

Aspects of the European Substrata in Armenian

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Armenian: loanword layers

1. **Middle Iranian** (esp. Parthian, 3rd c. BCE – 3rd c. CE)
2. **Greek** (at least two layers)
3. **Classical Syriac** with the introduction of Christianity and some older **Semitic** loans
4. **Kartvelian**, especially **Zan** languages (Megrelian and Laz)
5. **Anatolian**, at least a few from Luwian.
6. **Urartian**, ca. 900-600 BCE (Hurrian too?)
7. **???**

Identifying non-IE (substrate) words

Challenges for Armenian:

- Isolation → fewer comparanda
- Dilution by later loanwords → smaller corpora
- Sound change erosion → ambiguity

Consequences:

- Irregular “cognates” of a sufficiently old age can only be identified across branches.
- Need to identify Armenian material that ties in with already familiar substrate words and alternations in Europe.
- In some cases non-IE comparanda?

‘mustard’

- Gk. νᾱπυ, σίνᾱπι ‘mustard’ (*Brassica/Sinapis*)
< **s(i)nāp*-
- Lat. *nāpus* ‘turnip’ (root of *Brassica rapa*)
< **(s)nāp*- (or from Greek)
- Arm. *niw* ‘wild mustard’ (hapax, Elišē)
< **(s)nēp*-V-
- Alternation **e* ~ **a* known esp. in Greek:
ἄγχουσα, ἔγχουσα ‘*Anchusa tinctoria*’
γάλινθοι, γέλινθοι (Hes.) ‘chickpeas’
γέφυρα ~ Arm. *kamowrj* ‘bridge’
phps. Lat. *rāpum* ‘turnip’ ~ OCS *rěpa* < **rēp*-?



Turnip flower

Preliminary corpus, best material

1. ayc	'goat'	21.karič	'scorpion'
2. arowoyt	'alfalfa'	22.kostł	'holly, bird-lime'
3. awaz	'sand'	23.kori	'channel'
4. bołk	'radish'	24.hac ^c	'bread'
5. bowrgn	'tower'	25.mor	'blackberry'
6. gari	'barley'	26.niw	'wild mustard'
7. ewł	'oil, fat'	27.ort ^c	'vine'
8. t ^c arp ^c	'creel'	28.ospn	'lentil'
9. t ^c eł	'elm'	29.pal, pał	'rock'
10.t ^c owz	'fig'	30.poytn	'pot'
11.t ^c owmb	'bank, dam'	31.ĵnar	'harp, lyre'
12.t ^c owp ^c	'bush'	32.salam(b)	'francolin'
13.lor	'quail'	33.sayl	'cart'
14.lowsanownk ^c	'lynx'	34.sex	'melon'
15.xstor, sxtor	'garlic'	35.siser ⁿ	'chickpea'
16.cłxni	'hinge'	36.siwn	'column'
17.*kałc ^c (dial.)	'milk'	37.sownk	'mushroom'
18.kamowrĵ	'bridge'	38.k ^c ałirt ^c	'animal stomach'
19.kask	'chestnut'		
20.karb	'poplar, aspen'		

Geographic distribution

Number of correspondences out of total 38

1. Greek	36	95 %
2. Italic	13	34 %
3. Germanic	10	26 %
4. Albanian	8	21 %
5. Balto-Slavic	5	13 %
6. Celtic	4	11 %
7. Anatolian	3	8 %
8. Indo-Iranian	2	5 %

Geographic distribution

Etymon	DISTR	Greek	Albanian	Italic	Germanic	Anatolian	Balto-Slavic	Celtic	Indo-Iranian	WCauc.	ECauc.	Kartv.	Berber	Semitic	Hattic
blackberry	7														
barley	5														
goat	5														
garlic	4														
holly	4														
sand	4														
lynx	3,5														
vine	3														
fig	3														
mushroom	3														
poplar, aspen	3														
elm	3														
harp	3														
pot	3														
rock	2,5														
chickpea	2,5														
milk	2,5														
animal stomach	2														
francolin/dove	2														
wild mustard	2														
radish	2														
melon	2														
alfalfa/pea	2														
oil	2														
bank	2														
bridge	2														
tower	2														
quail	1,5														
column	1,5														
scorpion	1														
bush	1														
chestnut	1														
lentil	1														
bread	1														
cart	1														
creel	1														
hinge	1														
channel	1														

Semantic distribution

- | | | |
|---|----|-------------------------------------|
| • Flora, agri/horticulture | 17 | wider distribution |
| • Mediterranean crops
'chickpea', 'garlic', 'fig', 'melon'
'olive/oil', 'chestnut' | | Armenian, Greek
Albanian, Italic |
| • Technical terms | 10 | narrower distribution |
| • Architecture
'bank', 'bridge', 'tower', 'column', 'channel' | | Armenian + Greek
Later?? |
| • Fauna | 6 | |
| • Secondary products | 3 | |
| • The natural environment | 2 | |

Chronology: one or more strata?

