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Bert Vaux



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# The Armenian dialect of Khodorjur<sup>1</sup>

Bert Vaux

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## 1. Introduction

Though Armenian dialectologists tend not to discuss the Khodorjur dialect, it possesses a number of features that should make it of interest to armenologists and general linguists alike. In this chapter I provide a bird's eye view of the dialect (which now sadly appears to be dead<sup>2</sup>) and some of its more noteworthy characteristics, and situate these within their larger linguistic and armenological contexts.

One question that immediately arises in light of Khodorjur's location at the nexus between the historical Ottoman and Russian empires, which more or less contained Western and Eastern dialects of Armenian respectively, is whether Khodorjur belongs to the Western or the Eastern branch of Armenian dialects. The available evidence suggests that with respect to most diagnostics Khodorjur belongs to the Western group, though as we might expect at the boundary between East and West, it does contain some features more characteristic of the Eastern dialects, such as the preservation of the original Armenian 2nd singular pronoun դու [du] (> Khodorjur դու [d<sup>h</sup>u]), which Western dialects typically augment with a final -n (e.g. SWA դուն [t<sup>h</sup>un]). This can be seen for example in the following sentence from H&H 419:

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<sup>1</sup> In order to make the materials discussed here accessible to both lay Armenians and linguists, I have provided transcriptions of all dialect forms in both the Armenian script and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The IPA values for the Armenian letters can be found at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:IPA\\_for\\_Armenian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:IPA_for_Armenian). For ease of bibliographic reference, literature is transcribed in the American Library Association-Library of Congress system ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization\\_of\\_Armenian#Transliteration\\_table](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization_of_Armenian#Transliteration_table)).

Abbreviations employed in this chapter: H&H = Hulunean and Hachean 1964, SWA = Standard Western Armenian, SEA = Standard Eastern Armenian.

<sup>2</sup> The last mention I have been able to find of the dialect being spoken is by Petrosyan et al. (1975:167), who state that at that time speakers existed in Black Sea coastal cities such as Sukhumi, Sochi, Adler, and Gagra.

- (1) դու էման վախկոտ էս, որ բան մ'որ ըլնի՝ դող կ'ելնես  
 d<sup>h</sup>u eman vaχgɔd ɛs, vɔr b<sup>h</sup>an mɔr əlni d<sup>h</sup>ɔɤ ɡɛlnɛs  
 'you're such a scaredy cat that you tremble no matter what is there'

Some typical Western features of the dialect include the preservation of the old Armenian ablative suffix \*-է [-ɛ], as in հերսէն [hɛrsɛn] 'from anger' (Hachean 1907:11; cf. also H&H 395 and Jahukyan 1972 feature 58), vs. Eastern -ից [-its<sup>h</sup>], and the expression of location by the nominative/accusative or genitive/dative case, as in մէ սխիրիմ մէջ փաթուրթուի [mɛ sχirim mɛtʃ<sup>h</sup> p<sup>h</sup>at<sup>h</sup>ut<sup>h</sup>vi] 'it is wrapped in a grass mat' (Hachean 1907:16), whereas Eastern dialects have a distinct locative case (e.g. SEA -ում [-um]). Here սխիր [sχir] corresponds to Standard Armenian խոիր [χ(ə)sir] 'mat', -ի [-i] is the genitive/dative suffix, and -մ [-m] is the indefinite article (q.v. section 4). As in SWA, the genitive/dative plural of nouns in the i-declension takes -ում -u rather than -ի -i, e.g. արմ [ard] 'field' → արմերում [ard-ɛr-u] 'of/to fields' (H&H 396), vs. SEA արմերի [art-ɛr-i] (cf. Dum-Tragut 2009:80).

In the realm of pronouns, the dative form of the 1st singular pronoun is ինձի [indzi] (e.g. Hachean 1907:20), not the older ինձ [indz] preserved in the average Eastern dialect. The 3rd singular possessive pronoun is իր(են) [ir(ɛn)] as in SWA, as opposed to Eastern forms such as SEA նրա [nɛra].

One could continue at length with the Western features of the Khodorjur dialect. Where does it fall *within* the Western branch of Armenian dialects, though? Acharean 1911 calls it a subdialect between Baberd and Hamshen, whereas Hachean 1915:12 labels it as similar to Sper, Baberd, Basen, Karin, and Alashkert, though without providing justification. Jahukyan 1972 discusses only Khndadzor (his dialect #44), which on the basis of his multi-featured classification system he identifies as the only member of an isolated Khodorjur dialect. Petrosyan (1987:287) simply identifies Khodorjur as a “Western կը [kə] dialect [i.e. one that marks the present and imperfect tenses with a cognate of SEA կը] spoken in the town of Khodorjur”.

One can be more precise than this, though. Within the Western branch, Khodorjur groups as one might expect on geographic grounds, with the other major Armenian dialects in northeastern Turkey: Hamshen, Trabzon, Ardvin, and Erzerum. An intriguing innovation found in all of these dialects (except perhaps Trabzon and Ardvin, for which I do not have sufficient information on this point) involves the imperfective clitic կու/կը,

which normally surfaces as [gu] or [gə] in these dialects but for unknown reasons becomes voiceless and/or aspirated with a few specific verbs such as ‘come’, ‘want’, ‘go up’, ‘fall’, ‘descend’, ‘cry’, and ‘be’. Khodorjur appears to have this peculiar outcome for at least ‘come’, ‘want’, and ‘be’: H&H 389, 390 report the forms կու գայ ‘he/she/it comes’, կ’ուզես ‘you (sg.) want’, and կ’ըլի ‘he/she/it is’ as being pronounced kouka (i.e. [kuka] in the IPA), kouzes (i.e. [kuzəs]), and [kəlni]<sup>3</sup> respectively.

