,
I am crying this year
And my heart is bleeding.*

Notes:

1. See more detailed about the ethno-defensive role of language in the study of Nalchajian A. *Ethnic Psychology*. Yerevan, 2001, (in Armenian).
2. Hübschmann, H. and Acharian Hr. have led us to some misunderstanding declaring that the inhabitants of the above mentioned territories were not Armenian. Academician G.Jahukian has given the following comprehensive explanation on this account, "H.Hubschmann and H.Acharian are apt to mean different languages used in the mentioned Armenian territories. [cf. with Hubschmann H. *Armenische Grammatik*. 1895, p. 19 (in German) and Acharian Hr. *History of the Armenian Language*. Yerevan. 1951, V. 2, p.p. 128-132 (in Armenian)] This authors haven't considered the analytical nature of Siunetsi's study and come to due conclusion from it. In particular, Acharian has had the following lapses: mentioning the plural forms of Mijherkrakan and Vostanikean, he has overlooked the fact that firstly words and not dialects are concerned and secondly, Siunetsi is quite aware of the differences of his native dialects and the neighbouring languages and has made a mention of those neighbouring languages just above the passage under consideration." (see Jahukian G.B. *Introduction to Armenian Dialectology*. Yerevan, 1972, p. 17)
3. Khachikian, L. referring to P. Toumanians's retold story of the Samira village colophon *Sharaknots*, writes that "the islamization of the Armenians of Sev Get, violent and bloody, was put in motion in the Armenian year of RMIT (1780)." According to L. Khachikian, the events of this year passed from mouth to mouth before being recorded by S. Haikuni in 1708-1710. (Khachikian L. *Some Pages From the History of Hamshinian Armenians. Selections*. Yerevan, Gandzasar Theological Centre, 1999, V. 2, (in Armenian).
4. „Hamshetsnag (k)“ means „in Hamshenian“. In the original text it is misliterated as „Hamshesttag“.
5. In the Hamshenian version of the text the word „city“ is missing while in the Turkish and English version gives the words „sehir“ „city“ in the same place.
6. „Hamshetsnoun“ means „the Hamshenians“. In the original text it is mistransliterated as „Hamshestanum“.

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Հայերենը որպես բռնի կրոնափոխված համշենցիների ինքնության հիշողություն և դրսևորում

Սույն հոդվածի շրջանակներում քննության է ենթարկված հայկական ծագումով կրոնափոխ համշենցիների ներկայիս սերունդների կողմից կիրառվող լեզուն՝ որպես ինքնության հիշողություն և դրսևորում: Օսմանյան կայսրության ճուլղական լեզվաքաղաքականության արդյունքում բռնի մահմեդականացված համշենահայերի սերունդների զգալի մասը, ժամանակի ընթացքում մոռանալով մայրենին, դարձել է թրքախոս: Միայն Արդվինի նահանգի համշենցիներն են, որ դեռևս շարունակում են պահպանել Համշենի բարբառը: Հոդվածում բերված լեզվական փաստերը ցույց են տալիս, որ Խոփայի համշենցիների բարբառն այսօր էլ կենսունակ է. համշենցիները շարունակում են այդ լեզվով խոսել, պատմություններ և երգեր հյուսել: Գրավոր այս փաստերն արժեքավոր նյութ են մատուցում ոչ միայն հայ բանահյուսությանը, այլև բարբառագիտությանը: Դրանց միջոցով կարելի է պարզել կրոնափոխ համշենցիների և Սև ծովի հյուսիսային ափերին հաստատված քրիստոնյա համշենահայերի խոսվածքների հնչյունական, քերականական և բառապաշարի ընդհանրությունները, շեղումներն ու տարբերությունները և պատկերացում կազմել նրանց այսօրվա լեզվավիճակի և ինքնության պահպանման մասին: