

Original article

УДК 398.224

DOI 10.25587/2782-4861-2026-1-54-66



TOWARDS THE GENERAL EPIC STRUCTURES OF THE ARMENIAN EPICS AND THE OSSETIC NART EPIC

Tork S. Dalalyan

Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Sciences of the RA, Yerevan, Armenia
e-mail: tork.dalalyan@iae.am

Abstract. The present article examines the epic structures in the ethno-genetic, pagan and medieval Armenian epics, as well as in the Ossetic Nart sagas. The purpose of this work is to explore the common folkloric and mythological features in the mentioned epic traditions of the region. The research is based on the published texts of the four mentioned epics. In some cases other folkloric and historical sources were also used. In our study we apply descriptive, comparative-historical, and constructive methods of analysis. The comparative study of these four epics reveals that a genealogical tree spanning five generations of heroes and narrative framework divided into four branches are present in all of them. The corresponding subsections of the article provide a mythological description of the main character(s) of each generation and his (their) epic embodiment in the said epics: ethno-genetic epic “Haykian” (the Haykids) [I], pagan epic “Ergk’ Vipasanac” (The sagas of epic-tellers) [II], medieval epic “Sasna Tsrer” (Daredevils of Sassoun) [III], and Nart epic [IV]. The main characters of these four epics are grouped under the following names: a) Thunderstorm proto-character, b) Twin brothers / triplets, c) Hero defending justice, d) Dragon-slayer protagonist, e) Dying-and-resurrecting hero. The first branches of each epic tradition include two main characters (a-b), while the other branches present respectively one main character (c, d, e). Thus the formulated conclusion is that these epics share the following four-branched structures: I. a-b) Hayk, Aramanyak-Aramayis, c) Amasia / Gelam / Harma, d) Aram, e) Ara Gelec’ik (Ara the Beautiful); II. a-b) Tsovinar, Tigran, c) Sanatruk, d) Artashes, e) Artawazd; III. a-b) Tsovinar, Sanasar-Baldasar, c) Great Mher, d) Davit, e) Little Mher; IV. a-b) Varkhag, Akhshar-Akhshartag, c) Wryzmag, d) Batradz, e) Soslan. Further research may reveal similar patterns in other epics of the region.

Keywords: epic; four-branched structure; thunderstorm proto-character; twins; triplets; “Mithraic” hero; main dragon-fighter hero; dying-and-resurrecting hero

Funding: This study was financially supported by the Higher Education and Science Committee of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports of the Republic of Armenia, under research project #21AG-6A080.

For citation: Dalalyan, T. S. Towards the general epic structures of the Armenian epics and the Ossetic Nart epic. *Eposovedenie*. 2026;1(41):54–66. <https://doi.org/10.25587/2782-4861-2026-1-54-66>

Научная статья

К вопросу об эпическом строении армянских эпосов и осетинского нартского эпоса

Т. С. Далалян

Институт археологии и этнографии Национальной академии наук РА, Ереван, Армения
e-mail: tork.dalalyan@iae.am

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются эпические структуры трех армянских эпосов: этногенетического, языческого и средневеково-христианского, а также осетинского «Нартского» эпоса. Эти фольклорные памятники получили свою окончательную форму в разные исторические эпохи. Цель данной

© Dalalyan, T. S., 2026

© Далалян Т. С., 2026

работы – исследовать общие фольклорные и мифологические особенности указанных эпических традиций региона. Исследование основано на опубликованных текстах четырех упомянутых эпосов. В некоторых случаях использовались также другие фольклорные и исторические источники. В нашем исследовании применяются описательные, сравнительно-исторические и конструктивные методы анализа. Сравнительное исследование данных эпосов показывает, что во всех них присутствуют генеалогическое древо, охватывающее пять поколений героев, и повествовательная структура, разделенная на четыре ветви. Соответствующие подразделы статьи содержат мифологическое описание главного героя (героев) каждого поколения и его (их) эпическое воплощение в указанных эпосах: в этногоническом эпосе «Хайкян» (Гайкиды) [I], в языческом эпосе «Эргк' Випасанац'» (Саги эпических рассказчиков) [II], в средневековом эпосе «Сасна црер» (Удальцы из Сасуна) [III] и в Нартском эпосе [IV]. Главные персонажи этих четырех эпосов сгруппированы под следующими именами: а) громовой прото-персонаж, б) братья-близнецы/тройняшки, в) герой, защищающий справедливость, г) главный герой-убийца драконов, д) умирающий и воскресающий герой. Первые ветви каждой эпической традиции включают двух персонажей героев (а-б), в то время как другие ветви представляют соответственно одного главного героя (в, г, д). Таким образом, сформулирован вывод о том, что во всех исследуемых эпосах существуют следующие четырехветвистые структуры: I. а-б) Айк, Араманык-Арамаис, в) Амасия/Гелам/Харма, г) Арам, д) Ара Гелецик (Ара Прекрасный); II. а-б) Цовинар, Тигран, в) Санатрук, г) Арташес, д) Артавазд; III. а-б) Цовинар, Санасар-Балдасар, в) Большой Мгер, г) Давид, д) Малый Мгер; IV. а-б) Вархаг, Ахшар-Ахшартаг, в) Вырызмаг, г) Батрадз, д) Сослан. Дальнейшие исследования могут выявить аналогичные закономерности и в других эпосах региона.

Ключевые слова: эпос; четырехветвенная структура; громовой прото-персонаж; близнецы; тройняшки; «митраический» герой; главный герой-драконоборец; умирающий-воскресающий герой

Финансирование: Данное исследование было профинансировано Комитетом по высшему образованию и науке Министерства образования, науки, культуры и спорта Республики Армения в рамках научно-исследовательского проекта № 21AG-6A080.

Для цитирования: Далалян Т. С. К вопросу об эпическом строении армянских эпосов и осетинского нартского эпоса. *Эпосоведение*. 2026;1(41):54–66. <https://doi.org/10.25587/2782-4861-2026-1-54-66>

Introduction

The folkloric monuments examined in this article took shape during different historical periods. The formation of the “*Haykian*” (the Haykids) epic was completed in the 9th–8th centuries BCE. The next, pagan epic “*Ergk' Vipsanac*” or “*Vipasank*” (The sagas of epic-tellers) emerged between the 2nd century BCE and the 1st century AD. The last Armenian, so-called “Christian” epic “*Sasna Tsrer*” (Daredevils of Sassoun) reached its final form mainly in the 9th–10th centuries AD. The core of the Ossetic “*Nart*” epic was formed during the middle ages, in 13th–14th centuries AD: however, the earliest storylines trace back to the Scythian pagan era, around the 8th–7th centuries BCE [1; 2].

Several researches have explored Armenian epics in recent years, aiming to synthesize and theorize the work of earlier folklorists and epic scholars who addressed this subject [3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8]. In comparative researches on mythology and epic studies, among other topics specific narrative schemes characteristics of the epics of our region, have also been particularly attempted to be identified by A. Petrosyan [9, p. 29–33, 74–76; 10, p. 124–131]. These attempts, however, led to other conclusions that differ from the scheme we formulated, and in addition, their author later seems to have abandoned them and proposed a simpler division (see below).

