

# Armeniaca

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Editors-in-chief

Aldo Ferrari

Alessandro Orengo

Zaroui Pogossian

Anna Sirinian

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# Armeniaca

## International Journal of Armenian Studies

Annual journal

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## Note from the Editors-in-Chief

Aldo Ferrari  
Alessandro Orengo  
Zaroui Pogossian  
Anna Sirinian

The editors-in-chief of *Armeniaca. International Journal of Armenian Studies* are pleased to offer its first issue to the attention of the readers. This initiative responds to the ever-growing diffusion of electronic journals in academia and the need to provide such a scholarly instrument also for Armenian studies: an open access outlet that follows a double-blind peer review procedure. We wish to thank everyone who took part in the realization of this first volume, particularly the contributors and the guest editors.

*Armeniaca. International Journal of Armenian Studies* embraces an international perspective and we hope that Armenologists from around the globe will consider it for their future publications and the diffusion of their research. It is open to the main fields of research in Armenian studies (archaeology, art, philology, literature, linguistics, history) and accepts articles in English, Italian, French, and German. We are looking forward to working with colleagues in the future and strengthening the field of Armenian Studies through yet another venue.





# Introduction

## Armenia(n) Through the Ages

Robin Meyer  
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Irene Tinti  
Università di Pisa, Italia

**Summary** 1 Background. – 2 Philology and Ethnography. – 3 Linguistics. – 4 Archaeology.

### 1 Background

The peer-reviewed articles collected in this first, thematic issue of *Armeniaca. International Journal of Armenian Studies* all concern to some extent the Armenian language, its varieties and/or individual manifestations in textual form, and together span nearly the entire length of Armenian written culture, from the 5th-6th centuries to the present time.<sup>1</sup>

This collection owes its unifying theme and draws its original inspiration from a scholarly conversation between the authors and numerous other colleagues that began on the occasion of the international conference *Armenian Through the Ages: Linguistic and Philological Perspectives*, jointly organised by the guest editors of the present issue.<sup>2</sup> Those preliminary considerations, as well as the reflections, re-

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**1** Although these lines have been jointly conceived, developed, and edited by the two authors, Irene Tinti is responsible for writing sections 1, 2 and 4; Robin Meyer for section 3. In their capacity as editors of the present issue, they both wish to thank the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research (OCBR), the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), and the Nubar Pasha Fund for Armenian Studies for their generous contributions to the publication of this volume.

**2** The conference, originally scheduled for 2020 and set to take place at Wolfson College, University of Oxford, was moved online due to the pandemic and eventually held on 22 January 2021. Beside Robin Meyer and Irene Tinti, the scientific committee included Valentina Calzolari, James Clackson, Theo Maarten van Lint, Alessandro Oren-

actions and counter-reactions that followed, have informed and enriched the papers and helped them reach their present form.

## 2 Philology and Ethnography

Of the ten articles collected here, three adopt a philological perspective and focus on one or more literary works, their linguistic and/or textual features, and the witnesses that have concretely preserved them. All three also highlight one characteristic feature of Armenian texts, namely the interactions and cross-fertilisations with other linguistic and cultural traditions.

Clara Sanvito's paper, "Շքակոխսն զմեր զփրկութիւնն, hapax nella traduzione armena dell'*Epideixis* di Sant'Ireneo di Lione: 'gettare sopra come ombra la nostra salvezza'" combines the methodologies of philology and theology to focus on a theological term that to date is only attested twice in the Armenian version of the otherwise lost *Epideixis* by St Irenaeus of Lyons. In both cases, the compound verb շքակոխսն has a variation on զփրկութիւսս 'our salvation' as its object. Working on the assumption that the term in question is most likely modelled on Greek, which is not uncommon for technical terms in Hellenising translations, Sanvito sets out to identify its most likely antecedent. On the basis of the attested bilingual correspondences between Greek and Armenian components, she argues that շքակոխսն is likely a semicalque on a Greek transitive verb. Having identified three possible candidates, she then conducts a detailed study of the usage of each in the Greek Scriptures, and concludes that շքակոխսն was likely used to render ἐπιτοκιάζω ('throw [our salvation] as a shade upon...'); her hypothesis is corroborated by a comparison with similar texts by Irenaeus and other Christian authors.

In "The Anonymous Saint in the Armenian Tradition: Alexi(an)os the Voluntary Pauper or the Anonymous 'Man of God'?", Anna Rogozhina deals with a story that is attested at least from the 6th century in Syriac sources and circulated widely in Byzantium and throughout the Christian East, but whose Armenian incarnation has received comparatively little attention from scholars. After outlining the basics of the legend and summarising its main variants and alterations (such as the Anonymous Saint's acquisition of a name in 9th-century Byzantium), Rogozhina focuses on Armenia, where the commemoration of the Saint was incorporated into the annual liturgical calendar by the 14th century at the latest. The Armenian legend has been preserved in two main versions, a short synaxaric text (Arm I) and a

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go, and Bert Vaux. The programme, recordings of some of the papers, and other relevant information can be found here: <https://sites.google.com/view/armlingphil2020/>.

fuller Life (Arm II), preserved in fewer manuscripts. After briefly discussing the documentary situation, including the available editions, Rogozhina addresses some specific features of Arm II in particular, such as its style and the conspicuous absence of personal names and other details. Finally, she draws some preliminary conclusions as to the Armenian versions' relations to the other incarnations of the legend, suggesting that Arm II likely reflects the Syriac layer of the legend, while Arm I is most likely based on the Greek one.

In the third paper in this section, "The Poetic Middle Armenian of *Kafas* in the *Alexander Romance*", Alex MacFarlane focuses on short monorhymed poems that are associated, in the manuscript tradition, with the Armenian version of the legendary history of Alexander III of Macedon (and later were also transmitted independently). These poetic texts, known as *kafas*, function as both captions to images and commentaries or additions to the main text (which is in prose); they repeat events, provide new details, and help the reader navigate exotic elements, heighten the impact of the relevant scenes, and/or reflect morally on the actions of the characters. While the *Alexander Romance* is written in Classical Armenian, the *kafas*, composed in the 13th-16th centuries, are written in the vernacular language and contain both Classical and Middle Armenian features (including loanwords from Persian, Arabic, and Turkish). The paper examines the interplay between the poetic requirements of meter and rhyme and the linguistic features of Middle Armenian, and points to cases where the choice between competing words or forms (e.g. alternative nominative plural endings; present and imperfect indicatives both with and without the particle *լու*) is dictated by the poetry. It also reflects on the attitudes and/or reactions of poets, traditors, and audiences towards poetry that crossed and incorporated several registers of language.

While the papers discussed so far all apply a philological approach to the study of ancient texts, the fourth article in the collection, authored by Carla Kekejian, adopts an ethnographic perspective to offer "A Brief Introduction to *Harsnerēn*" ('Language of the Bride'). This was a gesture-based form of communication used by married women in Armenia, meant to provide some means of conveying necessary information in families where the practice of *č'xōskanut'iw*n ('not-speaking') was otherwise enforced on brides. The extent of a woman's silence as well as her use of *Harsnerēn* varied depending on household dynamics and relationships, but permission to speak was (almost always) eventually granted, often by the dominant in-law, or implicitly when that in-law died or when the bride's first child was born. While also referring to pre-existing scholarly literature, the paper chiefly describes the fieldwork the author personally conducted in 2016 and 2018 in six villages in rural Armenia, filming and documenting interviews with former users of *Harsnerēn* or other people involved (e.g. the family members of former users). Interestingly, her

data show that the practice of silent-keeping, while mostly a tradition of the past, was (is?) still in use as recently as the 21st century in rare cases. Kekejian has documented signs that partly overlap, partly differ from those attested in previous studies. Her working hypothesis is that some uniformity of *Harsnerēn* existed, as women in different villages demonstrated similar gestures not only to refer to actions such as ‘eat’ or ‘drink’, but also for more complex yet highly relevant referents such as ‘mother-in-law’. She argues that the study of such practices allows for an examination of the relationship between language and power dynamics in intimate, familial, and social relationships, and thus deserves further research.

### 3 Linguistics

The transition to the more linguistically-oriented part of this collection is conceptually not as abrupt as the diversity of methodologies involved might suggest at first. The approaches in question complement one another and collectively illustrate, once again, that without a thorough understanding of the language(s) associated with a particular culture and the textual history of its primary sources, any deeper understanding of more complex aspects of said culture is inevitably hampered.

In the first paper of this section, “From Manuscript to Tagged Corpora. An Automated Process for Ancient Armenian or Other Under Resourced Languages of the Christian East”, Chahan Vidal-Gorène and Bastien Kindt bridge the gap between linguistics and philology by delineating the processes behind the journey from written documents to digital corpora. On the example of a 17th-century gospel manuscript, they describe in detail the creation of an annotated Armenian corpus by means of a semi-supervised process, using tools developed by and pre-trained as part of the Calfa and GREgORI projects, beginning with layout analysis, text and line recognition, and line extraction and leading to lemmatisation and morphosyntactic analysis by form matching and through mediation by a trained Recurrent Neural Network. This strategy, using a generic model which is gradually specialised on the task at hand, yields lemmatisation and part-of-speech analysis accuracies above 90% and thus illustrates clearly the potential and crucial importance of such strategies for the digitisation of documents in understudied languages such as Armenian and the generation of corpora on their basis for use by linguists and philologists.

The other five linguistics papers gathered here share one important commonality with the first: their reliance on and use of corpus data to inform their method and conclusions. In terms of time periods, they span the whole gamut of the linguistic history of Armenian, from its pre-literary form to modern varieties, and are presented in what follows in approximate chronological order.

In his paper “A New Look at Old Armenisms in Kartvelian”, Rasmus Thorsø considers seven Armenian etyma (*poni* փոնի ‘ford’, cp. Arm. հուն; OGe. *ruy* ռյը ‘small stream, channel’, cp. Arm. առու; Ge. *γvino* ճvինո ‘wine’, cp. Arm. գինի; OGe. *γw(v)ay* վյ(ջ)այ ‘juniper’, cp. Arm. գի; OGe. *tirkumel-ni* տիրքւմէլնի ‘kidney’, cp. Arm. երկկամն; Ge. *soḵo* Նօջօ ‘mushroom’, cp. Arm. սունկ(ս); Ge. *čero* ճերօ ‘crane’, cp. Arm. կռունկ) which are supposed to have been borrowed into Kartvelian at an early date. Based on established Armenian sound changes and comparative evidence from other loanwords, Thorsø is able to establish a tentative relative chronology of borrowing. The Armenian words listed above must have been borrowed into Proto-Georgian-Zan at a time when certain Kartvelian sound changes had not yet come to completion (e.g. loss of final syllables; \*ɣ<sup>w</sup> > g; etc.) and before the first Greek and Iranian loans, which do no longer undergo these changes. Taking into consideration further loan data from Armenian, he suggests that the period of contact between Proto-Armenian and Proto-Georgian-Zan therefore ought to fall in the latter half of the 2nd millennium BCE.

Moving on to the earliest literary texts, Hana Aghababian’s paper “Classical Armenian Deixis: Issues of Translation” deals with the problems arising in translating deictic references from a two-way to a three-way system. While Biblical Greek only differentiates two localities (proximal οὗτος and distal ἐκεῖνος), Classical Armenian knows proximal, medial, and distal forms, expressed by clitics, adjectives or pronouns using the morphs (-)s(-), (-)d(-), and (-)n(-), respectively. Using the Gospel of Matthew as her test corpus, Aghababian explores how Armenian medial deixis is used, and to what extent the Armenian usage can be compared to the Latin translation of the same text, given that Latin also has a three-way differentiation (*hic*, *iste*, and *ille*). While Armenian and Latin share in only translating the Greek proximal deixis as medial, they do not agree in all instances when such a translation is warranted. This prompts Aghababian to suggest that the decision of the translator, whilst systematic in each language, is rooted in the individual idiom and represents a stylistic choice or, at times, even an interpretation of the passage translated.

Combining elements of the two previous contributions, Katherine Hodgson approaches the “Grammaticalization of the Definite Article in Armenian” in her article. The three-way system already mentioned marks definiteness through suffixation, which is not typical of Indo-European languages, but finds parallels in Kartvelian, so Hodgson. This marker in Kartvelian has grammaticalised over time and has become first a marker of argument status and then a part of the case system. In this paper, using a corpus of Eastern Armenian texts as well as insights from typological research, she argues (a) that the enclitic article in Classical Armenian arose through contact with Kartvelian; (b) that over the course of time, this article lost its deic-

tic function in favour of marking definiteness; and (c) that in Modern Armenian, the same enclitic article has further followed a grammaticalization path leading to its marking (core) argument status rather than definiteness or specificity.

Exchanging definite for indefinite, Hasmik Sargsyan traces the development of “The Forms of the Indefinite Article in Eastern Armenian”, taking into account pre-modern, early modern and modern colloquial sources. Comparing the actual use of the forms *մի* and *մէկ*, traditionally interpreted as the indefinite article and the number ‘one’ respectively, in three texts (Xaç’atur Abovean’s *Wounds of Armenia*, Abraham Erewanc’i’s *History of Wars*, and Petros di Sargis Gilanënc’*s Chronicle*) as well as in the Eastern Armenian National Corpus, Sargsyan shows that no clear-cut definition between the two functions of indefinite article and numeral can be made since neither form is used entirely consistently. She notes that *մի* is not used as a bare numeral, but co-occurs with numeral classifiers for quantification. By contrast, *մէկ* largely occurs in the modern standard language, but rarely in colloquial or early modern texts; its preponderance in Abovyan’s text is attributed to influences from Western Armenian. She ends with an outlook on what further corpus-based studies may bring to light.

Finally, staying in the present, Victoria Khurshudyan and Anaid Donabedian present their research on “Cleft Constructions in Modern Armenian”. While cleft constructions are commonly associated with languages exhibiting strict constituent order, varieties of Modern Armenian show both more variable constituent order and these constructions, consisting of a fronted phrase and copula connected to the matrix clause by a pseudo-relative (type: *ես է որ ասաց*, ‘It is I who said’). This strategy serves focalisation and represents the strongest expression available of this process in Armenian. The diachronic stability of (pseudo-)clefts in Armenian and its varieties across time leads them to argue in favour of a grammaticalization pathway from such cleft constructions to another focalisation strategy, namely copula movement (cp. unmarked *ես գնում եմ*, ‘I am going’, and focalised *ես եմ գնում*, ‘I am going’). The latter process exists to differing extents and with different specific functions in the modern varieties, suggesting a later and independent development as compared to the cleft construction. They emphasise, however, that other dimensions such as areal and contact phenomena cannot be ignored in explaining this development.

The articles included in this volume confirm, if need be, that the process of understanding is cyclical. Not only can insights from Modern Armenian linguistics inform research in the Classical language, and vice versa; the knowledge and insight gleaned from linguistic and philological studies provide information for literary and historical research, which in turn – together with details from other disciplines – can provide an input for further, more in-depth linguistic and philological research, and so on.

## 4 Archaeology

The final piece in this issue, “The Armenian-Italian Joint Expedition at Dvin. Report of 2021 Activities”, is an excavation report, the first of a series that is set to appear annually in subsequent issues of *Armeniaca*. Although strictly archaeological in content, it originates from a research project that provides a concrete example of interdisciplinary cross-fertilisation, namely, the ERC Consolidator Grant Project *Armenia Entangled: Connectivity and Cultural Encounters in Medieval Eurasia 9th-14th centuries* (ArmEn), led by Prof. Zarouy Pogossian at the University of Florence.<sup>3</sup>

Co-authored by Hamlet Petrosyan, Michele Nucciotti, Elisa Pruno, Leonardo Squilloni, Tatyana Vardanesova and Lyuba Kirakosyan, the piece details the excavations conducted in 2021 at Dvin, one of the largest medieval urban centres in Armenia, by a joint Armenian-Italian expedition. This season has marked the beginning of a new phase of excavations at the site. Activities concentrated on three areas: Dvin Market; the south-eastern part of the Lower Fortress; and an area 200 meters south of the market in a residential-economic complex. The architectural structures and materials uncovered are datable to the 5th-13th centuries overall, but most material findings date to the 12th-13th centuries. Beside presenting the results of the excavations, the report gives a concise history of previous investigations on the site and sets out perspectives for further research.

### Note on Transliteration Criteria and Manuscripts

All articles adopt the Armenian script and/or transliterate Armenian according to the system developed by Hübschmann, Meillet, and Benveniste (HMB). Individual authors have chosen to transliterate the Armenian digraph <նլ> differently, some using <u>, others <ow>. The names of classical and modern authors and individual literary works are given either in HMB transliteration or in the form most commonly used in the literature as per the author’s choice.

All relevant entries in the final bibliographies are transliterated with the HMB system in the form employed by the *Revue des Études Arméniennes* (with <նլ> rendered as <u>).

When referring to Armenian manuscripts, the acronyms developed by B. Coulie (see e.g. Coulie, B. (2020). *Armenian Manuscripts. Catalogues, Collections, Libraries*. 2nd revised edition. Turnhout: Brepols) are always given (at least in brackets at the first occurrence if the authors have decided to use a different nomenclature in their articles).

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.armen.unifi.it/>.





# Շրակոխեմ գմեր գփրկութիւնն, hapax nella traduzione armena dell'*Epideixis* di Sant'Ireneo di Lione: 'gettare sopra come ombra la nostra salvezza'

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**Abstract** In the *Epideixis* by St Irenaeus of Lyons, a work originally written in Greek but only transmitted in an Armenian translation, the otherwise unattested compound verb շրակոխեմ occurs twice, with գմեր գփրկութիւնն (or գփրկութիւնս), 'our salvation', as its object. To fully understand its meaning, one must account for both elements, namely շուք and կոխեմ. Since no Greek verb exists that is composed of Greek terms equivalent to both, շրակոխեմ is likely not an exact calque but rather a semicalque on a Greek transitive verb. In this investigation three Greek verbs are identified which շրակոխեմ could have translated. On the basis of a detailed study of the usage of each one in the Greek Scripture, the Author argues that շրակոխեմ was used to render ἐπισκιάζω. This hypothesis is substantiated with the help of similar texts by Irenaeus and other Christian authors.

**Keywords** Irenaeus. *Epideixis*. Shadow. Body. Incarnation.

**Sommario** 1 Introduzione. – 2 Ireneo e l'*Epideixis*. – 3 Il verbo շրակոխեմ. – 3.1 Շրակոխեմ nel suo contesto. – 3.2 Studio morfologico e lessicale del verbo շրակոխեմ. – 4 Possibile originale greco di շրակոխեմ. – 4.1 Possibili verbi composti greci all'origine di շրակոխեմ: ἐπισκιάζω, κατασκιάζω e σσκιάζω. – 4.2 Uso di ἐπισκιάζω, κατασκιάζω e σσκιάζω nella Scrittura. – 5\* Ἐπισκιάζω, possibile originale greco di շրակոխեմ. – 5.1 Significato dell'ombra in Ireneo come corpo di Cristo. – 5.2 L'immagine dell'ombra in relazione al corpo di Cristo era nell'ambiente contemporaneo a Ireneo. – 6 Conclusione: շրակոխեմ գփրկութիւնն մեր come 'gettare sopra come ombra (ἐπιսκιάζω) la nostra salvezza'.



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## 1 Introduzione

Il presente articolo vuole tentare di comprendere il significato e proporre un possibile originale greco del termine շբաղիտն, presente in due occasioni nella versione armena dell'*Esposizione della predicazione apostolica* di Sant'Ireneo di Lione e, per quanto è possibile conoscere dai lessici, non altrimenti attestato: si tratta di un *hapax legomenon* proprio del corpus ireneano armeno.

Per intraprendere tale studio, dunque, chi scrive presenterà brevemente l'autore e l'opera, e spiegherà le sue peculiarità riguardanti la trasmissione del testo. Quindi, analizzerà il verbo շբաղիտն in rapporto al suo contesto nei suoi elementi lessicali armeni e nelle sue possibili relazioni con il greco. Individuerà poi i verbi greci che potrebbero costituirne il termine originale soggiacente, e studierà il loro uso nella Scrittura. Una volta riconosciuto che uno di essi potrebbe trovarsi all'origine della traduzione շբաղիտն, esporrà le difficoltà che si possono opporre a tale ipotesi e la sua proposta di soluzione.

## 2 Ireneo e l'*Epideixis*

Della vita di Ireneo, poche notizie ci sono giunte: presumibilmente nasce, o almeno cresce, a Smirne nella prima metà del secondo secolo; lì è discepolo del vescovo Policarpo, a sua volta discepolo degli Apostoli (cf. Iren. *Haer.* 3.3.4). Lo ritroviamo nel 177 in occidente come secondo vescovo di Lugdunum, l'odierna Lione, successore del martire Potino: come vescovo, oltre a intervenire in varie vicende della Chiesa (cf. Eus. *H.E.* 5.24.11-18), scrive numerose lettere e opere (cf. Eus. *H.E.* 5.1.1-3.4; 7.1; 20.1; 24.11-17; 26). Si può collocare la sua morte a cavallo tra il II e il III secolo.<sup>1</sup>

Delle opere ireneane che Eusebio di Cesarea nomina, solo due ci sono pervenute intere: lo *Smascheramento e confutazione della falsa gnosi*, o *Adversus Haereses*,<sup>2</sup> e appunto l'opera che ci occupa, l'*Esposizione della predicazione apostolica*, più comunemente conosciuta co-

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<sup>1</sup> Per una sintetica presentazione della vita di Ireneo si veda Bellini, Maschio 2003, 25-9.

<sup>2</sup> Dell'originale greco dell'*Adversus Haereses* sono pervenuti solo frammenti; il testo intero è stato trasmesso unicamente nella sua traduzione latina (greco e latino sono pubblicati in: Rousseau, Doutreleau 2008; Rousseau, Doutreleau 2011-13; Rousseau, Doutreleau 2002; Rousseau et al. 2008; Rousseau, Doutreleau, Mercier 2013). Inoltre, possediamo una traduzione armena dei libri IV e V (pubblicata in Ter-Minassiantz 1910 e recentemente edita in Képéklian 2021), oltre a vari frammenti risalenti alla stessa traduzione (pubblicati in Jordan 1913 e Renoux 1978). Infine, abbiamo recepito anche una cinquantina di frammenti siriaci (pubblicati in Harvey 1857).

me *Epideixis*.<sup>3</sup> L'*Epideixis* è un breve compendio della fede trasmessa dagli Apostoli e conservata nella Chiesa:<sup>4</sup> Ireneo, dopo aver presentato i tre articoli principali della fede cristiana - Padre, Figlio e Spirito Santo - vi narra la storia della salvezza dalla creazione dell'uomo alla vita in carne del Verbo, per poi passare a esporre e interpretare in senso cristologico ed ecclesiologico vari passaggi della Scrittura.

Per secoli non abbiamo conosciuto dell'*Epideixis* che il titolo e il destinatario;<sup>5</sup> è solo nell'anno 1904 che a Erevan è scoperta in un manoscritto la traduzione armena dell'intero testo greco.<sup>6</sup> A oggi, tale manoscritto è l'unica testimonianza intera dell'*Epideixis* che possediamo, testimonianza cui si sono aggiunti, nel tempo, frammenti del testo della stessa traduzione armena provenienti da altri manoscritti,<sup>7</sup> invece, tranne il titolo, nulla conosciamo dell'originale greco.

Ora, la traduzione armena dell'*Epideixis*, sulla cui datazione gli studiosi non hanno ancora raggiunto un accordo,<sup>8</sup> è decisamente ellenizzante:<sup>9</sup> come tale, pertanto, è necessario studiarla.<sup>10</sup> Inoltre, per poterla adeguatamente comprendere, e dunque per poterne proporre un'adeguata traduzione, è necessario anche conoscere la teologia dell'autore, strumento fondamentale per delucidare le inevitabili ambiguità e i passaggi non comprensibili del testo armeno.

**3** Dal suo titolo greco, Εἰς ἐπίδειξιν τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ κηρύγματος, 'Esposizione della predicazione apostolica', appunto, trasmesso da Eus. *H.E.* 5.26. D'ora in poi ci si riferirà all'opera come *Epideixis* e, nelle citazioni, con l'abbreviazione *Epid.*

**4** Così presenta lo stesso Ireneo la sua opera in *Epid.* 1-3.

**5** Entrambe le informazioni sono contenute in Eus. *H.E.* 5.26.

**6** Il manoscritto, oggi catalogato come M3710 (Erevan, Matenadaran 3710), fu scoperto da Karapet Ter-Mékérttschian, vicario in Erevan del Catholicos. Lo stesso Ter-Mékérttschian fu il primo editore del testo (Ter-Mékérttschian, Ter-Minassiantz, Harnack 1907; il testo fu pubblicato anche in Ter-Mékérttschian, Wilson 1919). Se nella prima di tali edizioni Mékérttschian dichiara di non sapere identificare la lingua da cui l'armeno traduce - l'originale greco o una sua traduzione siriana - (Ter-Mékérttschian, Ter-Minassiantz, Harnack 1907, V-VII), a partire dalla sua ritrattazione (Ter-Mékérttschian, Wilson 1919, 4-5) non sono stati avanzati più dubbi sul fatto che l'armeno traduca direttamente il greco.