The innovations shared between Hamshen and Khodorjur in particular are so numerous that we may assign them to a common subgroup, which I refer to as the Northeastern Turkish group. Perhaps the most striking linguistic feature shared by Hamshen and Khodorjur<sup>4</sup> is what is described in the literature as use of forms of the verb ունիլ [unim] ‘have’ as an auxiliary with transitive verbs in the perfect tense and its derivatives (pluperfect, future perfect, etc.), e.g. Khodorjur կերած ունիլ [geradz unim] (H&H 408), Eastern Hamshen [giadzuim] ‘I ate, I have eaten’ (Vaux 2007). The verb ‘eat’ is slightly deceptive because it can lack an overt direct object, as in the examples just given; the situation may be more clear with an example such as թագաւոյն սէ աղուէս տեսած ունի [tʰagavɔj(ə)n mɛ aʁvɛsəm dɛsadz uni] ‘the king saw a fox’ (Hachean 1907:21). Intransitive and passive verbs employ the verb ‘be’ as their auxiliary: Khodorjur տղէն քուն եղած ա [dəʁɛn kʰun jɛʁadz a] (H&H 409), Eastern Hamshen [daʁan kʰun aʁadz a] ‘the boy slept’.

Another interesting innovation shared by Homshetsma and Khodorjur is the use of Common Armenian թէ [tʰɛ] ‘that, if, whether’ as a marker of yes/no questions<sup>5</sup> (Acharyan 1947:154, Dumézil 1963:21, H&H 419). Examples of this are given in (2):

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<sup>3</sup> They do not actually transcribe this form, but point 1 of their discussion of the pronunciation of կ makes clear that կ’ըլի has [k] rather than [g]. This is supported by Gevorgyan 1979 spelling the word գլի in the text reproduced here in section 6, which given that he employs the Western values of the Armenian letters implies that the form was pronounced [kəlni].

<sup>4</sup> Though Aytənean 1866.2:96-97 mentions it occurring in an unspecified set of Modern Armenian dialects as well as Middle Armenian and even a few times in Classical Armenian.

<sup>5</sup> Hachean 1907:6, fn. 14 and H&H 419 do not get the distribution quite right; both assert that թէ is added at the end of every interrogative sentence, predicting that wh-questions such as “who came?” should fall into this class. Examples such as գիտե՞ս էնչադ, ի՞նչ ասես պիտի [gʰides ɛntʰas ɛntʰ asɛs bidi] ‘do you know what you’ll say at that time?’ show that this prediction is incorrect.

(2) yes-no questions in Khodorjur and Hamshen

Khodorjur

a. հը՛ւմ, տարիմ պօ՛ւ ա թէ

[həm, darim bəl a tʰɛ]

‘hm, is a year a lot?’

(Hachean 1907:6)

b. ըմպայ իտա իմ ընկէյս թա՛յս աշխարհքիս վերջ քուն ըլնի պիտի, չէ՞ք  
աւտալ թէ:

əmba ida im əngɛj(ə)s tʰáχ aʃχarkʰis vɛrtʃʰ kʰun əlni bidi, tʃʰɛkʰ avdal tʰɛ

‘but this one of my friends must/will sleep until the end of the world, can you believe it?’

(Hachean 1907:6)

Eastern Hamshen

c. şone hats devoğ çek ta?

[ʃone hatsʰ devɔɅ tʃʰɛkʰ tʰa]

‘aren’t you (plural) going to give food to the dog?’

(Vaux 1995)

It is possible that the development of this marker of yes/no questions was influenced by the existence in the prestige language in the area, Turkish, of an overt marker of yes/no questions, *-mI*, as in the Turkish equivalent of the above Hamshen sentence, *köpeğe yemek vermiyecek misiniz?*, literally ‘dog-to food give-not-future yes.no.question.marker-you.plural’. Under similar pressure, other Armenian dialects actually borrowed the Turkish morpheme *-mI* directly; cf. Trabzon *unis mi* ‘do you have it?’ (Acharyan 1947:155).

Further similarities to the other Armenian varieties of northeastern Turkey can be seen throughout the remainder of this chapter, but we will focus on providing a general description of the structure of the dialect.

## 2. Pronunciation

Though to the best of my knowledge no recordings of the dialect exist, the available written materials and descriptions suggest that its phonetic features were more similar to those of Erzerum than the other northeastern dialects,

with respect to the voiced aspirated stops and the diphthongized mid vowels, for example.

## 2.1. Vowels

The vowel inventory appears to have been fairly typical for a western dialect, with all of the original Armenian diphthongs monophthongizing to give the six vowels  $\text{u } \text{t} \text{ } \text{h} \text{ } \text{o} \text{ } \text{n}_\text{l} \text{ } \text{p} \text{ } [\text{a } \text{e} \text{ } \text{i} \text{ } \text{ɔ} \text{ } \text{u} \text{ } \text{ə}]$  (Petrosyan 1987:287). Interestingly, Western dialects typically monophthongize original  $\text{այ} [\text{aj}]$  to  $\text{u} [\text{a}]$  and Eastern dialects to  $\text{t} [\text{e}]$  (cf. Common Armenian  $\text{այս} [\text{ajs}]$  ‘this’ > SWA  $\text{աս} [\text{as}]$ , SEA  $\text{էս} [\text{es}]$ ), but Khodorjur often changes  $\text{այ}$  to  $\text{t}$  despite being largely Western, as shown by the forms in (3).

(3)  $\text{այ} [\text{aj}] > \text{t} [\text{e}]$  in Khodorjur

Common Armenian	Khodorjur	gloss	source
ձայն [dzajn]	ձէն [dz <sup>h</sup> en]	voice	Hachean 1907:20
վրայ-ն [vrāj-n]	վրէն [vərən]	on it	Hachean 1907:21
այրել [ajrel]	էրել [ɛrɛl]	to burn	H&H 389
լայն [lajn]	լէն [lɛn]	wide	H&H 389
երկայն [erkajn]	երկէն <sup>6</sup> [ɛrgɛn]	long	H&H 389

Occasional exceptions to this generalization appear in H&H, though, such as  $\text{ծայր} [\text{tsajr}] > \text{ծար} [\text{dzar}]$ . These may be loans from SWA.

