

Antonio Baldassarre and Tatjana Marković, editors

MUSIC CULTURES IN SOUNDS, WORDS AND IMAGES

Essays in honor of
ZDRAVKO BLAŽEKOVIĆ

HOLLITZER



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AND IMAGES

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ZDRAVKO BLAŽEKOVIĆ

edited by

Antonio Baldassarre & Tatjana Marković

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Zdravko Blažeković fishing in Kazakhstan, July 2015. © Tatjana Marković

Copy-editing: Diane Glazer, Antonio Baldassarre, Tatjana Marković
Layout: Nikola Stevanović
Printed and bound in the EU

Cover image: Nikola Stevanović

Antonio Baldassarre and Tatjana Marković:
Music Cultures in Sounds, Words and Images. Essays in Honor of Zdravko Blažeković.
Wien: HOLLITZER Verlag, 2018

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HOLLITZER Verlag
a division of
HOLLITZER Baustoffwerke Graz GmbH, Wien

www.hollitzer.at

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ISBN 978-3-99012-451-2 (print)
ISBN 978-3-99012-504-5 (PDF)

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INTRODUCTION

MUSIC CULTURES IN SOUNDS, WORDS AND IMAGES ESSAYS IN HONOR OF ZDRAVKO BLAŽEKVIĆ

INTRODUCTION

This book is a gift to Zdravko Blažeković, with whom we have exchanged thoughts, had long discussions and, above all, shared our mutual passion for thinking and writing on music at different points all around the world, for many years. It came out of our long lasting, warm friendship and respect for his work, and often unexpected perspectives of considering different questions related to history of music, performance practice, archival research or indeed any aspect of musicology. This wide horizon results from his dedication to research, tireless following of contemporary literature on different topics, as well as immense experience of listening to music.

According to Robert Hoffman, currently a Senior Research Scientist at the Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, and recognized as a world leader in cognitive systems engineering and Human-Centered Computing, “researchers deserving of a festschrift share certain qualities”, including “outstanding mentoring skills, profound impact on an academic [...] department’s growth or direction, technical mastery, significant contributions to research and theory, and broad interests”.¹ Zdravko Blažeković exemplifies this combination of characteristics. He is a role model as mentor and advisor to many, endowed with a natural sense of humor, a sensitive flair for trends, and visionary thinking that crosses existing boundaries. These features form the fundament of his weighty and lasting impact on research and scholarly enterprises – particularly as Executive Editor of the *Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale* (RILM) at the International Center in New York, and as Member of the Council of Association *Répertoire International d’Iconographie Musicale* (RIdIM).

Zdravko’s academic rigor is beyond compare, manifested in his enriching and influential scholarship with a remarkable research output and an almost boundless scope of interests, encompassing a spectrum of topics ranging from

1 Ricki Lewis, “Festschriften Honor Exceptional Scientific Careers, Scholarly Influences” (2 September 1996), online:
<https://www.the-scientist.com/?articles.view/articleNo/18041/title/Festschriften-Honor-Exceptional-Scientific-Careers--Scholarly-Influences> (last accessed: 4 January 2018).

global and local histories of music, to nationalism and sacred, national and traditional music, from music iconography and organology to ethnomusicology, music archaeology and ethnochoreology, and from music historiography to editing as a creative process. This wide range of issues is reflected in the topical and methodological diversity present in this festschrift to celebrate Zdravko as an outstanding and unique figure in music scholarship, as well as to give expression to the profound gratitude which his friends and colleagues feel for the scholarly and personal enrichment that acquaintance with Zdravko has afforded us. The contributions in this volume are, therefore, taken from the research areas in which Zdravko has made major contributions, and they provide proof of the continued fecundity of his thought.

Zdravko Blažeković was born on 13 May 1956 in Zagreb,² in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the country which belonged to neither political block, and formed the third one, the Non-Aligned-Movement.³ Being on the crossroad between east and west, connecting central/east, southeast Europe, the Balkans and the Mediterranean, it provided insight in both western and eastern cultures, literature, music, films, as well as a wide and specific education in the given coordinates. Such a coexistence of different worldviews can also be found as the fundamental driving force behind Zdravko's achievements.

