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Classical Armenian

Introduction – Part 3: Linguistic Connections



Roadmap

- Armenian: an Iranian language?
- Iranian influence: loanwords, calques, religio-cultural
- Armenian as a separate branch of Indo-European
- The position of Armenian in Indo-European
- Armenian and its Indo-European neighbors
- Armenian as a Near Eastern and Caucasian language

Armenian: an Iranian language?

- 19th c.: Armenian classified as an **Iranian** language (e.g. by Bopp, Müller, Windischmann)
- Iranian appearance of Armenian due to the huge number of **loanwords** that have entered the language at different times, from Old and Middle Iranian languages.

Iranian influence: loanwords

- Some early loanwords (before the Armenian “sound shift”):

t’šnami ‘enemy’ < Iran. **duš-manyu-* ‘evil-minded’ (Av. *dušmainiiu-*)
with **d* > **t* > *t’*;

partēz ‘garden’ < Iran. **paridaiza-* (Av. *pairi-daēza-* ‘enclosure’; also
borrowed into Gr. παράδεισος, cf. NE *paradise*)
with **d* > *t*, but not yet **p* > **p^h* (> *h*);

arcat’ ‘silver’ (: Lat. *argentum*, Skt. *rajatá-*, Av. *arəzata-*):
Vnt-* > Arm. *-nd/-n* ((d)wīkmtī* > *k’san* ‘twenty’, **ant-o-* in *dr-and*
‘door post’), so **arġento-/arġnto-* > Arm. **arcind/arcand-*

Iranian influence: loanwords

- Iranian words only attested as loanwords in Armenian:

erašx ‘guarantee’ < Iran. **raxši-*, cf. Skt. *rakṣ-* ‘protect’;

hraparak ‘place, court’ < Iran. **fra-pādaka-*, cf. Syr. loanword *hrpdq*;

nirh ‘sleep(iness)’ < Iran. **nidrā-*, cf. Skt. *nidrā-*;

parawand ‘fetter’ < Iran. **pādabanda-*, cf. Skt. *pādabhandā-*.

Iranian influence: loanwords

- Meillet, Benveniste, Bolognesi: loanwords from various Iranian languages/dialects, at least **Parthian** (Northwest) and **Middle Persian** (Southwest)

NW	Arm.	SW	ex.
<i>s</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>h</i>	Arm. <i>vnas</i> ‘damage’ : Man. MP <i>wināh</i> , NP <i>gonāh</i>
<i>rd</i>	<i>rd</i>	<i>l</i>	Arm. <i>vard</i> ‘rose’ : MP <i>gul</i> ‘flower’
<i>hr</i>	<i>rh/h</i>	<i>s</i>	Arm. <i>parh/pah</i> ‘guard’, Parth. <i>pāhr</i> , Av. <i>pāθra-</i> : MP NP <i>pās</i>
<i>b</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	Arm. <i>bar-a-pan</i> ‘doorkeeper’, Parth. <i>bar</i> ‘door’ :: MP NP <i>dar</i> ‘door’
<i>sp</i>	<i>sp</i>	<i>s</i>	Arm. <i>asp-</i> ‘horse’ in compounds :: OP <i>asa-</i> , MP <i>as-</i> (<i>aswār</i> ‘cavalry’)
<i>ž</i>	<i>ž</i>	<i>z</i>	Arm. <i>žamanak</i> ‘time’, Parth. <i>žamān</i> ‘id.’ <jm’n> :: Man. MP <i>zaman</i>
<i>g</i>	<i>γ</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>mogpet</i> ‘Mazdean high-priest’, Man. Parth. <i>magbed</i> :: NP <i>mowbad</i> (Arm. <i>moypet</i>)

Iranian influence: calques

- *erdowmn owtel* ‘to eat an oath’
- Yovhannes Mandakowni (5th c.):
*orpês k’ristoneayk’ en ew gołk’, k’ristoneayk’ en ew pořnikk’, noyn
k’ristoneayk’ en ew hakařakołk’, erdmnahark’ ew **erdmnakerk’***
“Just as there are Christians who are thieves and whores, there are
Christians who are renegades and perjurers.”
- *erdowmn* ‘oath’, *owtem* : AOR *eker* ‘eat’
- Middle Persian *sōkand xvartan* ‘to eat an oath’, Modern Persian
saugand xurdan