Original  $\text{իւ} [\text{iw}]$  also monophthongizes, to  $\text{n}_\text{l}$ , as in most modern Armenian dialects (H&H 393). U’s resulting from this process can then undergo the older rule that reduces  $\text{ի} [\text{i}]$  and  $\text{n}_\text{l} [\text{u}]$  to  $\text{ը} [\text{ə}]$  or zero in unstressed syllables, e.g.  $\text{ալիւր} [\text{aliwr}]$  ‘flour’ >  $\text{ալուր} [\text{alur}]$ , genitive  $\text{ալրի} [\text{alri}]$  (H&H 393).

Though the Common Armenian diphthongs all monophthongize in Khodorjur, new diphthongs arise from a number of sources. As in a large percentage of modern Armenian dialects, original  $\text{ե} [\text{e}]$  diphthongizes to  $\text{իէ} [\text{iɛ}]$  in monosyllabic words (Jahukyan 1972 features 30 and 32, H&H 390), e.g.  $\text{բեր} [\text{ber}]$  ‘carry!’ >  $\text{բ’իեր} [\text{b<sup>h</sup>iɛr}]$  (Hambardzumyan and Khudaverdyan

<sup>6</sup> H&H give the form as  $\text{երկէն}$ , i.e.  $[\text{jɛrgɛn}]$ , but as we shall see below, we expect original  $\text{e}$ -not to diphthongize in polysyllabic words, so I have transcribed it as  $[\text{ɛrgɛn}]$  in (2).

1979; we shall see later that the final *r* sometimes deletes). Unlike in SWA but like in many modern dialects, Khodorjur does not diphthongize word-initially in polysyllabic roots (H&H 390), e.g. Common Armenian էփէս [ep<sup>h</sup>es] ‘if you cook’ > Khodorjur էփէս [ep<sup>h</sup>es] ‘you cook’ (Hachean 1907:8); cf. SWA էփէս [jep<sup>h</sup>es].) This form also shows that Khodorjur does not diphthongise original է [e] in non-initial syllables (i.e. the output is not \*[ep<sup>h</sup>iəs]).

Most dialects that diphthongize [e] to [iɛ] also change ո [o] to ուո [uɔ], and this is what Jahukyan 1972 (q.v. feature 31) reports for Khodorjur, but our other sources state a different range of outcomes. H&H state that original ո [o] becomes վո [vɔ] word-initially in monosyllabic words, and ոյ [ɔj]<sup>7</sup> when non-initial in word-final syllables (391). Hambardzumyan and Khudaverdyan 1979 report that original ո [o] becomes ուո [ɔu], and give the example որոս [orot] ‘thunder’ > որոսու [ɔrou].

Other than [iɛ], [ɔu], and [ɔj], the only other sequences that I am aware of in the dialect that might be called diphthongs (i.e. sequences of two vowel sounds acting as a single sound) are products of the ր [r] > յ [j] sound change to be discussed in the next section, e.g. իյ [ij] (as in ծիրս [tsirt] ‘bird feces’ > ծիրս [dzird], H&H 390) and ոյ/ոյ [ɔj] (as in խնձոր [χndzor] ‘apple’ > խնձոր [χəndz<sup>h</sup>ɔj]<sup>8</sup> (H&H 407)). In the absence of evidence that these sequences behave as single sounds, though, I will treat them as sequences of vowel + glide.

## 2.2. Consonants

Khodorjur (as well as the form of Hamshen dialect described by Petrosyan et al. 1975) differs from SWA but resembles SEA in preserving a three-way laryngeal contrast in stops and affricates, but differs from SEA in that the Common Armenian plain voiced series becomes aspirated (cf. [ber] ‘carry!’ > [b<sup>h</sup>ier] mentioned earlier) and the plain voiceless series becomes voiced (cf.

<sup>7</sup> The sequence ոյ in Armenian script is ambiguous between [ɔj], [ɔ], and [uj], so it is not straightforward to interpret what H&H mean by it. I assume that they intend [ɔj] on the basis of Hambardzumyan and Khudaverdyan’s (1979) statement that the pronunciation is ուո [ɔu].

<sup>8</sup> H&H spell this form with <ձ>, suggesting that it is pronounced with [ts<sup>h</sup>] rather than [dz<sup>h</sup>], but the post-nasal facts discussed in 2.2 lead me to believe that the correct Khodorjur form must actually have a [dz<sup>h</sup>].

ծիրս [tsirt] ‘bird feces’ > ծիրս [dzird]) (Petrosyan et al. 1975:142). Jahukyan 1972 states that the aspiration process applies in word-initial position (his feature 2), to which Hambardzumyan and Khudaverdyan 1979 and Petrosyan 1987:287 add that it applies after nasal consonants as well (but do not provide any examples). Jahukyan 1972 (feature 4) asserts that this series aspirates after *r* as well, though I have not come across any examples of this type. If the form սպրանքս [abrank<sup>h</sup>əd] ‘your goods’ in the text sample in section 5 is correct, we can infer by comparison to its ancestor սպրանք /aprank<sup>h</sup>-d/ that word-final voiced stops remain unchanged (at least in the deictic clitics, which do not always undergo the same changes as the relevant consonants in other situations).