Zdravko studied musicology at the Zagreb Music Academy, from where he received his Bachelor and Master's Degrees in 1980 and 1983 respectively. At that time he started an extensive systematic archival research in numerous cities and towns in Croatia with his mentor Ladislav Šaban (1918–1985), which was the basis of, and departure point for his further multiplied research interests. After a period of academic activities in his native country – as researcher at the Department of Musicology of the Zagreb Music Academy (1980), and at the Croatian Academy of Science and Arts (1981, and 1983–1988), as well as Editor at the Croatian Music Information Center (1982–1983) – he moved to New York City where he was endorsed by Barry S. Brook (1918–1997), the internationally renowned American musicologist and founding father of so many significant musicological ventures. This move has, however, not meant a departure from the Old World. On the contrary, Zdravko has remained

2 The biographical part of this introduction processes information provided in Vilena Urbanić, "Blažeković, Zdravko" (3 Sept 2014), *Grove Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0002270684>; <http://www.rilm.org/aboutUs/bio.php?who=ZBlazekovic>; and <http://www.musiciconography.org/bio> (last accessed: 15 Jan 2018)

3 Jürgen Dinkel, *Die Bewegung Bündnisfreier Staaten. Genese, Organisation und Politik (1927–1992)* (Berlin–Munich: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2015).

deeply rooted in the European humanist traditions embracing the curiosity to discover many new worlds.

In New York City, Zdravko accomplished his PhD at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York in 1997, with the study *Music in Medieval and Renaissance Astrological Imagery*.⁴ In 1987 he became involved with the international center of the Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale (RILM) – whose foundation was strongly promoted and supported by Barry S. Brook – and held various positions within it, until he was appointed Executive Editor in 1996. Simultaneously he started conducting extensive music iconography research, and was appointed Associate Director (1991–1997) of the Research Center for Music Iconography at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (founded by, again, Barry S. Brook) and eventually promoted to Director in 1998. In the same year, 1998, Zdravko transformed the *RIdIM Newsletter* that he had edited for a couple of years into the journal *Music in Art*, one of the leading and most highly regarded international scholarly journals for music iconography research, of which he still serves as General Editor. Finally, Zdravko served as a member of the advisory boards of the two currently most important music encyclopediae, i.e. the 2001 edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, and the second edition of *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* – concerning the latter he is still actively involved in its recently launched online version. Since 2011, he has been Chair of the Study Group on the Iconography of the Performing Arts of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) and Member of the Council of Association Répertoire International d'Iconographie Musicale (RIdIM).

In 2002, Stjepan Mesić, the then-Croatian President, awarded Zdravko the high state Order of the Zvezda Danica for his contribution to Croatian culture. The monograph *Hrvatska glazbena historiografija u 19. stoljeću* that he published in collaboration with Sanja Majer-Bobetko and Gorana Doliner received the Josp Andreis Award from the Croatian Musicological Society in 2010.⁵ Finally, the volume *Speaking of music: Music conferences, 1835–1966* that he edited jointly with Barry S. Brook and James R. Cowdery was awarded the Vincent H. Duckles Award of the Music Library Association in 2006.⁶

It is our deepest and sincere hope to bring great pleasure to our friend with this festschrift. We trust that this collection of essays honors Zdravko as both

4 Zdravko Blažeković, *Music in Medieval and Renaissance Astrological Imagery* (PhD diss., City University of New York, 1997; published Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 2008).

5 Sanja Majer-Bobetko, Zdravko Blažeković, Gorana Doliner, *Hrvatska glazbena historiografija u 19. stoljeću* (Zagreb: Hrvatsko Muzikološko Društvo, 2009).

6 James R. Cowdery, Zdravko Blažeković, Barry S. Brook, *Speaking of Music: Music Conferences, 1835–1966* (New York: Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale, 2004).

an “outstanding figure in a given profession”,⁷ and – first and foremost – as a unique individual whose incredible generosity, enormous curiosity, innovative and sometimes unorthodox thinking and remarkable achievements will always serve as a model.

