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Male Costume and Weapons as Attributes of the Presentation of Masculinity in the Armenian Traditional Culture

Lusine Gushchyan

<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-7550-5315>

Researcher of the Leading Category of Russian Museum of Ethnography (St. Petersburg)

medievist@yahoo.com

Elizaveta Neratova

<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8153-1713>

Curator of Special Collections of the Russian Museum of Ethnography

e.neratova@mail.ru

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The article discusses the ways of presenting the aesthetics of masculinity in two Armenian historical and cultural areas during the second half of the 19th - early 20th centuries. Based on the analysis of the corpus of objects preserved in one of the largest ethnographic museums in the world - the Russian Museum of Ethnography in St. Petersburg, the criteria for differences in the formation of two main types of costume complexes - western (Van men's costume) and eastern ("pan Caucasian" men's costume) are revealed. The main criterion for differences is singled out - the belt and the types of edged weapons associated with them. Daggers, sabers and checkers presented in the museum's collection are considered from the point of view of their inclusion in the Armenian culture. The article examines five items that were made by Armenian craftsmen, or existed in the Armenian environment in one capacity or another. A number of objects have epigraphic inscriptions, which make it possible to clarify their origin. The analysis of the material makes it possible to identify, first of all, the importance of the role of Armenian armorers in the Caucasus region and far beyond its borders, however, it is also important to determine the place of weapons in the presentation of the image of an Armenian man.



Տղամարդու տարազը և զենքը որպես առնականության դրսևորում հայկական մշակույթում

Լուսինե Ղուշյան

*Մանկտ Պետերբուրգի Ռուսական ազգագրական թանգարանի առաջատար
գիտաշխատող*

Ելիզավետա Ներատովա

*Մանկտ Պետերբուրգի Ռուսական ազգագրական թանգարանի մասնագիտացված
պահեստավորման բաժնի վարիչ*

Հիմնաբառեր՝ Թանգարան, ազգագրություն,
տարազ, սառը զենք, առնականության
ներկայացում:

Հոդվածում քննարկվում են առնականության գեղագիտական ներկայացման ուղիները հայկական երկու պատմամշակութային արեալներում 19-րդ դարի երկրորդ կեսին և 20-րդ դարի սկզբին: Աշխարհի խոշորագույն ազգագրական թանգարաններից մեկում՝ Մանկտ Պետերբուրգի Ռուսաստանյան ազգագրության թանգարանում պահվող առարկաների վերլուծության հիման վրա, բացահայտվում են տարազների երկու հիմնական տեսակի՝ արևմտյան (Վան) ձևավորման տարբերությունների չափանիշները. տղամարդկանց տարազ) և արևելյան («համակովկասյան» տղամարդկանց տարազ) առանձնահատկությունները: Առանձնացվում է տարբերությունների հիմնական չափանիշը՝ գոտին և դրա հետ կապված սառը զենքի տեսակները: Թանգարանի հավաքածուում ներկայացված դաշույնները, սրերը և շաշկան դիտարկվում են հայկական մշակույթի մեջ դրանց ընդգրկման տեսանկյունից: Հոդվածում մանրամասնորեն քննարկվում են հինգ առարկաներ, որոնք պատրաստվել են հայ արհեստավորների կողմից կամ այս կամ այն չափով գոյություն են ունեցել հայկական միջավայրում: Մի շարք առարկաներ ունեն արձանագրություններ, որոնք հնարավորություն են տալիս ճշտել դրանց ծագումը: Նյութի վերլուծությունը հնարավորություն է տալիս նախ և առաջ բացահայտել հայ զինագործների դերը կովկասյան տարածաշրջանում և նրա սահմաններից շատ հեռու, ինչպես նաև որոշել զենքի տեղը հայ տղամարդու կերպարում:

**Мужской костюм и оружие как атрибуты презентации маскулинности в армянской
традиционной культуре**

Лусинэ Гушян

*научный сотрудник ведущий категории Российского этнографического музея (Санкт-
Петербург)*

Ключевые слова: музей, этнография, традиционный костюм, холодное оружие, презентация маскулинности.