One of the most striking features of the Khodorjur dialect is that (like Hamshen, Hajin, and Zeytun) it changes *p* [r] to *j* [j] under certain conditions (Achaëan 1911, Jahukyan 1972 feature 22), even in at least some loanwords (cf. սպառս [bazaj(ə)n]<sup>9</sup> ‘the bazaar’ (Hachean 1907:8) < Persian *bāzār*, but թարգուն [t<sup>h</sup>arzun] ‘the tailor’ (Hachean 1907:7) < Turkish *terzi*, սրտիւսն [ardivan] ‘staircase, ladder’ (H&H 431) from Persian *nardubān*). H&H 389 add that this change does not take place in the Krman T<sup>h</sup>agh quarter. Several sources specify that the change of *p* to *j* happens either “next to a consonant” (H&H 389) or before a consonant (Petrosyan 1987:287, Hambardzumyan and Khudaverdyan 1979), but neither of these generalizations is quite right; the former predicts incorrectly that the rule will apply in CRV sequences (e.g. սպրանքս [abrank<sup>h</sup>əd] ‘your goods’ in the text sample in section 5 should come out as \*սպյանքս [abjank<sup>h</sup>əd]) and the latter that it will not apply in word-final position.<sup>10</sup> The correct generalization appears to be that the

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<sup>9</sup> Since writers using Armenian orthography tend not to write schwa (ը), it is unclear whether forms like սպառս or H&H’s *hoju* ‘of my father’ (< *hoju*) and *ւոյս* ‘of my mother’ (< *ւոյս*) (389) are pronounced respectively [bazajn], [hɔjs], [mɔjs] or [bazajən], [hɔjəs], [mɔjəs].

<sup>10</sup> There are in fact some apparent cases of this type; for example, on the same line of p. 15 Hachean 1907 has both *խնձոր* [χndz<sup>h</sup>or] ‘apple’ and *խնձորն* [χəndz<sup>h</sup>ɔj(ə)n] ‘the apple’, and his nominative form corresponding to *թագաւոյն* [t<sup>h</sup>agavɔj(ə)n] ‘the king’ (1907:9) is *թագաւոր* [t<sup>h</sup>agavɔr] (1907:13). However, the fact that he also provides forms of the type in (4b), where the change does apply, suggests that one cannot simply say that the process is limited to pre-consonantal position.



change applies in syllable codas, i.e. when the *p* is not followed by a vowel, as can be seen from the examples in (4).

(4) the distribution of *p* [ɾ] > *j* [j] in Khodorjur

Common Armenian	Khodorjur	gloss	source
a. pre-consonantal			
հարս [hars]	հայս [hajs]	bride	H&H 389
արտ [art]	այտ [ajd]	field	H&H 389
դատարկ [datark]	դայտակ [d <sup>h</sup> ajdag]	empty	H&H 389
գորս [gort]	գոյս [g <sup>h</sup> ɔjd]	frog	H 1907:16 <sup>11</sup>
b. word-final			
խնձոր [χndzor]	խնձոյ [χəndz <sup>h</sup> ɔj]	apple	H&H 407
ուր [ur]	ոյ [hɔj]	where	P 1987:287
շորեր [ʃorer]	շորեյ [ʃɔrej]	clothes	H 1907:9
բեր [ber]	բեյ [b <sup>h</sup> ej]	bring!	H 1907:11
վայր [vajr]	վայ [vaj]	down	H 1907:8 <sup>12</sup>
c. does not apply before vowels			
բրինձ [brindz <sup>h</sup> ]	բրինձ [b <sup>h</sup> ərindz <sup>h</sup> ]	rice	Gevorgyan 1979
բերայ [beraj]	բերաւ [b <sup>h</sup> iɛra]	he brought	Gevorgyan 1979

The form ծերերն /dzɛr-ɛr-n/ ‘the elders’ (elder-plural-definite) → ծերեյն [dzɛrej(ə)n] (Hachean 1907:19) nicely illustrates the situation: the first *p* [ɾ] remains because it is followed by a vowel, whereas the second *p* [ɾ] changes to *j* [j] because it is not. The process appears to be synchronically active, judging by alternations such as Common Armenian թագաւոր [t<sup>h</sup>agavor] ‘king’ > Khodorjur թագաւորին [t<sup>h</sup>agavɔrin] ‘the king’s’ (1907:8) : թագաւոյն [t<sup>h</sup>agavuj(ə)n] ‘the king’ (1907:9), or the root բեր [ber] ‘bring’ → բերաւ [b<sup>h</sup>iɛra] ‘he brought’ but բեյ [b<sup>h</sup>ej] ‘bring!’, as can be seen in (4b) and (4c) respectively. As mentioned in footnote 9, it is not clear whether or not the

<sup>11</sup> On p. 75 he has the same form with *p* instead of *j*, suggesting that the rule is variable. This can be seen even more clearly on the first two lines of p. 7, where he has first զայրի [zajt<sup>h</sup>i] and then զարթի [zart<sup>h</sup>i] ‘wakes up’.

<sup>12</sup> The interpretation of the pronunciation of this form is ambiguous, since Hachean 1907 also employs <այ> to represent the sound [a] in word-final position, e.g. on p. 8 he renders the Turkish loans hama ‘but’ and para ‘(a unit of) money’ as համայ <hamaj> and փարայ <p<sup>h</sup>araj> respectively.

process has to apply before enclitics are added, as we cannot from the orthography employed in our sources whether or not schwas are pronounced in forms such as ծերեյն [dzɛɛj(ə)n] above and ընկեյս [əŋgej(ə)s] ‘my friend’ (Hachean 1907:6).