**7** Il più rilevante di tali manoscritti è ITB54 (Istanbul, Biblioteca del Patriarcato armeno 54), che con i suoi 13 frammenti riproduce circa il 15% del testo. I restanti manoscritti riproducono per lo più un solo e unico breve passaggio del testo. Per la descrizione dei manoscritti e il riferimento alle edizioni dei frammenti ireneani in essi contenuti si veda Sanvito 2018, 84-96.

**8** Le ipotesi più recenti si orientano a collocarla tra il secolo V e il VI; per un breve *status questionis* si veda Sanvito 2018, 78-82.

**9** Per una sintetica esposizione delle caratteristiche delle traduzioni ellenizzanti, su cui la letteratura è molto vasta, si veda almeno Muradyan 2012 e 2014.

**10** Per il carattere decisamente ellenizzante del testo e quello specialistico del termine in questione, chi scrive si limita in questa sede, sull'implicita scia degli altri traduttori dell'*Epideixis*, a ricercare una possibile origine del termine in un calco, o semicalco, del greco piuttosto che investigare eventuali antecedenti in altri ambiti linguistici che hanno influenzato l'armeno.

### 3 Il verbo շքակոխում

L'oggetto di questo studio è uno dei casi in cui il testo armeno è arduo. Più precisamente, si tratta del significato di un verbo non attestato dai lessici e che tuttavia non sembra costituire un errore, giacché nell'*Epideixis* appare due volte (*Epid.* 37 e 38): il verbo շքակոխում.

#### 3.1 Շքակոխում nel suo contesto

Ecco dunque il verbo nel suo contesto (*Epid.* 37-38):

37. Արդ՝ այսպէս շքակոխէր գիրկութիւնն մեր եւ հարցն զխոստումն կատարէր եւ զհին տարալսութիւնն ի բաց լուծանէր. Որդին Աստուծոյ որդի Դաւթի եւ որդի Աբրահամու եղել: Քանզի զայսոսիկ կատարելով եւ վերստին գլխաւորելով յինքն՝ զի մեզ ստացուցէ կեանս, Բանն Աստուծոյ մարմին եղել վասն կուսին տնաւբնութեան, առ ի լուծանել զմահն եւ կենսագործել զմարդն, քանզի յարգելանս մեղաց էաք՝ մեր<sup>11</sup> եւ ի ձեռն մեղանութեանն ծնիցելոց եւ ընդ մահուամբ անկելոց.<sup>12</sup>

38. Արդ՝ բազմագութ էր Յայրն Աստուած. առաքեաց զարուեստագետ Բանն որ, եկեալ յապրեցուցանել զմեզ, ի նոյն վայրս մեզ եւ ի նոյն տեղիս եղել յորս մեքն լինելով կորուսաք զկեանս, լուծանելով զարգելանացն կապանս: Եւ երեւեցաւ լոյսն նորա եւ աներեւութացոյց զխաւարն զյարգելանին եւ սրբեաց մեր զծնունդն եւ խափանեաց զմահն զնոյն՝ ինքն զկապանսն որով ըմբռնեալն էաք՝ լուծեալ:

Եւ զյարութիւնն էցոյց՝ ինքն անդրանիկ մեռելոց եղեալ եւ յինքեան յարուցեալ զկործանեալ զմարդն, հանելով ի վեր ի գեր ի վերոյսն երկնի՝ յաջմէ փառաց Յաւրն, որպէս Աստուած ի ձեռն մարգարէին խոստացաւ ասելով. «Եւ յարուցից զխորանն Դաւթի զկործանեալն», այսինքն է զմարմինն զ'ի Դաւթայն: Եւ զայս ճշմարտապէս կատարեաց Տէրն մեր Յիսուս Քրիստոս, զմեր գիրկութիւնն շքակոխելով, զի զմեզ ճշմարտապէս յարուցէ՝ ապրեցուցեալ Յաւրն:

37. Ora, così [Cristo] շքակոխէր la nostra salvezza, compiva la promessa dei Padri e dissolveva l'antica disobbedienza: il Figlio di Dio si fece figlio di Davide e figlio di Abramo [cf. Mt 1:1]. Infatti, compiendo queste cose e operando la ricapitolazione in se stesso per permetterci di ricevere la vita, il Verbo di Dio si fece carne [cf. Gv 1,14] secondo l'economia della Vergine per annientare la morte e vivificare l'uomo, poiché noi eravamo nel carcere del peccato, sia essendo stati generati nella condizione di peccato, sia essendo caduti sotto la morte.

<sup>11</sup> Si segue qui l'emendazione di Rousseau 2011, 134.

<sup>12</sup> Si segue qui la proposta di Froidevaux 1971, 92 nota 4.

38. Dunque, Dio Padre fu immensamente misericordioso [cf. Ef 2,4]: inviò il Verbo artefice che, venendo a salvarci, stette nelle nostre stesse terre e nei nostri stessi luoghi trovandoci nei quali noi fummo senza vita, sciogliendo le catene del carcere. E apparve la sua luce, dissipò le tenebre nel carcere, purificò la nostra generazione ed eliminò la morte stessa, lui in persona sciogliendo quelle stesse catene da cui eravamo costretti.

E mostrò la Risurrezione, divenendo lui stesso il primogenito dei morti [cf. Col 1,18; Ap 1,5] e facendo risorgere in lui stesso l'uomo caduto, innalzandolo nell'alto dei cieli alla destra della gloria del Padre come promise Dio per mezzo del profeta dicendo: «E innalzerò il tabernacolo di Davide che era stato abbattuto» [Am 9,11; At 15,16], cioè la carne che è da Davide. E veramente il Signore nostro Gesù Cristo adempì questo, շքակոխութիւն la nostra salvezza, per resuscitarci veramente, salvandoci per il Padre.<sup>13</sup>

Ci troviamo nel culmine dell'esposizione della storia della salvezza: l'annuncio della vita in carne del Verbo di Dio - dall'Incarnazione all'Ascensione - e la spiegazione delle sue implicazioni redentrici e salvifiche per l'uomo, tema che Ireneo sviluppa in *Epid.* 31-40a. Nella pericope che contiene le due occorrenze del verbo շքակոխութիւն (*Epid.* 37-38), Ireneo afferma dunque che l'incarnazione del Verbo in una carne vergine della stirpe di Davide e, prima ancora, di Abramo costituisce la ricapitolazione dell'uomo necessaria alla redenzione dal peccato (cf. *Epid.* 32); tale redenzione, a sua volta, è preludio alla salvezza, che il Verbo incarnato opera con la sua Resurrezione dai morti e Ascensione ai cieli alla destra della gloria del Padre.

Precisando ulteriormente il contesto del verbo շքակոխութիւն, è da notarsi che in entrambi i casi esso ha per soggetto Cristo (in *Epid.* 37 il soggetto è sottinteso dal periodo anteriore, cf. *Epid.* 36) e ha per complemento oggetto il sintagma գլխի գիրկուրթիւն [օ գիրկուրթիւն], 'la nostra salvezza': se ne deduce, dunque, che a livello morfologico il verbo è personale e transitivo, e a livello semantico deve esprimere l'azione di Cristo rispetto alla salvezza.

Nelle principali edizioni esistenti fino al giorno d'oggi, il verbo è stato tradotto nei seguenti modi: «herrlich durchführen» (Ter-Mëkërttschian, Ter-Minassiantz, Harnack 1907, 21), «als herrlicher Sieger vollenden» e «siegreich erkämpfen» (Weber 1912, 26-7), «gloriose expugnare» (Weber 1917, 63, 65), «glorieusement opérer» (Barthoulot, Tixeront 1919, 122-3), «to accomplish gloriously» o «to perfect» (Ter-Mëkërttschian, Wilson 1919, 35-6), «to achieve gloriously» (Armitage Robinson 1920, 103-4), «conquistare magnificamente» e «conquistare gloriosamente» (Faldati 1923, 93, 95), «to be the trium-

<sup>13</sup> Ove non diversamente indicato, le traduzioni sono dell'Autrice.

ph of» (Smith 1952, 71-2; lo stesso, alla pagina 175, nota 183 dichiara poi che la traduzione più letteralmente sarebbe ‘to march over gloriously’), «opérer glorieusement» (Froidevaux 1971, 91, 93), «compiere gloriosamente» e «operare in modo glorioso» (Peretto 1981, 123.125), «realizar magnificamente» e «actuar gloriosamente» (Romero-Pose 2001, 137, 140) e «opérer magnifiquement» (Rousseau 2011, 135, 137).

### 3.2 Studio morfologico e lessicale del verbo շքակոխան

Dalle traduzioni citate emerge che tutti i traduttori hanno identificato nel verbo շքակոխան un composto, di cui una parte significherebbe ‘gloria’ e un’altra ‘compiere’ o ‘conquistare’, in senso più o meno metaforico. In effetti, շքակոխան è facilmente identificabile come un composto: infatti, identificando il morfema congiuntivo -ա-, usuale per i composti armeni il cui secondo termine inizia in consonante (cf. Meillet 1962, 163-8), sapendo che in armeno il primo termine nei composti è solito apparire nel caso nominativo-accusativo (cf. Meillet 1962, 160), e che nelle radici monosillabiche ove non accentato il fonema /u/ si indebolisce (cf. Minassian 1996, 6), è possibile riconoscere in շքակոխան le radici del sostantivo շուք e del verbo կոխան.

Cerchiamo ora di comprendere i significati dei termini di cui շքակոխան si compone. In armeno classico շուք significa in primo luogo ‘ombra’, e in secondo ‘onore’, ‘rispetto’, ‘gloria’, ‘decoro’ (Ciakciak 1837, 1109); կոխան, da parte sua, ‘mettere il piede’, ‘entrare’, ‘calpestare’, ‘schiacciare’ (Ciakciak 1837, 788). Così pure nelle traduzioni dal greco շուք è solito corrispondere in primo luogo a σκιά, ‘ombra’, e in secondo a τιμή, ‘onore’ e δόξα, ‘gloria’ (Awetik’ean, Siwrmēlean, Awgerean 1836, 2: 492-3), mentre կոխան a πατέω, ‘camminare’ e ‘calpestare’, e καταπατέω, ‘calpestare’ (Awetik’ean, Siwrmēlean, Awgerean 1836, 1: 1109).

È evidente che tutti i traduttori precedentemente considerati attribuiscono a շուք il significato di ‘gloria’; tutti, poi, cercano anche di mantenere il significato di կոխան, alcuni in un senso più forte e fisico (è il caso, per esempio, della traduzione «siegreich erkämpfen» di Weber 1912, 27), altri trasferendo l’idea di ‘entrare’ in modo metaforico con verbi come ‘opérer’ o ‘to accomplish’. Tuttavia, a giudizio di chi scrive, per comprendere il significato di շքակոխան è necessario considerare anche l’uso che il traduttore di Ireneo – che gli studiosi concordano essere l’autore sia della traduzione dell'*Epideixis* sia di quella dell'*Adversus Haereses*, di cui dunque è possibile avvalersi

come termine di confronto<sup>14</sup> - fa dei due termini componenti il verbo, uso che, rispetto a շուք, contraddice l'interpretazione data dai traduttori moderni.

In effetti, in due delle sue tre occorrenze nella versione armena di Ireneo il termine շուք è utilizzato nel significato non di 'gloria', bensì di 'ombra':<sup>15</sup> si tratta di *Iren. Haer. 5, praef.* e in *Iren. Haer. 5, praef. e 5.1.3* (cf. Reynders 1954, 2: 151, 217). Nella prima, շուք è presente nel sintagma առատաբար շքով եւ երկով - letteralmente 'abbondantemente con ombra e fatica' - in corrispondenza del latino *impen-sius*; nella seconda, nel sintagma շուք առնսն ի վերայ, 'fare ombra su', in corrispondenza del latino *obumbro*, il quale a sua volta in questo caso traduce con ogni probabilità *Ἐπισκιάζω* di Lc 1,35: il contesto del sintagma - *Spiritus sanctus advenit in Mariam et virtus Altissimi obumbravit eam* - ricalca infatti le parole dell'angelo a Maria in Lc 1,35: πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἀπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ | καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι, «lo Spirito Santo scenderà su di te, su te stenderà la sua ombra la potenza dell'Altissimo» (Vattioni 1974, 2195).

Il termine կոխսն, dal canto suo, corrisponde anche in Ireneo, così come frequentemente nelle traduzioni armena dal greco,<sup>16</sup> al significato di 'avanzare' o 'calpestare': infatti, nell'*Adversus Haereses* traduce il greco πατέω, συμπατέω o καταπατέω, e corrisponde al latino *calco* e *conculco* (cf. Reynders 1954, 2: 46-60) e nelle uniche due occorrenze nell'*Epideixis* (*Epid. 71*) ha chiaramente il significato di 'calpestare', per quanto emerge dal contesto.<sup>17</sup>

Considerato che nei composti armeni la cui seconda parte è un nome verbale, la prima funge da accusativo (cf. Meillet 1962, 162) ed estendendo per analogia l'uso anche ai verbi armeni composti, come è il nostro, deduciamo che il significato di շքալիխտս potrebbe essere all'incirca 'calpestare l'ombra'.

<sup>14</sup> Si veda al rispetto per esempio Ter-Mékérttschian, Ter-Minassiantz, Harnack 1907, IV-VI; Conybeare 1911, 193-202; Jordan 1913, 203-4; Terian 1982, 175-86; Rousseau 2011, 30.

<sup>15</sup> Chi scrive sospetta che la terza occorrenza di շուք, in *Haer. 5.1.3* in corrispondenza del latino *aspiratio* per indicare il soffio di vita dato da Dio all'uomo, sia un errore del copista, che potrebbe aver scritto l'appena usato շուք 'ombra' o 'gloria', invece del simile շուկ 'soffio', normalmente utilizzato nel contesto della creazione dell'uomo (cf. per esempio *Epid. 11*).

<sup>16</sup> Si veda il sopraccitato Awetik'e'an, Siwrmêlean, Awgerean 1836, 1: 1109.

<sup>17</sup> La frase in cui appare il verbo կոխսն è la seguente (*Epid. 71*): 'D'altra parte per mezzo dell'ombra indica anche l'umiltà e la spregevolezza del suo corpo, cioè che come l'ombra di corpi in piedi è per terra e viene calpestata [կոխի], così anche il corpo di Cristo, essendo caduto a terra con la Passione, ugualmente fu calpestato [կոխտցալ]'.

## 4 Possibile originale greco di շբալիտսն

Per comprendere il significato di շբալիտսն, tuttavia, è necessario cercare di intuire qual è il greco che traduce.

Ora, se շբալիտսն non è un errore ma, d'altra parte, è un *hapax legomenon* proprio del corpus ireneano armeno, l'ipotesi più probabile è che esso costituisca il calco di un verbo composto greco: cos'altro giustificerebbe, altrimenti, non l'utilizzo di due parole, ma la creazione *ex novo* di un verbo composto?

### 4.1 Possibili verbi composti greci all'origine di շբալիտսն: ἐπισκιάζω, κατασκιάζω e συσκιάζω

Se շբալիտսն, dunque, fosse un calco dal greco, a partire dai dati analizzati (cf. section 3.2), pur inevitabilmente parziali, si potrebbe pensare a un verbo greco originale composto nella prima parte dalla radice di σκιά - e non di τιμή o δόξα, giacché in Ireneo շԼԻԲ appare solo con il significato di 'ombra' - e nella seconda, verosimilmente, da quella di πατέω. Tuttavia, un verbo con queste caratteristiche in greco non è attestato.

Sembra dunque ragionevole considerare la possibilità che շբալիտսն sia non un calco, ma un semicalco, cioè un tipo di calco che delle due parti del termine greco rispetta il significato, ma non l'esatta categoria morfologica: chiamiamo 'semicalco', per esempio, la traduzione di un verbo composto greco la cui preposizione che funge da preverbo è tradotta in armeno da un avverbio o dalla radice di un altro termine (cf. Muradyan 1999, 70). Come possibile originale greco, si prenderanno dunque in considerazione i verbi greci composti che presentino la radice o di σκιά, o di πατέω.

Per comodità nell'esposizione, si valuta in primo luogo la possibilità che si tratti di un verbo contenente πατέω, e si esclude immediatamente. Infatti, շբալիտսն in primo luogo è transitivo, giacché presenta un complemento oggetto, e in secondo luogo ha come soggetto 'Cristo' e complemento oggetto 'la nostra salvezza'; invece il verbo πατέω e tutti i suoi composti o sono intransitivi o, se transitivi, hanno un significato negativo come 'calpestare', 'distruggere'. Ne conseguirebbe che Ireneo si contraddirebbe, poiché secondo questo passaggio Cristo calpesterebbe o distruggerebbe la salvezza degli uomini, mentre secondo il resto della sua opera la causerebbe.

Si passa dunque a esaminare i verbi greci composti con la radice σκιά che siano transitivi e che veicolino anche l'idea di πατέω, cioè di 'avanzare' o 'calpestare': ἀποσκιάζω, ἐπισκιάζω, κατασκιάζω, παρασκιάζω, περισκιάζομαι, συσκιάζω e ὑποσκιάζω. Tra essi, si identificano come verbi transitivi che anche semanticamente accetterebbero l'oggetto 'la nostra salvezza' quattro verbi: ἀποσκιάζω, 'get-



to l'ombra', 'proietto l'ombra' (cf. Liddell, Scott 1973, 217), ἐπισκιάζω, 'copro d'ombra', 'oscuro', 'copro' (657), κατασκιάζω, 'ombreggio', 'copro' (912) e συσκιάζω, 'copro d'ombra', 'occulto', 'copro' (1733).

Tuttavia, tra questi sembra opportuno non considerare il verbo ἀποσκιάζω: infatti, almeno per quanto ci è pervenuto, ἀποσκιάζω non compare mai nei LXX, in Filone di Alessandria<sup>18</sup> e nei testi cristiani anteriori e contemporanei a Ireneo,<sup>19</sup> punti di riferimento per quest'ultimo, e sembra dunque ragionevole pensare che potesse non appartenere al greco che parlava Ireneo.

#### 4.2 Uso di ἐπισκιάζω, κατασκιάζω e συσκιάζω nella Scrittura

A questo punto, sembra necessario esaminare l'usus di ἐπισκιάζω, κατασκιάζω e συσκιάζω almeno nella Scrittura, di cui Ireneo, Filone e gli altri autori cristiani anteriori e contemporanei a Ireneo si nutrono in abbondanza.

Ἐπισκιάζω è presente nella Scrittura nei seguenti passaggi:

Es 40,29: Καὶ οὐκ ἠδυνάσθη Μωυσῆς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ μαρτυρίου, ὅτι ἐπεσκίαζεν ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἡ νεφέλη, καὶ δόξης κυρίου ἐπλήσθη ἡ σκηνή.

E non poté Mosè entrare nella tenda della testimonianza perché stendeva la nube su di essa la sua ombra ed era piena la tenda della gloria del Signore. (Lucca 2012, 467)

Sal 90,4: Ἐν τοῖς μεταφρένοις αὐτοῦ ἐπισκιάσει σοι, | καὶ ὑπὸ τὰς πτέρυγας αὐτοῦ ἐλπείεις· | ὄπλω κυκλώσει σε ἡ ἀλήθεια αὐτοῦ.

Ti farà ombra col suo dorso | e sotto le sue ali spererai; | la sua verità con uno scudo ti circonda. (Martone 2013, 263)

Sal 139,8: Κύριε κύριε, δύναμις τῆς σωτηρίας μου, | ἐπεσκίασας ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν μου ἐν ἡμέρᾳ πολέμου.

Signore, Signore, potenza della mia salvezza, hai fatto ombra sul mio capo nel giorno della guerra. (380)

Pr 18,11: Ὑπαρξίς πλουσίου ἀνδρὸς πόλις ὄχυρά, | ἡ δὲ δόξα αὐτῆς μέγα ἐπισκιάζει.

Gli averi di un uomo ricco sono una città fortificata, | e la sua gloria fa una grande ombra. (549)

<sup>18</sup> Si è deciso di considerare anche Filone in quanto analogo a Ireneo e agli scrittori cristiani a lui anteriori e contemporanei nell'alimentarsi con abbondanza della Scrittura.

<sup>19</sup> Lo studio è stato realizzato sulla base del *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.

Mt 17,5: Ἐτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος ἰδοὺ νεφέλη φωτεινὴ ἐπεσκίασεν αὐτούς, καὶ ἰδοὺ φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης λέγουσα· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα· ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ.

Egli stava ancora parlando quando una nuvola luminosa li avvolse con la sua ombra. Ed ecco una voce che diceva: 'Questi è il Figlio mio prediletto, nel quale mi sono compiaciuto. Ascoltatelo'. (Vattioni 1974, 2126)

Mc 9,7: Καὶ ἐγένετο νεφέλη ἐπισκιάζουσα αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐγένετο φωνὴ ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ. Poi si formò una nube che li avvolse nell'ombra e uscì una voce dalla nube: 'Questi è il Figlio mio prediletto; ascoltatelo!' (2173)

Lc 1,35: Πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπελεύσεται ἐπὶ σέ | καὶ δύναμις ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι.

'Lo Spirito Santo scenderà su di te, su te stenderà la sua ombra la potenza dell'Altissimo'. (2195)

Lc 9,34-35: Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ἐγένετο νεφέλη καὶ ἐπεσκίαζεν αὐτούς· ἐφοβήθησαν δὲ ἐν τῷ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτούς εἰς τὴν νεφέλην. καὶ φωνὴ ἐγένετο ἐκ τῆς νεφέλης λέγουσα· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἐκλελεγμένος, αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε.

Mentre parlava così, venne una nube e li avvolse; all'entrare in quella nube, ebbero paura. E dalla nube uscì una voce, che diceva: 'Questi è il Figlio mio, l'eletto; ascoltatelo'. (2218)

At 5,14-15: Μᾶλλον δὲ προσετίθεντο πιστεύοντες τῷ κυρίῳ, πλήθη ἀνδρῶν τε καὶ γυναικῶν, ὥστε καὶ εἰς τὰς πλατείας ἐκφέρειν τοὺς ἀσθενεῖς καὶ τιθέναι ἐπὶ κλιναρίων καὶ κραβάττων, ἵνα ἐρχομένου Πέτρου κἂν ἡ σκιά ἐπισκιάσῃ τινὲς αὐτῶν.

Intanto andava aumentando il numero degli uomini e delle donne che credevano nel Signore fino al punto che portavano gli ammalati nelle piazze, ponendoli su lettucci e giacigli, perché, quando Pietro passava, anche solo la sua ombra coprisse qualcuno di loro. (2336)

Tranne nel caso di Pr 18,11, che non ha relazione con Dio, il verbo ἐπισκιάζω è sempre in relazione con la potenza o la gloria di Dio: descrive un coprire efficace, ed è un verbo specificamente caratterizzato, in cui il soggetto è Dio e l'azione compiuta è quella di comunicare la sua potenza (a volte nella figura della nube). In questi casi il verbo è utilizzato in forma transitiva e l'oggetto è la cosa o la persona che è coperta (cf. anche Bauer 1979, 298).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Pur cosciente dell'esistenza di una versione aggiornata all'anno 2000, chi scrive ha avuto la possibilità di consultare solo la versione dell'anno 1979, che sarà dunque

Per quanto riguarda invece *συσκιάζω*, esso è presente nella Scrittura nei seguenti passaggi:

Es 25,19: Ἔσονται οἱ χερουβὶμ ἐκτείνοντες τὰς πτέρυγας ἐπάνωθεν, συσκιάζοντες ταῖς πτέρυξιν αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τοῦ ἱλαστηρίου, καὶ τὰ πρόσωπα αὐτῶν εἰς ἄλληλα.

I cherubini avranno le ali protese verso l'alto e faranno ombra con le loro ali al propiziatorio e avranno i volti l'uno verso l'altro. (Lucca 2012, 405)

Nm 4,5: Καὶ εἰσελεύσεται Ἀαρὼν καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ, ὅταν ἐξάιρη ἢ παρεμβολή, καὶ καθελούσιν τὸ καταπέτασμα τὸ συσκιάζον καὶ κατακαλύψουσιν ἐν αὐτῷ τὴν κιβωτὸν τοῦ μαρτυρίου.