Apparently, the proposed epic schemes could also apply to Caucasian epics, especially the Ossetic “*Nart*” epic, which has been extensively researched. In an early research we examined the “*Daredevils of Sassoun*” alongside the Ossetic “*Nart*” epic, aiming to outline shared features, including certain narrative structures [11]. Later, we expanded this comparison to include the epic scheme of “*The Sagas of Epic-Tellers*” as well [12, p. 43–44]. The general conclusion is that Armenian and Ossetic epic thinking share following family trees for their main heroes: а) Thunderous proto-character, appearing as a forefather or foremother, who is according to ancient mythological perception personification of

thunderstorm; b) His/her children – thunderous twin or triplet brothers, appearing as cultural heroes, who establish a family house; c) First Mithraic hero who defends justice and fights for it; d) Main dragon-fighter hero, who plays a central role in the epic, killing the general dragonish character; e) Second Mithraic hero, who fights for justice but can not reach it, appearing as a dying-and-resurrecting character or a hero imprisoned in the rock. In a roughly similar manner, S. Harutyunyan identified four main myths in *“Daredevils of Sassoun”*: a) Twins’ myth; b) Myth of thunderstorm hero–dragon-fighter; c) Myth of the god Mithra-Mihr; d) Astro-solar myth [13, p. 9]. However, he sees echoes of these four myths simultaneously in different branches of the Armenian Medieval epic, and therefore, in this case, it is not about an epic scheme present in folkloric monumental works.

Most likely, the five-part epic structure proposed by us evolved from an earlier and simpler mythological triad, consisting of: a) Ancient sky god; b) Twin dragon-fighter heroes; c) a Dying-and-resurrecting hero: these three epic generations are discussed by A. Petrosyan [10, p. 124–129], who later applied this structure to all Armenian epics, as well as to Ossetic epic [14, p. 16–19; 15, p. 48–51]. However, we think that in classic versions of three Armenian epics and in Ossetic epic the five-part epic structure is evident.

Peculiarities of the epics

Notably, the figure of the “dying-and-resurrecting” hero marks the conclusion of the main narratives in the *“Haykian”*, *“The sagas of epic-tellers”*, and *“Daredevils of Sassoun”* epics, as well as in the Ossetic *“Nart”* epic [7, p. 418; 10, p. 130–131]. However, some storytellers have reported that the *“Daredevils of Sassoun”* continued beyond the branch of Little Mher, claiming the epic originally included seven or even forty branches, which took place between the era of the twins and that of Great Mher [16, p. 61–63]. Consequently, the number of main heroes in the epic would also have matched this expanded structure. It is important to note that such multi-branched compositions are more characteristic of strongly historical epics and particularly of ethnogonic sagas. In such genealogical series—especially in literary or historicized versions of epics—the number of heroic generations tends to be greater. Still, epic thinking usually highlights the five-part structure through vivid and distinct characters. Sometimes, these distinct epic heroes may also embody a fusion of several historical individuals’ deeds and traits, compressed into a single symbolic hero.

For example, in Movsēs Xorenac‘i’s historical narrative of the *“Haykian”* epic, ten generations of heroes are listed. Among them the thunderstorm proto-character Hayk stands out, followed by the presumed “twin” pair Aramanyak and Aramayis [27, p. 52]. Then heroes such as Amasia, Gelam, or Harma, who may be considered Mithraic figures. The dragon-slayer protagonist is Aram, followed by his son Ara the Beautiful, a “dying-and-resurrecting” figure. The segments of the *“Haykian”* epic found in the writings of historians Mar Abas Katina (Mār Awā Qaṭṭīnā, 2nd century BC) and Movsēs Xorenac‘i (5th century) were transmitted solely through literary means after the 5th century. Today, it is difficult to determine exactly when these narratives were first recorded, how long they were orally passed down among the people, what literary forms and techniques were used to compose them, how the heroes’ characters were grouped and condensed, and how many main branches the folk version of the epic had. It is noteworthy, however, that regarding the narratives about Aram the hero, one of the Haykian descendants, Xorenac‘i mentions that the accounts of Aram’s heroic deeds were drawn from popular bards’ songs of and were later deposited in the royal archives of Nisibis, from where Mar Abas made use of them [17, p. 27–28]. Based on philological analysis of Xorenac‘i’s passage, M. Abeghyan suggests that this story in other words the once sung epic poem included the heroic deeds of all the figures from Hayk to Aram [18, p. 267–270]. However, it was transmitted in the words of Xorenac‘i, in prose.

The picture is significantly different in the case of *“The sagas of epic-tellers”* (*“Ergk‘ Vipasanac‘”* or *“Vipasank‘”*). This is the oldest recorded Armenian mythological epic, as it contains complete poetic fragments preserved from the original epic tradition. These fragments almost directly reflect the popular character of certain tales from that era. As H. Acharian notes based on lexical analysis, the language of the transmitted passages aligns with the speech of folk singers and differs greatly from

Xorenac'i's "post-5th-century" language [19, p. 70–71]. G. Jahukyan expends on this idea by examining the morphological and syntactic features of *"The sagas of epic-tellers"* [20, p. 368–370]. This pagan Armenian epic is divided into following four branches: 1. Tsovinar and her triplets, the youngest of whom is Tigran, 2. Sanatruk, 3. Artashes, 4. Artawazd [12, p. 34–40]. Although the twins Yervand and Yervaz precede Artashes, they are not part of the main heroic lineage. Moreover, their stories lack epic action and are mostly limited to historical information. Finally, they appear as adversaries of the main dragon-fighter hero.

In later-recorded epics such as Armenian *"Daredevils of Sassoun"* and the Ossetic *"Nart"* epic, the five generation genealogical tree has crystallized clearly. Notably, the thunderstormy primordial figure does not appear as a separate branch but altogether with the twin brothers in the very first branch. As a result, both epics share a similar four-branch structure. In *"Daredevils of Sassoun"*: 1. Tsovinar, Sanasar and Baldasar, 2. Great Mher, 3. Davit, 4. Little Mher. In the *"Nart"* epic: 1. Warkhag, Akhshar and Akhshartag, 2. Vyryzmag (with Shatana), 3. Batradz, 4. Soslan / Sozrykho [11, p. 83]. Despite their internal semantic differences, these four successive branches form a coherent and logical chain that reflects the stages of social development in their respective communities. These stages have been characterized by the following sequential labels: 1. birth-creation-divinity, 2. establishment-consolidation-authority, 3. defense-heroism-empowerment, 4. decline-departure-eternal life [6, p. 77–79; 8, p. 325].

Regarding the Ossetic epic, it is important to note that in addition to the four main branches, there are several shorter secondary ones—such as those centered around the heroes Syrdon and Atsamaz as well as numerous independent tales about standalone heroes. These tales either fall entirely outside the core structure of the *"Nart"* epic or relate to it only marginally. Moreover, since Soslan—the hero "born from stone"—was considered the son of Shatana, and since the episodes and narratives surrounding him are the most numerous, his branch is placed before Batradz's in the composite version of the Ossetic epic. As a result, in scholarly literature the four branches of the Ossetic epic are often mentioned in slightly altered order [2, p. 15–16].