Gevorgyan 1979 points out that the change of *r* to *j* does not always apply when its conditions are met, as can be confirmed by many forms in his text sample, reproduced here in section 5, such as մարդ [martəm] ‘a man’, որ [ɔr] ‘that’, ձեր [dzʰɛr] ‘your (plural)’. One might think that all the exceptions are learned borrowings from the literary language, but this is disproven by dialect forms such as օրման [ɔrman] ‘how’ (H&H 406), (եւ)ուր [(ɛv)ur] ‘why?’, լիկոր [lɔgɔr] ‘just now’, նոր [nɔr] ‘where?’ (ibid. 416), ախբար [axpar] ‘brother’, իտոր [idɔr] ‘her’, քուր [kʰur] ‘sister’ (Gevorgyan 1979). Another set of exceptions worth noting includes նե [nɛ] < ներս [ners] ‘in’ (only in the verb նե մտնուլ [nɛ mədnul] ‘enter into’), բե՛ [bʰɛ] ‘bring!’ < բե՛ր [ber] and կե՛ [gɛ] ‘eat!’ < կե՛ր [ker] (Hachean 1907:18), and դուս [dʰus] ‘outside’ < դուրս [durs] (Hachean 1907:20), which we expect to come out as \*նեյս [nɛjs], \*բեյ [bʰɛj], \*կեյ [gɛj], and \*դուրս [dʰurs] in Khodorjur. It is possible that the *r* in these forms dropped in an ancestor of the dialect before the change of *r* to *j* developed, since we find *r*-less forms of these words in dialects that lack the *r* to *j* change. The forms for ‘bring’ and ‘eat’ may also simply have mistakenly omitted a final [j], as բեյ [bʰɛj] shows up elsewhere (cf. (4b)).

Like French and Spanish, Western varieties of Armenian tend to eschew the word-initial sequences of *s* + consonant handed to them by their ancestor language. Both French and Spanish initially dealt with Latin clusters of this type by inserting an *e*- before the offending cluster, as in Latin *scola* ‘school’ > Spanish *escuela*, French *école*. SWA opts for a similar strategy, inserting an unwritten ը [ə] before the *s* if the following consonant is a stop (e.g. սպայ [əspa] ‘officer’), and after the *s* if it is a liquid or nasal (e.g. սնունդ [sənuntʰ] ‘food’). Khodorjur opts for two different strategies, though: in some cases it deletes the *s* (e.g. սպասաւոր [spasawor] ‘servant’ > պասաւոր [basavɔr], Ստեփան [stepʰan] ‘Stephen’ > Տեփան [dɛpʰan], H&H

389) and in others it inserts schwa after the s (e.g. սպանանել [spananel] ‘kill’ > սրպանել [səbanel], H&H 392).<sup>13</sup>

Another oddity of s in Khodorjur is that it appears to sometimes trigger aspiration in a following stop, if we can trust the form օսքի [ɔskʰi] ‘gold’ that occurs on p. 20 of Hachean’s 1907 collection of folk tales. This would be a mirror image of the aspiration that shows up *before* s in many dialects of Armenian, e.g. Common Armenian կուշտ [kuʃt] ‘side’ > New Julfa քշտին [kʰəʃtin] ‘on the side’ (Acharyan 1940, §123). It is a bit troubling, though, that ‘gold’ shows up elsewhere in Hachean 1907 as օսկի [ɔski], without aspiration.

### 3. Morphology

The morphological system of the Khodorjur dialect differs from that of SWA in numerous ways that we find in other non-standard dialects, typically involving the preservation of Middle Armenian forms, but a few rarities show up as well.

#### 3.1. Nominal

H&H 396 state that most polysyllabic words form their plural with the old suffix -ni (Jahukyan 1972, feature 52), as with գումբուս [g<sup>h</sup>umb<sup>h</sup>ud] ‘cowherdess’ → plural գումբուսնի [g<sup>h</sup>umb<sup>h</sup>udni]. Interestingly, H&H add that the ablative of such plurals is -ումնի [-umən] (e.g. գումբուսնումնի [g<sup>h</sup>umb<sup>h</sup>udnumən]), which is reminiscent of the general Tiflis ablative suffix -եմնի [-emən] (e.g. ինչեմնի [intʃ<sup>h</sup>emən] ‘from what’, Tēr Aghek’sandean 1886:211). A fairly systematic exception to this according to H&H 398 is that i-final nouns in the plural instead select the Middle Armenian suffix -եսան [-(ɛ)san] (like Artvin; Jahukyan feature 54). Pluralized nouns are surprisingly rare in the folk tales collected by Hachean

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<sup>13</sup> The latter strategy is quite unusual in an Armenian context, but can be found in the Garabed Gospel, produced somewhere in Armenia in 1609 and now held at the University of Chicago. A nice example can be seen on the first page of the gospel of Mark, which as of this writing is viewable online at <http://goodspeed.lib.uchicago.edu/view/index.php?doc=0140&obj=213>.

(1907), but an example of the i-final class can be seen on p. 21: ինքն կ'երթայ օսկեստանն մենակ ուտելու [ink<sup>h</sup>ən ɡert<sup>h</sup>a ɔsgɛsdann mɛnnag udɛlu] ‘he goes to enjoy (literally ‘eat’) the gold pieces alone’.

Several monosyllabic roots (primarily paired body parts, according to Hambarzumyan and Khudaverdyan 1979) select the Middle Armenian plural suffix –նի [-vi] (H&H 397; Jahukyan 1972 feature 51): աքնի [ak<sup>h</sup>vi] ‘feet’, աչնի [atʃ<sup>h</sup>vi] ‘eyes’, ընքնի [ɛnk<sup>h</sup>vi] ‘eyebrows’, etc. Interestingly, in the oblique cases these also add the -ni suffix we saw above, e.g. genitive plural աչնիքնու [atʃ<sup>h</sup>vənu] ‘of eyes’ ← underlying /atʃ<sup>h</sup>-vi-ni-u/.

One potential oddity in the nominal morphology of the dialect is claimed by Acharyan 1957:689, namely that Khodorjur has a locative case ending –նի –ni, for which he provides the example տուննի [dun:ini] ‘in the house’. If true this would be a case form unparalleled elsewhere as far as I know, but according to H&H 454 such forms actually involve a postposition ինի [ini] meaning ‘toward(s)’, e.g. գնայ տունն ինի [g<sup>h</sup>əna dun: ini] ‘I went to(ward) the house’.