Antonio Baldassarre
Tatjana Marković

7 Imogen Fellingner, “Festschriften and occasional volumes”, transl. by Tessa Wilson with permission from *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. by Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter; Stuttgart: Metzler, 1995, 2nd rev. ed.), Sachteil, vol. 3, 426–434, in *Liber Amicorum: Festschriften for Music Scholars and Nonmusicians, 1840–1966*, ed. by Zdravko Blažeković and James R. Cowdery (general editors) (New York: Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale, 2009), xix–xxvii, here xix.

SOUNDS OF NATIONS

BEATA NAVRATIL
The City University of New York

MUSIC IN POETRY: TUMANIAN'S *ANUSH**

Abstract. The poem *Anush* by the Armenian poet Hovhannes Tumanian (1869–1923) is rooted in traditional Armenian music. Tumanian's poem reflects a number of manifestations thereof: (1) It borrows in its style from Armenian lyrical songs (such as *lalik* and *khagh*), from the *parerg* style (the traditional dance-song), and from the *voghb* style (laments such as funeral laments, *bayati*, and tragic odes). (2) *Ashug* style of storytelling/singing as a main form of conveying the storyline. (3) Dancing and music making during Armenian traditional rituals – in particular, the *Hambarsum* celebration (Feast of Christ's Ascension), the winter village wedding, and the *kokh* (wrestling dance) – are in the poem inseparable from the protagonists' fate. (4) Songs incorporated into the poem serve as personifications of characters and their fate. (5) The poet uses the folk music idioms such as a presence of natural phenomena to tell the story and emotions. The three dominant interconnected components of nature – mountains, flowers and bodies of water – create a psychological background and all songs in the poem are connected with them emulating every mood, emotion and physical attribute of the people, as there is no direct description of their feelings or appearances.

Hovhannes Tumanian (Հովհաննես Թումանյանը, 1869–1923) stands out as one of the most beloved and prominent Armenian poets. His output is large and stylistically varied, including poems, ballads, stories, fairy tales, and numerous translations of world literature. His father was a priest, an educated man who instilled a deep appreciation for the history and traditions of his country and people. He was a descendant of an Armenian princely family, the Tumanians, a branch of the royal dynasty of the Mamikonians that settled in Lori (Armenia) in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Hovhannes Tumanian was also well-educated with an excellent knowledge and love of world literature. He worked tirelessly to translate into Armenian many works of Shakespeare, Byron, Goethe, Longfellow, and others. Shakespeare was and stayed the ideal of creativity for Tumanian throughout his life.

In his work, Tumanian immortalized noble human aspirations – sublime dreams of happiness and justice, love and beauty, wisdom and integrity. Tu-

* This contribution is based on the dissertation by Beata Navratil, *Music in poetry and poetry in music: Tumanian's 'Anush'*, DMA diss., The City University of New York (2015).

manian's poem, *Anush* (Անուշ) is often called the pinnacle of his poetry. It tells about the tragic love of a young shepherd boy, Saro, for a peasant girl, Anush. Breaking away from old traditions and beliefs results in the tragic deaths of both Saro and Anush. When speaking about the musicality of *Anush*, an audience would almost certainly think of Armen Tigranian's loved and widely known opera of the same name. One might say that the poem has become identified with the opera; however, the poem has its own musical language. This chapter will focus on the ethnographic musical thesaurus of folk rituals as told by Tumanian and show the musical influences of folk music on his work.

All Tumanian scholars have agreed on the folk nature of his language but the core of his style seems to be born particularly from folk music – not simply the song sections of the poem but the entire work from beginning to end. Tumanian said with pride on many occasions that he borrowed from folklore with great freedom: “Vortegh kefs tvel e” (Whenever it pleased me to).¹ He would often use words, lines, rhythms, rhymes, and any other material from national folk resources that he found carried the depth of the idea he was looking to express.² He was a tremendous ethnographer, collecting and transcribing folklore,³ and his personal library contained thousands of publications on Armenian folklore and ethnography – as well as that of other nations.⁴ The poem *Anush* is deeply connected to and rooted in traditional Armenian music and reflects a number of manifestations thereof:

- (1) It borrows in its style from Armenian lyrical songs (such as *lalik* and *khagh*), from the *parerg* style (the traditional dance-song), and from the *voghb* style (laments such as funeral laments, *bayati*, and tragic odes).
- (2) *Ashug* style of storytelling/singing as a main form of conveying the storyline.
- (3) Dancing and music making during Armenian traditional rituals – in particular, the *Hambarsum* celebration (Feast of Christ's Ascension), the winter village wedding, and the *kokh* (wrestling dance).