Ed entreranno Aronne e i suoi figli, quando si leverà l'accampamento, e smonteranno il velo che ricopre e copriranno con esso l'arca della testimonianza. (641)

Os 4,13: Ἐπὶ τὰς κορυφὰς τῶν ὄρεων ἐθυσίαζον καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς βουνοὺς ἔθυσον, ὑποκάτω δρυὸς καὶ λεύκης καὶ δένδρου συσκιάζοντος.

Sulla cima dei monti facevano sacrifici e sulle colline facevano offerte, sotto una quercia, un pioppo e un albero che faceva ombra.

Nelle sue occorrenze nella Scrittura, dunque, il verbo *συσκιάζω* non è mai connesso direttamente con Dio né mai indica un coprire efficace ai fini della potenza divina.

Infine, il verbo *κατασκιάζω* compare in Eb 9,5 all'interno della citazione di Es 25,19, il cui verbo è *συσκιάζω*.<sup>21</sup> Vale dunque per *κατασκιάζω* quanto affermato per *συσκιάζω*, cioè che nella sua unica occorrenza nella Scrittura non è connesso direttamente con Dio né indica un coprire efficace ai fini della potenza divina.

Dal momento che *շրալիդիտի* ha per soggetto Cristo e per oggetto la salvezza degli uomini, dei tre verbi greci esaminati sembra ragionevole continuare a considerare come possibile originale greco solo *ἐπισκιάζω*, che nella Scrittura è solito avere per soggetto Dio ed essere relazionato con la gloria o potenza di questi. È necessario ora continuare a verificare se nel passaggio dell'*Epideixis* oggetto di questo articolo *ἐπισκιάζω* può essere il verbo greco all'origine dell'armeno *շրալիդիտի*.

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quella cui si farà riferimento nel presente articolo.

**21** Si segnala che nella tradizione manoscritta di Es 25,19 invece del verbo *συσκιάζω* compare a volte *σκιάζω* o *συσκευάζω*, ma mai *κατασκιάζω* (cf. Wevers 1991, 286). D'altra parte, nella tradizione manoscritta di Eb 9,5 non sono attestate varianti a *κατασκιάζω* (cf. Nestle, Aland 1993, 574-5).

## 5 Ἐπισκιάζω, possibile originale greco di շքակիտն

Come appena mostrato, le analogie tra շքակիտն ed ἐπισκιάζω nel soggetto (rispettivamente: Cristo e Dio) e nel significato o uso (i verbi hanno relazione rispettivamente con la salvezza degli uomini e la gloria o potenza di Dio) permettono di pensare che ἐπισκιάζω possa essere il verbo greco all'origine della traduzione շքակիտն. Tuttavia, negli usi esaminati del verbo ἐπισκιάζω il complemento diretto è la cosa o la persona che è coperta; invece, se ἐπισκιάζω avesse come oggetto 'la nostra salvezza', questo non indicherebbe la cosa coperta (nel senso di 'coprire come un'ombra la nostra salvezza') ma l'identità di ciò che copre, in una sorta di complemento dell'oggetto interno ('stendere/gettare sopra come un'ombra la nostra salvezza'). Sarebbe possibile questo?

### 5.1 Significato dell'ombra in Ireneo come corpo di Cristo

Per rispondere a questa domanda, chi scrive crede sia necessario comprendere il significato dell'ombra per Ireneo, il quale a sua volta si inserisce nella tradizione scritturistica.

Infatti, spesso nella Scrittura l'ombra è segno della presenza di Dio: da una parte lo è fisicamente, sia come ombra della nube che copre il popolo di Israele (cf. Nm 9,18, 9,22, 10,34) o attraverso cui Dio parla (cf. Mt 17,5; Mc 9,7; Lc 9,34) e identificata come sua gloria (cf. Is 4,5), sia come ombra umana resa capace di miracoli (cf. At 5,15); dall'altra lo è metafisicamente, come immagine della protezione di Dio (cf. Dt 33,12; Bar 1,12; Mc 4,32), e della sua potenza (cf. Lc 1,35). Così, Ireneo certo identifica l'ombra con la presenza di Dio, ma specifica: l'ombra è per lui il corpo del Verbo incarnato.

In effetti, in *Epid.* 71 Ireneo interpreta l'ombra (che l'armeno rende in questo caso con altri termini, հովանի e ստուեր)<sup>22</sup> in senso cristologico, come corpo di Cristo. Ecco a continuazione la pericope.

Եւ յայլում վայրի ասէ Եսայեայ.<sup>23</sup> «Յոգի դիմաց մերոց Քրիստոս Տէր.<sup>24</sup> եւ զի'արդ ըմբռնեցաւ յորոգայթս նոցա գորոյ ասացաք՝ ընդ հովանեաւ նորա կեցցուք ի հեթանոսս»: Եւ զի հոգի Աստուծոյ ելով՝ Քրիստոս հանդերձեալ էր լինոցել չարչարելի մարդ՝ Գիր ազոյէ, եւ իբրու հիանայ եւ զարմանայ ի վերայ չարչարանացն նորա, զի այսպէս

<sup>22</sup> Per l'uso e l'alternanza dei termini հովանի e ստուեր in *Epid.* 71 si veda Bais 2019, 194-205.

<sup>23</sup> Si segue qui l'emendazione di Rousseau 2011, 184. Per l'argomentazione della scelta, si rimanda a Sanvito 2018, 804.

<sup>24</sup> Si segue qui l'emendazione di Rousseau 2011, 184.

գչարչարանսն կրել հանդերձեալ էր «որոյ ընդ հովանեան ասացաք զի կեցցուք» : Եւ «հովանի» ասէ զմարմինն նորա : Քանզի որպէս հովանի ի մարմնոյ լինի, այսպէս եւ Քրիստոսի մարմինն ի հոգւոյն նորա եղել : Այլ եւ զնուաստութիւն եւ զհիւրաքամահեղին մարմնոյն նորա ի ձեռն «հովանւոյն» նշանակէ, զի որպէս ստուերն եւ մարմնոց ուղղոց եւ կանգնոց սա ի գետնի է եւ կոխի, այսպէս եւ մարմինն Քրիստոսի ի գետնն անկեալ չարչարանաւքն կոխեցաւ թերեւս : Եւ «ստուեր» զմարմինն Քրիստոսի անուանեաց, իբրու հովանի եղեալ Յոգւոյն փառաւք եւ ծածկեալ զնա : Այլ եւ բազում անգամ անցանելով Տեառնն՝ դնէին զ'ի բազմապատիկ հիւանդութիւնս ըմբռնեալս առ ճանապարհաւն, եւ յորոց վերայ հասանէր ստուերն նորա՝ ապրէին :

E in un altro passaggio dice Isaia: «Lo spirito del nostro volto è Cristo Signore; e come è stato preso nei loro lacci colui di cui dicemmo: alla sua ombra vivremo tra le nazioni!» [Lam 4,20] E che essendo spirito di Dio Cristo sarebbe diventato uomo passibile, la Scrittura lo annuncia, e quasi si sorprende davanti alla sua Passione, poiché così avrebbe sopportato la Passione colui di cui dicemmo che avremmo vissuto alla sua ombra. E dice ombra il suo corpo. Infatti, come l'ombra proviene da un corpo, così anche il corpo di Cristo provenne dal suo spirito. D'altra parte per mezzo dell'ombra indica anche l'umiltà e la spregevolezza del suo corpo, cioè che come l'ombra di corpi in piedi è per terra e viene calpestate, così anche il corpo di Cristo, essendo caduto a terra con la Passione, ugualmente fu calpestato. E chiamò il corpo di Cristo ombra quasi che fosse ombra alla gloria dello spirito e lo coprisse. E ancora molte volte quando passava il Signore collocavano coloro che soffrivano malattie di ogni genere al lato della strada, e [quelli tra loro] su cui giungeva la sua ombra guarivano.

In questo passaggio Ireneo interpreta l'ombra presente nella citazione di Lam 4,20 come il corpo di Cristo, Verbo di Dio di natura originariamente spirituale fatto uomo.

In primo luogo, infatti, Ireneo nota che Lam 4,20, lasciando emergere lo sconcerto per la Passione di Cristo, annuncia la sua Incarnazione ('essendo spirito di Dio Cristo sarebbe diventato uomo passibile'), cioè la sua vita in una carne umana, soggetta alla sofferenza. Ireneo dà a intendere che lo sconcerto è dovuto al fatto che la sua vita in carne era attesa come ombra protettrice dalla sofferenza ('colui di cui dicemmo: alla sua ombra vivremo tra le nazioni'), e non passibile di sofferenza.

In secondo luogo, Ireneo motiva l'identificazione dell'ombra nel corpo di Cristo con tre analogie: nell'origine, nell'umiltà e disprezzo sofferto e nell'azione di oscurare qualcosa. Rispetto all'origine, infatti, Ireneo spiega che sia ombra che corpo provengono da un'altra cosa: l'ombra dal corpo, e il corpo di Cristo dal suo spirito. Rispetto

all'umiltà e al disprezzo sofferto, spiega che come l'ombra, che è per terra ed è calpestata, indica una cosa umile e disprezzata, così anche il corpo di Cristo è stato calpestato (կիսնսն) – e dunque, aggiungiamo, disprezzato per la sua umiltà – quando è caduto a terra nella Passione. Rispetto all'oscurare qualcosa, infine, spiega che come l'ombra copre qualcosa, rendendolo meno visibile, così la gloria dello spirito<sup>25</sup> è nascosta dal corpo di Cristo, un corpo disprezzabile.<sup>26</sup>

In terzo e ultimo luogo, attraverso l'esempio del miracolo operato da Gesù con la sua ombra<sup>27</sup> Ireneo mostra come nell'ombra sia presente l'efficacia divina, anche se apparentemente coperta: l'ombra, dunque, è la realtà creata del corpo assunta dal Cristo preesistente la cui natura è spirito divino e che, unta dallo Spirito Santo, si rende presente ed efficace su tutta la realtà.<sup>28</sup>

Ora, la concezione del corpo di Cristo come proveniente dallo spirito è presente in un altro passaggio dell'opera di Ireneo (*Haer.* 1.11.1), ma in bocca a Valentino gnostico:

Et [dicit] Christum autem non ab his qui sunt in Pleromate Aeonibus emissum [προβεβλήσθαι], sed a Matre foris [autem] facta secundum memoriam meliorum enixum esse [ἀποκεκυσθαι] cum

**25** Certamente intendiamo qui ancora 'spirito' come natura divina di Cristo, ma, nella misura in cui si fa riferimento ai miracoli di Gesù, anche come Spirito Santo ricevuto nel Battesimo nel Giordano, giacché è in virtù di tale unzione che Gesù compie i miracoli che Ireneo menziona subito dopo. In effetti nell'insieme della teologia di Ireneo è necessario integrare l'Incarnazione – intesa come la vita in carne del Verbo – con l'Unzione dello Spirito Santo, in virtù della quale Gesù può compiere miracoli.

**26** La frase եւ «ստուեր» գնարմինս Քրիստոսի անուանեաց, իբրո՛ւ հովանի եղեալ Յովակիմ փառաւրք եւ ծածկեալ զաւս է stata tradotta in vari modi, principalmente secondo due interpretazioni: una per cui il corpo di Cristo è chiamato 'ombra' perché lo spirito lo ha coperto, e dunque il corpo sarebbe l'ombra prodotta dalla gloria dello spirito (così per esempio Ter-Mékérttschian, Ter-Minassiantz, Harnack 1907, 40; Weber 1912, 51; Weber 1917, 98; Armitage Robinson 1920, 132; Froidevaux 1971, 139), e l'altra per cui il corpo di Cristo è chiamato 'ombra' perché esso ha coperto il suo spirito glorioso, e dunque il corpo sarebbe ombra per lo spirito (così per esempio Smith 1952, 94; Rousseau 2011, 185). La prima possibilità ricalca la prima esegesi di Lam 4,20 ('E dice ombra il suo corpo. Infatti, come l'ombra proviene da un corpo, così anche il corpo di Cristo proviene dal suo spirito'), ma ne è anche praticamente la tautologia, apportando come unico elemento di novità la gloria insieme allo spirito. Considerando, poi, il contesto, si nota che l'esegesi in questione segue alla descrizione della Passione, in cui sono sottolineate l'umiltà e la spregevolezza del Corpo di Cristo che l'hanno portato a essere disprezzato. La seconda interpretazione sembra dunque conseguente: Ireneo a questo punto nota che il corpo è come un'ombra alla gloria dello spirito e lo copre; questa, pertanto, è la traduzione che adotta chi scrive (per uno studio dettagliato si veda Sanvito 2018, 812-15). Si nota anche che il fatto che il corpo sia ombra alla gloria dello spirito fa parte dell'economia di rivelazione progressiva e di redenzione, ed è dunque un fatto buono per l'uomo: in *Haer.* 4.38.1 Ireneo spiega che Dio non manifesta prima la sua gloria non perché non possa farlo, bensì perché l'uomo non la può ancora accogliere.

**27** La Scrittura trasmette tale miracolo operato non da Gesù, ma da Pietro, in At 5,15.

**28** Si veda la spiegazione alla nota 25.

quadam umbra [σκιᾶς τινος]. Et hunc quidem, quippe cum esset masculus, abscondisse a semetipso umbram [ἀποκόψαντα ἑαυτοῦ τὴν σκιάν] et regressum in Pleroma. Matrem autem subrelictam sub umbra [ὑπολειφθεῖσαν μετὰ τῆς σκιᾶς], evacuatam autem spiritali substantia, alterum filium emisisse. Et hunc esse Demiurgum, quem et omnipotentem dicit eorum quae ei subiacent.

[E dice che] il Cristo non è stato emesso dagli eoni che si trovano nel Pleroma, ma dalla Madre che, posta fuori, lo partorì, secondo il ricordo che aveva delle realtà superiori, con una certa ombra. E costui, poiché è maschio, ha rescisso da sé questa ombra ed è risalito nel Pleroma. Invece la Madre, abbandonata nell'ombra, svuotata della sostanza pneumatica, emise un altro figlio. Costui è il Demiurgo, che Valentino dice onnipotente rispetto alle cose che sono sotto di lui. (Cosentino 2009, 2: 110)

Nella spiegazione ireneana, per Valentino Cristo è stato emesso fuori dal Pleroma dalla Madre (che per Valentino è lo spirito divino) secondo il ricordo che ella aveva delle realtà superiori. Pertanto, è stato emesso insieme a una certa ombra, cioè la materia informale della creazione. Ora, Ireneo, nella sua puntuale confutazione della dottrina valentiniana esposta nel libro II dell'*Adversus Haereses*, critica la concezione di Valentino dell'ombra-materia (cf. *Haer.* 2.8.1-3), ma non il fatto che utilizzi l'immagine dell'ombra per indicare la materia (cf. *Haer.* 2.4.1-2.5.1). In effetti, come appare in *Epid.* 71, Ireneo stesso utilizza tale immagine, pur, appunto, all'interno di una diversa concezione di materia:<sup>29</sup> per Ireneo l'ombra-corpo di Cristo non è tenebra - luogo inaccessibile al divino -, bensì possibilità di rivelare il divino. Inoltre l'ombra, in quanto corpo proveniente dallo spirito e dunque partecipante della condizione divina e insieme di quella umana, opera sull'uomo l'azione efficace della salvezza, come afferma in *Haer.* 3.10.3:

Agnitio Salutis erat agnitio Filii Dei, qui et Salus et Salvator et Salutare vere et dicitur et est: Salus quidem sic: «In Salutem tuam sustinui te, Domine»; Salvator autem iterum: «Ecce Deus meus Salvator meus, fidens ero in eum»; Salutare autem sic: «Notum fecit Deus Salutarem suum in conspectu gentium». Etenim Salvator quidem, quoniam Filius et Verbum Dei; Salutare autem, quoniam spiritus: «Spiritus enim, inquit, faciei nostrae Christus Dominus»; Salus autem, quoniam caro: «Verbum enim caro factum est et habitavit in nobis».

<sup>29</sup> Per uno studio dell'immagine dell'ombra nella prima teologia cristiana si veda Orbe 1994, spec. 525-7.

Ma la conoscenza della salvezza era la conoscenza del figlio di Dio, che è chiamato ed è davvero Salvezza, Salvatore e Virtù salvatrice: Salvezza in questo senso: «In vista della tua salvezza io ti ho atteso, Signore» (Gen 49,18); Salvatore in quest'altro: «Ecco, Dio è la mia salvezza; io confiderò [in lui]» (Is 12,2); Virtù salvatrice infine in tal modo: «Dio ha manifestato la sua salvezza dinanzi al volto dei popoli» (Sal 97,2). È infatti Salvatore in quanto Figlio e Verbo di Dio; è Virtù salvatrice perché Spirito, [giacché] - è detto - «lo spirito del nostro volto è Cristo Signore» (Lam 4,20); infine è Salvezza perché carne[,] giacché «il Verbo si fece carne e venne ad abitare in mezzo a noi» (Gv 1,14). (Cosentino 2009, 2: 40; modifiche dell'Autrice)

Ireneo mostra in questo passaggio il modo in cui Cristo, Verbo spirituale incarnato, è il mediatore nella salvezza dell'uomo. Egli infatti è salvatore (*Salvator*) perché è personalmente Figlio e Verbo di Dio; è virtù salvifica (*Salutare*) in quanto spirito e unto (*Christus*); ed è salvezza (*Salus*) in quanto carne.<sup>30</sup> Per Ireneo, dunque, l'ombra, cioè il corpo di Cristo, è portatrice di salvezza.

## 5.2 L'immagine dell'ombra in relazione al corpo di Cristo era nell'ambiente contemporaneo a Ireneo

Si nota, d'altra parte, che l'uso dell'immagine dell'ombra in relazione al corpo di Cristo era presente in contesto cristiano all'epoca di Ireneo. Così la si ritrova infatti in un passaggio di Clemente Alessandrino (*Exc.* 18.2):

Ὅθεν, ἀναστὰς ὁ Κύριος, εὐηγγελίσατο τοὺς Δικαίους τοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀναπαύσει, καὶ μετέστησεν αὐτοὺς καὶ μετέθηκεν, καὶ πάντες «ἐν τῇ σκιᾷ αὐτοῦ ζήσονται». Σκιαὶ γὰρ τῆς δόξης τοῦ Σωτῆρος τῆς παρὰ τῷ Πατρὶ ἡ παρουσία ἡ ἐνταῦθα· φωτὸς δὲ σκιαὶ οὐ σκότος, ἀλλὰ φωτισμὸς ἐστίν.

Per questo il Signore, dopo essere resuscitato, ha evangelizzato i Giusti che erano nel riposo, li ha liberati e li ha cambiati di posto, e tutti «vivranno alla sua ombra» [Lam 4,20]. Infatti l'ombra della gloria del Salvatore, quella che aveva presso il Padre, è la sua venuta qui; e l'ombra della luce non è tenebra, ma illuminazione.

Clemente offre la stessa esegesi di Ireneo dell'ombra di Lam 4,20: l'ombra è ombra della gloria che il Salvatore aveva nella sua condi-

<sup>30</sup> Rispetto alla salvezza portata da Cristo in quanto carne si veda De Andia 1986, 187-9; rispetto alla formazione del corpo del Verbo, si veda Orbe 1995, 24-5.



zione di preesistente alla creazione, ovvero è la sua venuta sulla terra, la sua vita in carne. Tale ombra, pertanto, mantiene la sua natura luminosa. Sembra che in questo modo Clemente indichi che il Verbo incarnato è efficace ai fini della gloria, come è possibile dedurre da quanto narrato immediatamente prima: dopo la resurrezione – evento appartenente alla vita in carne del Verbo – il Signore ha operato in modo efficace rispetto ai giusti.

In un senso simile spiega il carattere del corpo di Cristo Ippolito<sup>31</sup> nelle *Benedizioni di Mosè*, testo originariamente scritto in greco ma trasmesso solo nella sua traduzione armena e in una georgiana realizzata a partire dall'armeno (Brière, Mariès, Mercier 1990, 195):

Եւ Մովսէս ասէ. «Եւ ծածկոյթ աստուծոյ իշխանութեանն եւ ի զաւրութեան բազկաց մշտնջենաւորաց». «Ծածկոյթ աստուծոյ» ասաց զմարմինն, յորում թաքուցեալ՝ բանն ծածկեցաւ : «Իշխանութիւն աստուծոյ» զբանն նշանակէ. եւ Վորդոմնն ասէ. «տէր հաստատեաց զիս ի սկիզբն ճանապարհաց իւրոց՝ ի գործս իւր». զոր ասացեալ եւ՝ Յոհաննու. «Ես եմ ա եւ ես եմ ք, սկիզբն եւ կատարած» : Արդ մարմին ծածկոյթ բանին եղեալ, որ էրն ի սկզբանէ յաստուծոյ, եւ նա հովանաւորի զաւրութեամբ հաւր : Եւ բանն զսուրբ մարմինն սիրեաց, եւ հայր զորինն ընդ բազկաւք իւրովք ընդգրկեալ՝ պահէ. զի յաւիտենական թագաւոր զնա ամենեցունն ցուցանէ.

E Mosè dice: «E copertura del principato di Dio e nella potenza delle braccia eterne» [Dt 33,27]. «Copertura di Dio» ha detto la carne, nella quale, occultato, il Verbo è stato coperto. «Principato di Dio» indica il Verbo. E Salomone dice: «Il Signore mi ha stabilito all'inizio dei suoi cammini per le sue opere» [Pr 8,22], cosa che ha detto anche Giovanni: «Io sono l'alfa e io sono l'omega, l'inizio e la fine» [Ap 21,6; 22,13]. Ora, essendo la carne copertura del Verbo, che era dal principio da Dio, anch'essa è ombreggiata attraverso la potenza del Padre. E il Verbo ha amato la carne santa, e il Padre, prendendo sotto le sue braccia il Figlio, lo custodisce; infatti, lo mostra a tutti come re eterno.

In questo brano Ippolito commenta il passaggio della benedizione di Mosè a Aser di Dt 33,27. In corrispondenza dell'armeno ծածկոյթ, il greco di Dt 33,27 presenta il termine σκέπασις, 'copertura',<sup>32</sup> e,

<sup>31</sup> Per uno *status quaestionis* sulla controversia riguardante l'identità di Ippolito, si rimanda a Simonetti 2000, 70-146.

<sup>32</sup> Il termine ծածկոյթ di questa citazione traduce il greco σκέπασις, che in tutta la Scrittura è presente solo in questo passaggio di Dt 33,27. Pertanto, nonostante Muraoka 2009, 623 registri la voce σκέπασις come 'protezione fornita', si è preferito identificare il suo significato a partire da quello del suo corradicale σκέπασμα, e cioè 'copertura, e dunque protezione' (cf. Bauer 1979, 753); così dunque, si è interpretato anche σκέπασις.

nell'esegesi del versetto, Ippolito afferma che tale copertura è la carne, in cui il Verbo è stato occultato. Pur non rappresentando il corpo specificamente con l'immagine dell'ombra, anche l'interpretazione di Ippolito sembra analoga a quella di Ireneo: il Verbo preesistente alla creazione riceve attraverso la carne una copertura alla sua natura divina. L'immagine dell'ombra è in ogni caso presente nel passaggio, ancora una volta in un modo simile a come è interpretata da Ireneo: Ippolito afferma che la carne «è ombreggiata attraverso la potenza del Padre». Se la potenza del Padre, dunque, fa ombra sulla carne del Verbo, evidentemente l'ombra, la carne in ombra, dev'essere permeata di potenza divina. Ecco dunque che anche per Ippolito l'ombra è immagine per il corpo del Verbo pieno di potenza divina, e dunque capace di un operare efficace, ove l'opera di Dio è la salvezza dell'uomo, la distruzione della morte, come afferma lo stesso poche linee dopo (cf. Brière, Mariès, Mercier 1990, 196).<sup>33</sup>

## 6 **Conclusion: շքակիտնմ զիրկութինն մեր come 'gettare sopra come ombra (էπισκιάζω) la nostra salvezza'**

È il momento, dunque, di tornare alla domanda che voleva verificare la possibilità che il verbo շքակիտնմ fosse la traduzione del greco *ἐπισκιάζω*, e che ha mosso l'indagine riguardo al significato dell'ombra in Ireneo e nei suoi contemporanei. Il dubbio sorgeva dal fatto che nella Scrittura *ἐπισκιάζω* ha come oggetto la cosa o la persona che è coperta, mentre nel caso di *Epid.* 37 e 38 *ἐπισκιάζω* avrebbe come oggetto 'la nostra salvezza', e dunque non indicherebbe la cosa coperta quanto l'identità di ciò che viene steso come un'ombra. Ci si chiedeva se questo tipo di complemento oggetto - potremmo dire una sorta di complemento dell'oggetto interno - sarebbe possibile.