### 3.2. Verbal

Perhaps the most intriguing property of the Khodorjur dialect, because it is only found here and perhaps in one or more of the dialects of Iraq, is its preservation of the Common (and Classical) Armenian simple present tense formation (e.g. Khodorjur տանիմ [danim] ‘I take’, Petrosyan et al. 1975:142), in contradistinction to the augmented constructions that surface in all other varieties of Modern Armenian (e.g. SWA կը տանիմ [gə danim], SEA տանում եմ [tanum ɛm]). It is not entirely clear under what conditions Khodorjur preserves the original construction, though, as opposed to the other options at its disposal. Several of our sources on the dialect (H&H 407, Jahukyan 1972 feature 100.1; Petrosyan et al. 1975:142, Petrosyan 1987:287) call it գրաբարատիպ [grabarati] ‘Classical-type’, referring to the unaugmented տանիմ type just mentioned, but all sources acknowledge that Khodorjur also uses the կ(ու) [g(u)] present and some assign it directly to the so-called “կը” [kə] group of dialects without mentioning the grabarati option (e.g. Hambarzumyan and Khudaverdyan 1979). Can any sense be made of this variation?

In an attempt to do so, I worked through the first fifty or so imperfective verbs (i.e. ones that would normally take  $\text{կ(ու)}$  [g(u)] in SWA, such as the present and imperfect indicative tenses) in Hachean's 1907 collection of folk tales. The patterns revealed in that mini-corpus suggest the following modifications of the generalizations offered by H&H and later studies:

(5) formation of the present in Khodorjur

- i. Prefixed  $\text{կու-}$  [gu-] is used with all monosyllabic verb stems, as in SWA, e.g.  $\text{կու զան}$  [gu k<sup>h</sup>an],  $\text{կու տայ}$  [gu da] (cf. Petrosyan et al. 1975:142).
- ii. Prefixed  $\text{կ-}$  [g-] is used with all verb-initial verb roots, e.g.  $\text{կաշին}$  [gafin] 'they see' (1907:6),  $\text{կէնես}$  [genes] 'you do',  $\text{կինկին}$  [gingnin] 'they fall' (1907:10); cf. H&H 389, Petrosyan et al. 1975:142.
- iii. Verbs that take the Classical formation in SWA (i.e. do not add  $\text{կ(ու)}$  [g(u)]) do the same in Khodorjur ( $\text{ունի}$  [uni] 'has',  $\text{գիտայ}$  [g<sup>h</sup>ida] 'knows', etc.).
- iv. Polysyllabic consonant-initial verb stems take either (a) the Classical formation ( $\text{նե մտնուն}$  [ne mædnun] 'they enter' (1907:6)), (b) prefixed  $\text{gu-}$  ( $\text{կու խասլիմ}$  [gu χaslim] 'I free' (1907:12)), or (c) prefixed  $\text{gə-}$  ( $\text{կը կաճուի}$  [gə gadzvi] 'is decorated' (1907:12)), with no discernible distribution. A given verb can choose more than one of these options, e.g. Hachean 1907 uses both  $\text{զայնու}$  [zajnu] and  $\text{կու զայնու}$  [gu zajnu] for 'he/she/it hits/sticks', and both  $\text{տանի}$  [dani] and  $\text{կը տանի}$  [gə dani] for 'he/she/it takes'. The most common of these three options in Hachean 1907 appears to be the Classic formation with no augment, a distribution echoed by H&H 407.
- v. There is only one exception to (i)-(iv) in my sample: on page 10 Hachean 1907 has postfixed  $\text{-gu}$  (cf. Jahukyan 1972 feature 78.1) in  $\text{շատ նեղուորի կու}$  [ʃad nɛvɔri gu] '[the king] is exceedingly vexed', but later on the same page the same notion is expressed as  $\text{շատ կու նեղուորի}$  [ʃad gu nɛvɔri].

- vi. H&H state (408) that g(u) can go before and/or after the rest of the verb, as in կու գայի կու [gu g<sup>h</sup>aji gu] ‘I was coming’, կը կենիմ կը [gə genim gə] ‘I am doing’<sup>14</sup>, but I found no examples of this doubled or trebled type in Hachean’s 1907 texts.

Patterns (5.ii), (5.iii), and (5.iv.a) can be seen co-occurring in a contextualized example from Hachean 1907:75:

(6) present tense constructions in context

...մէջն ի վար նէ մտնու<sub>5iva</sub>, կիջնու<sub>5ii</sub> ջրին քով. տեսնու<sub>5iva</sub> որ, մէ մէ՛ծ դեւմ նստած ա, մէկ ծնկին վրայ ռունտ աղջիկմ կար<sub>5iii</sub>, մէկալ ծնկին վրայ ալ մէ գորսմ.

...mēdz(ə)n i var nē mādnu, gidznu dzərin k<sup>h</sup>ov. dēsnu vər, mē mēdz d<sup>h</sup>evəm nēsdadz a, mēg dzəngin vəra rund aēdzigəm gar, mēgal dzəngin vəra al mē g<sup>h</sup>ordəm.

‘he enters down into the well and descends close to the water. He sees that an enormous demon is seated with a beautiful girl on one knee and a frog on the other’

The distribution in (5) is similar to what we find in Hamshen, except that Hamshen doesn’t allow doubling of g(u), doesn’t allow prefixed gu- with polysyllables, doesn’t allow the bare classical-type construction, and optionally allows gu to occur between the verb stem and the personal endings, e.g. menagum ~ menomgu ‘I stay’.

In addition to the (partial) preservation of the original Armenian present tense construction, Khodorjur retains several other verbal archaisms. Like Hamshen it preserves the Common Armenian u-conjugation (H&H 408, Jahukyan 1972 feature 77) for verbs such as առնուլ [arnul] ‘take’<sup>15</sup>, though interestingly many of the verbs in this class have been imported from the original –anel class, including մտնուլ [mādnul] ‘enter’ < մտանել [mtanel], գտնուլ [g<sup>h</sup>ədnul] ‘find’ < գտանել [gtanel], տեսնուլ [dēsnu] ‘enter’ < տեսանել [tesanel], ինջնուլ [indznu] ‘descend’ < իջանել [idzanel] (H&H

<sup>14</sup> This example actually involves three g’s, as the verbal root ‘do’ in this dialect is էն- [en-].