В статье рассматриваются способы презентации эстетики маскулинности в двух армянских историко-культурных ареалах в период второй половины XIX – начала XX веков. На основании анализа корпуса предметов, хранящихся в одном из крупнейших этнографических музеев мира – Российском этнографическом музее в Санкт-Петербурге., выявляются критерии различий в формировании двух основных типов костюмных комплексов – западного (ванский мужской костюм) и восточного («общекавказский» мужской костюм). Выделяется основной критерий различий – пояс и связанные с ними типы холодного оружия. Кинжалы, сабля и шашка, представленные в собрании музея, рассматриваются с точки зрения их включенности в армянскую культуру. В статье подробно рассматриваются пять предметов, которые были изготовлены армянскими мастерами, либо бытовали в армянской среде в том или ином качестве. Ряд предметов имеет эпиграфические надписи, которые позволяют уточнить их происхождение. Анализ материала позволяет выявить в первую очередь значение роли армян-оружейников в регионе Кавказа и далеко за его пределами, однако немаловажным является и определение места оружия в презентации образа армянского мужчины.

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Pre-modern communities of the Caucasus region and adjacent territories stereotypically are presented as dominantly male cultures. In current article, we propose to see as the basis for the manifestations of masculinity neither the character, nor the expectations of society from a man. The specific manifestations that form the image of a man and are characterized, particularly in the silhouette formed by the composition of the costume, which we will consider on the basis of the collections of the Russian Ethnographic museum. I would like to note that, speaking of this image, we mean only the so-called "folk culture", that is, the costume and weapons of officers, soldiers, officials and other civil servants will not be considered in this study.

So, considering the Armenian culture from this angle – demonstration the aesthetics of masculinity, becomes obvious, that it is not monolithic and has conditionally two variants of the image in accordance with the costume, which reflects the idea of masculinity. We can conditionally call the first type Eastern Armenian, and the second - Western Armenian type, according to the proposal given by Step'an Lisic'ian [Lisic'ian, 1955, 182–264].

The basis of both types of men's costume is a shirt, trousers, hinged outerwear, a headdress, a belt, socks and footwear options.

So, in the suit of a resident of the coast of Lake Van (Alur village, Shatakh) from the REM collection No. 3737, which we took as a reference, short-shouldered clothing (shirt, bottom jacket), outer jacket, belt clothing - pants with a wide bottom of the legs, normatively not narrowed, the two-part headdress (a hat, mostly wool and a scarf, mostly silk) and a sash - a wide, long woven belt. In some cases, a leather belt with a set in the form of a bag and a dagger could be worn with a sash.

Costumes from the Elisavetpol and Tiflis provinces from collection 3518 and a number of collections from the Museum of the Peoples of the USSR, transferred to the REM in 1948, are of a different type. The costume includes a mandatory shoulder clothing in the form of a shirt, arkhaluk, choka; belt clothes - harem pants with trouser legs tapering downwards or trouser legs that are tied up or laid in socks or boots; headdress - one-piece, in the form of a fur hat, which later became a cap; narrow leather belt with metal details.

The first type is distinguished by polychrome, an abundance of decorative techniques in the form of embroideries and stripes, the second - by the dark color of all elements of the costume, and the absence of decor. The cut of clothes is also important, which in the first type does not emphasize the waist, but, on the contrary, expands it, as well as the shoulders, and in the second - a cut with a cut-off waist, from which the long hem expands due to side wedges and gathers. Headdress differ both in composition and in the material of manufacture. Finally, the main difference between the complexes is undoubtedly the type of belt - in the first it is a wide woven sash, in the second - a narrow leather belt.

Thus, upon a more detailed examination of the complexes, one can note the difference in the design of individual objects, in the color scheme, and in the method of decoration. All this determines the differences in silhouettes, visual expansion of the torso in the first type and narrowing in the second. Rather conventionally, the first complex demonstrates the idea of a "hero" - an archaic image of a formidable male warrior, and the second - a more modern image in which strength is replaced by dexterity.

In general, the analysis of museum exhibits allows us to say that the Eastern Armenian type of costume, in a number of ways, is part of the "Pan-Caucasian" type, and the Western Armenian, in certain parameters, is part of the Mediterranean-Pontic type. At the same time, the main marker that distinguishes both types of costume is the multi-part belt and the types of weapons associated with it and the ways of wearing them.

It should be noted that, in contrast to the mountainous North Caucasian culture, weapons and the ability to use them, in the Armenian tradition, were not a dominant feature, a condition for the status of a man's personal freedom. However, weapons have become an important attribute, demonstrating the integrity of the image of a man of childbearing age and his status, coming out of the craft and merchant environment. At the same time, it should be taken into account, and I would like to emphasize this, that the general silhouette of the urban Armenian men's costume reflects the main

ideas of the “pan-Caucasian”, however, the leather belt of an adult male craftsman with a silver set is deprived of a dagger, and acquires the status of an expensive item that has real value and function of accumulated capital.

Outside the city, the dagger is an attribute of a man, without which his status becomes ambivalent; therefore, this is the main weapon of his image. All other weapons (both melee and firearms) are weapons of a warrior.