1 From Tumanian's article “Hayots drambianize u es” [Armenian Drambianizm and me], in *Hovhannes Tumanian, Intir erker erku hatorov* [Hovhannes Tumanian, Collection of works in two volumes] (Erevan: Sovetakan Grogh, 1985), 361–362.

2 Hovhannes Ghazarian, “*Anushi*” *steghsagortsakan patmutiune* [Creative history of “Anush”] (Erevan: Hayastan, 1975), 73.

3 Artashes Nazinian, “Mets banasteghtse ev zhoghovrdakan banahyusutyune” [The great poet and folklore], *Patma-Banasirakan Handes* 3 (1969), 25–36. The article provides in-depth analysis of Tumanian's work and collection of folklore.

4 Tumanian's house-museum in Erevan contains over eight thousand books from Tumanian's personal library. Over one thousand books comprise the collections of world folklore. <http://www.toumanian.am/tangaran/tang.php?clear=1> (last accessed: April 4, 2014).

- (4) Songs incorporated into the poem serve as personifications of characters and their fate and are inseparable from the protagonists' fate.
- (5) The poet uses the folk music idioms such as a presence of natural phenomena to convey the story and emotions. The three dominant interconnected components of nature – mountains, flowers and bodies of water – create a psychological background and all songs in the poem are connected with them emulating every mood, emotion and physical attribute of the people, as there is no direct description of their feelings or appearances. Such transference and humanization of nature, combined with musical references (dancing mountains, crying-lamenting clouds, springs lamenting “as nymphs,” the river singing the hymns) are used as vehicles for telling/singing the story.

Traditional Armenian music, in all its forms and genres, has found its main expression in dancing, singing, comic musical and serious dramatic plays, as well as celebrations of rituals, both secular and sacred. Most of the traditions of common people have left their footprint in the musical heritage of the nation. Armenian musical folklore can be of great interest as it has absorbed centuries of religious traditions, popular beliefs, historical facts, and most importantly, musical excerpts from antiquity – often an oral art form most susceptible to vanishing. With its status as a masterpiece of Armenian poetry, *Anush* can be looked at as a musical snapshot of ethnographic musical collection as well. The poem's musical folklore and rituals are an important part of the plot and overall structure of the poem as a synthesis of folk customs, minstrel-style storytelling and classic tragedies. The types of folk music embedded in the rituals of Tumanian's poem reveal spiritual and earthly beliefs of an ancient civilization from early antiquity on.

Each and every song, whether part of a ritual or a lyrical love song, is given in its entirety in the poem with full refrains and repetitions. This dominance of song warrants a special look. The songs bear hidden messages, genuine sentiments, and thoughts. Those elements are emphasized by slowing down the timeline, using the song to give the reader time to feel the emotions of the protagonists as reflected and embedded in the traditional folk music and rituals.

ASHUGS AND POETIC AND MUSICAL FORMS AS ONE

Armenian national music is a monument of centuries-old culture, a natural synthesis of religious, folk and ashug music, poetry, and history. Movses Khorenatsi (Moses of Khoren, ca. 410–490 AD), an Armenian historian, hymn

writer, and poet, and Pavstos Buzand (Faustus of Byzantium, fifth century), an Armenian historian, documented the art and rituals of ancient Armenians, including the traditions of the *gusan* (bard), *vipasan*, and *goghtan* (epic singer, interchangeable with the *vipasan*). Many poetic-musical genres, developing from late-medieval Armenia up to the turn of the nineteenth century, retained their connection to both art forms. Gusans, and later *ashugs* (minstrels), played a significant role in the development of literature and music, with the synthesis of both poetic and musical arts. All of these musical genres have corresponding poetic styles and meters. Tumanian was well acquainted with ashug traditions as the ashugs often traveled to and stayed in the poet's native Lori. A common ashug style of "telling" the story was to sing some parts of the drama and narrate others while acting out different characters. In making the switch from narration/chanting to singing at the moments of high dramatic tension, some ashugs would announce the moment of transition to the song with words, "But this I cannot express in words, give me a *saz*⁵ and I will sing it for you".⁶ In Tumanian's poem, at the moments of heightened emotions, only the songs reveal the inner thoughts and true feelings of the protagonists. Thus, in line with ashug traditions, Tumanian's protagonists express their emotions through songs when "words could not".