Thunderstorm proto-character

Epic narratives typically begin with a primordial proto-character who becomes the progenitor or ancestress of the heroic epic. This figure is generally the most mythic and archaic hero of the epic. Often, the proto-character is associated with a totem animal. In the *"Daredevils of Sassoun"*, the proto-character is Tsovinar: based on comparative folklore and ethnographic materials, her symbolic animal in ancient times have been the cow—believed in folk tradition to bellow from the crimson Purple Sea during a thunderstorm [12, p. 22–24]. The motif of red cow is also quite widespread in Armenian folktales, where this mythical creature act as a protector of persecuted children [21] (cf. the narrative motif in several versions of the *"Daredevils of Sassoun"*, featuring twin brothers pursued by Caliph of Baghdad).

A comparative analysis concludes that in the most ancient version of *"The sagas of epic-tellers"*, the thunderstormy proto-character was also Tsovinar. The figure that follows her, however, is not a pair of twins but a trio of brothers. In this respect, one can distinguish an ancient substratum in *"The sagas of epic-tellers"*, which appears semi-concealed in the version that has reached us. That is to say, in Xorenac'i's historical account, the ancient myth of Tsovinar giving birth to triplet brothers is placed in the middle of the epic, appearing as a dream of Azhdahak [12, p. 24–26, 44]. However, if the causal and chronological order of events were to be restored, this myth would logically belong at the very beginning of the epic. Accordingly, the first branch of *"The sagas of epic-tellers"* could quite rightly be titled "Tsovinar and the Triplets," the youngest and mightiest of whom is Tigran. His adversary, Azhdahak, is the very one who recounts the mythic episode of Tigran's birth in the form of a dream within Xorenac'i's narration [17, p. 40–41].

In the Ossetic epic, the progenitor of the hero-warriors – the Narts – is named Warkhag (*Værxæz*), who is considered the father of the twin brothers, founders of the epic family house. Based on

comparative mythology and linguistic etymology, V. Abaev concluded that the name of Warkhag derived from the Scythian *varka-, meaning ‘wolf’ [22, p. 321, 328–329, 336; 23 p. 305, 313, 319]. Based on this scholarly reconstruction, he posited that the central heroes of the first branch of the “Nart” epic—the twin brothers—have a totemic origin and that their father is, essentially, a wolf or a deity bearing a wolf symbol. Nonetheless, in the preserved narratives of the Ossetic epic, there is no surviving totemic myth regarding Warkhag, apart from a possible onomastic hint in his name.

According to another hypothesis, the name Warkhag (*Værxæz*) may derive from the Old Iranian root *vah(r)- / va(r)h-, meaning ‘wind’ or ‘storm’ (Avestan *vərəθra-* / *vārəθra-* meaning ‘obstructive’ or ‘barrier-forming’) [24]. Warkhag’s first wife was Sainagon, the daughter of the god of rocks (her name means ‘rocky’), and his second wife was Dzerasa, the daughter of the sea god, who appears in different versions of the Ossetic epic in various zoomorphic forms: fish-like, dove-like, and deer-like. Comparative mythology suggests that Warkhag embodies elemental forces of nature in Ossetic mythology—particularly wind and storm. In the first branch of the Nart epic, Warkhag is depicted as a force of destruction: he abducts and drives off the Narts’ large-horned herds, drowns them in the sea, or throws them from towering cliffs [25]. The mythic couple “Warkhag – Sainagon/Dzerasa” thus seems functionally parallel to the “Caliph of Baghdad – Tsovinar” pair in the “*Daredevils of Sassoun*”, and we see the latter figure also in the ancient version of “*The sagas of epic-tellers*”.

As for the epic of “*Haykian*”, its historicized version contains no portrayals of positive female characters, with the sole exception of a brief mention of Nouard. Consequently, we can only speculate to who the true thunderstorm-associated proto-character a might have been in the original, unadulterated folk version of the epic that has not survived. This absence suggests that the epic underwent a process of rationalization and masculinization, likely influenced by historiographical or ideological motives, which led to the marginalization—or complete omission—of primordial feminine figures, including a possible thunderstorm-associated mother-goddess.

Twin/Triplet Brothers

In the “*Daredevils of Sassoun*”, the thunderstorm-associated proto-character Tsovinar gives birth to twin brothers through supernatural conception. The elder of the two is also the more powerful, and becomes the eponymous forefather of the house of Sassoun [26]. Comparative folklore studies indicate that in the earlier-recorded “*The sagas of epic-tellers*”, Tsovinar—or a goddess identified with her—gives birth to triplets atop a mountain peak, and in this case, the youngest brother is the most powerful [17, p. 40–41]. Essentially, in the extant version of “*The sagas of epic-tellers*”, the only narrative related to the triplets is the scene of their birth. The rest of the story centers solely on the third brother, Tigran, who, together with his sister Tigranuhi and his adversary Azhdahak, forms the main heroic triangle of this epic branch. No tales involving the other two triplet brothers have survived.

In the Ossetic epic as well, the younger of the twin brothers—Akhshartag (*Æxcæpmæz*)—is portrayed as more powerful than Akhshar (*Æxcæp*), just as in “*The sagas of epic-tellers*” Tigran is the youngest and most powerful of the triplets. However, a comparative analysis of the plots of the epics “Nart” and “*Daredevils of Sassoun*” reveals that the younger twin, Akhshartag, in the Ossetic epic corresponds to the older twin, Sanasar, in the Armenian epic, and Akhshar corresponds to Baldasar. Across most of the five key story motifs below (except plot b.), the indicated similarity is clearly visible:

a) In both epics, the twin brothers are primarily hunters. In the Armenian epic, the twins reach the sea while hunting, where Sanasar descends to the bottom while Baghdasar waits ashore. Similarly, in the Ossetian version, the twins follow the blood trail of a wounded bird to the sea; Akhshartag dives beneath the surface, while Akhshar remains on the shore.

b) Both sets of twins have a strong mythological connection to the water element. One brother receives his powers and weapons from beneath the sea. However, while this is more powerful brother Sanasar in the “*Daredevils of Sassoun*”, in the “Nart” epic, it is less powerful brother Akhshar.

c) The underwater milky spring or the milky lake greatly enhances Sanasar’s strength and even revives the fallen in battle Akhshartag.

d) In both epics, the stronger brother descends into the underworld—or a space symbolically linked to it—to rescue the other from captivity.

e) The twins duel each other over a beautiful girl: in the *“Daredevils of Sassoun”*, it is Deldzun Tsam (Peach-Tressed), while in the *“Nart”* epic, it is a sea-maiden. In the Armenian version, Baldasar is wounded in the duel, while Sanasar believes him was dead. In some Ossetic versions, one brother dies and the surviving brother, empowered by the sea, marries the sea-maiden; in others, both perish.

In the *“Haykian”* epic, Aramanyak and his son Aramayis are considered to function as a twin-like pair. It is quite plausible that in the original folk version of the epic, they appeared as twin brothers—founders and eponyms of the city of Armavir—much like Sanasar and Baghdasar are presented as the founders and eponyms of the fortress city of Sassoun (Sanasoun) [27, p. 52]. While no city-founding legend survives concerning Akhshar and Akhshartag, their classical analogs Romulus and Remus in Latin tradition are said to have founded the city of Rome, thus preserving the same structural motif [22, p. 317–337; 23, p. 302–325].