The REM collections make it possible to discuss both the existence and the manufacture of weapons in the Armenian traditional culture in the territory under consideration. Conventionally, the thesis “Armenian craftsmen to the peoples” can define the factor of weapons making in the region. The most striking example is Checkers, a type of edged weapons that Armenian artisans made, but they did not enter widely into Armenian culture.

In general, Armenians used and carried weapons in a manner similar to other peoples of the region. In the Caucasus itself, the existence of weapons in the Armenian environment was more widely developed, in the territory of the Ottoman Empire - less.

So, to illustrate weapons that existed or were made in the Armenian environment, we have chosen:

1. The dagger donated to the museum by the collector M.V. Sinegub in 1911 and registered in 1912 by A. Loris-K'alandar as “xanjal/erksayri”
2. Checker from the collection of weapons P. Potoc'ki.
3. A saber from the collection collected by S. Ter-Avetisyan in the Kazakh district of the Elisavetpol province in 1903 and registered by K. Inostrantsev under the term “t'ur” «тур»
4. Dagger purchased from a private individual in 2011, brought from Spitak.
5. Sword (Dagger) from the collection of the former Museum of the Peoples of the USSR, transferred to the REM in 1948.

It should be noted that the daggers made by the most famous Armenian masters are not presented in the REM. Nevertheless, there is one dagger in the museum's collection, which can be on a par with them. Although the name of the master blade maker is not currently known and celebrated, he was certainly a very good artisan, as evidenced by the quality of the blade, the carved ornament and the inscription made in the technique of gold inlay on steel. On the front side of the blade it is written that it was made by the master Gaxa Mamikonov for the use of Ohanjan Budałov: (ՈՒՄՄԴԱ ԳԱԽԱ ՄԱՄԻԿՕՆՕՎ Ի ՎԱԵԼՈՒՄՆ ՕՅԱՆՋԱՆ ԲՈՒՂԱՂՕՎԻ), on the back: «1827 year, November 20th made. Yohanjan Putałov» (1827= թի' + նյ ~ թրի 20-ու մն շինեցաւ + յօհանջաւն x պուտաղով).

The handle is one-piece, walrus tusk, which indicates that this is an expensive custom item. The blade is fortified into it by the rider method and is fixed only on one rivet. The scabbard has a classic design for the first third of the 19th century: from two wooden planks covered with green velvet on the front side and red leather on the back. The clip for fastening the scabbard to the belt (using a

leather loop) is steel, decorated with a gold notch, but the rim of the mouth and the tip are silver. The silver is decorated with a sparse stylized floral ornament made using the technique of engraving and niello. The background is filled with engraved zigzag lines. Finery is fully consistent with the fashion and style of the time. It should be added that this is a “kama” dagger, i.e. dagger with a straight blade – the most popular form in the Caucasus, for which this term of Iranian origin has long been accepted,

Accordingly, this expensive, custom-made dagger was made by an Armenian master. No less important, it was worn by an Armenian man, as evidenced by the corresponding inscription.

Unlike the next item - checkers, made in the city of Akhaltsikhe in 1850 by the famous gunsmith Mahdesi Keork (Keorg, Geork) Burunsuzov (Purunsuzov). Burunsuzov was born in Erzerum. He worked in Akhaltsikhe from 1828 to the 1860s. The master became world famous due to the fact, that he participated in the World Exhibitions of 1862 in London and 1867 in Paris. [Astvac'aturian, 2004, 405,408].

The inscription on the checker blade is in Russian (Cyrillic), which also underlines that the blade was forged for a non-Armenian user. The inscription is applied in the technique of notching with gold. On the front side: “Ахалц'их 1850” («Ахалцыхъ 1850»), on the back: “М. Burunsuzov” («М. Бурунсузовъ»). The handle is horn, with a forked head. Wooden scabbard (made of two wooden dies) covered with black leather. The device of the scabbard (mouth, clip and tip) is silver, decorated with a sparse stylized floral ornament, made using the technique of engraving and niello. The background is filled with engraved zigzag lines.

On the silver details is the hallmark of the Tiflis Assay Office: the city mark of Tiflis in 1850, the mark of the assay master E.I. Blumberg 1850 and 84 sample. The presence of hallmarks on an item also often indicates that the item was intended for general sale, and was not made by order of a particular person. The personal seal of P.P. Potoc'ki is attached to the handle of the checker, as this checker was received by the museum from the collection of Pavel Platonovich Potoc'ki (1857 - 1935).