We know that Tumanian was well acquainted with works of many gusans and ashugs, which he would often use and rework. An example is his epic poem *Sassuntsi Davit* (David of Sassun),⁷ an ancient Armenian ballad told/sung by ashugs for many centuries that is still popular in Armenia today.

It can be said with confidence that Tumanian's work process (collection, absorption, and personal interpretation of folklore) is similar to that of the ashugs. Whether one considers the style, language, or traditions depicted, the result is the work of a singer-poet, not just of a writer who is skilled only in poetry. In *Anush*, the poet pays homage to minstrels and bards: (Canto the First, episode I).⁸

5 Long-necked fretted lute.

6 Khristofor Kushnarev, *Voprosy istorii i teorii armjanskoj monodičeskoj muzyki* (Questions of history and theory of Armenian monodic music) (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo, 1958), 241.

7 *Sassuntsi Davit* (David of Sassun) is an epic ballad about an Armenian herculean hero David (Sassun, historically part of Western Armenia, is currently in Turkey). It is one of four parts of a large epic poem *Sassna Tsrer* (Daredevils of Sassun) describing four generations of the Sassun family. Thousands of pages documenting different versions collected from oral and written sources dating from the eighth century on are preserved in the Matenadaran archives in Armenia.

8 The poetic translation of *Anush* by Mischa Kudian is used in this work: Mischa Kudian, trans., *The bard of loree: Selected works of Hovannes Toumanian* (London: Mashtots Press, 1970).

My soul now flies towards home;
There, sitting before the family hearth,
They wait ever with yearning for me
And through the long, wintry nights
Tell about the ancient braves of Lori.

LAMENTS

By framing the poem as a tragic sung lament, Tumanian touches upon the deepest corners of the human soul in ways that recall and emulate ancient Greek tragedies. The poem consists of a Prologue and Six Cantos.⁹

Prologue.

On the night before Hambartsum (Feast of the Ascension), tearful fairies gather on the mountain top to lament the tragic love of Saro, a shepherd, and Anush, a young peasant maiden. At the first rays of light, the nymphs disappear into the rivers and springs.

Canto the First (Episodes I–IX).

The poet recollects memories of his beloved Lori and majestic images of the mountains and valleys bring back memories of people and events long gone. The love story of Saro and Anush is told. The young shepherd Saro, while coming down a mountain, sings a love song for his beloved Anush with the youthful ardor of passionate love. Under the watchful eyes of her traditional family, the young woman feels restless and tries to find a pretense to meet with her beloved. She joins her friends at the spring to collect water, sings *Ampi Takits jur e galis* (From under the clouds the water is coming) along with her friends, and eagerly waits for a meeting with Saro.

Canto the Second (Episodes X–XI).

The village youth are celebrating Hambartsum with dancing, singing the ritual songs of *jan giulum* (dear flowers) and *vitchaki erg* (fortune-telling song). During the ritual of fortune-telling, Anush draws the dark lot foretelling a tragic fate. She believes in the prediction and surrenders to dark thoughts and deep sadness.

Canto the Third (Episodes XII–XVI).

9 The general structure of Greek tragedies is: (a) a prologue, (b) a *parodos* (choral first song), followed by (c) three or more episodes interspersed with *stasima* (choral interludes) and (d) *exodus*.

Winter has come. There is a wedding celebration in the village. During the festivities, two friends, Saro and Anush's brother Mosi, are encouraged by the crowd to wrestle. During the wrestling, Saro breaks the age-old tradition forbidding friends to force an opponent's shoulders to the ground. Saro, seeing Anush in the crowd, forgets the rules and the "world" and pushes Mosi to the ground, thus insulting his honor in front of all. Mosi gives an oath of revenge and forbids Anush to see Saro ever again.

Canto the Forth (Episodes XVII–XXI).