The Justice-Bringing Hero

The second branch of epic narratives is typically centered around a hero who upholds justice and restores order. This hero is usually the son of the powerful twin introduced in the first branch. He is often the first Mithraic hero – defined primarily by his commitment to justice, truth, and societal harmony.

In the *“Daredevils of Sassoun”*, this figure is Great Mher or Mher the Leonine, whom I. Orbeli described as “the most perfect of all heroes, whose very name reveals his cosmic essence” [28, p. 114]. Mher is the spiritual heir to the pre-Christian deity Mithra (Armenian Mihr), whose cult extended from India to the Roman Empire, with Armenia serving as one of its key centers [28, p. 114–116; 29, p. 306–309].

The lion-slaying motif is one of the central attributes of the pagan god Mithra, which strongly supports the argument that Great Mher is an autonomous and original figure within the epic of *“Daredevils of Sassoun”*. Great Mher stands out as a solitary champion of justice: he battles the lion barehanded and – unlike other heroes in the epic – is the only one to form a pact with his adversary, directly echoing the Indo-Iranian god Mithra’s name (literally ‘alliance’, ‘pact’) and his core function as the deity of covenants [30, p. 99]. Mher’s act of slaying the lion (a symbol of royal power) while simultaneously embodying that very power aligns him with Mithraic iconography, particularly Roman reliefs where Mithras is depicted with a lion’s head on a human body – a fusion of dominance and divine sovereignty. In Christian Armenia, Mihr’s characteristics were absorbed and reinterpreted [13, p. 13]: Christian spiritual hymns often apply the epithet “the Sun of Righteousness” – originally used for Mihr – to Christ, continuing the symbolic thread of cosmic justice [31, p. 160].

In the *“The sagas of epic-tellers”* the second main character after Tigran is Sanatruk, who seeks justice and aims to restore the unity of the Armenian Kingdom, which has been split in two [17, p. 89-90]. In a previous research, drawing on insights from comparative mythology and linguistics, we proposed that Sanatruk’s character may have originally been connected to the worship of Mithra-Mihr. Just as the figure of Mihr in the *“Daredevils of Sassoun”* is split between two heroes – Great Mher and Little Mher – Sanatruk in the *“The sagas of epic-tellers”* serves as the forerunner to his grandson, Artawazd [32, p. 67–68].

According to A. Perikhanian, Sanatruk may have originally epitomized the solar deity Khvara or Mithra-Mihr. One of the most plausible etymologies of the name Sanatruk is the compound sāt-an-ruk, which likely meant ‘the one who raises the light’ or ‘rising light’, similar to the Sogdian compound xvar-ā-sān, which means ‘sunrise’ [33, p. 81–82].

Thus, in pairs “Sanatruk – Artawazd” and “Great Mher – Little Mher,” the first figure symbolizes dawn and the sun’s ascent, while the second represents sunset. I. Orbeli described this duality in the *“Daredevils of Sassoun”* concerning the split of Mher character: “The first is the grandfather figure, reflecting the traits of the rising sun radiant and life-giving while the second is the grandson, embodying the traits of the weary, setting sun” [28, p. 115].

In the Ossetic “*Nart*” epic, the hero upholding justice is Wryzmag (Урызмæг). He finds his grandfather, who has been ignored and rejected by the Narts and brings him back into their community. Wryzmag consistently leads the Narts’ advisory council, the *Nækhas*, and presides over feasts as the table master. He battles a one-eyed giant, rides an eagle to the underworld, and performs other heroic feats [25, p. 45–85].

In the “*Haykian*” epic, the figures who might have served as justice-bringers could include Amasia, Gelam, or Harma. However, apart from the etymology of their names and reconstructions based on toponyms and topographical legends, we have no preserved epic tales or detailed narratives about them.

Main Dragon-Fighter Hero

This hero is a central figure whose duel with a dragon-like adversary forms the core narrative conflict of the epic, symbolizing the clash between “us” and “the other”. In the “*Daredevils of Sassoun*”, this takes the form of Christians versus pagans; in the “*The sagas of epic-tellers*”, it is Armenians versus the draconic Medes. As I. Orbeli aptly notes, this third-generation hero is the epic’s central figure, and his feats dominate and define the story. In the epic “*Daredevils of Sassoun*”, Davit possesses character traits that are shared by both his forefathers – his grandfather and father and his son [28, p. 71–72]. S. Harutyunyan, through a detailed analysis of the related episodes, clearly shows that the conflict between Davit and Mesra Melik has a mythological dragon-fighter character: Davit appears as the archetypal mythic dragon-fighter, while Msra Melik plays the role of the dragon. While Harutyunyan also identifies dragon-fighting elements in episodes involving Sanasar and Great Mher, he rightly emphasizes that the purest and most vivid expression of the dragon-fighter theme appears in the third branch of the epic—in the opposition between Davit and Msra Melik [34, p. 76–80, 83; 13, p. 11–12; cf. also 35]. This branch is by far the most widespread and was told by nearly all narrators, unlike the other branches, which were sometimes omitted. All the epic’s traditional themes and motifs converge around Davit [16, p. 133].

In the “*The sagas of epic-tellers*”, Artashes is the archetypal dragon-fighter hero, although the conflict with the dragon-blooded foes begins earlier with the most powerful of the triplet brothers—Tigran—just as in the “*Daredevils of Sassoun*”, it is Sanasar, the stronger of the twin brothers, who first takes up the fight against dragons. Later this war continued by Great Mher and Davit. In the “*The sagas of epic-tellers*”, Artashes leads military campaigns in various directions, defeats the evil-eyed Yervand and his brother Yervaz, wages war against the king of the Alans, captures his son, marries his daughter Satenik, and slays many of his enemies, descendants of the dragons. According to Xorenac’i, much of these events was sung by the singers of Goltn [17, p. 99–100]. In the historical narrative of the Epic, although Artashes is not the direct successor of Sanatruk their dynastic connection and line of succession are revealed in the episode where, following the defeat of Yervand Smbat discovers Sanatruk’s crown in the royal treasury and crowns Artashes as the King of Greater Armenia [17, p. 98].

In the Ossetic epic, the dragon-slayer protagonist is Batradz. Although he is not the son of the justice-bringing hero Wryzmag – unlike Davit, who is the son of Great Mher, or Artashes, who descends from Sanatruk – Batradz is considered the son of Wryzmag’s twin brother, Khamyts. Nonetheless, the resemblance between Davit and Batradz is striking, a similarity noted by scholars researching the Armenian and the Ossetic epic traditions [14, p. 19, 22]. As for the “*Haykian*” epic, the central dragon-fighter hero is unequivocally Aram. He launches campaigns in three directions and expands the borders of the Armenian homeland, asserting his role as the primary warrior against foreign and monstrous threats [cf. 17, p. 26–28].