Iranian influence: religio-cultural

- **saukanta*- ‘sulphur’, cf. Av. *saokəntavant*- ‘containing sulphur’
- Context: Vd. (Videvdat) IV.54f. ordeal (test) for a liar: must drink :
āpam saokəntavaitīm zaranyāvaitīm vīdušavaitīm
“water containing sulphur and gold dust, which brings out the truth.”
- Negative meaning in Armenian due to invocation of heathen gods:
pad xvarrah i Ohrmazd bay u dēn i māzdēsnān “in the name of the
glory of God Ohrmazd and the religion of the Mazdaists”
(*Ayātkar i Zarērān* 41, 42, 52).

Armenian as an Indo-European language

- Hübschmann (1875) was the first to recognize Armenian as a **separate branch** of the Indo-European language family.
- After eliminating all known Iranian borrowings, he was left with a small set of several hundred words of distinctly **non-Iranian** appearance, which had undergone very different sound changes.
- These words belonged to core lexical domains (numerals, kinship terms, body parts, everyday objects, basic verbs).
- Cf. the Armenian and Avestan forms in the next slide.

Armenian as an Indo-European language

	Armenian	Avestan		Armenian	Avestan
'one'	<i>mi</i>	<i>aēuua-</i>	'nine'	<i>inn</i>	<i>nauua</i>
'two'	<i>erku</i>	<i>duuā</i>	'ten'	<i>tasn</i>	<i>dasa</i>
'three'	<i>erek'</i>	<i>θraiiō</i>	'father'	<i>hayr</i>	<i>pitar-</i>
'four'	<i>č'ork'</i>	<i>čaθbārō</i>	'mother'	<i>mayr</i>	<i>mātar-</i>
'five'	<i>hing</i>	<i>paṇča</i>	'brother'	<i>eṭbayr</i>	<i>brātar-</i>
'six'	<i>vec'</i>	<i>xšuuāš</i>	'sister'	<i>k'oyr</i>	<i>x^vanhar-</i>
'seven'	<i>ewt'n</i>	<i>hapta</i>	'daughter'	<i>dowstr</i>	<i>dug^adar-</i>
'eight'	<i>owt'</i>	<i>aštā</i>	'brother-in-law'	<i>taygr</i>	<i>devár-</i> (Vedic)

Armenian as an Indo-European language

- These lexical items are now considered to be directly inherited from **Proto-Indo-European (PIE)**, the reconstructible ancestor of all the known ancient and modern Indo-European languages.
- Because most of the lexicon is of foreign origin, this makes it difficult to determine some of the more complex **sound changes** that have taken place from PIE to Armenian.

The position of Armenian within Indo-European

- Generally accepted that Armenian shares areal affiliations with **Greek**, **Phrygian**, and **Indo-Iranian**.
- This dialectal position makes geographical sense, and also accords with the testimony of Herodotus (see above).
- Watkins (2001: 57) viewed these languages as belonging to a large subgroup “on the basis of shared grammatical features, like the ‘augment’-prefix, the prohibitive negation, and the whole structural organization of the verbal system.... This group forms the basis on which the proto-language was first reconstructed, and it is probably the most recent in time of the various ‘branches’ or subgroups of the family.”

Armenian and Greek

- Already in the early 20th century, Pedersen and Meillet listed phonological, morphological, and above all lexical isoglosses linking Armenian and **Greek**.
- Solta (1960) and Djahukian (1982) concluded that Armenian shares the most lexical isoglosses with Greek, with Indo-Aryan in second place.
- Some scholars (e.g. Hamp) have gone so far as to speak of a “Greco-Armenian” subgroup of Indo-European.
- However, several recent studies argue against an especially close connection between Greek and Armenian. See especially Clackson (1994) and now Kim (2018).

Armenian and the Balkan *Sprachbund*?