<sup>15</sup> SWA and SEA generally merge old u-verbs into the e-conjugation, e.g. առնուլ > առնել [arnel].

455). These verbs remain in the e-conjugation in the imperfect, e.g. կը տեսնէի [gə dəsnɛi] ‘I saw’ (H&H 408).

Like SWA, Khodorjur preserves the i-conjugation (Jahukyan 1972 feature 76; SEA merges the i-conjugation into the e-conjugation), though the e- and i-conjugations actually switch their theme vowel in the present tense, original -ե- [-e-] becoming ի [i] and original -ի- [-i-] becoming է [ɛ], as in Common Armenian ուտեմ [utem] ‘I eat’ > Khodorjur կ’ուտիմ [gudim] vs. սովորիմ [sovorim] ‘I study’ > կը սորվեմ [gə sɔrvɛm] (H&H 407).

H&H 407 mention that Khodorjur preserves the Common Armenian past tense augment ե- [e-] in forms like ետ [ɛd] ‘gave’, չեբեր [tʃʰɛbɛr] ‘didn’t bring’, եթող [ɛtʰɔɽ] ‘left’, and եղիր [ɛdir] ‘you (sg.) put (past tense)’. We find this same archaism in Hamshen and numerous other modern dialects. It may be worth noting, though, that none of these augmented forms appear to surface in Hachean’s 1907 collection of texts.

In addition to these archaisms, Khodorjur displays a number of innovations in the verbal system. Of particular interest is the novel future tense formation using the -ոյ [-ɔɽ] participle (Jahukyan 1972 feature 91.2) which the two modern literary dialects employ for subject participles. Jahukyan 1972 mentions that this innovation shows up in Ghalach’a, to which we can the Muslim varieties of the Hamshen dialect (Dumézil 1963, Vaux 2007), e.g. but this future construction is not mentioned by H&H and does not appear to be used in any of Hachean’s 1907 texts.

#### 4. Syntax

We have already discussed the innovative use of թէ [tʰɛ], which in addition to its interest as a new marker of yes-no questions is also noteworthy for occurring at the *end* of the clause over which it has scope, rather than the beginning as in the varieties of Armenian where its equivalent եթէ [jetʰɛ] *begins* if/whether (i.e. subordinate yes-no) clauses; contrast for instance Khodorjur սուր կերթա՞ք թէ [asɔr gɛrtʰakʰ tʰɛ] ‘are you (plural) going today?’ (H&H 419) with SWA հարցուցի եթէ սուր կերթա՞ք [hartsʰutsʰi jetʰɛ asɔr gɛrtʰakʰ] ‘I asked if you’re going today’.

Khodorjur in fact allows postposing of a wide range of things that are normally preposed in one or both of the modern literary dialects. In addition to the (albeit rare) postposing of the imperfective marker -gu discussed

earlier, the obligatory marker պիտի [bidi] can follow the main verb, as we saw in (2b), although it can also precede the rest of the verb, as in SWA and SEA (e.g. պիտի սպրիսք [bidi abrink<sup>h</sup>] ‘we will survive’ (Hachean 1907:7). One might hypothesize on the basis of this last form vs. cases like երթաւ պիտի թագաւորին երազն պատմիմ [jert<sup>h</sup>am bidi t<sup>h</sup>agav<sup>o</sup>rin (j)erazən badmim] ‘[I] must go to the king [and] interpret [his] dream’ (Hachean 1907:20) that bidi precedes the verb when denoting futurity and follows when marking obligation. The sentence immediately following this example in the text appears to falsify this hypothesis, though; the snake who has asked the boy where he’s going follows the latter’s response with գիտե՞ս էնչադ, ի՞նչ ասես պիտի [g<sup>h</sup>ides entʃ<sup>h</sup>aʔ intʃ<sup>h</sup> asɛs bidi] ‘do you know what you’ll say at that time?’, where the context makes clear that the snake is asking an informational question (using bidi as a future marker), rather than telling the boy what he must say (using bidi as an obligatory).

Khodorjur also postposes the indefinite article -մ [-(-ə)m] (cf. Jahukyan 1972 feature 71), e.g. կնիկմ [gənigəm] ‘a woman’ (Hachean 1907:7). Like the cases above, this represents a shift from the original Armenian form (preposed մի [mi] ‘one’); because SWA also postposes the indefinite article, though, this particular innovation is perhaps of less interest.

Various forms of negation can also show up in the mirror image of their order in SWA and SEA, e.g. սատկեցաւ ոչ [sadgets<sup>h</sup>av (v)otʃ<sup>h</sup>] ‘didn’t die’ (Hachean 1907:23; the exact same construction is used in the Muslim subdialect of Hamshen) vs. SWA չսատկեցաւ [tʃ<sup>h</sup>əsadgets<sup>h</sup>av]; ոչինչ գտնուլ չին [(v)otʃ<sup>h</sup>intʃ<sup>h</sup> g<sup>h</sup>ədnuł tʃ<sup>h</sup>in] ‘they didn’t find anything’ (Hachean 1907:11); էս ջիւտի մանչու առնուլ չիմ [ɛs dʒ<sup>h</sup>əhudi mantʃ<sup>h</sup>u arnuł tʃ<sup>h</sup>im] ‘I won’t take this jewish man [as husband]’. Sequences of modal + main verb can also be inverted vis à vis their order in the standard literary dialects, e.g. իսկ չիկայնայ [χəmɛl tʃ<sup>h</sup>igajna] ‘he can’t drink’ (Hachean 1907) vs. SWA չի կրնայ իսկ [tʃ<sup>h</sup>igərna χəmɛl].