Dying-and-resurrecting Hero Imprisoned in the Rock

This hero can be called the second “Mithraic” figure – present vividly in all Armenian epics and serving as their concluding character. Although imprisoned or sealed away, he remains alive, thus becoming the “eternally living” hero who symbolizes the continuity of life and the cyclical nature of history. In the “*Haykian*” epic, this figure is Ara the Beautiful; in the “*The sagas of epic-tellers*”,

it is Artawazd; and in the *“Daredevils of Sassoun”*, it is Little Mher. Ara is the son of Aram, the chief dragon-fighter hero in the *“Haykian”* cycle. Similarly, Artawazd is the son of Artashes in the *“The sagas of epic-tellers”* and Little Mher is Davit’s son in the *“Daredevils of Sassoun”*.

Notably, the *“The sagas of epic-tellers”* presents Artawazd as a deeply dualistic and contradictory character—unlike Little Mher, and especially unlike Ara. Some epic versions even refer to two distinct Artawazds: one perceived as the son of Artashes, the other possibly the child of Argawan, as Satenik was said to have betrayed Artashes with Argavan. Similarly, the Ossetian Soslan had his negative counterpart legends—Syrdon who persistently sought to obstruct and harm him. There also existed two Shatanas, one belonging to demons and the other to the Narts [36, p. 202–203, 209].

According to the Epic narration, Artawazd while hunting boars and onagers near the springs of Gina at the foot of Mount Masis (Ararat) becomes delirious—struck by certain vision—loses his senses and falls into a deep chasm, where he is imprisoned and chained by mythical beings known as *k’adj-k’* (demons). Thus the curse of Artashes is fulfilled: a curse he had placed upon Artawazd either on his deathbed or according to some interpretations after his death [17, p. 110]. As we see, Artawazd’s figure combines the two defining traits of the “hero bound within the rock”: the patricidal act (father-slaying) and the destructive dragonhood [37, p. 15]. Many scholars have pointed out the duality in Artawazd’s character as well as the myth’s association with the end of a particular chronological or ritual cycle. The possibility of Artawazd emerging from the chasm of Masis was traditionally linked to the New Year—either on the eve of the first month, Nawasard, or its first day. In Movsēs Xorenac‘i’s version the annual ritual cycle is replaced by a seven day or weekly cycle moreover, in the mythological episodes associated with Little Mher, who is confined within the rock, the notion of the ancient annual cycle is preserved in the form of a relic cultural element [38, p. 12, 17].

If in *“The sagas of epic-tellers”*, Artawazd is the son of Satenik, similarly, in the Ossetic epic, Soslan is the son of Shatana, born through a “miraculous conception” and ultimately emerging from a stone [36, p. 209; 39, p. 49–51]. Like the mythological Mihr, Soslan is a classic “stone-born” hero. He unsuccessfully tries to marry Atsyrukhs, the daughter of the Sun and embarks on a long journey to the underworld to retrieve the leaves of the Aza tree to reach her [25, p. 86–187]. During his quest, the spirits (*k’adj*) kill Soslan’s horse with arrows, and Soslan dies from a “solar disk.” In another Ossetic tale, Soslan (also called Sozryko) is captured by the *k’adj*-s while hunting and nailed to a wall [cf. 36, p. 209; 39, p. 51–52]. These stories parallel *“The sagas of epic-tellers”*, where the *k’adj*-s oppose Artawazd, and the “Haykian” epic in which Anushavan Sosanouer, considered the son of Ara the Beautiful, makes prophecies using the leaves of poplar trees. These sacred poplars grew in Armawir, in the land of Aza known from cuneiform sources [cf. 17, p. 35–36; 40, p. 13].

The “solar disk” in Soslan’s tales closely resembles the “Wheel of Fortune” in the legend of Little Mher, symbolizing inevitable fate. Notably also that the horse plays a pivotal role in the death scenes of Soslan, Little Mher, and Artawazd across all mentioned traditions.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the five-generation lineage of heroic figures and the corresponding four-branched narrative structure are characteristic of both Armenian and Ossetic epics. However, this similarity does not necessarily—and in all cases—have to be explained by ethnic kinship or a shared genealogical origin. In general, epic structures emerge from mythological worldviews and, to some extent, from the templates of artistic thinking that derive from them. These templates may reflect the universal workings of the human mind, regardless of a specific region.

For example, some scholars believe that the four-branched epic structure was widespread in ancient times across a much broader area. As evidence, they cite the analysis of character systems in Homer’s *Odyssey*, which reveals a four-generation structure [8, p. 323–324]. This idea reinforces the understanding that myth and myth-based storytelling form the foundation of epic and later-developed artistic thought. Moreover, the deeper the roots of a given epic reach into antiquity, the more pronounced the influence of mythology becomes [41, p. 125].

