

## The Armenian dialect of Artvin

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### Abstract

Hrač<sup>h</sup>ea Ačařean states in his 1913 *Hayerēn Gawařakan Bařaran* (1913:39) that Artvin “remains an entirely unknown dialect”, and little has happened to change that picture in the subsequent century despite its putative membership in the mysterious -lis dialect subgroup (e.g. *ērt<sup>h</sup>lis ēs* ‘you go’). The dialect is not mentioned in most surveys of Armenian dialects, and the lone thesis on the dialect (Alaverdyan 1969) is lost, according to directors of the dialect institute (personal communication, 2001). The most extensive treatment of the dialect currently available is Gharibyan 1953:329-342, on which Grigoryan 1957:435-452 and Alaverdyan (1968a, b) appear to be based. The original but limited presentations by Ačařean and Gharibyan are based on the speech of individuals who grew up in Artvin and Batumi before the Genocide, leaving us unsure of what has become of the dialect in subsequent generations. The primary purpose of the present talk is to address this lacuna based on field work I have conducted with two middle-aged speakers of the dialect currently residing in the Los Angeles area. I focus on the following questions:

- Where is the dialect currently preserved, and by how many speakers?
- How has the dialect changed from the form reported by Ačařean, Gharibyan, and Alaverdyan?
- How does the dialect relate to the neighboring Armenian dialect groups (Hamshen, Trabzon, Xodrĵur, Erzerum/Axaltsxa/Axalkalak, Tiflis) and the other dialects of the -lis branch?