Several of the examples presented thus far in this chapter show that Khodorjur employs what linguists call “negative concord”, i.e. marking of negation on both the verb and one or more of its arguments, e.g. ոչինչ գտնուլ չին [(v)otʃ<sup>h</sup>intʃ<sup>h</sup> g<sup>h</sup>ədnuł tʃ<sup>h</sup>in] ‘they didn’t find anything’ (Hachean 1907:11) or մանչ հէջ չունիք [mantʃ<sup>h</sup> hɛtʃ<sup>h</sup> tʃ<sup>h</sup>unir] ‘he didn’t have any boys’ (Hachean 1907:75). This appears to be the normal state of affairs in non-



standard Armenian dialects, but is not always mentioned in grammars of the standard literary dialects.

## 5. Texts

In order to provide a feel for the dialect I conclude with a condensed translation of T<sup>h</sup>umanyan's famous folktale Բարեկենդանը (SEA [barekendanə]) 'Shrovetide' by Gevorgyan 1979.

(7) Khodorjur version of Բարեկենդանը (Gevorgyan 1979)

Գլնի չլնի մի մարդմ ու կնիկմ, համա իսոք իրար չին հավնի՝ մարդը կնկան կասա իելառ, կնիկը՝ մարդուն. մէ օյմ ալ մարդը մէ քանի փուր եղ ու բրինձ բերա տունն ու կնկան կասա. պեհա:

--Կասիմ օրա դե իելառ իս, չես ավտա, իսքանը մեկ անգամ էվո՞ւր ունիս առած, --կասա կնիկն:

--Ի՞նչ կասէս, քա կնիկ, բարիկենդանի համար ա, տար պեհա:

կնիկն հանգստանա ու տանի պեհա: Կնիկը շատ կսպասա. բարիկենդանը չի գա. համա մէ օյմ տեսնու օր իրենց տան առջեվէն անծանօթմ կանցնի, իսա կանչա.

--Ախբար, կայնա, դուն բարիկենդանն իս, --անցոյթը նկատա օր իսոք իելթը պակաս ա. կասա, --Հա, քուր ջան, ես իմ:

--Մենք իօ քու խղմաքայն չի՞նք օր քու եղն ու բրինձը պեհինք, չէ՞ս ամչենալ, էվո՞ւր չես դա ապրանքտ տանիս:

--Դե, մի նեղվորի, քուր ջան, ձեր տունն ման գուգաի, չեի գտնու:

kəlni tʃ<sup>h</sup>əlni mi martəm u gəniɡəm, hama isək<sup>h</sup> irar tʃ<sup>h</sup>in havni` martə gəngan gasa χelar, gəniɡə` martun. mɛ ɔjm al martə mɛ k<sup>h</sup>ani p<sup>h</sup>ut<sup>h</sup> jɛɛ u b<sup>h</sup>ərindz b<sup>h</sup>era dunən u gəngan gasa. bɛha:

--gasim ɔra d<sup>h</sup>e χelar is, tʃ<sup>h</sup>es avda, isk<sup>h</sup>anə mɛɡ anɡ<sup>h</sup>am evur unis aradz, --gasa gəniɡən:

--intʃ<sup>h</sup> gases, k<sup>h</sup>a gəniɡ, b<sup>h</sup>arigend<sup>h</sup>ani hamar a, dar bɛha:

gəniɡən hang<sup>h</sup>əsdana u dani bɛha: gəniɡə ʃad gəsbasa. b<sup>h</sup>arigend<sup>h</sup>anə tʃ<sup>h</sup>i g<sup>h</sup>a. hama mɛ ɔjm desnu ɔr irɛnts<sup>h</sup> dan ardʒeven andzanɔt<sup>h</sup>əm gants<sup>h</sup>ni, isa gantʃ<sup>h</sup>a.

--aχbar, gajna, d<sup>h</sup>un b<sup>h</sup>arigend<sup>h</sup>an: is, --ants<sup>h</sup>ɔjt<sup>h</sup>ə nəɡada ɔr idɔr χɛlk<sup>h</sup>ə bagas a. gasa, --ha, k<sup>h</sup>ur dʒan, jɛs im:

--mɛnk<sup>h</sup> ԿՉ k<sup>h</sup>u ԿՅmk<sup>h</sup>ajɛn tʃ<sup>h</sup>ink<sup>h</sup> յր k<sup>h</sup>u jɛɛn u b<sup>h</sup>ərindzə bɛhink<sup>h</sup>, tʃ<sup>h</sup>ɛs  
amtʃ<sup>h</sup>ɛnəl, ɛvur tʃ<sup>h</sup>ɛs d<sup>h</sup>a abrank<sup>h</sup>əd danis:

--d<sup>h</sup>e, mi nɛɛvɔɾɪ, k<sup>h</sup>ur dʒan, dz<sup>h</sup>ɛr dunən man g<sup>h</sup>ug<sup>h</sup>ai, tʃ<sup>h</sup>ɛi g<sup>h</sup>ədnu:

‘Once upon a time there was a man and a woman, but they didn’t like each other. The man called the woman stupid, and the woman said the same to the man. One day the man brought home a few poods<sup>16</sup> of oil and rice, and told the woman to keep it.

--When I say you’re stupid, you don’t believe me. Why did you buy this much at one time? said the woman.

--What are you saying, woman? It’s for Shrovetide. Take it and keep it.

The woman calms down, takes it, and keeps it. The woman waits for a long time, and Shrovetide doesn’t come. Then one day she sees that an unknown person is passing in front of their house, and calls to him:

--Stop, brother, are you Shrovetide?

The passerby notices that her mind is a bit lacking. He says:

--Yes, sister dear, I am.

--We’re not your servants who keep your butter and rice for you! Aren’t you ashamed? Why don’t you come and take your goods?

--Well, don’t get angry, sister dear, I was making my way to your house, but couldn’t find it.’

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<sup>16</sup> 1 pood = 16.3kg.

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