Литература

1. Աբեղյան Մ.Խ. Հայ վիպական բանահյուսություն: Երկեր, հատոր Ա: Երևան. ՀՍՍՀ ԳԱ հրատ.; 1966. 572 (на армянском яз.).
2. Абаев В.И. *Нартовский эпос осетин*. В кн.: Хамицаева Т.А., Бязыров А.Х. (сост.), Том 1; 1990: 7–76.
3. Հարությունյան Ս.Բ. Բանագիտական ակնարկներ: Երևան. ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատ.; 2010. 263 (на армянском яз.).
4. Դալայան Ս.Ս. «Վիպասանք» ժողովրդական դիցավեպի ավանդման եղանակները: «Էջմիածին». կրօնագիտական եւ հայագիտական հանդես. 2015;10:58–65 (на армянском яз.).
5. Դալայան Ս.Ս. «Սասնա ծռեր»-ը և հայկական մյուս էպոսները: Հայաստանը՝ ծանոթ և անծանոթ. հանրագիտարան, խմբ. Մ. Դիլանյան, Վահան սարկավազ Սահակյան: Երևան. «Արեգ»; 2018. 134–135 (на армянском яз.).
6. Համբարձումյան Հ.Ա. «Սասնա ծռեր». պատում, մոտիվ, գրքային ավանդույթ, խմբ. Ս.Բ. Հարությունյան: Երևան. ԵՊՀ հրատ.; 2018. 320 (на армянском яз.).
7. Պետրոսյան Ա.Ե. Հայ ժողովրդական հերոսական էպոսը: Հնագիտության և ազգագրության ինստիտուտի աշխատություններ: հատոր 1. Հայ ժողովրդական մշակույթ XVII. ավանդականը և արդիականը հայոց մշակույթում: Երևան. ՀԱԲ հրատ.; 2018. 414–425 (на армянском яз.).
8. Համբարձումյան Հ.Ա. «Սասնա ծռեր» էպոսի կառուցվածքային համակարգի ձևավորումը. առասպելական սխեմաներ, թե՞ գրական ավանդույթ: Գրականագիտական հանդես. 2020;20/1:312–326 (на армянском яз.).
9. Պետրոսյան Ա.Ե. Հայկական էպոսի հնագույն ակունքները: Երևան. «Վան արյան»; 1997. 96 (на армянском яз.).
10. Петросян А.Е. *Армянский эпос и мифология: истоки, миф и история*. Ереван: Институт археологии и этнографии НАН РА; 2002:239.
11. Դալայան Ս.Ս. «Սասնա ծռերի» և օսական «Նարթյան դիցավեպի» համեմատական քննության ուրվագծեր: Հայկական «Սասնա ծռեր» էպոսը և համաշխարհային էպիկական ժառանգությունը. միջազգային գիտաժողովի զեկուցումներ, խմբ. Ա.Կ. Եղիազարյան և այլք: Երևան. ՀՀ ԳԱԱ Մ. Աբեղյանի անվան գրականության ինստիտուտ, Հնագիտության և ազգագրության ինստիտուտ; 2004. 82–87 (на армянском яз.).
12. Դալայան Ս.Ս. «Վիպասանք» էպոսի առաջին ճյուղը և ամպրոպային դիցազնատոհմի ծագումը: Շնորհի ի վերուստ. առասպել, ծես, իրականություն. հոդվածների ժողովածու՝ նվիրված Սարգիս Հարությունյանի 80-ամյակին, խմբ. Ա.Ե. Պետրոսյան: Երևան. ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատ.; 2008. 19–50 (на армянском яз.).
13. Հարությունյան Ս.Բ. «Սասնա ծռեր» հերոսավեպի առասպելաբանական հիմքերը: Հայկական «Սասնա ծռեր» էպոսը և համաշխարհային էպիկական ժառանգությունը. միջազգային գիտաժողովի զեկուցումներ, խմբ. Ա.Կ. Եղիազարյան և այլք: Երևան. ՀՀ ԳԱԱ Մ. Աբեղյանի անվան գրականության ինստիտուտ, Հնագիտության և ազգագրության ինստիտուտ; 2004. 9–16 (на армянском яз.).
14. Պետրոսյան Ա.Ե. Հայկական և հյուսիսկովկասյան նարթական էպոսների հարաբերությունը: Հայկական էպոսը և համաշխարհային էպիկական ժառանգությունը, խմբ. Ա.Ե. Պետրոսյան, Ա.Կ. Եղիազարյան: Երևան. ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատ.; 2012. 8–51 (на армянском яз.).
15. Петросян А.Е. Структурные связи армянских и осетинского эпосов. В кн.: *Армянский эпос и всемирное эпическое наследие*, ред. А.Е. Петросян. Ереван: Издательство «Гитутюн» НАН РА; 2014: 47–53.
16. Սահակյան Ա.Շ. «Սասնա ծռերի» պատումների քննական համեմատություն: Երևան. ՀՍՍՀ ԳԱ հրատ.; 1975: 191 (на армянском яз.).
17. Мовсес Хоренаци. *История Армении*, перевод с древнеармянского языка, введение и примечания Г.Х. Саркисяна. Ереван: Аястан; 1990: 293.
18. Աբեղյան Մ.Խ. Հայ ժողովրդական առասպելները Մ. Խորենացու Հայոց պատմության մեջ: Երկեր, հատոր Ը: Երևան. ՀՍՍՀ ԳԱ հրատ.; 1985: 66–272 (на армянском яз.).
19. Աճառյան Հ.Հ. Վիպասանական հայերեն: Հայոց լեզվի պատմություն, II մաս: Երևան. Հայպետհրատ; 1951: 65–75 (на армянском яз.).
20. Զահուկյան Գ.Բ. Ստանդարտ լեզու և բարբառներ. Վիպասանական հայերեն: Հայոց լեզվի պատմություն. նախագրային ժամանակաշրջան: Երևան. ՀՍՍՀ ԳԱ հրատ.; 1987: 364–371 (на армянском яз.).

21. Հայրապետյան Թ.Լ. Կարմիր կովի մոտիվը հայկական հրաշապատում հեքիաթներում: Պատմաբանասիրական հանդես. 2010;3(185):228–241 (на армянском яз.).
22. Абаев В.И. Опыт сравнительного анализа легенд о происхождении нартвов и римлян. В кн.: *Памяти академика Н. Я. Марра*, отв. ред. И.И. Мещанинов. Москва–Ленинград: Изд. АН СССР; 1938: 317–337.
23. Абаев В.И. *Избранные труды. Религия, фольклор, литература*, отв. ред. и составитель В.М. Гусалов. Владикавказ: Ир; 1990: 640.
24. Դալայան Տ.Ս. Օսական Wærxæg-ի և հայկական Վահագնի մասին: Հայ ժողովրդական մշակույթ XII. հանրապետական գիտաժողովի նյութեր, Մեսրոպ արք. Աշխանի հիշատակին, խմբ. Ս.Բ. Հարությունյան, Դ.Ս. Վարդումյան: ՀՀ ԳԱԱ ՀԱԻ: Երևան. Մուղնի; 2004: 37–39 (на армянском яз.).
25. Хамицаева Т.А., Бязыров А.Х. (сост.) *Нартæ: Ирон адамы героикон эпос / Нарты: осетинский героический эпос*, автор вступительной статьи и научный консультант В.И. Абаев. Том 1-2. Москва: Главная редакция восточной литературы издательства «Наука»; 1990: 431 и 1989: 492 (на осетинском и русском яз.).
26. Мелик-Оганджян К.А. (ред.) *Армянский народный эпос Сасунские удалцы: избранные варианты*, перевод текстов, составление и словарь-комментарии академика К.А. Мелик-Оганджяна. Ереван: Ван Арьян; 2004: 347 (на армянском языке).
27. Պետրոսյան Ա.Ե. Նոր քաղաքի հիմնման առասպելը հնդեվրոպական վիպական ավանդության մեջ: Էպոս, ինքնություն և մշակույթ. «Սասնա ծռեր» էպոսի ուսումնասիրության 150-ամյակին նվիրված միջազգային էպոսագիտական 6-րդ գիտաժողովի ամփոփագրերի ժողովածու, խմբ. Տ.Ս. Դալայան: Երևան. ՀԱԻ հրատ.; 2024: 51–53 (на армянском яз.).
28. Օրբելի Հ.Ա. Հայկական հերոսական էպոսը: Երևան. ՀՍՍՌ ԳԱ հրատ.; 1956: 139 (на армянском яз.).
29. Մելիք-Օհանջանյան Կ.Ա. Միթրա-Միհրի արքանյակներն ու գործակալները: Գրական-բանասիրական հետախուզումներ (Մանուկ Աբեղյանի հիշատակին), գիրք 1, խմբ. Խ. Սարգսյան: Երևան. ՀՍՍՌ ԳԱ հրատ.; 1946: 269–327 (на армянском яз.).
30. Համբարձումյան Հ.Ա. Փոքր Միեր. գենեզիս և տիպաբանություն: Գրականագիտական հանդես. 2006;1:89–100 (на армянском яз.).
31. Арутюнян С.Б. Михр. В кн.: *Мифы народов мира*. Гл. ред. С.А. Токарев. Том 2. Москва: Советская энциклопедия; 1992: 160.
32. Դալայան Տ.Ս. Հայոց «Վիպասանք» էպոսում Սանատրուկի կերպարը և նրա դիցաբանական զուգահեռները: Հայկական էպոսը և համաշխարհային էպիկական ժառանգությունը, խմբ. Ա.Ե. Պետրոսյան, Ա.Կ. Եղիազարյան: Երևան. ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատ.; 2012: 65–71 (на армянском яз.).
33. Периханян А.Г. *Материалы к этимологическому словарю древнеармянского языка*. Ереван: Издательство Национальной Академии РА; 1993: 142.
34. Հարությունյան Ս.Բ. Վիշապամարտը «Սասնա ծռեր»-ում: ՀԽՍՀ ԳԱ Լրաբեր հասարակական գիտությունների. 1981;11(467):65–85 (на армянском яз.).
35. Абрамян Л.А. Убийство Мсра Мелика в ритуально-мифологическом контексте. В кн.: *Армянский эпос и всемирное эпическое наследие*, ред. А. Е. Петросян, А. К. Егиазарян. Ереван: Издательство «Гитутюн» НАН РА; 2012: 103–120.
36. Դալայան Տ.Ս. Հայոց վիպական Սաթենիկ թագուհու կերպարի ծագումնաբանության շուրջ: Պատմաբանասիրական հանդես. 2002;2(160):191–213 (на армянском яз.).
37. Աբրահամյան Լ.Հ. Բավիղ-լաբիրինթոս. արտավազդյան առասպելը կովկասառաջավորասիական համատեքստում: Հայ ժողովրդական մշակույթ XII. հանրապետական գիտաժողովի նյութեր, Մեսրոպ արք. Աշխանի հիշատակին, խմբ. Ս.Բ. Հարությունյան, Դ.Ս. Վարդումյան, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ ՀԱԻ: Երևան. Մուղնի; 2004: 13–18 (на армянском яз.).
38. Հարությունյան Ս.Բ. Ժայռում փակված կամ ժայռին գամված հերոսի առասպելային դրսևորումները հայկական վիպական ավանդույթում: Հայկական էպոսը և համաշխարհային էպիկական ժառանգությունը, խմբ. Ա.Ե. Պետրոսյան: Երևան. ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատ.; 2014: 9–25 (на армянском яз.).
39. Դալայան Տ.Ս. Դրվագներ հայ-ալանական դիցանվանական առնչություններից: Հայ ժողովրդական մշակույթ XIII. նյութեր հանրապետական գիտական նստաշրջանի, Դ.Ս. Վարդումյանի հիշատակին, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ ՀԱԻ, խմբ. Դ.Ս. Վարդումյան, Ս.Բ. Հարությունյան, Ս.Գ. Հոբոսյան: Երևան. ՀՀ ԳԱԱ «Գիտություն» հրատ.; 2004: 44–54 (на армянском яз.).