Si è visto che in *Epid.* 71 Ireneo sviluppa con ogni particolare l'immagine dell'ombra come corpo del Verbo spirituale, e pertanto efficace ai fini della gloria e della salvezza umana; quindi, si è potuto verificare che l'immagine dell'ombra come corpo di Cristo, potente ai fini della salvezza dell'uomo in quanto insieme Figlio e Verbo di Dio, Spirito e carne (cf. *Haer.* 3.10.3), era presente nell'ambiente contemporaneo a Ireneo, come è risultato dai testi analizzati di Clemente Alessandrino e di Ippolito.

A questo punto, è facile notare l'analogia tra il contesto di tali passaggi e quello del passaggio di *Epid.* 37 e 38: anche *Epid.* 37 e 38

<sup>33</sup> Si segnala che l'immagine dell'ombra è presente anche in *Fil. leg. alleg.* 3.96, il quale la sviluppa però in un senso diverso: non come corpo del Verbo spirituale, bensì come relazione tra Dio - la realtà ultima -, e il Logos - che ne è, appunto, l'ombra.

hanno per oggetto la vita in carne del Verbo e la salvezza che il Verbo incarnato porta all'uomo.

Per questo, chi scrive ritiene che il verbo շքալիտսւմ sia la traduzione del greco ἐπισκιάζω, e che, con il complemento oggetto գիրկութիւնս մեր, l'espressione possa significare 'gettare sopra come ombra la nostra salvezza' alludendo all'Incarnazione,<sup>34</sup> dove l'ombra del Verbo - cioè il corpo del Verbo - è sacramento di salvezza: la gloria e la potenza di Dio creano un'ombra per cui si rendono visibili, e cioè la carne di Cristo, che è la salvezza dell'uomo.<sup>35</sup>

In effetti, il significato di 'calpestare' veicolato dal verbo կիտսւմ può costituire un tentativo di traduzione del preverbo ἐπι-, 'sopra', di ἐπισκιάζω, e, d'altra parte, il verbo ἐπισκιάζω potrebbe essere stato utilizzato nel contesto di *Epid.* 37 e 38 proprio sulla scia del suo uso in Lc 1,35. Infatti, il contesto di Lc 1,35 è l'Incarnazione, esattamente quello che Ireneo in questi passaggi sta presentando.

**34** Con il termine 'Incarnazione' si intende qui non solo il momento puntuale dell'Incarnazione *stricto sensu*, ma l'intera vita in carne del Verbo. In questo senso, infatti, intende l'Incarnazione già Gv 1,14, Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, «E il Verbo si fece carne e venne ad abitare in mezzo a noi; e noi vedemmo la sua gloria» (Vattioni 1974, 2266): la gloria si è resa visibile nella carne del Verbo non nel momento puntuale dell'Incarnazione, bensì dopo la Resurrezione, e cioè dopo l'intero *cursus* della vita in carne.

**35** Dal momento che l'ombra non costituisce un paragone estemporaneo, bensì l'immagine utilizzata nella Scrittura e da Ireneo stesso per descrivere la potenza di Dio resa visibile, in modo particolare nella carne di Cristo, chi scrive preferisce la traduzione di 'come ombra', che ritiene rendere l'immagine nel suo significato teologico e cristologico meglio dell'espressione 'come un'ombra', che sottintende forse piuttosto un semplice paragone.

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# The Anonymous Saint in the Armenian Tradition Alexi(an)os the Voluntary Pauper or the Anonymous ‘Man of God’?

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**Abstract** This paper will outline the Armenian tradition of the story of the Man of God who became known in Byzantium and the West as St Alexius (Alexis) the Man of God. The Armenian legend has been preserved in two main versions – as a short synaxaric text, such as the ones found in the synaxaries M1512, M1502 of the Matenadaran, and a fuller *Life*, preserved in fewer manuscripts (M789, M792). The article will also discuss some specific features of the Armenian text, such as its style, the conspicuous absence of personal names and other details that might allow us to trace the origins of this textual tradition, as well as the possible relations of the Armenian *Life* to the extant Syriac and Greek texts of the saint's *Life*.

**Keywords** Hagiography. Asceticism. Alexis. Man of God. Armenian translations. Manuscripts.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 The Story of the Man of God. – 2.1 Brief Outline of the Legend. – 2.2 Further Development of the Legend. – 2.3 The Saint Receives a Name. – 2.4 Multiple Versions of the Saint's *Life*. – 2.5 Amalgamation / Confusion with St John the Recluse. – 2.6 Hymnography. – 3 The Man of God in the Armenian Tradition. – 3.1 Dating the Cult. – 3.2 The Two Versions of the Legend. – 3.3 Editions of the Text. – 3.4 Special Features of Arm II. – 4 Conclusion.



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## 1 Introduction

Veneration of the anonymous saint who first appeared in Syria as *gabra d'Alaha*, 'man of God', and from the 9th century became known in Byzantium and the West as St Alexius (or Alexis) the Man of God was widely spread throughout the Christian East, even as far as Ethiopia. Dramatic developments and transformations of his legend have been an object of scholarly interest since the 18th century - various parts and texts comprising his dossier in the Byzantine, Slavic, European, Ethiopic, and especially Syriac traditions have been published and studied, first by the Bollandists (Du Sollier et al.) in 1725, and later by Amiaud, Massmann, Paykova, Muraviev, and others (see final bibliography). However, the Georgian and Armenian versions of this legend, which, due to the geographic position and unique ties of their respective cultures to both the Greek- and Syriac-speaking worlds, could shed light on the development of the legend, have not so far received any particular attention. The present paper is not meant as a comprehensive essay on the topic, but rather as an introduction (laying the basis for further research) and an attempt to situate the Armenian tradition of the Man of God in the complicated sequence of transmissions and transformations of his dossier in the Christian East.

## 2 The Story of the Man of God

### 2.1 Brief Outline of the Legend

The story of the Man of God is a peculiar one; it is, as some might say, a disturbing one because the main protagonist seems to have divested himself of any 'normal' human attachment and emotion in his quest for higher vocation, and yet, it inspired generations of hagiographers and translators to keep it alive, adding more vivid details and transforming it along the way. In the earliest version of this legend (Syr I), preserved in three manuscripts kept at the British Museum dating from the 6th century,<sup>1</sup> the narrative goes as follows. A wealthy but childless family residing in Rome after many prayers finally are blessed with an heir; the child grows up a serious, quiet young man. At his coming of age, the parents arrange a wedding and

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**1** British Museum Or. Add. 17177; Add. 14644; Add. 12160.

prepare a feast, in the middle of which the young man flees away, runs to the port and goes first to Seleucia, and then to Edessa. There he stays for 17 years, living among the poor at one of the churches, and his piety is spotted by one of the *paramonarii* (church wardens) who learns his story but keeps quiet, obeying the saint's request. After the death of the Man of God, said *paramonarius* reveals this to the bishop, who happens to be the famous bishop Rabbula.<sup>2</sup> The grave of the saint is checked by the clergy of Edessa only to be found empty with no trace of his body – a shocking and impressive spectacle which inspires the bishop to dedicate more of his resources and money to the care of the poor and strangers.

## 2.2 Further Development of the Legend

The later (second) Syriac version (Syr II)<sup>3</sup> which appears in the manuscripts dating from the 9th century onwards presents a completely different storyline.<sup>4</sup> The saint does not die but flees Edessa for Tarsus trying to escape unwanted fame. However, the ship is carried by adverse winds to Rome, his birthplace! The saint takes this as an omen and retreats to the house of his parents who do not recognise him. He settles as one of the paupers or clients of the household and lives there for another 17 years, abused and mistreated by the servants. Before his death the saint writes a letter (*chartion*) to his parents in which he reveals his identity and tells the story of his life. However, the father of the saint cannot remove the *chartion* from the saint's hands; it is solemnly taken from the hands of the deceased saint only by the emperors Honorius and Arcadius and by Innocentius, the bishop of Rome. The affair is revealed, the parents recognise their long-lost son, his bride – or rather, his wife – produces a ring and a veil that had been given to her by her fiancé on the eve of the wedding and which were described in the letter. The saint himself remains anonymous in both Syriac versions.

## 2.3 The Saint Receives a Name

In the second half of the 9th century St Joseph the Hymnographer composed in Constantinople a canon in honour of the saint, and it is

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<sup>2</sup> On Rabbula and his connection to the Man of God see Drijvers 1982 and 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Edited by Amiaud (Amiaud 1889) on the basis of Brit. Mus. Add. 14655.

<sup>4</sup> Amiaud insisted that the second Syriac version was not based on the early (first) legend, but must have used some other base text, probably Greek (Amiaud 1889, introduction). Paykova disagrees, cf. Paykova 1986, 168-9.

only then that this saint is identified by name - Alexis (also Alexius, Alexios). This is also the first time when this name enters the Greek world and gains immense popularity both in Byzantium and in the West (five Byzantine emperors, starting with Alexios I Komnenos [1048-1118], bore this name). Some scholars suggest that there must have existed a Greek translation of the Syriac text, probably produced in Constantinople in the early 9th century, which became the basis for Joseph's canon, while others think that the Greek text was used as the base text for Syr II (Muraviev et al. 2001, 9). The Greek canon and the Greek *Lives* of St Alexis in some instances coincide verbatim with Syr II, but it is not possible to establish the direction of this textual transmission (Paykova 1986).

#### 2.4 Multiple Versions of the Saint's *Life*

In the 10th century we witness an explosion of interest in this saint. This is attested by the appearance of a number of Arabic versions of his *Life*. These either try to present a composite story, eliminating all contradictions (as in the so-called *karshuni* version), or simply follow the Greek Constantinople version (the second Arabic version, Ar II). A metaphrastic Greek version also appears in the 10th century. At the same time, a Latin tradition begins to develop in Rome; it connects the saint, now firmly established as Alexis or Alexius, to the Aventine hill where the house of the saint's parents was allegedly situated. In 1216 the inhabitants of the monastery proclaimed that they had found the relics of St Alexis and this led to a quarrel with the clergy of St Peter's Basilica who also claimed to have his body. Some parts of his relics surfaced throughout the Middle Ages in different parts of the Christian *oikoumene* - his head in Agia Laura in Peloponnesus, his right hand in Novgorod, St Sophia Cathedral (Muraviev et al. 2001, 9).

#### 2.5 Amalgamation / Confusion with St John the Recluse

The legend of (Alexis) the Man of God very much resembles that of St John the Recluse (known also as Calybites or the Hut-Dweller) who lived in Constantinople in the 5th century and left his parents' house to lead an ascetic life in an unnamed monastery. John returned disguised after six years of absence and then lived unrecognised near his parents until the time of his death. Some scholars have suggested that these two saints are in fact the same person, but this hypothesis is not universally accepted. However, St John and St (Alexis) the Man of God frequently appear together in the iconography of ascetic saints and their lives are often placed together in various collec-

tions and synaxaria. The similarity between these saints sometimes led to the confusion of their iconographic representations which will be discussed later.

## 2.6 Hymnography

The liturgical commemoration of St Alexius the Man of God is witnessed in the *Typicon of the Great Church* (10th-11th centuries), in the verse *Prologos* of Christopher of Mytilene and in the Studite *Typicon* of the 11th century (Muraviev et al. 2001, 10). It would be useful to look for hymns in his honour in the languages of the Christian East outside the Byzantine tradition - if found, they might provide new evidence for this cult and might solve some riddles, notably the mystery of the saint's name and the development of his tradition between the 6th and the 9th centuries.<sup>5</sup>

## 3 The Man of God in the Armenian Tradition

### 3.1 Dating the Cult

It is not yet possible to determine exactly when the Man of God - either in his anonymous personification or under the name of Alexi(an)os - was added to the list of saints venerated by Armenian Christians. The legend of the Man of God does not appear in the earlier synaxaria, but it features in some collections of the *Lives of Saints* (e.g. M792), homiliaries, and in the later versions of the *Synaxarium* (e.g. M789, M512, M1502). His commemoration was incorporated into the annual liturgical calendar not later than the 14th century and was celebrated on the 17th of March (9th of Areg) as is witnessed in synaxaries of the 14th century, for example, in the *Synaxarium of Ter Israel* (ՅԱՍՍԱՆԱՆՈՒՐՔ).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> One of the anonymous reviewers has helpfully pointed out the existence of a hymn by Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i (14th-15th centuries) called Տաղ սրբոյն Ալեքսիանոսի (Song of St Alexianos). This will constitute a possible line of inquiry for future research.

<sup>6</sup> Bayan (1930, 171-5), who published it, used a 14th century manuscript from the collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS BnF 180 (= P 180). In this version the name of the saint is Alexios (Ալեքսիոս), not Alexianos. The present Author is aware that a more recent edition of the ՅԱՍՍԱՆԱՆՈՒՐՔ, with an English translation, exists, although she has not been able to consult it: for the life of St Alexis see Mathews 2016, 100-5.

### 3.2 The Two Versions of the Legend

The synaxaric (abridged) Armenian tradition of the Man of God (Arm I) at first glance appears to be following the Greek (Byzantine) one: the saint has a name, the parents of the saint are not anonymous either (the Greek name Euphemianos appears in variant forms), the storyline coincides with the one found in the Greek sources. The rubrics of these texts present the Man of God as Alexianos the Voluntary Pauper, Ալէքսիանոս կամաւոր աղքատ (for example, M792, f. 262a; M1502, f. 348; this version will be further referred to as Arm I).<sup>7</sup> It is striking that this special title, կամաւոր աղքատ, is also used for St John the Recluse whose story appears in the same collections, thus M1502, f. 246a refers to John as Yovhannès the Voluntary Pauper, Յովհաննէս կամաւոր աղքատ. Their iconography in some Armenian manuscripts also reflects a degree of confusion. The regular iconographic attribute of John the Recluse, the Gospel book that he is normally holding in his hands,<sup>8</sup> appears in the miniature accompanying the story of Alexianos.<sup>9</sup> It might be suggested that the similarities between the accounts of the two saints confused the compilers of these collections who applied the same title to both Alexianos and John which, in turn, misled the artists who illuminated the manuscripts, but this problem requires further investigation.

However, the Armenian tradition has also retained a different version of the legend. The main characteristic of this version is the total anonymity of the Man of God and all other *dramatis personae* apart from the bishop of Edessa, Rabbula. Moreover, the title of the *Life* literally defines the main character as an ‘anonymous son of the king of the Romans’, անանուն որոյ թագաւորին Յոռոնց.<sup>10</sup> This version will be referred to as Arm II and will be discussed below.

### 3.3 Editions of the Text

Since the synaxaric versions (Arm I) rely on the Byzantine tradition and have very minor differences from what one sees in the Greek text (apart from the name, which has the peculiar form Alexianos rather than Alex-

<sup>7</sup> The Author would like to express her deep gratitude to Armine Melkonyan (Matenadaran) for providing the accession numbers for these manuscripts and for notifying her of the accompanying miniatures.

<sup>8</sup> An example of such standard iconography might be found in a miniature of St John in the Եաշոց (Lectionary) of King Hetum II, M979, f. 47a.

<sup>9</sup> M1502, f. 348b.

<sup>10</sup> M789, f. 525b: ‘Պատմութիւն եւ վարք կամաւոր աղքատացելոյն վասն Քրիստոսի՝ անանուն որոյ թագաւորին Յոռոնց (Story and Life of the Voluntary Pauper for Christ’s Sake, the Anonymous Son of the Roman King).

ios), they have not yet attracted any scholarly attention and have not been studied separately.<sup>11</sup> The second version was published by the Mekhitarists in 1855 in their collection of the *Lives of the Holy Fathers*. It is a long text, much longer than both Syriac versions (Syr I and II) and slightly longer than the metaphrastic Greek version. The Mekhitarists' edition was based on unspecified manuscripts, which makes tracing the original text rather difficult. However, the differences between their edition and M789 are relatively few, which supports the contention that there must exist a number of manuscripts containing the same version. In any case, the relation between this edition and the existing manuscript versions of Arm II will require further investigation.

### 3.4 Special Features of Arm II

#### 3.4.1 Names and Titles

Throughout the text the saint is referred to as 'the blessed one', երասնելի. Other appellations include the aforementioned 'voluntary pauper', կամաւոր աղքատ, and 'the son of the king of Rome', որի թագաւորին Յռոնց. However, in the second part of the story that is situated in Edessa the saint acquires a different title - այր աստուծոյ / այր տէառն, 'Man of God' or 'Man of the Lord', which is the calque of the Syriac *gabra d'alaha*.

There are no other names in Arm II apart from the name of the bishop of Edessa, the famous Rabbula. Even the parents of the saint remain the anonymous 'king' and 'queen', which suggests that this text is not based on the later Syriac version (Syr II) or on the Greek metaphrastic version. The 'Alexianos version' (Arm I) has the same names as the Greek text. As has been shown by Drijvers (1982), this type of "anonymous holiness" was a trademark of early Syrian asceticism, which suggests at least some, if not direct, influence of the Syriac *Vorlage* on this Armenian text.

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**11** Some of the Arm I versions of the Alexi(an)os legend are included in the concordance edition of the lives of saints published by Holy Ējmiacin (Petrosyan et al. 2010, 182-9). This edition presents parallel versions with manuscripts from various collections (W1048, M4512, M4683, M4684, V7433, and others), but does not focus on the analysis of the narrative and its features. However, it will be a useful tool for the further study of the Alexi(an)os tradition in Armenia, especially in the Arm I version, and thanks are due to one of the anonymous reviewers for bringing it to the Author's attention.

### 3.4.2 Other Features

The Arm II version has other features that set this text apart from both the Syriac and Greek versions and raise a number of new questions. The most striking differences are the following: a great number of additional details (such as lengthy descriptions of different objects or the ascetic endeavours of the saint); many dialogues between the characters; a number of soliloquies (internal monologues) attributed to the main protagonist. The style feels heavy and unnatural with many excessive, repetitive phrases and frequent usage of substantive infinitives with a chain of objects piling on each other.

Some episodes in Arm II do not correspond to the Syriac or Greek at all. By way of illustration, the lengthy depiction of the wedding garments<sup>12</sup> of the saint is not found elsewhere; moreover, one of these wedding garments unexpectedly ends up in the hands of the ship owners as a fare for his journey to Seleucia,<sup>13</sup> not in the hands of his bride, as in the Greek version and other texts stemming from it.

Furthermore, Arm II contains a remarkable episode that does not appear in any other version. This comprises a dialogue between the priest (բահաւսայ, not the *paramonarius* of the other versions) in the church of Edessa and the Man of God in which the saint insists on remaining anonymous because his name is not worthy of any commemoration.<sup>14</sup> This particular emphasis on anonymity is something we encounter in the Syriac ascetic tradition; it is very interesting that the editor or author of the Armenian version decided to stress this point.

## 4 Conclusion

Thus, taking into account the main features and specific elements of both Arm I and II, some preliminary observations on the duality of the Man of God in the Armenian tradition may be advanced. As it appears, the longer version (Arm II) reflects the older, likely Syriac layer of the legend (the anonymity of the saint and other characters being a convincing if not quite decisive argument), while the shorter 'Alexianos versions' (Arm I) are most likely based on the Greek version of the legend, judging by the coincidence of the storyline and personal names. This would allow us to set the *terminus post quem* for the Arm I versions as the 9th century, when the Greek canon in honour of St Alexios the Man of God was composed by Joseph the Hymnographer. Meanwhile, the Arm II version - perhaps not the extant text,

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<sup>12</sup> Vark' srboc' haranc' 1855, 372; M789, f. 526b ff.

<sup>13</sup> Vark' srboc' haranc' 1855, 373; M789, f. 527a.

<sup>14</sup> Vark' srboc' haranc' 1855, 380; M789, f. 530a.



but its *Vorlage* – might be seen and studied as an important witness to the development of the early Syriac legend outside the Constantinopolitan tradition.

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# The Poetic Middle Armenian of *Kafas* in the *Alexander Romance*

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**Abstract** This paper examines the use of Middle Armenian in the medieval *kafas* (short monorhymed poems) associated with the legendary history of Alexander III of Macedon in its Armenian translation. These poems, composed in Armenian in the 13th-16th centuries, contain classical and vernacular language. Examining the interplay between the poetic requirements of meter and rhyme and the linguistic features of Middle Armenian, this paper points to cases in the *kafas* where the choice between words and grammatical forms is dictated by poetry. This includes the use of both classical nominative plural ending -ք and the medieval (and modern) -(ն)եր, and the concurrent comprehensibility of the present and imperfect indicative both with and without the particle կը.

**Keywords** Alexander Romance. Middle Armenian. Classical Armenian. Kafas. Xaç'atur Keč'areci. Grigoris Alt'amarc'i. Zak'aria Gnunec'i.

**Summary** 1 The Armenian *Alexander Romance*. – 2 Poetic Language in the *Alexander Kafas*. – 2.1 A Note on Manuscripts. – 2.2 Rhyming. – 2.3 -(ն)եր Plural Ending. – 2.4 Use of կը with Indicative Verbs. – 2.5 Giving a Reply. – 3 Conclusion.



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## 1 The Armenian *Alexander Romance*

The text known by various names including *The History of Alexander of Macedon*, and commonly called in scholarship the *Alexander Romance*, comprises a semi-historical narrative of the life of Alexander III of Macedon, including fantastical episodes such as Alexander's journey to the edges of the world and his meeting with talking trees that foretell his death. Originally a Greek text that came together by the 3rd century CE, though revisions and additions continued in Greek over subsequent centuries, an early version of it was translated into Armenian in or very soon after the 5th century (Nawotka 2017; Cowe 1996; Mancini Lombardi, Uluhogian 1998; Traina 2016). Manuscripts of the Armenian *Alexander Romance* only start to survive from the late 13th-early 14th century, and it is then that Xaç'atur Keč'arec'i (1260-1331), writing in the southern Caucasus, composed *kafas* (short, monorhymed poems) in Armenian to accompany the narrative. In the 16th century, Grigoris Aht'amarc'i (c. 1478-c. 1550) and his pupil Zak'aria Gnunc'e'i, based around Lake Van, composed additional *kafas*.

These *kafas* appeared alongside the prose narrative of the *Alexander Romance*, functioning as both captions to images and commentaries or additions to the main text, repeating events in the narrative or providing new details, heightening the visual or emotional impact of the scene, or reflecting morally on the actions of Alexander or other figures (Simonyan 1975, 41-134; Maranci 2003-04; MacFarlane 2019; 2020). They are interventions in the narrative: at the edges of the world, they Christianise the unfamiliar landscape through which Alexander travels. They ruminate on fate, and charge Alexander's death with a moral lesson about the futility of amassing wealth and ruling the world.

From the 16th century onwards, they also began to be copied separately, in *tataran* manuscripts (anthologies of poetry and songs) and *žo'lovacu* (miscellany) collections. Some selections of *kafas* in these manuscripts appear to be comprehensive collections of a full 'cycle' of Alexander *kafas* taken from the *Alexander Romance*, following the narrative of Alexander's life and military campaigns, while others are shorter sets grouped around particular events or themes relating to Alexander, such as his encounter with the Persian king Darius and the turning wheel of their fates. The same *kafa* might thus appear in multiple contexts: as part of the narrative sequence in the *Alexander Romance*, and in new, short cycles of poetry in an anthology manuscript. While moving from one location to another, a *kafa* might also be altered by its traditor: words spelled differently, words replaced, lines rewritten.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Traditor' is being used here in its folkloristic sense: a person who holds and passes on an oral or literary tradition. This is an especially useful term with the *tataran* and

The architecture of each *kafa* is determined by its poetic form. Following the isosyllabic trend in medieval Armenian poetry, and specifically the influence of Arabic monorhymed verse (Cowe 2005), the *Alexander kafas* typically possess one of the two following patterns of metre and monorhyme:

1. 15 syllables, split into two half-lines of 2 + 3 + 2 / 3 + 2 + 3, with the rhyme falling at the end of each full line.
2. 16 syllables, 3 + 5 per every half-line, rhyming at the end of each half-line.

This is not absolutely adhered to, with a small number of *Alexander kafas* having ‘defective’ half-lines or written entirely without either of the above syllabic structures, presumably due to the usual mix of scribal innovation and error. In most cases, however, the *kafas* follow one of the above two forms, and thus offer insights into how medieval poets used Armenian, wielding word choice to maintain the syllable count and rhyme of each half-line or line.