After some time has passed, early in the morning the news has spread of Saro's and Anush's elopement. Attempts to find the young couple hiding in the mountains prove to be fruitless. All have returned but Mosi, who having sworn to find them at all costs, continues his search. Sometime later Anush returns to the village with hopes of forgiveness from her family. Saro remains in the mountains.

Canto the Fifth (Episodes XXII–XXVI).

The news of Saro's death reaches the village. Mosi returns home with a rifle behind his shoulders and the village folk understand that Mosi has satisfied his quest for revenge. People run to the valley to the screams of Saro's distraught mother. Saro is buried on the river bend far from the village.

Canto the Sixth (Episodes XXVII–XXIX).

The spring comes again. Distraught in her grief Anush is wandering on the banks of the river crying, lamenting, and singing mad songs. She hears the voices of the river Debed calling her to reunite with her beloved.

On the eve of new celebrations of Hambartsum, when time stops and nature becomes animate, two stars embrace and kiss each other in longing ardor.

In many ancient cultures, laments belonged among the oldest literary forms such as epic poems and were an important medium for "telling" the tragedy. Tragic events told in laments are cries of suffering and pain and evoke strong emotions of compassion. A paper examining Greek laments by Đurđina Šijaković gives a succinct definition of the therapeutic effect of laments on the lamenters and society in general. She writes:

Preserving archaic elements of ritual lament, Greek tragedy gives extremely precious and reliable testimonies about ancient funeral rites and about the way ancient Greeks used to deal with their beloved's

death. It says a lot on the role of women in funeral ritual, on the power that traditionally belonged to them and was controlled by laws of many poleis. Lament is, even if it calls for revenge, a structured answer to death, an answer of a community, and furthermore an attitude of the same community towards life. This building of suffering into a song eases the sorrow of the woman that laments, of a bereaved family, and wider of a whole community. Lamenting has different aspects, among them creative-therapeutic as a very important and interesting one. This art offers solace, it shapes the pain.¹⁰

The musical sections of ancient tragedies were meant to stir empathy, thus lifting and redeeming an indifferent soul, something that Tumanian also saw as one of the most important purposes of literature. For Nietzsche, the musical dimension of the dramatic tragedy and most importantly music itself was of great interest. In his essay *Über Musik und Wort* (On music and word), he stated that music is a primary expression of the essence of everything, and lyrical poetry and drama are only secondary derivatives, thus concluding that tragedy is born from music.¹¹ Nietzsche also argued that Greek tragedy is the highest form of art due to its mixture of both Apollonian and Dionysian elements. The Dionysian element is represented in the music of the chorus while the Apollonian element is found in the spoken dialogue. The Dionysian element is also found in the drunkenness and wild celebrations at the festivals manifested in musical representations.

Likewise, in Tumanian's *Anush* we have the chorus and spoken dialogues and we have Apollonian and Dionysian elements saturating all the festivities and rituals.

Aristotle in his *Poetics* lays great emphasis on *mimesis* (imitation) and *catharsis* (cleansing) in explaining the purpose of tragedy. Especially important is his emphasis on "the language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament," among which music plays a dominant role:

Tragedy is the imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play. In form it is action, not narrative. Through pity and terror it effects the purgation of these emotions. By 'language embellished' I mean lan-

10 Đurđina Šijaković, "Shaping the pain: Ancient Greek lament and its therapeutic aspect", *Glasnik Etnografskog instituta SANU* 60/2 (2012), 139–154.

11 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On music and words*, ed. by Oscar Levy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), vol. 2, 27–48 and Friedrich Nietzsche, *The birth of tragedy*, ed. by Oscar Levy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), vol.1.

guage into which enter rhythm, harmony and song. By the ‘several kinds being found in separate parts’ I mean that some parts are rendered through medium of verse alone, others again with the aid of song.¹²