40. Օսերեն *wærm* և *wæzdan* բառերի ծագման հետքերով: Երիտասարդ արևելագետների հանրապետական 22-րդ գիտական նստաշրջանի զեկուցման թեզեր: Երևան. ՀՀ ԳԱԱ Արևելագիտության ինստիտուտ; 2001: 13 (на армянском яз.).

41. Егиазарян А.К. Эпическое повествование. В кн.: *Армянский эпос и всемирное эпическое наследие*, ред. А.Е. Петросян. Ереван: Издательство «Гитутюн» НАН РА; 2014: 125–131.

References

1. Abeghyan MKh. Armenian epic folklore. In: *Works, Vol. 1*. Yerevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences Publ.; 1966: 572 (in Armenian).
2. Abaev VI. *Nart epic of the Ossetians*. In: Khamitsaeva TA., Byazirov AKh. (comp.), Vol. 1; 1990: 7-76 [see № 25] (in Russian).
3. Harutyunyan SB. *Essays on folklore studies*. Yerevan: Armenian National Academy of Sciences Publ. “Gitutyun”; 2010: 263 (in Armenian).
4. Dalalyan TS. The manners of reciting the epic “Vipasank”. *“Etchmiadzin”: Review of Religious Studies and Armenology*. 2015;10:58–65 (in Armenian).
5. Dalalyan TS. “Daredevils of Sassoun” and the other Armenian epics. In: *Armenia: familiar and unfamiliar. Encyclopedia*, ed. by S. Dilanyan, Deacon Vahan Sahakyan. Yerevan: Areg; 2018: 134–135 (in Armenian).
6. Hambardzumyan HA. *“Daredevils of Sassoun”: variant, motif, book tradition*, ed. by S.B. Harutyunyan. Yerevan: Yerevan State University Publ.; 2018: 320 (in Armenian).
7. Petrosyan AY. Armenian popular heroic epic. In: *Proceedings of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography*, Vol. 1: Armenian folk culture XVII: tradition and modernity in Armenian culture. Yerevan: Publ. of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography; 2018: 414–425 (in Armenian).
8. Hambardzumyan HA. The formation of the structural system of the epic “Daredevils of Sassoun”: mythical schemes or literary tradition? *Journal of Literary Studies*. 2020; 2020;20/1:312–326 (in Armenian).
9. Petrosyan AY. *The ancient origins of the Armenian epic*. Yerevan: Van aryan; 1997: 96 (in Armenian).
10. Petrosyan AY. *Armenian epic and mythology: origins, myth, and history*. Yerevan: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography; 2002: 239 (in Russian).
11. Dalalyan TS. Outlines of a comparative study of the “Daredevils of Sassoun” and the Ossetic “Nart” epic. In: *The Armenian epic “Daredevils of Sassoun” and the world epic heritage: international conference’s reports*, ed. by A.K. Yeghiazaryan et al. Yerevan: M. Abeghyan Institute of Literature, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia; 2004: 82–87 (in Armenian).
12. Dalalyan TS. The first branch of the epic “Vipasank” and the origin of thunderstorm epic family. In: *Gift from Heaven: myth, ritual, and history: Festschrift in honor of 80th anniversary of Sargis Harutyunyan*, ed. by A.Y. Petrosyan. Yerevan: Armenian National Academy of Sciences Publ. “Gitutyun”; 2008: 19–50 (in Armenian).
13. Harutyunyan SB. Mythological foundations of the heroic epic “Daredevils of Sassoun”. In: *The Armenian epic “Daredevils of Sassoun” and the world epic heritage: international conference’s reports*, ed. by A.K. Yeghiazaryan et al. Yerevan: M. Abeghyan Institute of Literature, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia; 2004: 9–16 (in Armenian).
14. Petrosyan AY. The relationship between the Armenian and the North-Caucasian Nart Epics. In: *Armenian epic and world epic heritage*, ed. by A.Y. Petrosyan & A.K. Yeghiazaryan. Yerevan: Armenian National Academy of Sciences Publ. “Gitutyun”; 2012: 8–51 (in Armenian).
15. Petrosyan AY. Structural links between the Armenian and the Ossetic Nart Epics. In: *Armenian epic and world epic heritage*, ed. by A.Y. Petrosyan. Yerevan: Armenian National Academy of Sciences Publ. “Gitutyun”; 2014: 47–53 (in Russian).
16. Sahakyan ASH. *A critical comparison of the variants of “Daredevils of Sassoun”*. Yerevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences Publ.; 1975: 191 (in Armenian).
17. Movses Khorenatsi. *History of Armenia*, translation from Classical Armenian, introductions and commentaries by G.Kh. Sarkisyan. Yerevan: Hayastan; 1990: 293 (in Russian).
18. Abeghyan MKh. Armenian popular myths in the History of Armenia by M. Khorenatsi. In: *Works, Vol. 8*. Yerevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences Publ.; 1985: 66–272 (in Armenian).
19. Atcharyan HH. The Armenian of epic tales. In: *History of the Armenian language*, Part II. Yerevan: Armenian State Publ.; 1951: 65–75 (in Armenian).