- Several features appear to group Armenian with Greek, Albanian, and Phrygian in a **Balkan linguistic area** or *Sprachbund*.
- Gr. ἄρ-νῦ-μαι ‘receive, take’ : Arm. *ar-now-m*
- Arm. *ar-nem* ‘do, make’, aor. *arari* : Gr. ἀραρεῖν (→ pres. ἀραρίσκω)
- Gr. γυνή ‘woman’, pl. γυναῖκες : Phryg. κναικο : Arm. *kin*, pl. *kanayk^c*
- Gr. μέχρι ‘until’ : Arm. *merj* ‘near’ < **me-ǵ^hsr-i* ‘at hand’ (: **ǵ^hesr-* > Gk. χεῖρ, Arm. *jeṛn* ‘hand’)
- negation Gr. οὐκ/χι ~ Arm. *oč’* < **ne...h₂oju k^uid* ‘not in a lifetime’ (: cf. Fr. *(ne)...pas/rien/personne*), Alb. *(a)s*
- suppletive paradigm of ‘be’: Gr. εἰμί : ἔπλετο (→ εἰμί : ἐγενόμην); Arm. *em* : *linim*, aor. *eṭew*; Alb. *ështëë* : aor. *qe* (< **e-k^ulh₁-e/o-*), OAlb. *cleh* (Buzuku)

Armenian and its IE neighbors in prehistory

- Martirosyan (2013) investigates all the claimed lexical isoglosses shared by Armenian and Greek and concludes (p. 85):

“...that Armenian, Greek, (Phrygian) and Indo-Iranian were dialectally close to each other. Within this hypothetical dialect group, Proto-Armenian was situated between Proto-Greek (to the west) and Proto-Indo-Iranian (to the east). The Indo-Iranians then moved eastwards, while the Proto-Armenians and Proto-Greeks remained in a common geographical region for a long period and developed numerous shared innovations. At a later stage, together or independently, they borrowed a large number of words from the Mediterranean/Pontic substrate language(s), mostly cultural and agricultural words, as well as animal and plant designations.”

Armenian as a Near Eastern and Caucasian language

- Since **Urartian** is attested from the 9th to 6th cc. BC in the Armenian highlands of eastern Anatolia, it is logical to assume some Urartian substratum in Armenian.
- Our knowledge of Urartian is limited, but several likely loanwords in Armenian have been identified, e.g. *caray* 'slave', *xnjor* 'apple (tree)'.

See Diakonoff 1985, Greppin 2008.

Armenian as a Near Eastern and Caucasian language

- Similarities between Armenian and **Georgian** (Kartvelian) have long been remarked, e.g. in the consonant inventories or lack of grammatical gender.
- However, direct influence of Kartvelian on Armenian appears to have been relatively limited. Cf. Gippert (2001).
- With the adoption of Christianity, several loanwords entered Old Georgian from Greek, Syriac, and Middle Iranian through Armenian, e.g.
 - *Huria(y)* ‘Jew’ ← **Hureay* ← Syr. *īhūdāyā*,
 - *Bagrat* ← Parth. *Bay-dāt* ‘given by God’,
 - both showing the typical Armenian replacement of [ǫ] by *r*.

Armenian as a Near Eastern and Caucasian language

- Later Armenian developed a largely agglutinative nominal inflection.

Cf. *sar* 'mountain' in Classical vs. Modern Eastern Armenian:

	singular	plural	singular	plural
nominative	<i>sar</i>	<i>sar-k'</i>	<i>sar</i>	<i>sar-er</i>
genitive	<i>sar-oy</i>	<i>sar-oc'</i>	<i>sar-i</i>	<i>sar-er-i</i>
locative	<i>sar</i>	<i>sar-s</i>	<i>sar-owm</i>	<i>sar-er-owm</i>
ablative	<i>sar-oy</i>	<i>sar-oc'</i>	<i>sar-ic'</i>	<i>sar-er-ic'</i>
instrumental	<i>sar-ov</i>	<i>sar-ovk'</i>	<i>sar-ov</i>	<i>sar-er-ov</i>

This has been ascribed to the influence of **Turkic** languages, but could well have evolved independently.

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շնորհակալութիւն

Thank you for your attention!