Historically, Armenia, situated on the crossroads of East and West, has witnessed numerous invasions and annihilations by neighboring Muslim countries and has lost most of its ancestral lands. Lamenting, in the form of *voghb* or *antuni*, is omnipresent in Armenian culture and has influenced every type of Armenian folk music. It is also closely tied to the style of religious chanting, with cries directed to divine powers. The church has absorbed secular laments into its *sharakan* (liturgical hymns) which in turn have influenced folk music. Both share similar qualities of speech and singing (chanting) together, a narrow vocal range, repetitiveness, sustaining a note for extended periods in a chant-like manner, and so on. The intonation of laments is born out of native conversational speech and poetic intonations. Laments, or *voghb* and *lalik*, are specific types of ritual songs representing an interesting category in itself. The opening lament of the poem *Anush* is similar in style to the Greek tragedies, where the chorus sets the mood in preparation for the tragedy that will ensue. The prologue’s opening with singing fairies – the mystical animation of nature in the form of spirits and the like – is also deeply rooted in ancient tragedy. The use of a chorus, especially one sung by mystical creatures such as nymphs, pursues a specific goal to announce the ensuing tragedy, combining the beliefs in supernatural and fateful occurrences. Especially relevant to Tumanian’s work are the ideals of Wagner’s *Gesamkunstwerk* and the unification of arts through theater drama. In his essay “Die Kunst und die Revolution,” (1849) Wagner uses the term *Gesamkunstwerk* in connection with Greek tragedies as works of art that are an expression of folk legends abstracted from nationalistic roots to become universal humanist fables¹³ – a fitting epithet for Tumanian’s *Anush*. Canto the Fifth is the poem’s most heartbreaking scene. The death of Saro becomes the climax of the tragedy and is painted by Tumanian in darkest colors. The scene of village people in the moment of grief envelops the reader. A sudden, shocking silence follows the screams and cries of the running crowd. Soulfully, the river Debed “sings” its muted lament alone:

Like the sudden surging of a deluge,
 Descended from the dark clouds in the sky,
 Like a tempest, impetuous and swift,

¹² Kenneth McLeish, *Aristotle* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 8.

¹³ Richard Wagner, *The art-work of the future, and other works*, transl. by William A. Ellis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 33–59.

A group of youth from the village sped forth.
 Inflamed by grief, they no longer questioned,
 And flew away as if pursued by fear:
 And before them opened out horribly
 The swishing valley filled with blood.
 The village emptied in but a moment
 And, impatiently waiting on the cliff edge,
 They listened silently, with throbbing hearts;
 They looked below...there was not a sound:
 The roused Debed alone in the precipice
 Glided downwards with a muted lament.

The lament of Saro's mother loosely fits what ethnomusicologists categorize as a funeral lament. It brings forth the heartbreaking wailings of a mother over the corpse of her son. The true force of the tragedy of the grieving mother is revealed as the poem grows darker in colors laden with cries and curses. Canto the Sixth shows Anush's madness through her songs. Anush's madness, along with laments of lost love and consequent suicide by drowning, parallels the fate of Shakespeare's Ophelia. Both works represent a universal depiction of tragedy – a trajectory of love, family betrayal, shame, abandonment, and death expressed in their songs. Anush's lament, in both content and mood is a combination of a funeral lament, an ode-like lament, and a lyrical love song. According to Armenian ethnomusicologists, all laments (sometimes also called *mahergs*, or dead-marches) share the same manner of free improvisation; they can change, shorten, elongate, and repeat the form of construction. Many lyrical love songs share the same improvisational and highly emotional forms of creation. Thus, the songs that are most emotional do not follow a specific restricted form but rather give the performer freedom of expression.

Anush's lament is her reaction of grief over the death of her beloved in the manner of a family member – something that was denied to her as Saro's death was blamed on her. Usually, the closest female family members, such as wives, mothers, and sisters, would use laments as a way to express their sorrow.¹⁴ The lament, in its deeply touching sadness, also is a love song for her beloved. Tumanian opens the poem with the love song of Saro toward Anush and closes it with a love song of Anush to Saro.

14 Margarita Brutian, *Hay zhoghovrdakan erazhshtakan steghcagorcutyun* (Armenian traditional music) (Erevan: Luys, 1971), vol. 1, 149.