20. Jahukyan GB. Standard language and dialects. The Armenian of epic tales. In: *History of the Armenian language: Pre-literary period*. Yerevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences Publ.; 1987: 364–371 (in Armenian).
21. Hayrapetyan TL. The Red Cow Motif in the Armenian Fairy Tales. *Historical and Philological Journal*. 2010;3(185):228–241 (in Armenian).
22. Abaev VI. An attempt at a comparative analysis of the legends about the origin of the Narts and the Romans. In *memoriam of Academician N.Y. Marr*, ed. by I.I. Meschaninov. Moscow-Leningrad: Publ. of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR; 1938: 317–337 (in Russian).
23. Abaev VI. *Selected works. Religion, folklore, literature*, ed. and comp. by V.M. Gusalov. Vladikavkaz: Ir; 1990: 640 (in Russian).
24. Dalalyan TS. About Ossetic Wærxæg and the Armenian Vahagn. *Armenian folk culture XII: materials of the republican conference, in memoriam of Archbishop Mesrop Ashjian*, ed. by S.B. Harutyunyan, D.S. Vardumyan. Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia. Yerevan: Mughni; 2004: 37–39 (in Armenian).
25. Khamitsaeva TA., Byazirov AKh. (comp.) *The Narts: Ossetic heroic epic*, author of the introductory article and scientific consultant V.I. Abaev. Vol. 1-2. Moscow: Nauka Publ.; 1990: 431 & 1989: 492 (in Ossetic and Russian).
26. Melik-Ohanjanyan KA. (comp.) *Armenian folk epic Daredevils of Sassoun: selected variants*, translation of texts, compilation and vocabulary-commentaries by Academician K.A. Melik-Ohanjanyan. Yerevan: Van Aryan; 2004: 347 (in Armenian).
27. Petrosyan AY. Myth of foundation of new cities in the Indo-European tradition. In: *Epic, Identity, and Culture*, 6th international epic studies conference dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the study of the epic “Sasna Tsrer” (“Daredevils of Sassoun”): Abstracts, ed. by T.S. Dalalyan. Yerevan: Publ. of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography; 2024: 51–53 (in Armenian).
28. Orbeli IA. *Armenian heroic epic*. Yerevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences Publ.; 1956: 139 (in Armenian).
29. Melik-Ohanjanyan KA. Mithra-Mihr’s satellites and agents. In: *Literary and philological explorations (in memoriam of Manuk Abeghyan)*. Book 1, ed. by Kh. Sargsyan. Yerevan: Armenian SSR Academy of Sciences Publ.; 1946: 269–327 (in Armenian).
30. Hambardzumyan HA. Little Mher: genesis and typology. *Journal of Literary Studies*. 2006;1:89–100 (in Armenian).
31. Harutyunyan SB. Mihr. *Myths of the world’s peoples*. Ed. by S.A. Tokarev. Vol. 2. Moscow: Soviet encyclopedia; 1992: 160 (in Russian).
32. Dalalyan TS. The Character of Sanatrouk in the Armenian Epic “Vipasank” and his mythological parallels. In: *Armenian epic and world epic heritage*, ed. by A.Y. Petrosyan, A.K. Yeghiazaryan. Yerevan: Armenian National Academy of Sciences Publ. “Gitutyun”; 2012: 65–71 (in Armenian).
33. Perikhanyan AG. *Materials towards the etymological dictionary of Classical Armenian*. Yerevan: Publ. of the National Academy of the Republic of Armenia; 1993: 142 (in Russian).
34. Harutyunyan SB. The dragon fight in the “Daredevils of Sassoun”. *Herald of Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR*. 1981;11(467):65–85 (in Armenian).
35. Abramhamyan LH. The murder of Msra Melik in a ritual and mythological context. In: *Armenian epic and world epic heritage*, ed. by A.Y. Petrosyan, A.K. Yeghiazaryan. Yerevan: Armenian National Academy of Sciences Publ. “Gitutyun”; 2012: 103–120 (in Russian).
36. Dalalyan TS. On the origin of the character of Armenian Epic Queen Satenik. *Historical and Philological Journal*. 2002;2(160):191–213 (in Armenian).
37. Abrahamyan LH. Babil-labyrinth: the Artawazdian myth in the Caucasian and Near-Eastern Context. *Armenian folk culture XII: materials of the republican conference, in memoriam of Archbishop Mesrop Ashjian*, ed. by S.B. Harutyunyan, D.S. Vardumyan. Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia. Yerevan: Mughni; 2004: 13–18 (in Armenian).
38. Harutyunyan SB. Manifestations of the myth about the hero locked in a rock or nailed to a rock in the Armenian tradition. In: *Armenian epic and world epic heritage*, ed. by A.Y. Petrosyan. Yerevan: Armenian National Academy of Sciences “Gitutyun”; 2014: 9–25 (in Armenian).
39. Dalalyan TS. Episodes from the Armenian-Alanian theonymical connections. *Armenian folk culture XIII: materials of the republican conference, in memoriam of D.S. Vardumyan*, Institute of Archaeology and

Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, ed. by D.S. Vardumyan, S.B. Harutyunyan, S.G. Hobosyan. Yerevan: Armenian National Academy of Sciences Publ. “Gitutyun”; 2004: 44–54 (in Armenian).

40. In the footsteps of the origin of Ossetic words wærm and wæzdan. *Proceedings of the 22th Republican conference of young orientalists*. Yerevan: Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of RA; 2001: 13 (in Armenian).

41. Yeghiazaryan AK. Epic narration. In: *Armenian epic and world epic heritage*, ed. by A.Y. Petrosyan. Yerevan: Armenian National Academy of Sciences Publ. “Gitutyun”; 2014: 125–131 (in Russian).

Об авторе

Далалян Торк Самвелович, кандидат филологических наук, Институт археологии и этнографии Национальной академии наук Республики Армения, заместитель директора, заведующий отделом фольклористики, Институт языка имени Гр. Ачаряна Национальной академии наук Республики Армения, старший научный сотрудник, ORCID: 0000-0002-8686-5341, e-mail: tork.dalalyan@iae.am

About the author

Tork S. Dalalyan, PhD in Philology, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Vice-Director, Head of the Folklore Studies Department, H. Acharyan Institute of Language, National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, senior researcher, ORCID: 0000-0002-8686-5341, e-mail: tork.dalalyan@iae.am

Конфликт интересов / Conflict of interests

Автору неизвестно о каком-либо другом потенциальном конфликте интересов, связанном с этой рукописью.

The author is not aware of any other potential conflict of interest relating to this article.

Поступила в редакцию / Submitted 11.01.2026

Поступила после рецензирования / Revised 23.02.2026

Принята к публикации / Accepted 13.03.2026