Specifically, the *kafas* tell us about two different kinds of Armenian. Unlike the *Alexander Romance*, which is written in *grabar*, the Classical Armenian first written in the 5th century, the *kafas* are written with the vernacular linguistic variations collectively known as Middle Armenian, or the various medieval dialects of Armenian, reflecting – and actively using – the speech of their medieval publics.<sup>2</sup> These features include the particle *լու* in the present and imperfect indicative, the use of *տրտս* in place of the classical *տս* (‘gave’), the plural *-(ն)եր*, and numerous new loan words from languages such as Persian, Arabic and Turkish. Changes in sound and orthography are also seen, such as the name ‘Alexander’, commonly *Աղէբասնոր*/*Աղէկասնոր*, written in some *kafas* as *Աղէկասնոր*, the *ղ* replaced by *ւ*, due to sound changes in some dialects. Yet, drawing a line between these two Armenians is not possible in the *kafas*. Much of the language remains classical, echoing the prose narrative, and the use of Middle Armenian is inconsistent. Classical and Middle Armenian, often imagined as different literary registers in the late medieval period – the ‘high’ language of the church, the vernacular languages of people – meld in these poems.

Medieval poets chose their register to suit their intended audiences, or used the language that reflected their learning. The 12th-century physician Mxit’ar Herac’i used a ‘rustic’ Armenian to write

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*žotovacu* manuscripts, where it is unknown whether the scribe created any new variations in the *kafas* or copied them from an exemplar.

<sup>2</sup> The plurality of Middle Armenian makes a comprehensive grammar difficult. For an early attempt, see Karst 1901. The Middle Armenian to East Armenian dictionary of Łazaryan and Avetisyan (2009), which frequently notes a word’s *grabar* form and/or its origin in other languages, is an invaluable resource from a lexical perspective.

his medical treatise so that it might be more readily understood. In the same century, catholicos Nersēs Šnorhali composed numerous texts – poetry, hymns, exegesis, an epistle – in *grabar*, but wrote riddles in Middle Armenian, also drawing on Scripture, apparently for people to puzzle over while drinking and celebrating (Pifer 2021, 135-50). In the introduction to a collection of love poems preserved in a 17th-century manuscript, the anthologiser distinguishes three sections of poetry, starting with subtle eulogies by the aristocratic Xaç'atur Keč'arec'i, Grigoris Ałt'amarc'i and Zak'aria Gnunec'i – our three authors of *kafas* about Alexander – and continuing to the plainer styles of other poets like Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i, ending with the anonymous, vernacular love songs of popular oral performance (Cowe 1995, 38-41). The social setting of the Alexander *kafas* is hard to pin down, especially when they escape *Alexander Romance* manuscripts and appear in anthologies. They originated in monastic settings, where we can imagine the *kafas* functioning like scholia, guiding a reader or listener through the narrative. All present would be educated in Classical Armenian, while conversant in their own vernaculars. To them, did the *kafas* evoke the more formal *grabar* of the narrative, with a lighter, familiar touch, speaking of monsters and morality in – at times – their own voices? Outside the monastery walls, their place is less clear. When they appeared in *talaran* and *žołovacu* manuscripts, did they reflect wider circulation, verses traditional yet familiar enough to follow?

Medieval Armenian poetry, shaped by class and choices more numerous than only those given here, has another hand at the sculptor's wheel: its own demands. Its metre, its rhyme, taken up by poets and other traditors, who bent language before they broke the rules of their form. Or is it truer to say that they revelled in the rich linguistic field of their lives? There are many hundreds of Alexander *kafas*, representing a rich corpus of Middle Armenian, part of the vibrant, productive medieval Armenian poetic tradition. More *kafas* adorned other prose narratives, while the *hayren* form proliferated as lay poetry of love and exile. Examining the Alexander *kafas* gives us a glimpse of how medieval Armenian poetic composition worked: how language moved in the hands (and mouths) of traditors known and unknown. It leaves us wondering how this poetry sounded to its audiences. How did it affect them?

## 2 Poetic Language in the Alexander *Kafas*

### 2.1 A Note on Manuscripts

This study makes use of two manuscripts containing the full Armenian *Alexander Romance* including *kafas*. The first is the late 13th-, early 14th-century manuscript V424, available via facsimile (Traina et al. 2003), which contains the *kafas* authored by Xaç'atur Keč'arec'i, absent sizeable lacunae. It is not an autograph copy. The second is the 16th-century manuscript MCR3, digitised and available to access online, an autograph copy of Zak'aria Gnunec'i.<sup>3</sup> Three anthology manuscripts, containing different short collections of Alexander *kafas*, are additionally used: the 16th-century *žtovacu* manuscript M3668, and the 17th-century *tašaran* manuscripts M7709 and M7726, all consulted in-person at the Mesrop Maštoc' Institute of Ancient Manuscripts.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the critical edition of Hasmik Simonyan (1989), based principally on a 16th-century manuscript by Zak'aria and consulting autograph copies by Grigoris Aht'amarc'i, is used.

### 2.2 Rhyming

Poetic use of Middle Armenian in the Alexander *kafas* is primarily determined, as outlined above, by the *kafas*' typical requirements of metre and monorhyme. This can be as straightforward as the poet preferring a version of a word that ends with the correct syllable to match the monorhyme. One likely case of the rhyme determining word choice is in the half-line of a *kafa* authored by Xaç'atur Keč'arec'i that depicts part of a dialogue between Alexander and the god Sarapis in a dream, which appears first in the manuscript V424 f. 24r: ընգանիս ի հուրն անշիջական ('you will fall into the unquenchable fire') – a defective half-line of nine syllables, but the rhyme -ան is present at the end of every full line. Later versions of the *kafa* shorten the final word (in manuscript M3668 f. 156r-v and Simonyan 1989, 134).

<sup>3</sup> The manuscript MCR3 is available online through the University of Manchester Library: <https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/Manchester~91-1~416825~147912>.

<sup>4</sup> The Alexander *kafas* in M7709 appear at the base of a prose tale (which has *kafas* of its own), *The History of the City of Brass* (MacFarlane 2021). Those in M3668 and M7726 appear as poetry alone, alongside other poems and prose texts, representing personal, unique collections.

Ծանիր զարարիչն աստուած	Know the creator God
Որ երեւո քեզ միտք բանական	who gave you a rational mind,
Թե չէ ի յաւուր դատման	for otherwise, at the day of judgement,
Ընկընիս ի հուրն անշիջան:	you will fall into the unquenchable fire.

In both cases, the use of *անշիջական* and *անշիջան* in place of the much more common classical *անշէջ* ('unquenchable') supports the -ան rhyme, while utilising the transparently adjectival -ական and -ան endings. The number of syllables in *անշիջան* specifically keeps the half-line at eight syllables, as per the metrical pattern of the *kafa*. Multiple considerations determine the poet's choice of word. Among them is the need to fit the *kafa*'s monorhyme, and preferably its syllabic requirements, too.

Similar considerations – of rhyme and metre – shape other *kafas* through choices such as which plural ending to use.

### 2.3 -(ւ)եր Plural Ending

Many *kafas* maintain the classical nominative plural ending -ք, but the plural -(ւ)եր – used already in medieval Armenian, and standard in Western and Eastern dialects of modern Armenian – appears in some.<sup>5</sup> Here, describing a group of unfamiliar people among the *mirabilia* at the edges of the world, a *kafa* authored by *Xač'atur Keč'ařec'i* and found in the manuscript V424 includes the plural -ւեր after two half-lines rhyming in -լեր (and the remainder of the *kafa* rhymes in -քեր).

#### V424 f. 92v

Այս են մարդիկն ձկնակեր,	These are the fish-eating people,
որ արածին իբրև խոտակեր,	who graze like herbivorous animals
զոր ըմբռնել ի նաւկներ, <sup>6</sup>	on what they have seized in boats.
խաւսին լեզուաքն խոժաբեր,	They speak with wild tongues,
հրաշս պատմեն զարմանաբեր,	they tell marvels and wonders,
յոլովակի ու անքննաբեր,	many and unfathomable,

<sup>5</sup> -ք and -(ւ)եր were not the only plural forms in written use during the medieval period: notably, the Cilician dialect saw the development of -ւի. Thus far, I have not observed the plural -ւի in the *Alexander kafas*.

<sup>6</sup> նաւկներ is un-classical not only for its plural, but the apparent dropping of an internal vowel from the classical form նաւակ ('boat') – նաւակներ would be expected. It is noteworthy that in the adjacent prose narrative of the *Alexander Romance*, the boats are also written with the plural -ւեր, but here նաւակներ(ւ) appears in full (Simonyan 1989, 282). Such medieval grammar in the prose is extremely uncommon, presumably an artefact of medieval transmission.



[զորս] հիանայր յոյժ հրաշաբեր,	extremely astonishing, so that he was astounded,
արքայս հզար և հմտաբեր:	this powerful and learned king.

Other *kafas* by Xaç'atur Keč'ařec'i in the same section of the narrative are replete with the classical plural -բ, most notably the following long *kafa* listing a myriad of wild and hybrid creatures that approach Alexander's army in the night.

**V424 f. 94v**

Այս են գազանք որ յանդառին,	These are the creatures that are in the forest,
ըռ[նկ]եղջիր չորքոտանին:	a four-footed rhinoceros,
առիւծք չափով են զուարակին	lions the size of a bull,
դէմք այլադէմք չար գազարա[լ]ին	[their] appearances distorted, evil, ugly,
վարազ վարեալք յաղմուկ կռուին,	boars driven to the tumult [where] they fight,
ինծք և ուսամբ փասսակարին,	leopards with the back of an injurious one,
կարճահագի վազերք վառզին,	scorpioid tigers [trampled],
փեղք եզնախոյք զ[ու]ա[րա]կանին:	elephants, ox-rams, bulls,
Արք վեցոտնայք և փոկոտին	six-footed and web-footed ones
և շնակաքաւք կերպարանին <sup>7</sup>	and those with the appearance of dog-partridges.

A subsequent *kafa* uses -բ in Յաւքս for 'these winged creatures' (V424 f. 96r). The *kafa* about the fish-eating people stands out among the others in this part of the manuscript, and the place of նաւկնտր ('boats') in the line suggests the use of its medieval plural to satisfy the -եր rhyme at the end of every half-line.

Elsewhere in V424, the two plural forms appear on the same page. Alexander and his army encounter trees that produce a sap-like Persian resin and perfume, but their attempt to fell the trees and collect the sap is met with invisible voices instructing the men to stop cutting the trees, or else suffer death. Two *kafas* adorn the prose (V424 f. 82r). The first opens with a half-line using the classical -բ plural: Այս ծառքս ի ջուր աճողական ('These trees growing at the water'). The second *kafa* uses the medieval plural -եր.

<sup>7</sup> The *kafa* continues for four more half-lines. The word վառզին (or any word based on վառզ-) resists discovery in dictionaries. Corruption is likely, perhaps of կոխին ('are trampled/crushed') or կոտորին ('are destroyed/routed'). The եզնախոյ(ք) are known only from the *Alexander Romance*, an animal derived from the words for 'ox' (եզ) and 'ram' (խոյ).

Ծառերն այլ ի դէմ դարձան,	The trees turned to face him,
խաւսեցան ձայնի բանական.	they spoke with a rational voice.

Here there is no obvious reason either plural must be used, other than that both half-lines fit the *kafas*' respective syllabic requirements (half-lines of eight syllables each in the first *kafa*, alternating half-lines of seven and eight syllables in the second), but the poet had many tools at his disposal to write the appropriate number of syllables. This was what he chose. On the other side of the same folio, we again see 'birds' in the plural -ք (հաււք, V424 f. 82v). The poet - here, Xaç'atur Keč'arec'i - comfortably uses the classical plural of his monastic teaching, but uses the vernacular plural where it suits his verse. There is no rigid delineation between the two forms. Rhyme and metre shape Xaç'atur's composition.

## 2.4 Use of կու with Indicative Verbs

The particle կու, which emerged in Middle Armenian as part of the present and imperfect indicative, appears irregularly in the *kafas* accompanying the *Alexander Romance*: included in some, not in others. Its use in the *kafas* points to the practical reality that their authors and audiences understood the verbs whether or not they included կու. No other change is needed to the verb at this time - աստմ ('I say') becomes կու աստմ, with only the addition of the կու - and this made these verbs ripe for poetic use in isosyllabic lines. The inclusion or exclusion of կու becomes determined by the need to fit the seven or eight syllables required in *kafas*.

This is seen within individual *kafas* and across multiple variants of the same poem. For instance, a *kafa* about prophetic talking trees at the edges of the world, presented in the edition of Simonyan (1989, 296), includes կու for only one of the two verbs in the present indicative. The *kafa* is not found in the manuscripts V424 or MCR3, making its authorship likely attributable to Grigoris Ałt'amarc'i.

Եւ քո հրամանացդ ահեղ	And your formidable commands
ամենայն եղեալք հնազանդին.	all beings obey.
Անշունչ՝ և անոգի ծառերս	Inanimate and spiritless trees
բանական ձայնի կու խաւսին:	speak with a rational voice.

Both half-lines follow the eight-syllable requirement of the *kafa*. The longer length of հնազանդին ('they obey'), alongside the other words in the half-line, leaves no spare syllables, while the shorter length of խաւսին ('they speak') requires an additional syllable, filled by կու.

Earlier in the narrative, when Alexander and his army encounter birds with human faces at the furthest part of the world, the same verb appears without կու in the manuscript MCR3 f. 108r, copied by Zak'aria Gnunc'i: Հաւքըս խաւսին մարդկան երգօք ('These birds speak in the languages of men'). The version of this half-line in Simonyan (1989, 263) has an irregular spelling for either the present or imperfect indicative, but still lacks կու, to preserve the syllabic count: Հաւքս այս խաւսէն մարդկան երգաւք ('These birds speak/spoke with the languages of men').

Even more tellingly, uses of կու vary in versions of the same *kafa*. In one, versifying a talking bird that foretells Alexander's death, one half-line of the bird's speech contains slight differences in wording – the addition of the word թագաւոր ('king') – that necessitates changes to the rest of the half-line in order to retain the eight-syllable metre. One of these changes is to the verb, unchanged in meaning. The first version appears in the 16th-century *Alexander Romance* manuscript MCR3, and the second in the 17th-century *talaran* manuscript M7726. No version of this *kafa* appears in the edition of Simonyan, nor in the manuscript V424. This makes the author of the MCR3 variant potentially Zak'aria Gnunc'i.

**MCR3 f. 146r**

ասաց ըշտապիր շուտով  
ու քեզ տես ահա կու ասեմ,  
ի ծանօթ յերկիր գնայ  
զի գըր մահն ես ծածկել ոչ եմ:

It said, "Make haste  
and behold what I tell you,  
go to a known land  
for I will not conceal your death"

**M7726 f. 38r**

ասաց մի ամ ել շտապով  
ահա քեզ ասեմ թագաւոր  
ի ծանօթ երկիր գընայ  
զի քո մահդ ես ծածկելոյ չեմ:

It said, "It will be one quick year.  
Behold – I tell you, king,  
go to a known land  
for I will not conceal your death"

The verbs կու ասեմ and ասեմ ('I say/tell') retain their grammatical function across the two variants, but the կու is dropped in the M7726 *kafa*, where the addition of the word թագաւոր ('king') takes up three of the half-line's eight syllables. In the hands of the M7726 *kafa*'s traitor, կու is not essential to the line's meaning. Nor, it seems, is retaining the monorhyme a priority.<sup>8</sup> Copied – and perhaps revised – in

<sup>8</sup> While the majority of the *Alexander kafas* in M7726 adhere to the usual monorhymes at the end of every line or half-line, a little over a quarter do not. Most are closer than the utterly non-rhyming -որ and -եմ of this example (such as -իւ and -իւ, -ւ and -ւ, where the vowel rhymes but one half-line sees the additional of a final consonant), but it is nonetheless suggestive of the traitor's own poetic sensibility.

the century after Zak'aria's composition, this *kafa* becomes more classical in its second half-line, while the verb in the fourth half-line reads more modern. What was the effect of such a composition – a literary archaisation, a congruous anachronism?

The mutability of կու is seen again in variants of a different *kafa*, deploring the man who fatally poisons Alexander. The variant authored by Xaç'atur Keč'arec'i in V424 f. 120 is metrically poor, not at all abiding by the standard syllabic patterns of the *kafas*, and the half-line includes կու in its verb formation: Էր կու խոցես հանց ողորմ և խիստ լալի ('why did you wound him so pitiably and severely deplorably?'). Appearing in MCR3 f. 159r, copied and perhaps amended by Zak'aria Gnunec'i, the կու has disappeared, along with several other words inessential to the line's general meaning, and the half-line fits within the whole line's 15-syllable constraint:

զայտ աշխարհակալ պարոնդ, Էր խոցես ողորմ ու լալի	This, your world-conquering lord, why did you wound him pitiably and lamentably?
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Another variant of this *kafa* is presented in the edition of Simonyan (1989, 346). It uses a different verb, but notably the removal of էր ('why') allows the inclusion of կու:

Չայդ աշխարհակալ պարոնդ կու դեղես ողորմ ու լալի.	This, your world-conquering lord, you poison pitiably and deplorably.
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These *kafas* demonstrate the ease with which traitors fit կու within the syllabic structure of medieval Armenian poetry. It is clear that its inclusion came naturally – such as in the overly long half-line of Xaç'atur Keč'arec'i in V424 f. 120, above – but its exclusion, frequent in the *kafas*, did not hinder their meaning, making it a convenient syllable to add or remove as the line required, even the same line as traitors changed it across different variants of the same *kafa*.<sup>9</sup> The impression in the corpus is of all three original authors – Xaç'atur Keč'arec'i, Grigoris Ał'amarc'i and Zak'aria Gnunec'i – using կու in

<sup>9</sup> *Kafas* with and without կու abound throughout this corpus, including other examples of differing use across variants of the same *kafa*. Another example is in a *kafa* about the poor fate of Darius. In the edition of Simonyan (1989, 151) and manuscript M3668 f. 157v, the relevant two half-lines read: Աշխարհս ի դուլսայ նըման, | որ ի վեր և ի վար թաւալէ: ('This world is like a water-wheel, which rolls up and down'). There is no կու. In a variant of this *kafa* in M7709 f. 209r, these half-lines change: յաշխարհս է բաժնու նման | որ ի վեր ի վայր կու հոսէ ('This world is like wind, which flows up and down'). Though the meaning – an evocation of Fortune's wheel – is sustained across both variants, the verb changes, and the shorter հոսէ leaves the half-line lacking an eighth syllable. This is filled by կու.

this way. Though the example given here from M7726 loses its կու, the manuscript's traditor preserves կու in six other *kafas*, including one where կու does not appear in the other known variants.<sup>10</sup> Fidelity to either the Classical absence of կու or its Middle Armenian use did not determine its place in every line. The poetry of it did.

## 2.5 Giving a Reply

Many *kafas* describe the epistolary dialogues of Alexander and other figures in the narrative, using set phrasing for 'giving a reply': frequently, պատասխան երես ('gave a reply') or պատասխան կու տայ ('gives a reply'), both Middle Armenian forms. Examples in the manuscript V424 show both:

### V424 f. 86r

Ծարայս պատասխան երես  
պարոսի ու սասց մեծ արքայ

This servant gave a reply  
to Poros, and he said, "Great king..."

### V424 f. 118r

Արքայն պատասխան կու տայ,  
թէ հոգիս ելաւ դու լռէ,

The king gives a reply,  
"My soul is perturbed, be silent!"

This variety is typical across the various manuscripts. Both verbal forms have the same number of syllables, so the poet's choice of one over the other is not metrical. Nor is grammatical tense of much significance in the *kafas*, especially when introducing dialogue – one variant of the second *kafa* above, found in the 17th-century *talaran* manuscript M7709 f. 191r, changes both the verb and the tense without affecting the overall meaning of the half-line: Արքայն պատասխան արար ('The king made a reply'). In many cases, due to the half-line's position in the first half of the 15-syllable full line, rhyme is also not the poet's concern.

In one *kafa*, set in the battle between Alexander and the Indian king Poros (Simonyan 1989, 274), the half-line ending երես is followed by another ending եկիր ('you came'). Here, they form a satisfying pair, both two syllables and beginning with the same sound.

<sup>10</sup> Two half-lines of a *kafa* in M7726 f. 39r read: Հանց ես Աղեկասնոր եղայ | կու զընամ ի հող ի զընտան: ('So I, Alexander, go into the earth, to a prison'). In MCR3 f. 161v, the second half-line is in the aorist – where կու would not be expected – and the third-person: ու զընաց ի նեղ գերեզման: ('and went into a narrow grave'), similar in its tense and meaning to the variant in M7709 f. 194r: որ մտաւ ի նեղ գերեզման: ('entered a narrow grave'). Either M7726's scribe amended the *kafa* to present tense with կու, or copied an elsewhere unattested variant.

Պովրոս պատասխան էրետ	Poros gave a reply,
Շտապով դու բոլորով եկիր	“You all came urgently”

The interchangeability of էրետ and կու տայ in the *kafas* generally seems to signify only the poet’s choice in the moment, but these half-lines attend to the aesthetic experience of poetry: the pleasure of sound.<sup>11</sup> There is much for the audience to appreciate in the *kafas*.

### 3 Conclusion

In mediating between the late antique *Alexander Romance*, translated and preserved in its early *grabar*, and the medieval and early modern worlds of the *vardapets* and unknown traditors who copied the surviving manuscripts of Alexander’s legendary life and anthologised its poetry, the *kafas* speak in a malleable Armenian. They feature the particle կու, used or omitted as the metre required, understood either way, and place the plural -(u)եր and less common variants of words where the monorhyme demanded. The natural variability of changing verbal and pluralisation systems permits this poetic exploitation. Not only does it speak to the ability of poets and publics to understand poetry that crossed and incorporated several registers of language, it points to why they might want to: poetic sensibility. The poets’ chosen form made metrical demands and used a monorhyme that most – though not all – traditors cared to adhere to. This paper has noted, where possible, the author and origin of each *kafa*, which indicates that each traditor partook in these pleasures, depending on their personal composition, copying and compilation (M7726, interestingly, reveals its traditor’s less rigid interest in rhyme). Each half-line is a facet of the use and development of Middle Armenian. Specifically, it is part of the experience of encountering Alexander in medieval Armenian literature: put into poetry that emerges from

<sup>11</sup> A less typical variant of the ‘giving a reply’ half-line comes in a *kafa* where the exchange, not epistolary, is between a narrator in first-person and the dead Alexander: դարձաւ պատասխանս էրետ (‘He gave a reply back’), in manuscript MCR3 f. 162r. The verb էրետ is familiar from the above examples, but the half-line adds դարձաւ. A variant of this half-line, in the edition of Simonyan (1989, 355), changes the formula further: Դարձաւ որ ջուսպ տտուր. Here, the familiar word պատասխան (‘reply’) has been replaced with the variously spelled loan-word ջուսպ (ճուղսպ in Łazaryan, Avetisyan 2009, 478), which has the same meaning but one fewer syllable, required by the addition of որ. Alternatively, if the causality is reversed, որ (or another one-syllable word) is required by the traditor’s choice to use ջուսպ. The second verb in this variant is also unusual: տտուր is typically the second-person (‘you gave’), but this does not match the *kafa*’s first half-line, in which the narrator in first-person asks their question ‘of him’, that is, Alexander. Lack of cohesion is, of course, a possibility, as is scribal error.

the artful voices of Keč'aris, Lake Van and many other points on an itinerary of transmission, at once classical and vernacular. How their publics heard these *kafas* – a lighter tread through a traditional language, an anachronistic voice in contemporary verse – remains harder to pin down, freed from these pages in lost pedagogies and performances.

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# A Brief Introduction to *Harsnerēn*

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**Abstract** *Harsnerēn*, meaning ‘Language of the Bride’ in Armenian, was a gesture-based form of communication used by married women. *Harsnerēn* was used when communication was absolutely necessary, as restrictions were typically placed on the speech of married women. The fieldwork for this study was conducted in six villages in Armenia where the author of this article filmed and documented first-hand accounts of uses of *Harsnerēn*. *Harsnerēn*, while observed as a tradition of the past, allows for an examination of the relationship between language and power dynamics in intimate, familial, and social relationships in modern society.

**Keywords** Harsnerēn. Silence-keeping. Language. Sign language. Women. Armenian.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 Fieldwork. – 3 *Harsnerēn* and Silence-Keeping. – 4 Gestures of *Harsnerēn*. – 5 Conclusions.



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## 1 Introduction

Contemporary musicians frequently create their own renditions of traditional Armenian folk songs. They apply modern twists to ancient melodies, making the songs and the lyrics they entail accessible in the present. Folk songs were passed on orally and typically described life and customs of the time. The revitalisation, reimagining, and professional recording of Armenian folk songs over the years has allowed modern populations to understand and engage with the traditions of ancient, rural Armenia. The folk song *K'amin Zana* includes a verse which describes a man's admiration for a beautiful woman. The verse concludes with the lines, *Atji, srteri orskan, aman | arnem dar'nas č'xoskan* 'Girl, you hunter of hearts | I'll marry you, you'll become mute' (Music of Armenia 2016). Through these lines, the man describes the woman as a 'hunter of hearts' and expresses his desire to marry her, upon which she will become *č'xoskan/č'xōskan*, 'mute'.