As already mentioned, the checker, as a type of weapon, was not in demand among the Armenians, as it was not a traditional weapon for them. The checker of the Caucasian sample was primarily an accessory of the corresponding regular and semi-regular military units. However, other long-bladed weapons - sabers - existed in the Armenian environment. They were called “t'ur”, which is usually translated by the word "sword", because the term “t'ur” simply means a weapon with a long blade. A similar history with the name is typical for most peoples: when the existing term is transferred to more modern models when changing the everyday type of weapon.

This type of saber was widely used throughout the South Caucasus. This sample from the Armenian environment belongs to the middle of the second half of the 19th century.

Finally, I would like to draw attention to the dagger, which was not made in the Armenian environment, but it was used in it. Данный кинжал был изготовлен в знаменитой на рубеже 19 и 20 веков мастерской лакца Османа Омарова во Владикавказе. This dagger was made in the famous workshop of Osman Omarov in Lak origin in Vladikavkaz at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Osman Omarov - a native of Kazikumukh, a well-known armorer who moved to Vladikavkaz and

opened a weapons workshop there. Daggers made in Vladikavkaz, with an abundance of silver in the decoration, with deep relief engraving, which were quite expensive, dispersed throughout the Russian Empire and were in very high demand. This fashion has become not only a pan-Caucasian, but also a pan-Russian phenomenon. This dagger from the collection of the museum is interesting as a product that came out of the workshop of Osman Omarov and has its hallmarks, but most of all it is valuable as an item with a specific family history, from which we know that it existed in the Armenian environment. At one time, the dagger belonged to Harut Avetisovich Oganesyanyan (1889 - 1976), who lived in the city of Spitak. The dagger was made in 1905-1907 and, according to the owner, was a gift from his relatives before he came of age.

One object from the museum's funds stands out. It is a dagger of incongruously large dimensions. And if it were not for the Armenian inscription on the mouth of the scabbard, then the need would not have arisen here to talk about it. This kind of "daggers" (commensurate in size with swords and registered in the museum's funds with this name) and other similar large weapons with non-combat quality blades are usually correlated with Shiite ritually theatrical performances associated with the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Hussein [Malozemova, 2020, 151-189]. There is an assumption that this type of daggers served to decorate scenes on the plot of events at Karbala ("takie"). As Elena Igorevna Malozemova writes in her article: "“Takie” were decorated in accordance with the possibilities of the organizers, but S.M. Marr, among other design elements of the “takie” he saw, mentions “very large sabers of some kind of soft metal with carved hilts, which hang from the walls and sway” [Malozemova, 2020, 151-189]. At the same time, if, for example, shawls used to decorate takie could be easily bought at the bazaar, then it was difficult to acquire the necessary weapons [Malozemova, 2020, 168-169]. Therefore, according to M. Khorasani and E.I. Malozemova, weapons for takie were mostly made to order and their quality depended on the amount of funds of those people who organized these performances. Referring to an item from the REM collection, on the scabbard of which there is an Armenian owner's inscription “MIK’AĒL MIK’ĒLIEANC’” («ՄԻՔԱԷԼ ՄԻՔԷԼԻԵԱՆՅ»), we suggest that perhaps this is the name of the owner of this item and he rented it for the corresponding ritual events. This assumption seems to be somewhat realistic, given that Shiism is not widespread among Armenians. On the other hand, the Armenians lived on the territory of Iran and could have been indirectly involved in such activities (as the owners of certain attributes, for example, theatrical weapons offered for rent), which, presumably, were used as exaggeratedly large kama-daggers, whose size and design indicated for decorative purposes. The blade is decorated with engraved floral ornaments, images of animals, incl. a rabbit (considered the incarnation of Muhammad's son-in-law - Ali [Malozemova, 2020, 173]), an image of a young man (possibly Imam Hussein?), surrounded by birds, fantastic animals and flowers. The blade has imitations of Arabic script inscriptions made using the etching technique and an engraved Arabic script inscription in a cartouche: “The grave [is] faith and hope” (translation by E.I. Malozemova). Birds, lions (including one with a humanized image of the face) and a man in a turban (full face and profile) are carved on the

handle of this dagger. The figure of a man depicted on both sides of the hilt can be presumably interpreted as the image of Rustam, the hero of the Iranian epic "Shahname", who was also assigned a place in *takie* [Малоземова, 2020, 173].

In any case, this dagger-sword is an interesting example of the existence of the “theatrical” Shiite weapons in the Armenian environment.

In conclusion, we note again the two main conclusions of our study: 1. due to historical features, within the boundaries of the Armenian traditional culture, two types of not only costume complexes, but also associated ideas about the aesthetics of masculinity were formed; 2. the skill of the Armenian armorer, recognized in the region, is not the only thing that connects Armenians with weapons.

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