RITUALS AND BELIEFS

National beliefs and values present in the rituals carry the historic memory of the nation. In turn, the rituals have the power to influence the behavior and beliefs of people, similar to the power of omens and signs. The poem does not present any specific time frame but celebrations such as Hambartsum and the winter village wedding give clear points of reference, becoming inseparable parts of the protagonists' fate. The events of the poem take place through the passing seasons and different celebrations in a swirl of events. Only the songs, whether the lyrical or the ritual type, present the storyline in a timeless manner, as many rituals and songs are ageless by their inherent ability to absorb generations of traditions and customs. Many Armenian traditions and rituals come from antiquity and many are remnants of paganism. As the people of the first nation to establish Christianity as a state religion, Armenians clung to their rituals, which found their way into Christian rites and traditions.¹⁵ Beliefs in fate, curses, and omens are omnipresent in the poem and show a vital part of societal functioning. Of all of these, the curse is the most feared. Anush recalls that as a child she was cursed to spend her life in tears. Fear of a curse is very strong among the people in the poem and Anush's fate becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. A cursed person is cursed by all, a situation Anush experiences many times throughout the poem.

Armenian wedding rituals are strictly observed as a means of protection from evil and bad luck. Other rituals, such as the elaborate order of lamenting for the dead and *kokh* (wrestling dance), were believed to influence future battles and even weather outcomes. Hambartsum's order of rites and rituals is believed to bring good luck in love and marriage; thus, the interpretation of dreams, signs, and many other methods emerged (in the poem the foretelling is also done by reading barley seeds). All these beliefs are reinforced by the events that seem to be a self-professed destiny, thus supporting society's firm faith in the importance of rituals. Most significantly, all such beliefs are strongly preserved in the musical elements of the rituals, which carry a major responsibility in bringing luck.

Episodes XII and XIII of Canto the Third depict a village wedding during the wintertime. In *Anush*, the description of the wedding scene is not long but it contains very clear images of traditional rituals. The tension is created by terse verses and language and rhythm that are different from the rest of the poem and are rather fast paced. Once again, we are wrapped in Tumanian's

15 Historically, the Armenian Church tried to limit pagan rituals which were seeping into Christian rites. The subject of fate prediction is frowned upon by the Church but it is firmly held in local beliefs.

timeless “time” by events that seem to happen in the blink of an eye in the long time frame of a wedding ceremony. The apogee of the tragedy is the breaking of an age-old tradition. During *kokh* (wrestling-dance), Saro, seeing Anush in the crowd, forgets the rules of the wrestling-dance and pushes Mosi (Anush’s brother) to the ground. Srbui Lisitsian, an expert in original Armenian dance forms, describes the ancient *kokh* as a hand-on-hand fight – a form of wrestling sometimes called *giulash kpnel*. It is an improvisational pantomime with moves dependent on choices made on the spur of the moment by both rivals. She further explains the rules:

Before the start of the “fight”, the wrestlers shake hands as a sign that the match should not be perceived as personal ill-will. Each one would circle his territory with some dance moves which contributes to a deeper meaning of a path that each warrior had taken before their “meeting”. Afterwards they would move towards each other, grab each other firmly at the waist and start the wrestling according to the strict rules. Music accompanied them at all times until one of them could force the opponent’s shoulder to touch the ground. It was also customary for the “opponents” to shake hands in a sign of good will and peace.¹⁶

A few words about the style of Armenian male circle dances may explain their value in society. The most typical circle dance involves arms chained into a tight interlock; the circle can open or close but the linked arms stay strong. The male dance has primarily a military origin and all the moves are connected to the imitation of a fight or battle scene. The linked arms symbolize the strength of the battle forts as well as ancient beliefs in mystical powers of cosmic circles. One example of battling male dances popular in Armenia is *berdi par* (Fortress dance); it always involves a figure of a closed circle as walls of a fortress (up to three groups) of men standing on each other’s shoulders. Thus, in *Anush*, a ritual becomes part of the downfall. As mentioned earlier, rituals were believed to carry the power to foretell and influence the future. In the minds of the people, breaking with their rules was believed to carry punishment. In the poem we read:

There was a custom in those dark valleys,
And, ever obedient to old customs,
No youth would set his fellow wrestler
To the ground before an assembled crowd.

¹⁶ Srbui Lisitsian, *Armjanskije starinnye pljaski* [Ancient Armenian dances] (Erevan: AH SSR, 1983), 67–68.