- **Mostly ambiguity**
- Arm. k^h = Gk. k *k^calirt^c* ‘animal stomach’
~ Cypr. (Hes.) **καλίδια** ‘entrails’
- Arm. k = Gk. g **kałc^c* ‘milk’ ~ Gk. **γάλα(κτ-)**
- Like inherited: (*k^cerem* ‘I scratch’ = Gk. **κείρω**)
- Arm. k vs. Gk. k *kask* ‘chestnut’ < **Kast-* ~ Gk. **κάστανον**
karič ‘scorpion’ < **Karid-ĭ-* ~ Gk. **κᾱρίς, -ίδος**
- **Borrowed after the Armenian sound shift?**
- **Or an underlying voicing alternation?** (**gast-*, **garid-* etc.)
cf. *kori* ‘channel’ < **gurio-*
~ Gk. **κορ-χυρέα, γορ-γύριον**
- Arm. s ~ Gk. s ? *sex* ‘melon’ ~ Gk. **σίκυα** ‘gourd’
?< **kék^h-* ~ Lat. *cucumis* ‘cucumber’
sayl ‘cart’ ~ Gk. **σατίνη** ‘chariot’
← Thracian? Cf. Hes. **σάτιλλα** ‘a constellation’
sring ‘pipe’ ~ Gk. **σύριγξ** (prob. a Greek loan)
- Contrast: *awaz* ‘sand’ ~ Gk. **ἄμαθος, ψάμμος** etc.
- The existence of several strata, hence a long period of contact with this substrate (e.g. Martirosyan 2013: 123) cannot be confirmed.

Chronology: relative dating

- **The European/Mediterranean loans in Armenian pre-date at least a number of important sound changes.**
- The Armenian sound shift (partly?).
- First palatalization:
 - Arm. *siser̄n* ‘chickpea’ ~ Lat. *cicer* ‘id.’
 - Arm. *siwn* ‘pillar’ ~ Gk. κίων ‘id.’
 - Arm. *cl̄xn-i* ‘hinge’ < **ǵilk^huN*-? ~ Gk. γί(γ)λυμος ‘id.’ (Martirosyan 2016)
- No examples of primary palatalization in loanwords from known sources.
- No sound shift after ca. 900 BCE:
 - Arm. *owłt* ‘camel’ ← Urartian *ul̄tu*
 - Arm. *babay* (lex.) ‘hill’ ← Urartian **babā*, *babānā* ‘mountainous’
 - Arm. *darbin* ‘smith’ ← Urartian **dabrinā* (cf. Hur. *tabre/inni* ‘smith’)

‘(chick)pea; alfalfa’

- Gk. ἐρέβινθος ‘chickpea’, ὀροβος ‘bitter vetch’

*ereb-/*orob-

- Lat. *ervum* ‘bitter vetch’

*erū-o-

- PGm. **arwīt-* ‘pea’

*orū-īd-

- Arm. *ar(o)woyt*, *ar(o)wowt* (etc.)
‘alfalfa’ (*Medicago sativa*, Galen dict.)

“*o(s)rVb-oud-” ?



Firo002/Flagstaffotos

-oyt for -owt?

- Is the standard variant *arowoyt* hypercorrect for *arowowt*?
- Usual pattern: stressed *oy* /uj/ - stressed *ow* /u/, cf. *loys* 'light', gen. *lowsoy*
- Restoration after a late derivative, e.g. diminutive **arowowt-ik*?
- -owt not always the adjective suffix?
Etymologically obscure plant names:

xtowt 'Scolopendium'

kałnowt 'Ononis spinosa' (?)

krkowt 'twig'

- **-ūd-* as a variant of **-īd-*

Gk. ὄλυνθος 'winter fig'

Lat. *hirundo* 'swallow', *harundo* 'reed, cane'

PGm. **albut-* 'swan'

- Thus **(V)rōb-ūd-* vel sim. ?

Parallels in the Caucasus?

- **‘goat’**: Arm. *ayc*, Gk. αἴξ, Alb. *edh, dhi* (**aiǵ-*) ~ Skt. *ajā-*, Lith. *ožỹs* (**aǵ-*)
- Proto-Circassian **hač:a* ‘goat’
- **‘garlic’**: Arm. *xstor, sxtor*, Gk. σκόδορον, σκόροδον, Alb. *hurdhë, hudhër*
- Proto-Circassian **śaḱǰar*, Abkhaz *a-saḱǰar* ‘ramsons’
- **‘bridge’**: Arm. *kamowrj*, Gk. γέφυρα (**g^wV(m/b^h)ur(-i-)*)
- Proto-Abkhaz **q^wembər-* ‘beam’ (cf. Martirosyan 2010: 352)
- **‘fig’**: Arm. *t^cowz*, Gk. (Boeot.) τῦκον, Lat. *fīcus* (**pu/ik/g-*)
- Udi (EC) *təxən* ‘fig’ – a relic?
- Other EC languages borrowed Ge. *leyvi* or Turk./Ru *inžir*.

Conclusions

- The oldest identifiable non-IE stratum of loanwords in Armenian is largely contiguous with a part of the Greek substratum; secondarily one found in Italic and Germanic.
- The relative chronology suggests a relatively old dating of these loans (probably 2nd millennium BCE) but the duration of the contact interface is uncertain.
- The geographic and semantic distribution is consistent with a generally Mediterranean substrate, but occasionally stretching its influence to Northern Europe (at other times to the Caucasus?)
- The distribution and particularly semantics favours the Neolithic substrate hypothesis. Large representation of the domain of agri/horticulture and urbanization/architecture.

Perspectives and future goals

- Consequences for the migration of the Proto-Armenians?
 - The wider distribution of the “Mediterranean” substrate still makes it difficult to exclude other options than the traditional Balkan/Anatolia route (viz. the “Transcaucasian” trajectory). However, the large overlap of Armenian with Greek material suggests that this direction is the most probable.
- Categorization of the completely isolated foreign words (phonology, morphology, semantics).
Corpus is large but heterogeneous.
- Further inclusion of non-IE comparanda.

շնորհակալութի՛ւն մտադրութեան մամար:



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