The notion of *č'xoskanut'yun/č'xōskanut'iwn* refers to the practice of not speaking. Upon marriage, a bride typically observed a period of silence where she did not communicate using oral language (Hoo-gassian Villa, Kilbourne Matossian 1982; Berberian 2000). The extent of a woman's silence varied among households and was contingent upon unique familial dynamics (Kekejian 2021). Depending on how strictly a bride's family mandated silence-keeping, a woman might be silent for up to one year, until her first child was born (however long that may take), or even for decades until she was implicitly or explicitly granted permission to speak (Kekejian 2021). The concept of *č'xōskanut'iwn* is elaborated further in section 3.

During these years of silence, a woman employed a gesture-based form of communication to convey necessary information to members of her household. This gestural form of communication was known as *Harsneren/Harsnerēn* (Kekejian 2017; 2021; Karbelashvili 1935). The word *harsn* in Armenian translates to 'bride' in English. The suffix *-erēn* is added to the name of a place, including countries or regions, and indicates the language used by the residents of that place. The word *harsn* combined with the suffix *-erēn* creates the word *Harsnerēn*, which comes to mean 'language of the bride' in Armenian (Kekejian 2017; 2021).

## 2 Fieldwork

The fieldwork for this ongoing study of *Harsnerēn* was conducted in the provinces of Tavuš and Gełark'unik' of present-day Armenia. Specifically, interviews and data collection were carried out in Bałanis, Oskepar, Oskevan, and Noyemberyan in Tavuš Province and Gavai, Martuni, and Joragyuł in Gełark'unik' Province. Over 50 interviews

were conducted as part of this fieldwork; they took place in individuals' homes as well as in community spaces (e.g. a church) and public gathering areas. During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to film uses of the nearly forgotten sign language. Such documentation had not been done since the work of Georgian scholar D.P. Karbelashvili from the USSR Academy of Sciences in Tbilisi in the early 1930s (Karbelashvili 1935).

A large part of my research on *Harsnerēn* has consisted in finding previous documentation on the topic to guide my work. When I was an undergraduate student at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), I obtained the only known primary source that was available at the time (until my current work) that discussed the sign language of Armenian women. The book is entitled *Ručnaja-reč' na Kavkaze. issledovanie po materialam baraninskogo rajona SSR Armenii. Manual Speech in the Caucasus. Research on Baranchinsky Region Armenian SSR*, by D.P. Karbelashvili (1935). Upon obtaining the book through library resources at the university, I collaborated with Mr. Mitchell Brown, Scholarly Communication Coordinator and Research Librarian at UC Irvine Libraries, who translated Karbelashvili's book from Russian to English. The original Russian text as well as the English translation (which includes my preliminary findings as the forward) has been made available online through eScholarship, a comprehensive open access publishing programme for the University of California (Karbelashvili 1935).

The translation of the book provided valuable insight into Karbelashvili's initial research objectives, sites, and findings. In the fall of 1931, D.P. Karbelashvili embarked on an expedition to four villages in the Tavuš province of present-day northeast Armenia with linguists, historians, an artist, a film director, and a film operator to explore the sign language used by married Armenian women (Karbelashvili 1935, 3). According to Karbelashvili, he and his team documented the practice in four ways: through descriptions, graphic illustrations, photography, and filming of the gestures. Moreover, the translation of Karbelashvili's book helped reveal the locations for his fieldwork – the villages of Bałanis, Oskepar, Oskevan, and Noyemberyan in the Tavuš Province of present-day northeast Armenia.

Karbelashvili's work and findings were cited by linguists and scholars who followed him, primarily discussing the presence of the sign language of Armenian women (Paget 1936) and placing it within the framework of other gesture-based forms of communication (Kendon 1988; Umiker-Sebeok, Sebeok 1987). The sources, while scarce, cite Karbelashvili's text as a reference for the sign language employed by Armenian women but provide no further analysis.

I began my fieldwork in 2016 by travelling to the villages where Karbelashvili conducted his original study over 80 years earlier, the four aforementioned villages in Tavuš Province. A more complete un-

derstanding and proper documentation of this communication system was only possible through in-person conversations with women and their families in that region. Specifically, I began my fieldwork in Bałanis (one of the villages where D.P. Karbelashvili conducted his exploration in the early 1930s). Coincidentally, I had travelled to Bałanis in 2014 to conduct volunteer work in the village; at that time, I had not begun to explore the topic of *Harsnerēn*. Through my volunteering in 2014, I had met the mayor of Bałanis village who became a point of contact for me in the village and in the regions when I began my fieldwork for the study of *Harsnerēn*.

I met with the mayor of Bałanis upon my arrival in the village in the summer of 2016 and informed him of my research interests surrounding the gesture-based sign language of married Armenian women. I requested that he direct me to elderly individuals in the village who may be able to provide more information and insight on the topic; he agreed and assisted in coordinating many of the interviews that I conducted, particularly in the early stages of the study. The first woman I interviewed informed me that she used to speak *Harsnerēn* (using the name/word *Harsnerēn* specifically). Prior to my fieldwork (and that initial encounter), scholarly evidence had not identified the name *Harsnerēn* in reference to the gesture-based communication medium of Armenian women; the practice had simply been described as the sign language of Armenian women (including in Karbelashvili's text). Thus, the name *Harsnerēn* was uncovered and documented during my first experience of fieldwork in 2016 in the village of Bałanis.

Following the first interview I conducted in Bałanis, many others were conducted through word-of-mouth and personal referrals in Bałanis and its neighbouring villages. Given the population and density of the village(s) in northeast Armenia, individuals I interviewed referred me to family, friends, and neighbours they knew who employed or knew about *Harsnerēn*. Through those personal references and with the help of the mayor, I went to different homes in the village(s) and conducted interviews. The interviews were carried out in a conversational format with women and their families; thus, interviews were conducted not just by women who 'spoke' (employed) *Harsnerēn* directly, but by those who *understood* it and were *receptors* of it (e.g. husbands, sons, in-laws, and other family members). Interviewing various people who employed and understood *Harsnerēn* (with regards to its gestures but also its social and cultural underpinnings) provided further insight into the use and practice of *Harsnerēn*.

In 2018, I returned to Armenia and travelled to Gełark'unik' Province to conduct more interviews in the cities of Gavař, Martuni, and Joragyuł. The interviews happened organically (i.e. through word-of-mouth personal referrals) there as well. For example, when I first arrived in Gavař with a friend, we were dropped off in the city centre by our taxi driver. We then walked into a small market to buy food where

the owner asked us where we were from and why we had come to visit Gavař. I told her that I was there to inquire more about *Harsnerēn*, and she referred us to her friend who lived around the corner who employed *Harsnerēn* to communicate years prior. That is how I conducted my first interview in Gavař, which was then followed by personal referrals to other individuals who employed or could speak to *Harsnerēn*. Additionally, prior to leaving Gavař, my friend and I decided to visit the church in the town centre. While in the church, we were once again asked by a local woman why we were visiting Gavař. I mentioned my study of *Harsnerēn* and she shared that she herself employed *Harsnerēn* for decades; that is how I conducted my last interview in Gavař – in church. The methodology employed for studying *Harsnerēn* was (and is) very organic, as demonstrated by my conversational interview process that was initiated through personal referrals by residents of the village(s) I conducted fieldwork in. Throughout my fieldwork, I have largely relied on my instincts and acquired knowledge to guide the procedures for researching this relatively unexamined topic (Naber 2021).

### 3 *Harsnerēn* and Silence-Keeping

An integral part of understanding *Harsnerēn* is an examination of the practice of *č'xōskanut'iwñ* mentioned earlier. *Č'xōskanut'iwñ* has been previously documented in Armenian scholarly work (e.g. Hoogassian Villa, Kilbourne Matossian 1982; Berberian 2000). Armenian women's communication through hand-based gestures during periods of silence has also been documented (Berberian 2000). In their book, *Armenian Village Life Before 1914*, Sousie Hoogassian Villa and Mary Kilbourne Matossian describe that typically after a woman got married "she became mute, lost her individuality, and fell under the absolute control of her elders" (1982, 71). Throughout my fieldwork, participants also discussed periods of observed silence when speaking was not permitted and when silence was mandated by their husbands and/or in-laws. The present study of *Harsnerēn* fills a gap in that literature by revealing the specifics of the communication mechanism that was employed during these periods of silence.

As indicated previously, my interviews have revealed that the extent of a woman's silence as well as her use of *Harsnerēn* varied depending on household dynamics and relationships (Kekejian 2021). For instance, in one household, a bride might only be forbidden from speaking to her in-laws; however, in another home, a bride might not be allowed to speak to her husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law, uncle, and aunt (Kekejian 2021). For women who observed *č'xōskanut'iwñ*, permission to speak was often explicitly granted by the dominant in-law or implicitly when that in-law died or when the bride's first child was born (Kekejian 2021).

One participant I interviewed in Bałanis recalled her mother's experience being granted permission to speak. Her father-in-law had given her mother jewellery as a gesture for granting permission to speak from that point on. She explained that, *matani dvec' tē inč' dvec' or lezun bac'vi, ira het xoselu iravunk' unec'av* 'he gave a ring or something and her tongue opened up, she was given permission to speak to him'. Another participant in Bałanis I interviewed discussed how she did not speak for 14 years upon marriage; she began to speak after her father-in-law died in 1976. She stated that, *kesrars merak, hetə lriv t'alec'im č'xoskanut'yunə*, 'my father-in-law died, and I completely buried my silence with him' (Kekejian 2021).

An Armenian woman was expected to be "modest and virtuous" and the clothing she wore had to accurately reflect those characteristics (Lima 1974, Introduction). As a symbol of their silence, modesty, and respect to others, women often covered their hair and lower half of their face with a veil, leaving only their eyes visible (Hoogasian Villa, Kilbourne Matosian 1982; Lima 1974). A bride often remained veiled in public until her first child was born or for the first few years of her child's life (Hoogasian Villa, Kilbourne Matossian 1982, 80-94). During my interviews, participants frequently discussed the wearing of a white veil to cover their hair and lower half of their face, including their mouth. It was expressed that a father-in-law must have never seen the bride's mouth as there was an aspect of shame associated with the visibility of a woman's mouth. One participant I interviewed discussed how her mother wore a veil to cover her head and mouth and would communicate using *Harsnerēn* when needed; she elaborated that her mother died never having been granted permission to speak.

The youngest participant I have spoken to was 19 years old at the time of the interview which was conducted in 2018 in Gełark'unik' province. She said that she was *č'xōskan* for one year upon marriage - until the birth of her first child. The oldest women I interviewed were in the four villages of Tavuš province, where all participants were between 60 and 96 years of age. Some have revealed that they were silent until 1976, 1978, and 1985 respectively. As indicated by the aforementioned ages and dates, the practice of *č'xōskanut'iwn* lives on to this day. This evidence highlights that the practice of silence-keeping and the use of *Harsnerēn* have persisted even through more modern times. *Harsnerēn* and *č'xōskanut'iwn* are not synonymous terms; a woman's *č'xōskanut'iwn* did not necessarily mean that she spoke *Harsnerēn*; some women said they had not used any form of communication, including gestural, during their periods of silence. On the contrary, if a woman spoke *Harsnerēn*, it meant that she practiced some degree of *č'xōskanut'iwn*. Simply put, *Harsnerēn* implies *č'xōskanut'iwn*, but the opposite is not always true.

There is an undeniable social and psychological impact that lives on in the present due to uses of *Harsnerēn* in the past (Kekejian 2021).

During my interviews, some women revealed that while they are not being mandated to speak *Harsnerēn* at this time, they still feel the need to remain silent in various settings. This immediately excludes women from both public and even private spaces and conversations. The study of *Harsnerēn* reveals the mutually constitutive relationship between the past and the present - namely, that ancient traditions are not isolated from modern realities and, in fact, greatly influence the current situations of Armenian women of various ages (Kekejian 2021).

Women who have spoken *Harsnerēn* are living proof of this ancient practice and its repercussions are very much manifest in today's society. *Harsnerēn* also highlights deeply rooted gender discrimination in Armenian culture which has, between the past and the present, paved the way for gender-based violence in modern Armenian society (Kekejian 2021). During my interviews, some women revealed being physically abused at moments when they broke their silence; one woman I spoke to described her experience of having a miscarriage and telling her husband about it through gestures out of fear of breaking her silence (Kekejian 2021).

#### 4 Gestures of *Harsnerēn*

My study of *Harsnerēn* allows for comparisons to be drawn with the first documentation of the practice by D.P. Karbelashvili in the early 1930s. This is done specifically by analysing the overlap and juxtaposition of the signs that women demonstrated as well as the societal norms of both times. Karbelashvili documented approximately 101 gestures, including single words and short phrases in his book; these included gestures representing people, animals, places, objects, and even abstract concepts. To this point in my research, I have documented over 20 individual words and phrases of *Harsnerēn*. My fieldwork has revealed signs that overlap with and vary from those included in Karbelashvili's documentation. Gestures that overlap in our documentation include those for 'cow', 'house', and 'water' among a few others.<sup>1</sup> Signs that I have recorded that do not appear in Karbelashvili's documentation include 'doctor', 'wash', and 'phone call' among others.

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1 See [figs 1-3] retrieved from Karbelashvili 1935, 46-56.

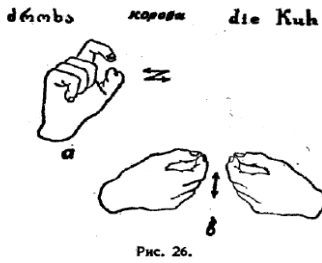


Figure 1  
Gesture for 'cow'. © Karbelashvili 1935



Figure 2  
Gesture for 'house'. © Karbelashvili 1935

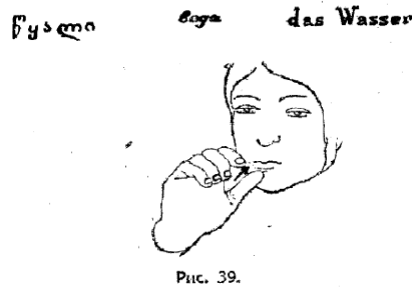


Figure 3  
Gesture for 'water'. © Karbelashvili 1935

Karbelashvili's documentation of gestures of *Harsnerēn* is more extensive than mine. One reason for this variation could be that he was documenting the gestures when they were actively being used, while my documentation primarily consists of women's recollection of their own, or their mothers' use of *Harsnerēn*. This comparison raises intriguing questions about how Karbelashvili was able to gain access to the women's sphere and document the somewhat secret sign language of married Armenian women when it was actively being used during the USSR.

One key difference between our data sets is that Karbelashvili recorded abstract concepts such as 'soul', 'God', and 'conscience' (Karbelashvili 1935). My fieldwork revealed that *Harsnerēn* was primarily used to communicate basic needs such as asking for food or water, informing of illness, and conveying important information related to household tasks. Across all the participants I interviewed, the gestures most commonly demonstrated were those meaning 'eat' and 'drink'. The frequency and consistency of these gestures across participants provides further evidence that *Harsnerēn* was primarily used to convey basic needs to household members.

The signs for 'mother-in-law' and 'father-in-law' were reoccurring in my fieldwork. Upon marriage, a bride typically lived with her husband and in-laws (Hoogasian Villa, Kilbourne Matossian 1982). It is



significant that gestures for these two words are part of the bride's repertoire as they highlight the critical role the in-laws played and the impact they had on the bride's everyday life. Throughout my interviews, participants demonstrated the gesture for 'mother-in-law' quite frequently. It was often in the context of asking for things such as food. A bride's mother-in-law controlled many aspects of her life including when she ate and the extent of her silence (Hoogasian Villa, Kilbourne Matossian 1982). Interestingly, the mother-in-law, who was once a silent bride herself, often imposed speech restrictions on to the next generation.

At this point in my research, it can be assumed that some uniformity of *Harsnerēn* did exist, as women in different villages who recalled uses of it demonstrated similar gestures at times. These included the gestures that represented 'eat', 'drink', and 'mother-in-law' among others. One assumption as to how such similarities or uniformities around *Harsnerēn* arose is due to observing women in their families (such as their mothers) employ signs of *Harsnerēn* years prior and then adapting their repertoires based on their environmental needs and circumstances.

## 5 Conclusions

There is a great deal that is unknown about *Harsnerēn* and its lasting impact; and it is important to recognise that we may never comprehend it in its entirety. For example, at this time, we do not know for certain how far back in Armenian history the use of *Harsnerēn* dates or the extent to which it is being employed across the different provinces of Armenia proper today. There are different reasons for this lack of information surrounding *Harsnerēn*. One reason for this is that women who practice(d) *č'xōskanut'iw'n* and/or employed *Harsnerēn* have likely not had the opportunity to share their stories and experiences. To my knowledge, there has been no first-person documentation of *Harsnerēn* between Karbelashvili's documentation in the early 1930s and my (ongoing) documentation which began in 2016. Moreover, as appears in my interviews, the trauma of *Harsnerēn* lives on and many women do not want to relive that experience by talking about it; therefore, while much can still be uncovered about *Harsnerēn* today, it should be (and is) acknowledged and respected that many women do not wish to resurface those memories.

While the origin of *Harsnerēn* is unknown, at this point, it can be concluded that *Harsnerēn* was a language created by women and for women to communicate during these periods of silence. *Harsnerēn* was established and employed under difficult circumstances. Women who were *č'xōskan* or employed *Harsnerēn* were not deaf or speech impaired - their ability to use oral language was intact; yet, upon

marriage (which often occurred at a very young age) they were forbidden from exercising that ability as a sign of respect for those around them. Therefore, the use of *Harsnerēn*, from one perspective, can be observed as a subversive medium of communication.

The study of *Harsnerēn* is an ongoing project. In the coming years, I hope to conduct more interviews with people, in particular women, in different regions of Armenia to evaluate the extent of uses of *Harsnerēn* beyond villages in the provinces of Gelark'unik' and Tavuš. I plan to continue documenting the gestures of *Harsnerēn* and unpacking the customs which underlie it; I aspire to share my findings not only within academic circles, but also at community events. Driven by my belief to make research (findings) accessible and comprehensible, I wrote and directed a documentary short film entitled *Harsnerēn. Language of the Armenian Bride* which premiered at the Pomegranate Film Festival in Toronto in 2019 (Torosyan 2019). Moving forward, I hope to screen my documentary short at different domestic and international community events and film festivals as well.

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# From Manuscript to Tagged Corpora An Automated Process for Ancient Armenian or Other Under-Resourced Languages of the Christian East

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**Abstract** Creating a digital corpus enriched by full linguistic annotations is a work which classically integrates several manual steps of acquisition, processing, and data display. Processing presupposes the existence of dedicated and specialised analysis tools, adapted to the state of the language used in the corpus. This paper describes a semi-supervised process for building Armenian corpora from scanned documents. This method is based on a chain of applications pre-trained by Calfa and GREgORI and enabling the complete processing of texts, from their automated input to their linguistic analysis and data display. We provide an assessment of this methodology and benefits of model specialisation, based on digitised copies of a 17th-century manuscript of the Four Gospels (Walters MS W541 = BAL W541, Amida Gospels, ff. 113v-117r: Lk 1:1-78).

**Keywords** Handwritten text recognition. Computational philology. Lemmatisation. Morphosyntactic analysis. Tagged corpora. Armenian.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 1.1 Text Recognition. – 1.2 Linguistic Analysis. – 1.3 Aims. – 2 From Handwritten Text to Digitised Text. HTR Processing. – 2.1 Layout Analysis. Identification of Text Area and Line Detection. – 2.2 Text Recognition. – 3 From Digitised Text to Tagged Corpus: Linguistic Analysis. – 3.1 First Step: Analysis by Matching. – 3.2 Second Step: Analysis by RNN. – 4 Conclusion.



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## 1 Introduction

Online corpora are essential resources for exploring a language and the contents of texts. The current global movement toward digitisation of documents in library collections is leading to the creation of huge image databases. Such initiatives ease access to digitised documents, but they are not sufficient to allow direct and effective researches in the textual data enclosed in these documents. To this end, images must be transformed into texts and texts into tagged corpora. Once they have been enriched with linguistic information and made available through interoperable formats, these corpora can then provide researchers with valuable data and be used for different purposes.

Image databases are increasing in number and growing ever larger. Their conversion into texts and then into corpora must therefore, by necessity, rely on automated processing methods. Two major steps are required to complete such a project: (i) text recognition and (ii) linguistic analysis of corpora. This paper presents and evaluates an operational processing chain developed by Calfa<sup>1</sup> and GREgORI,<sup>2</sup> and already implemented for different languages of the Christian East.<sup>3</sup> Here, this chain is applied to texts written in Classical Armenian.

### 1.1 Text Recognition

Good practice in text recognition consists in a three-phase process:

1. layout analysis and understanding;
2. identification of text lines;
3. text extraction itself and its export in a digital format.

State-of-the-art recognition systems achieve excellent results on well-preserved printed documents with simple layouts (Reul et al. 2019). Recognition of historical manuscripts and of complex layouts (e.g. columns, marginal or interlinear scholia, etc.) remains an open problem. The conclusions drawn from the latest *International Conference on Frontiers of Handwriting Recognition (ICFHR)* and *Inter-*

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<sup>1</sup> Calfa specialises in document analysis for Armenian and other oriental languages; for more information see <https://calfa.fr>.

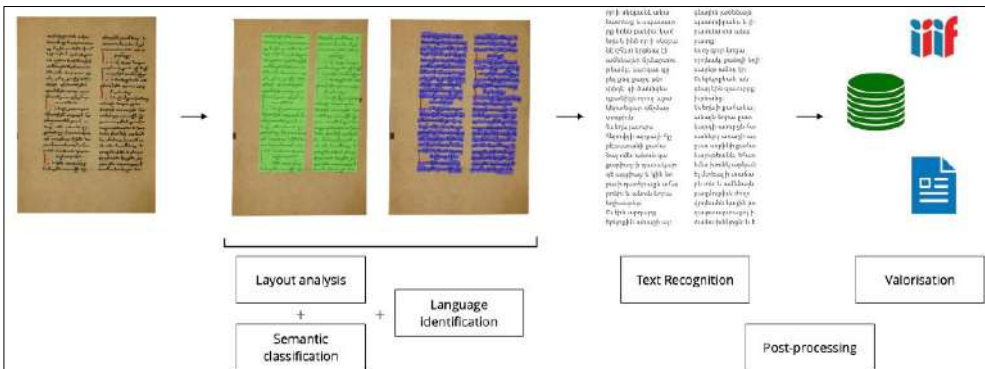
<sup>2</sup> About the GREgORI project, see <https://uclouvain.be/fr/instituts-recherche/inca/ciol/gregori-project.html>. GREgORI has developed an expertise in morpho-syntactic analysis of the main languages of the Christian East, Greek, Armenian, Georgian, and Syriac.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Vidal-Gorène et al. 2020. The GREgORI Project provides scholars with lemmatised index and concordances, cf. Stone 2021 for Armenian; Schmidt et al. 2021 for Syriac; Pataridze 2020 for Georgian.

*national Conference on Document Analysis and Recognition (ICDAR)* (Clausner et al. 2019) demonstrate the benefits of using Artificial Intelligence in this field.

Indeed, an artificial neural network can easily be trained with large databases to recognise a given object in a specific context. The success of this approach mainly depends on the availability of large amounts of data, which is not the case for poorly endowed languages, such as Armenian, for which other strategies must be implemented (Vidal-Gorène et al. 2021).

This approach has already proven its efficiency when applied to printed Latin scripts. At present, Optical Character Recognition (OCR) systems have been adapted for Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR) and are being used in a number of digital humanities projects. Figure 1 highlights the common pipeline for the recognition of a handwritten text [fig. 1]. For historical manuscripts, layout analysis and character recognition generally achieve 95% or higher accuracy, even with under-resourced scripts and complex layouts (Vidal-Gorène et al. 2021).



**Figure 1** Common steps of HTR process (theoretical aspect): layout analysis, line detection, text extraction and formatting

The recognition engine produces a plain text file retaining the structure of the original document. Such a file already makes it easier to find information (e.g. research by word-form). However, since hyphenation, word spacing, idiosyncratic spellings and mistakes are not resolved, the search possibilities remain limited.

## 1.2 Linguistic Analysis

Linguistic analysis aims to enrich the textual data with linguistic information. In this case, three types of annotations are carried out:

1. lemmatisation: to assign a lemma (a lexical entry) to each word-form of the text;
2. morphosyntactic tagging: to identify the morphosyntactic category of every word-form (e.g. noun, verb, adjective, pronoun, etc.);
3. inflectional tagging: to provide an analysis for every word-form (e.g. case, number, voice, mood, tense, person, etc.).

For instance, the word զբաւիցն (MS W541 f. 113 col. A; Lk 1:4) can be described as follows:

1. զ-: a prefixed preposition (morphosyntactic tag) / զ (lemma);
2. -բաւից-: the inflected form of a common noun (morphosyntactic tag) / բաւ (lemma) genitive (case) plural (number);
3. -ն: the demonstrative suffix (morphosyntactic tag) / ն (lemma).

Tagged corpora make it possible to focus queries on any kind of information recorded within it (word-form, lemma, morphosyntactic and inflectional tags or any combination thereof). This data may then be used for other purposes, paving the way for further studies such as syntactical and semantical analysis.

Such analyses require tools from the Natural Language Processing field (NLP). These tools, first developed for the analysis of modern Western languages in Latin script (written from left to right) are now being adapted to process other languages, including Ancient languages or Oriental languages belonging to different language families or linguistic systems (Indo-European or Semitic languages, inflected or agglutinative languages, etc.) and using different alphabets, or a right-to-left script.

The lemmatisation and tagging steps have initially been implemented with the help of rule-based systems that rely on reference lexicons (built from already analysed corpora) to match the word-forms. This strategy results in effective coverage of the already known vocabulary of the text, irrespective of the context. Resorting to artificial intelligence helps compensate two downsides of this method: lexical ambiguity and unknown terms.

Provided with previously tagged corpora, a neural network (e.g. a Recurrent Neural Network or RNN) can learn, through examples, to infer statistically the analysis of new texts. Instead of manually producing rules for the analysis beforehand, the system is left to generate its own rules using its own devices. The outcomes achieved are therefore predictions. The reliability of the results depends more on the volume and quality of annotations provided initially than on the

sophistication of the rules set out. Using RNN offers a reliable and rapid method for the analysis of new data. This method is particularly appropriate for poorly endowed languages, like Armenian. Despite the existence of several large annotated corpora – Arak29 for Classical Armenian<sup>4</sup> and EANC for Modern Eastern Armenian<sup>5</sup> –, researchers still do not have massive, reliable and interoperable data, as is already the case for modern languages or some ancient languages like Greek.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.3 Aims

This problematic highlights the need for a full processing chain for text analysis and data creation in Armenian within the scope of the Calfa and GREgORI projects. These endeavours will significantly increase the extent of computer resources available for the creation of annotated corpora, not only in Armenian, but also in other languages of the Christian East.

In this paper, we describe an experiment conducted on the text of the first chapter of the Armenian version of the Gospel of Luke, as transmitted by the early 17th-century manuscript Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, W541 (= BAL W541), ff. 113r-117r.<sup>7</sup> The text, in *bolorgir* script, is written with great care. The beginning of the text, on the first folio, partly uses foliate initials and capital letters rubricated in blue and gold (f. 113r; cf. **fig. 2**). The text is spread over two columns, containing 23 lines each, with protruding initials. Different intonation and punctuation marks can be seen (cf. **fig. 3**). These initials and interlinear marks may affect text recognition.

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<sup>4</sup> See [https://www.arak29.am/bible\\_28E](https://www.arak29.am/bible_28E).

<sup>5</sup> See <http://www.eanc.net>.

<sup>6</sup> For a state of the art for Armenian, see Vidal-Gorène et al. 2020, 92-5.

<sup>7</sup> For a complete description of the manuscript, with high-definition reproductions, see <http://purl.thewalters.org/art/W.541/description>. Images are available under a CC BY 3.0 licence.



Figure 2 MS W541 f. 113r



Figure 3 MS W541 f. 114

Regarding the language itself, this text is a sample of Classical Armenian as used in the 5th-century translation of the Gospels. It contains 1,502 word-occurrences and 508 different word-forms, identified after analysis as belonging to 300 different lemmas.

In order to confirm the efficiency of the HTR approach, we also provide results on two other samples 'out of the box' of the same text, with various other difficulties:

1. a page of the 12th-century manuscript W538 (= BAL W538) (ff. 154r-156r),<sup>8</sup> written in a slanted *erkat'agir*, and following a *scriptio continua* on two columns, sometimes hard to read, and 'text alignment' leading to wrong spaces added into characters of a single word;
2. a page of the printed edition of the Zohrab (1805), from the public domain. The 1805 edition is particularly known for being hard to read due to typography, text density and scan quality.

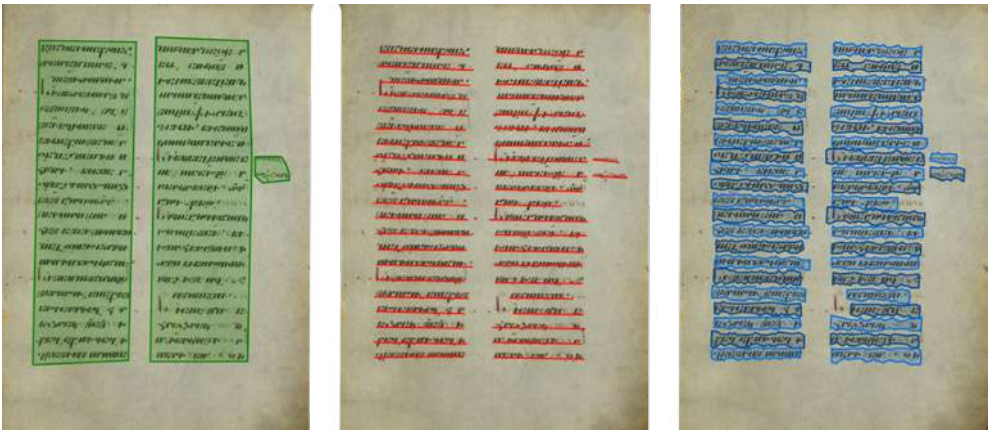
Experiments are led within the scope of very under-resourced projects, for which we observe a lack of annotated data or a need of specialised transcription.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/html/W538/>, images available under a CC BY 3.0 licence.





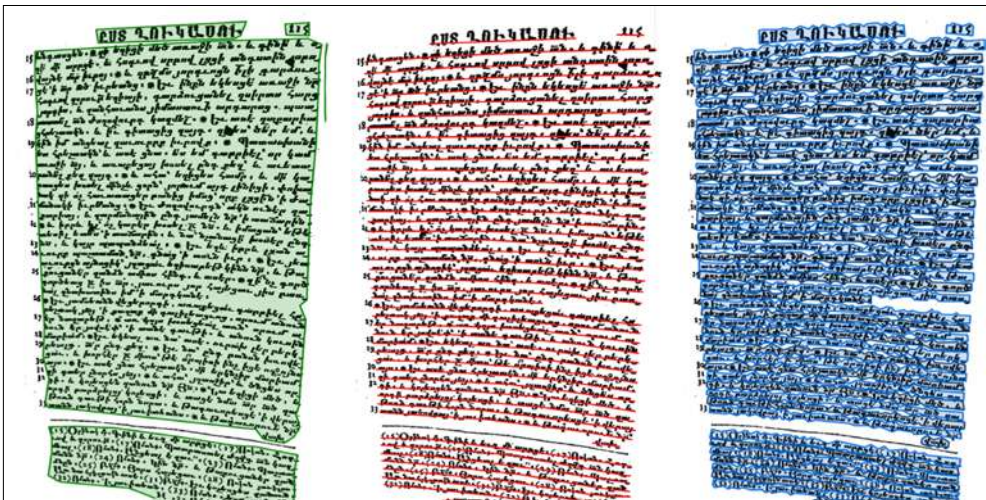
**Figure 4a** (i) Layout analysis with text-regions identification, (ii) line detection, and (iii) line extraction (MS W541, f. 114v). The user keeps control over each step on Calfa Vision in order to ensure high recognition rates



**Figure 4b** (i) Layout analysis with text-regions identification, (ii) line detection, and (iii) line extraction (MS W538, f. 156r)

## 2 From Handwritten Text to Digitised Text. HTR Processing

The creation of high-performance models for text recognition of ancient manuscripts has not yet been sufficiently evaluated. An effective approach consists in building models specialised on one script or one hand, and then to proceed to fine-tuning, by adjusting the models to the needs of the task at hand (e.g. identification of a text-area in particular, processing an unprecedented abbreviation system, etc.). To be relevant, this methodology should require a dedicated interface to display results and to enable proofreading in order to fine-tune the integrated model [figs 4a-b].



**Figure 4c** (i) Layout analysis with text-regions identification, (ii) line detection, and (iii) line extraction. Zohrab Bible, 105 (Venice, 1805)

In this case, the document analysis, the semi-automated transcription, and the proofreading of results are undertaken on Calfa Vision,<sup>9</sup> an online semi-automated service specialised in the processing of handwritten documents. The platform allows the creation of customised models for under-resourced languages, for which a massive data approach is limited. Calfa Vision integrates several generic models for layout analysis and HTR (Vidal-Gorène et al. 2021, 513-17). As mentioned above, the document analysis is a three-step process: layout analysis, line detection and text recognition. The processing was

<sup>9</sup> See <https://vision.calfa.fr>.

deliberately divided in three steps in order to allow the user to manage the complete process and to customise each feature according to its needs. Figures 4a-c illustrate these three first steps.

## 2.1 Layout Analysis. Identification of Text Area and Line Detection

Preliminary text area identification is conducted using the method described in Vidal-Gorène et al. (2021, 514). Areas located by this means are categorised on the basis of their content (main body of text, title, marginalia, etc.) and sorted according to the reading order in Armenian. The identification of text area, in blue and red in figure 4.1, reaches 99.64% accuracy.

The engine then proceeds to recognise the lines of text (cf. [fig. 4.1](#), steps ii and iii). Across the eight pages of the text, the *precision* (relation between the number of lines correctly predicted and the total number of lines identified) is 89.08% and the *recall* or relevance (relation between the number of lines correctly identified and the total number of lines expected) is 98.53%.<sup>10</sup>

At this stage, the inaccuracies and the mistakes must be corrected manually on Calfa Vision (rectifying the shape of a line, deleting or adding a line, etc.). This operation limits the accumulation of errors throughout the process [\[fig. 5\]](#).

Once the layout has been validated, the extraction of lines is achieved automatically, with the help of a surrounding polygon (in blue in figure 5), and the result can be manually corrected on Calfa Vision. This two-step approach (Diem et al. 2017) allows oblique or curved line localisation.

Thanks to real-time proofreading and evaluation of the models' predictions, the corrected data fed back into the models enable their continuous adjustment to the peculiarities of the corpus. Hence, the quality of predictions increases for the processing of the subsequent images.

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<sup>10</sup> The difference between the two measurements is due to the high rate of errors obtained on the first folio of the text (113r), comprised of illuminated letters and surrounding artworks. For that single folio, the *precision* is 30.77% and the *recall* 99.89%. It means that the four lines of text have been identified, even though they are mixed with a large number of lines detected by mistake. *A contrario*, for the entire text, irrespective of the first folio, the *precision* reaches 96.37% and the *recall* 98.36%. The specific layout of the first folio is the issue here.

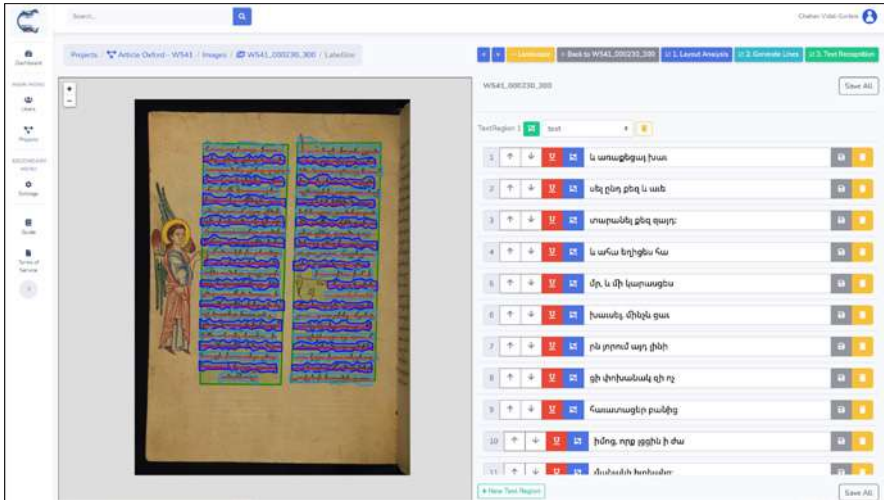


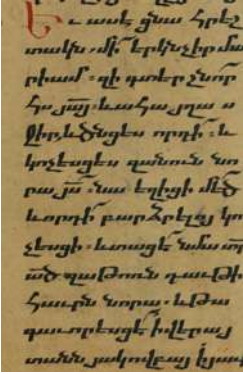
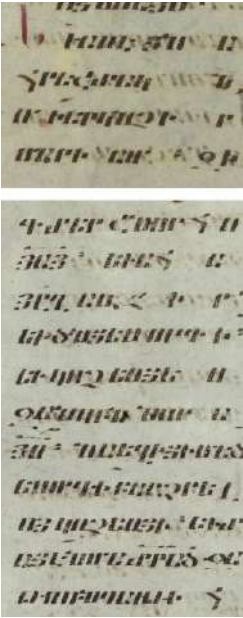

Figure 5 Annotation and proofreading interface, MS W541 f. 114v, Calfa Vision (June 2021)

## 2.2 Text Recognition

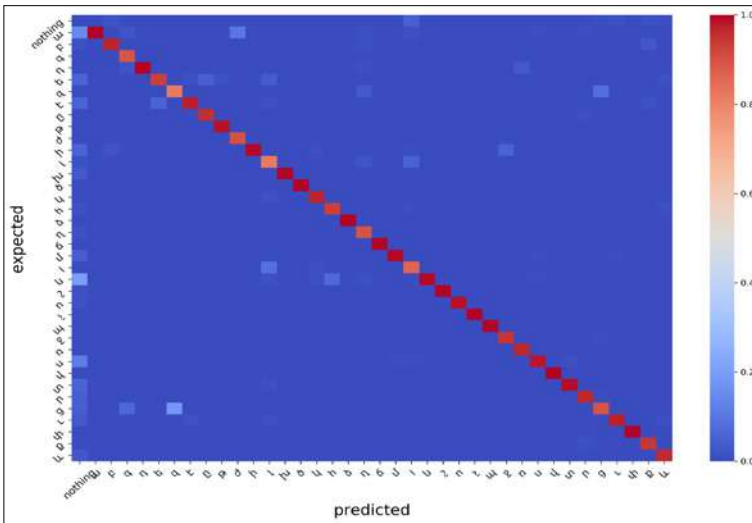
Already at the previous step, the identified lines of text can be submitted to the HTR. Calfa Vision includes several generic models of text recognition for the four main types of Armenian handwriting, namely the *erkat'agir*, *bolorgir*, *nōtrgir* and *štagir* scripts (Stone et al. 2002). The HTR error rate is assessed by a specific metric, the Character Error Rate (CER). The *bolorgir* model used here by default gives a 5.42% CER for the manuscript. Figure 6 shows the confusion matrix displaying the distribution of errors [fig. 6].

Warm colour indicates that a predicted character (on the X-axis) is often transcribed as an expected character (on the Y-axis). For instance, the character  $\omega$  is well recognised by the HTR, as the cell is red in the matrix. For this character, the outcome is close to 100%. The matrix shows the distribution of the recognition rate for each character (high on the diagonal). It means that a significant proportion of letters is correctly recognised. Different hues indicate characters with lower recognition rates. Such is the case for the letters  $q$ ,  $l$ , and  $j$ , whose recognition rate is 70%.

**Figure 7** Example of prediction from model by default, and after fine-tuning with additions of spaces and resolution of abbreviations, MS W541 f. 115r col. A, MS W538 f. 156r col. B, 156 col. A., and the Zohrab Bible (1805), p. 115

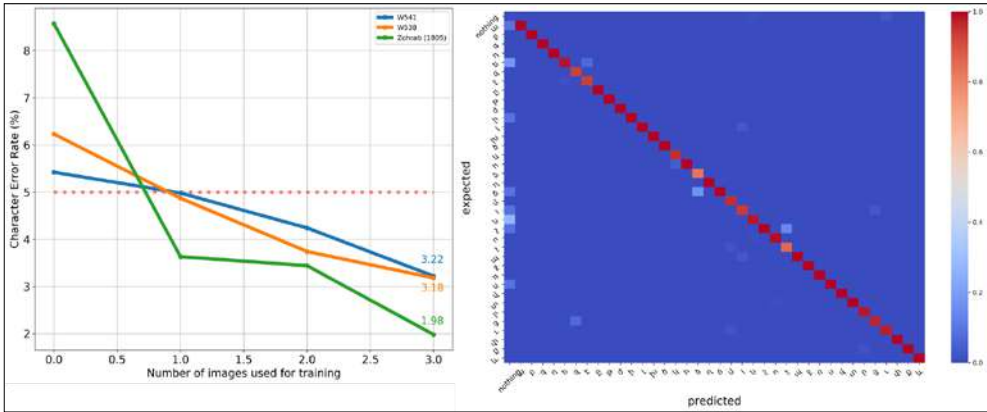
Original picture	Default model prediction	Fine-tuned model prediction (after 3 images)
	<p>ւսսէզնսհրեշ տակն,միերկնչիրմա րիամ:զիգտերշնոր հսյայ:կահայդաս չիրևծնցեսորդի:և կոչեսցեսզանունն որայ:նահղիցիմեծ: ևորդիբարձրելոյկո չեսզի:ևտացէնմատր ածոյաթոռնդաւթի հարննորա.ևթա գաւորեսցէիվերայ տաննյակովբայիյաւի տեսնա:ևթագաւոր</p>	<p>Եւ սսէ ցնս հրեշ տակն, մի երկնչիր: մա րիամ: զի գտեր շնոր հս յաստուծոյ: և ահա յդաս չիրև ծնցես որդի: և կոչեսցես զանունն նո րա յիսւս: նա եղիցի մեծ: և որդի բարձրելոյ կո չեսցի: և տացէ նմա տր ածոյաթոռն դաւթի հարննորա: և թա գաւորեսցէ իվերայ տանն յակովբայ ի յաւի տեսնա: և թագաւոր</p>
	<p>ԵՒ ԱՍՒՔՅՆ Ա ՀՐԵՇՏԱԿ Ն, Մ ԻԵՐԿՆՉԻ Ր ՄԱՐԻ ԱՄ : ՁԻ ԳՏԵՐ ՇՆՈՐՀՍ ՅԱՅ: ԵՒ ԱՀ Ա ՅԸՂԱՍՁ Ի Ր, ԵՒ ԾՆՑԵՍՈՐԻ Ի: ԵՒ ԿՈՉԵՍՑԵ Ս ՁԱՆՈՒՆ ՆՈՐ Ա ՅՍ: ՆԱԵՂԻԾԻՄԵԾ ԵՒՈՐԻԻԲԱՂՐԵԼ ՈՅԿՈՉԵՍՑԻ: ԵՒՏ ԱՑԷՆՄԱՏՐԱԾՁԱ ԹՈՒՆԴԱԻԹԻ Հ ԱՐ ՆՈՐԱ: ԵՒԹԱ ԳԱԻՈՐԵՍՑԷ</p>	<p>Եւ սսէ ցն ս հրեշտակ ն, մ ի երկնչիր մարիամ : զի գտեր շնորս յաստուծոյ: և սհ ս յըզասջ ի բ, և ծնցես որդի: և կոչեսցէ ս զանունն նորա յիսուս: նա եղից ի մեծ և որդի բարձրել ոյ կոչեսցի: և տ ացէ նմա տէրաստուծ զս թոռն դաւթի և ար նորա: և թա գաւորեսցէ</p>
	<p>Եւ սսէ ցնս հրեշտակն. մի երկնչիր մարիամ, զի գտեր շնորհս յայ: և ահա յդասչիր և ծնցես որ դի. և կոչեսցեն զանունն նո րա Յս: Նա եղիցի մեծ, և որդի բարձրելոյ կոչեսցի: և տացէ նմա ար ած գա թոռն դաւթի հորն նորա. և թագաւոր</p>	<p>Եւ սսէ ցնս հրեշտակն. մի երկնչիր մարիամ, զի գտեր շնորհս յաստուծոյ: և ահա յդասչիր և ծնցես որ դի. և կոչեսցեն զանունն նորա Յիսուս: Նա եղիցի մեծ, և որդի բարձրելոյ կոչեսցի: և տացէ նմա տէր աստուծ զս թոռն դաւթի հորն նորա. և թագաւոր</p>





**Figure 6** Distribution of HTR errors in the confusion matrix (default model)

With a CER of 5.42%, an overall understanding of the text can be achieved (cf. column Default model prediction in [fig. 7](#)). Errors are recurrent and located on a limited number of letters (cf. [figs 6-7](#)). However, a good character recognition model does not mean that predicted output is directly exploitable as is by researchers, because the text produced by the HTR is limited in its inter-word spaces recognition and it preserves a *scriptio continua* (model originally trained on texts without word spaces), end-of-line word breaks and abbreviations of the original text. Several approaches are possible: on the basis of the obtained text (see [fig. 7](#)), either automatically generate word spacing and resolve abbreviations in post-processing (Camps et al. 2021), or manually add the spaces, corrections and desired information in order to fine-tune the models with this new text as a reference. We favour the second approach, because it gives the user total control over its editorial choices, directly on Calfa Vision. [Figure 8](#) shows how this fine-tuning helps reduce the CER, depending on the number of images that undergo manual correction [[fig. 8](#)].



**Figure 8** Distribution of HTR errors in the confusion matrix (Fine-tuned model) and CER evolution

The new confusion matrix obtained after correcting three images shows limited information loss for the letters ձ and շ, as well as a recognition loss for the letter փ. Nevertheless, the fine-tuning did result in limiting the confusion between characters. The CER is now 3.22% and word separation is 95.42% accurate.<sup>11</sup> This step shows the interest of an automated annotation platform such as Calfa Vision for a customised specialisation, with only three images to manually proof-read. It corresponds to 100 very short lines for manuscript MS W541 (only 4 words by line), when state-of-the-art models and technologies generally requires between 600 and 2,500 lines. The same applies for MS W538 and the Zohrab bible.

The text achieved at this stage can either follow a diplomatic transcription or be adjusted to the needs of the user, depending on the choices made during the proofreading of predictions and the potential fine-tuning. However, the text is not standardised, end-of-line word breaks, most notably, being retained in cases where the break is not obvious (lack of a hyphen).

<sup>11</sup> We notice a very significant gain in accuracy after a fine-tuning conducted on five to ten corrected images. In this scenario, the CER is below 2.5%. The architecture proposed by Calfa seems efficient to resolve directly various abbreviations at the HTR stage (Camps et al. 2021), with a larger number of images to correct however, not only with three images as we did for W541. For example, the user could decide to transcribe all instances of  $\omega\jmath$  in  $\omega\omega\omega\omega\omega\omega\omega\omega$  or in  $\omega\omega\omega\omega\omega\omega\omega\omega$  or in  $\omega(\omega\omega\omega\omega\omega\omega)$  according to their own editorial choices, and to train the models to replicate this transcription rule. The same applies for other abbreviated words with an abbreviated mark.

### 3 From Digitised Text to Tagged Corpus: Linguistic Analysis

The digitised texts undergo linguistic analysis, as a result of which each word-form is lemmatised and morphosyntactic features as well as inflectional analysis are provided. To this end, a mixed method was applied: an analysis by matching (using GREGORI’s lexical data), assisted by an analysis by RNN. Outcomes have been compared to the analyses provided by Arak29.

#### 3.1 First Step: Analysis by Matching

The analysis by matching works by comparing the vocabulary of a given text with the lexical data already gathered in reference lists, here the linguistic resources of the GREGORI project (as described, in Greek, in Kindt 2021, 175-83). For the Armenian language, these resources consist of digital dictionaries of both simple forms and polylexical ones, i.e. with prepositional prefixes and determinative suffixes. In these resources, word-forms are linked with their lexical analysis (lemma), morphological analysis (morphosyntactic category) and inflectional analysis (case, number, voice, mood, tense, person, etc.). They include word-forms attested in the corpora processed earlier, currently amounting to more than 67,039 word-occurrences, 25,000 unique, either simple or polylexical (cf. Coulie et al. 2022). **Table 1** presents a sample of simple word-forms of the lemma ազատ.

**Table 1** Sample of simple word-forms of the lemma ազատ

Word-form	Lemma	Morphosyntactic analysis	Inflectional Analysis
ազատ	ազատ	A	:As:Ns*
ազատաց	ազատ	A	:Âp:Dp:Gp
ազատաւ	ազատ	A	:Hs
ազատաւք	ազատ	A	:Hp
ազատէ	ազատ	A	:Âs
ազատի	ազատ	A	:Ds:Gs:Us
ազատս	ազատ	A	:Ap:Up
ազատք	ազատ	A	:Np
ազատօք	ազատ	A	:Hp

\* The GREGORI Project uses a specific inflectional tagset described in Coulie et al. 2021 ; e.g. “As” = acc. sing., “Ns” = nom. sing., “Âs” = abl. sing., “Hp” = instr. plur., “Up” = locatif plur., etc.



These resources also comprise automatically generated word-forms, in order to complete the inflectional paradigms of some lemmas and fill in standard combinations of simple word-forms with prepositional prefixes and determinative suffixes. All these data, totalling more than 850,000 different word-forms (simple or polylexical), can be considered as a potential lexicon, increasing the lexical coverage during the lexical look-up process. **Table 2** presents a sample of automatically generated word-forms of the lemma *ազատ*.

**Table 2** Sample of generated word-forms for the lemma *ազատ*

Word-form	Lemma	Morphosyntactic analysis	Inflectional analysis
ազատ	ազատ	A*	:Ap:Up
ազատսդ	ազատ@դ	A@PRO+Dem	:Ap:Up@ø
ազատսն	ազատ@ն	A@PRO+Dem	:Ap:Up@ø
ազատսս	ազատ@ս	A@PRO+Dem	:Ap:Up@ø
ազատստ**	ազատ@դ	A@PRO+Dem	:Ap:Up@ø
զազատ	զ@ազատ	I+Prep@A	ø@:Ap
զազատսդ	զ@ազատ@դ	I+Prep@A@PRO+Dem	ø@:Ap@ø
զազատսն	զ@ազատ@ն	I+Prep@A@PRO+Dem	ø@:Ap@ø
զազատսս	զ@ազատ@ս	I+Prep@A@PRO+Dem	ø@:Ap@ø
զազատտ	զ@ազատ@դ	I+Prep@A@PRO+Dem	ø@:Ap@ø
յազատ	յ@ազատ	I+Prep@A	ø@:Ap:Up
յազատսդ	յ@ազատ@դ	I+Prep@A@PRO+Dem	ø@:Ap:Up@ø
յազատսն	յ@ազատ@ն	I+Prep@A@PRO+Dem	ø@:Ap:Up@ø
յազատսս	յ@ազատ@ս	I+Prep@A@PRO+Dem	ø@:Ap:Up@ø
յազատտ	յ@ազատ@դ	I+Prep@A@PRO+Dem	ø@:Ap:Up@ø

\* The GREGORI Project uses a specific morphosyntactic tagset described in Coulie et al. 2021; e.g. “N+Com” = (common)-noun, “A” = adjective, “V” = verb, “I+Prep” = preposition (“I”, for “Invariable”, characterises uninflected words), “PRO+Dem” = demonstrative pronoun or suffix, etc.

\*\* Automated word generation includes uncommon (or inaccurate) spellings attested in manuscripts or editions (in this case unexpected *ազատտտ* instead of *ազատտդ*); samples in Stone 2021, 21, 93.

At the end of the analysis by matching, the simple word-form *եղն* (f. 113 col. A; Lk 1:2) is analysed as *եղանիս.V:MİJ3p* - lemma: *եղանիս*; category: verb; morphological analysis: *MİJ3p* = mediopassive aorist indicative, third person plural. The polylexical word-form *ցհրեշտակն* (f. 114r col. V; Lk 1:28), which can be split into *ց-հրեշտակ-ն*, is analysed as *ց.I+Prep - հրեշտակ.N+Com:As - ն.PRO+Dem*; distinguishing the prepositional prefix (*ց-*), the noun

(հրէշտակ) in the accusative singular (As), and lastly the determinative suffix (-ի).<sup>12</sup>

This approach of analysis by matching quickly provides very reliable results for the word-forms already compiled in the resources, as well as for non-ambiguous word-forms. In Greek, by using the lexical resources of the GREgORI Project, it yields a coverage of more than 90% of the vocabulary of a new text (Kindt, Pirard 2016). However, the approach also has limitations that influence its outcomes.

First, if a given word-form is not already listed in the reference resources, no analysis can be provided. The word յաւժարեցին (f.113r col. AB; Lk 1:1), missing from the resources, even under the alternate spelling յօժարեցին (lemma յաւժարեմ), has no match. In the first chapter of Luke, the situation mainly concerns proper nouns (anthroponyms or toponyms), such as Եղիսաբեթ (f. 113 col. A; Lk 1:5), Նազարեթ (f. 114 col. B; Lk 1:26), or even abbreviations like իղի for Իսրայելի (f. 117r col. B; Lk 1:80).

Second, the analysis by matching does not take into account the contexts in which words appear. Hence, when several analyses are possible for a single word-form, all of them are returned. For instance, the word կամ (f. 113 col. A; Lk 1:3) is analysed as կամ.V:ԷԻP1s (verb lemma), կամ (ել).I+Conj (lemma of the conjunction ‘or’) and կամ (կամաց).N+Com:As:Ns (noun lemma).<sup>13</sup> Some simple word-forms are homographs of word-forms with the demonstrative suffix -u. The word աւռաւ (f. 117r col. A; Lk 1:75), for instance, is analysed both as աւռ.N+Com:Ap:Up (simple word-form) and as աւռաւ,աւռ.N+Com:Ds:Gs:Us - u,PRO+Dem (polylexical word-form).

Last, if not all possible analyses of a given word-form are recorded in the reference resources, the analyses provided this way remain partial and can be erroneous. The words ած (for instance f. 114r col. B; Lk 1:16) and այ (for instance f. 117r col. B; Lk 1:78), which are actually abbreviated forms of Աստուած and Աստուծոյ respectively, have been analysed as ած,ածեմ.V:ԷՂJ3s and այ,աի.I+Intj. Though technically correct out of context, these outcomes are erroneous in this particular case.

The text of the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke in the W541 manuscript is made up of 1,052 words-occurrences. As shown in **table 3**, the resources of the GREgORI project identified 973 word-oc-

**12** At this stage, we can notice that the Arak29 analysis has the following outcome for the polylexical form գրեշտակի: հրէշտակ - noun.acc.sg, which only identifies the noun lemma, without acknowledging the prepositional prefixes and determinative suffixes. This linguistic description, more concise than the one provided by GREgORI, limits the automated comparison with the Arak29 tagging, and hence the experiment.

**13** Moreover, in this last case, there are also two possible inflectional analyses: nominative singular (Ns) or accusative singular (As). In this paper, we focus on lexical analyses, leaving aside inflectional ambiguities.

currences, among which 79 word-occurrences are left with no analysis and 211 words-occurrences are assigned to more than one lemma.

**Table 3** Outcomes of the linguistic analysis by matching

	Total	Proportion	Examples
Word-forms	1.052	100%	
Analysis = 0	79	7,51%	
Analysis = 1	762	72,43%	
Analyses $\geq$ 1	973	92,49%	
Analyses > 1	211	20,05%	
Analyses = 2	116	11,03%	պատասխանի = պատասխանի. N+Com:As:Ns vs պատասխանեմ.V:MİP3s
Analyses = 3	26	2,47%	նման է նա (նա).PRO+Dem:Âs vs նման. A:Âs vs նմանեմ.V:EİP3s
Analyses = 4	60	5,70%	ի = ի.I+Prep vs ինի.N+Lettre vs 20.NUMA+Car vs 20th.NUMA+Ord
Analyses = 5	0	0,00%	
Analyses = 6	9	0,86%	է = է.I+Intj vs եմ.V:EİP3s:MİP3s vs է (ա). N+Lettre vs է (էից).N+Com:As:Ns vs է,7. NUMA+Car vs է,7th.NUMA+Ord

Thus, although the analysis by matching covers 92.49% of the vocabulary of the text processed, this result has to be qualified considering the limitations outlined above. These words without analysis and words with more than one analysis should be checked before delivering the final data. This verification step can be executed manually. It is, however, a very tedious and time-consuming task, when done over massive corpora. The analysis by RNN makes it possible to overcome these difficulties.

### 3.2 Second Step: Analysis by RNN

The RNN model used is the one built by Calfa in March 2020 (Vidal-Gorène, Kindt 2020), using the Pie architecture (Manjavacas et al. 2019). It has been trained with a corpus of 67,039 analysed word-forms from the GREgORI resources (Coulie et al. 2021). General accuracy of this model is 90.44% for the lemmatisation task (86.20% for the ambiguous tokens and 68.64% for the unknown tokens of the testing set) and 92.39% for the morphosyntactic annotation task (91.45% for the ambiguous tokens and 74.41% for the unknown tokens). This model provides a single prediction for each word-form, including unknown word-forms and word-forms that could have sev-

eral analyses with an approach by matching. **Table 4** displays the outcomes of the analysis by matching and of the RNN predictions for the same sample of text.

**Table 4** Sample from the analyses by matching and by RNN (fol. 114 col. A; Lk 1:19-21)

Word-forms	Analysis by Matching		Analysis by RNN	
	Lemma	Morphosyntactic Annotation	Lemma	Morphosyntactic Annotation
և	և	I+Conj	և	I+Conj
առաքեցայ	առաքեմ	V	առաքեմ	V
խաւսել	խաւսեմ	V	խօսիմ	V
ընդ	ընդ	I+Prep	ընդ	I+Prep
քեզ	դու	PRO+Per2s	դու	PRO+Per2s
և	և	I+Conj	և	I+Conj
աւետարանել	աւետարանեմ	V	աւետարանեմ	V
քեզ	դու	PRO+Per2s	դու	PRO+Per2s
զայդ:	զ@այդ	I+Prep@PRO+Dem	զ@այդ	I+Prep@PRO+Dem
և	և	I+Conj	և	I+Conj
ահա	ահա	I+Intj	ահա	I+Intj
եղիցես			եղանիմ	V
համր,			համր	N+Com
և	և	I+Conj	և	I+Conj
վի	վի(վիոց)	NUM+Car	վի (ոչ)	NUM+Car
կարասցես			կարեմ	V
խաւսել,	խաւսեմ	V	խօսիմ	V
վինչև	վինչև	I+Conj	վինչև	I+Conj
ցարն	ց@ար@ն	I+Prep@N+Com@PRO+Dem	ց@օր@ն	N+Com@PRO+Dem@ø
յորում	ի@ո՞ր	I+Prep@PRO+Int	ի@որ	I+Prep@PRO+Rel
այդ	այդ	PRO+Dem	այդ	PRO+Dem
լինիցի	լինեմ	V	լինիմ	V
փոխանակ	փոխանակ	I+Adv	փոխանակ	N+Com
զի	զ@ի	I+Prep@I+Prep	զի	I+Conj
ոչ	ոչ	I+Neg	ոչ	I+Neg
հաւատացեր	հաւատամ	V	հաւատամ	V
բանից	բան	N+Com	բան	N+Com
իմոց,	իմ	PRO+Pos1s	իմ	PRO+Pos1s
որք	ո՞ր	PRO+Int	որ	PRO+Rel
լցցին	լնում	V	լնում	V
ի	ի	I+Prep	ի	I+Prep
ժամանակի	ժամանակ	N+Com	ժամանակ	N+Com

Results were automatically evaluated by comparing the analyses produced by the two approaches with those provided by Arak29. The RNN approach highlights several points (see [table 5](#)). We first notice that the RNN fixes 47 analyses produced by the matching step (6.16% error). These are often imprecise or erroneous analyses present in the lexical resources used.

Then, we can observe that the analyses of the RNN are correct in 89.87% of cases for the lemmatisation of word-forms with only one possible analysis, and in 90.52% of cases for the ambiguous word-forms. Regarding the morphosyntactic annotation, these rates reach 60.75% and 92.41% respectively. RNN is therefore more efficient for word-forms disambiguation than for unknown word-forms prediction.

**Table 5** Evaluation of the RNN approach

	GREgORI quantitative data		GREgORI wrong analyses		RNN correct lemma		RNNcorrect morphosyntactic annotation	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Word-forms	1.052							
Analysis = 0	79	7,51%			71	89,87%	48	60,75%
Analysis = 1	762	72,43%	47	6,16%				
Analyses > 1	211	20,05%			191	90,52%	195	92,41%

The texts of the RNN training set mainly consist in texts with a specific state of Armenian language, the so-called Hellenising school, significantly different from the Classical Armenian of the Gospels.<sup>14</sup> Despite this bias, the model demonstrates a good capacity of generalisation.

In case of unanalysed word-forms during the matching steps - meaning the word-form is unknown in the GREgORI resources - the model notably fails on the morphosyntactic analysis of proper nouns (36% of mistakes). For instance, the model analyses erroneously the word *ԹԵՆՓԻՒՂԷ* (f. 113 col. A; Lk 1:3) as a verb, and the word *Չաբարիայ* (f. 114r col. B; Lk 1:18) as a preposition (q-) followed by an anthroponym.

However, the model manages without too much difficulty various spelling variations, such as the alternations *աւ/օ* or *լ/ղ*. The two words *գաբրիէլ* (f.114r col. B; Lk 1:19) and *գաբրիէլ* (f.114 col. B; Lk 1:26), missing in the GREgORI resources, are correctly analysed and lemmatised.

In the end, the defined hybrid approach achieves a correct lemmatisation at 93.06% and a correct morphosyntactic analysis at 91.44%.

<sup>14</sup> About this question, see Coulie 1995; Muradyan 2012; Meyer 2018.

These results constitute a baseline for analysis of Classical Armenian and demonstrate the relevance of a hybrid approach when processing an under-resourced language or with very specific data. Two areas of improvement emerge from these experiments: 1. to integrate additional analysed data in the training set, from other texts processed by GREgORI or from other projects, such as literary quotes from NBHL; 2. it would also be useful, as we did for the text recognition step, to specialise the model on a part of the corpus being analysed and to carry out an analysis by iteration.

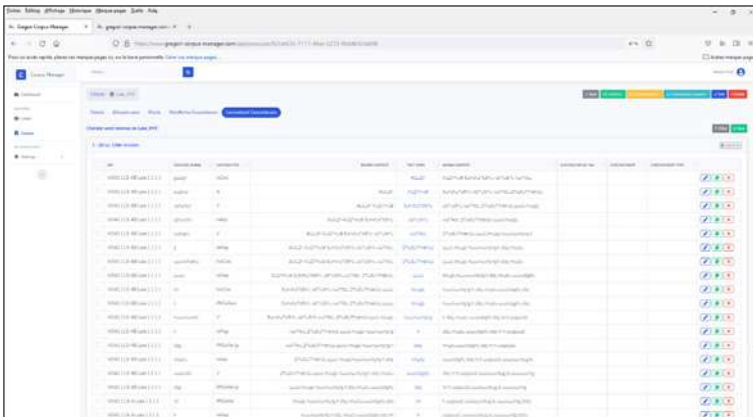
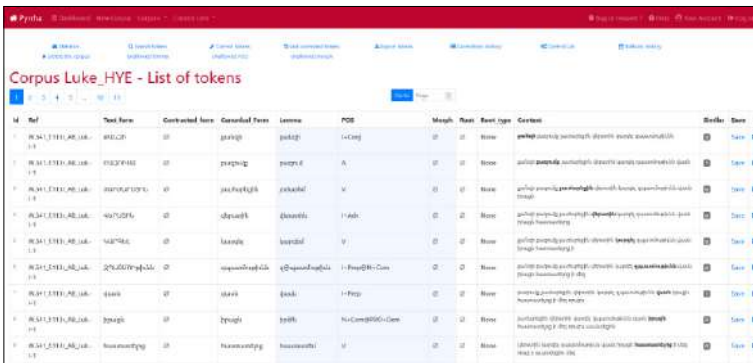


Figure 9 Pyrrha interface

Figure 10 GCM interface

There are tools for visualising and proofreading analysed corpora, such as Pyrrha (Clérice et al. 2019) (cf. fig. 9), or the GREgORI Corpus Manager (GCM) (cf. fig. 10), two online interfaces enabling collaborative work. Pyrrha is an interface initially developed by the

École Nationale des Chartes (Paris). The user can view the processed texts and make corrections to the linguistic analyses of the corpus [figs 9-10].

Pyrrha and the GCM share common features. However, GCM can process larger corpora, import lemmatised data produced by other analysis tools and instantly generate word-form concordances or lemmatised concordances.

Pyrrha and the GCM are useful tools to correct analysed data of corpora, partially or in full. These corrections make it possible to enrich the resources used for an analysis by matching or to specialise neural models.

## 4 Conclusion

In this paper, we evaluate the use of Calfa and GREgORI tools for the semi-automatised creation of corpora from digitised documents. The strategy of using generic models gradually specialised on the considered task quickly results in a CER of 3.22%, a lemmatisation of 93.06% and POS-tagging of 91.44%.

If these results really depend on the choice of the manuscript and the language state of the processed text, they nevertheless demonstrate the relevance of such an approach with extremely insufficient data (only three images in training for recognition by HTR, an initial corpus of 67,039 word-occurrences for lemmatisation and morpho-syntactic analysis), which is the case for most under-resourced languages or with non-Latin scripts. Evaluations carried out on W538 and the Zohrab bible, as control samples, highlight the adequacy of the process applied to new documents with other kind of difficulties.

The interfaces used for this paper provide interoperable data with other systems and enable full control of the pipeline and of editorial choices. The continuous improvement of generic models is at the heart of the implemented strategy, in order to strengthen the ability of fast specialisation of tools and models. The described processing chain demonstrates the effective capacity of systems implemented by Calfa and GREgORI to produce corpora and linguistic data, opening new perspectives for under-resourced languages, in general, but also specifically for Armenian studies.

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# A New Look at Old Armenisms in Kartvelian

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**Abstract** The present paper is concerned with the most ancient layer of Armenian loanwords (armenisms) in the Kartvelian languages. Due to the relatively conservative historical phonology of Kartvelian, compared to Armenian, it appears that more archaic forms have occasionally been preserved. These forms can be identified on the basis of the comparative method. Here, six of the previously proposed armenisms and one new proposal, a word for ‘crane’, are discussed. It is proposed that this stratum of loans probably dates to the latter half of the 2nd millennium BC and prior to the breakup of Proto-Georgian-Zan.

**Keywords** Armenian. Georgian. Kartvelian. Indo-European. Historical linguistics. Language contact. Loanwords.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 Material in the Previous Literature. – 2.1 ‘Ford’. – 2.2 ‘Stream’. – 2.3 ‘Wine’. – 2.4 ‘Juniper’. – 2.5 ‘Kidney’. – 2.6 ‘Mushroom’. – 3 Chronology. – 4 A New Proposal. ‘Crane’.



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## 1 Introduction

The study of early contacts between Armenian and the Kartvelian languages is fundamentally concerned with two domains: structural (i.e. phonological, morphological, and syntactic) isoglosses and lexical borrowings. The former field was pioneered by Gerhard Deeters in a double publication (Deeters 1926; 1927) showing that several traits which distinguish Armenian from other Indo-European (IE) languages were also found in the Kartvelian languages. Deeters, and later scholars following him, explained this by the fairly simple hypothesis that Kartvelian constitutes a significant part of the Armenian substrate. That is, when Proto-Armenian (PA) speakers migrated into their historical territory in the South Caucasian highlands, their language was taken over by many formerly Kartvelian-speaking groups whose native language(s) left a significant mark on Armenian before being passed on to the following generations.

If this scenario is true, it is conspicuous how relatively few Kartvelian loanwords can be identified in Armenian. Hübschmann (1897, 396), who notably accepts only one “kaukasisch” loanword in his corpus,<sup>1</sup> comments upon this fact by stating that the Armenians were in this relation “stets mehr die Gebenden als die Empfangenden” (always donors rather than recipients), being endowed with “höherer Intelligenz und Kultur” (a higher intelligence and [form of] culture). As outdated as this phrasing appears in our time, the supposition that Armenian, at the time of its prehistoric expansion in Eastern Anatolia and the South Caucasus, was conceived of as a language of higher status, a superstrate, may in essence be true.<sup>2</sup> However, as was shown in several early works of N. Marr, and by Vogt (1938), a small layer of loanwords from the Zan languages (Megrelian and Laz) can be identified even in the earliest Armenian sources. A few of these are actually attested while others can be reconstructed by comparison with Georgian forms.<sup>3</sup>

Armenian loanwords, or armenisms, in Georgian are particularly common in the literary era. A wealth of examples may be found

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**1** That word is *k'ac* բաժ ‘bitch’, which is not Kartvelian but probably Nakh-Daghestanian, cf. e.g. Lak *k:ač:i* ‘bitch’.

**2** Of course, this statement can only apply to the relation between Armenian and its neighbouring languages to the north. As for the later contact with especially Middle Iranian and Syriac, Armenian was almost exclusively the recipient language.

**3** Note, for instance, Arm. *čanč* ճաճ ‘fly’ (*i*-stem) ← Meg. *čanji*, Laz *mčaji* ‘fly’. The Georgian cognate is *mčeri* მჭერი ‘insect’ pointing to a Proto-Kartvelian *\*(m)čer-* ‘insect’ (Vogt 1938, 332-3; Ačaryan 1971-79, 3: 184; Gippert 2005, 154-5).

throughout the etymological dictionary of Ačaryan (1971-79). At a preliterary stage, Armenian has in some cases passed on loans from Parthian and Middle Persian to Georgian (see Gippert 1993; an overview is found on pages 348-9). The passage of loans in this direction has a longer history, however, because a small number of particularly archaic loanwords from Armenian to Kartvelian may be identified on the basis of the comparative method. These loanwords are the topic of this article, in which six previously identified Kartvelian armenisms will be discussed and a new one will be proposed.

## 2 Material in the Previous Literature

Especially in Georgian, one may identify several words that appear to reflect older, more conservative forms of corresponding Armenian words. These can conveniently be referred to as Proto-Armenian forms.<sup>4</sup> For a significant part of the examples that have been adduced in the literature thus far, the only potential archaic trait is the preservation of the \*o of the final syllable in thematic nouns, e.g. Old Ge. *m-delo*- მდელი- 'grass, herb' ← PA \**delo*-, cf. Arm. *deł* դեղ (*o*-stem) 'herb, medicine' (Ačaryan 1971-79, 1: 649; Gippert 2005, 152 fn. 59).<sup>5</sup> Yet, not all examples of this kind are necessarily indicative of early loans.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, a part of these words have no (certain) etymology on the Armenian side, making it impossible to confirm if the direction of borrowing was really from Armenian.

The scope of this paper is therefore limited to words that show additional archaic traits in their phonological makeup. These reflect intermediate stages between reconstructed Proto-Indo-European (PIE) words and their attested Armenian reflexes. A priori, one may also expect that the Kartvelian languages borrowed words which were entirely lost or morphologically reshaped in Armenian before the literary transmission. For such an example, see section 4. Potentially, this material can provide valuable information about the relative time

<sup>4</sup> This use of the term Proto-Armenian, which is fairly common in the literature, obviously differs from a strict definition of the term as the latest common ancestor of all Armenian dialects.

<sup>5</sup> The Armenian word is probably cognate with Gk. *ῥάλλω* θάλλω 'bloom, become green, thrive' and internally Arm. *dalar* դալար 'green, fresh' (Martirosyan 2010, 231-2; Kölligan 2020, 218).

<sup>6</sup> Granted that *o*-stem inflection in Georgian certainly suggests that the word in question is non-Kartvelian (cf. Gippert 2005, 152), some cases are still more likely to be later than the Armenian apocope. For example, as pointed out by an anonymous reviewer of the present paper, a word like Ge. *šoro* ზორი 'hole, den', compared to Arm. *šor* սոր (*o*-stem) 'id.' (Ačaryan 1971-79, 4: 246; Jahowkyan 1987, 590), is not attested before the 17th century, in a Georgian translation of the *Fables* by Vardan Aygekc'i, which suggests that it was borrowed very late.

of borrowing. The relatively high degree of phonological conservatism exhibited by the Kartvelian languages (especially Georgian and Zan) is a significant advantage for this purpose. In some ways, the situation can be compared to that of the early Germanic loans in Finnic (Djahukian 2003, 191).<sup>7</sup>

The fact that some of these forms are found only in Georgian does not mean that they were necessarily borrowed only after Georgian had split from its closest relatives, Megrelian and Laz. Since Georgian is the only Kartvelian language with a longstanding literary tradition, beginning more than a millennium before Megrelian, Laz and Svan were recorded, there is ample time for the latter languages to have lost particular lexical items. In the following, three fairly certain and three less certain comparisons from among a set of the most compelling early armenisms will be discussed. Very doubtful or entirely rejected comparisons are left outside the scope of this paper.

## 2.1 ‘Ford’

Ge. *poni* ფედი ‘ford’ ← PA \**p<sup>h</sup>on-V-* (or \**fon-V-*) < PIE \**pontH-*, cf. Arm. հոււ հown (*i*-stem) ‘ford’ (Čubinašvili 1887, 112; Ačarjan 1971-79, 3: 123; Vogt 1938, 331; Bielmeier 1994, 430; Gippert 2005, 151; Martirosyan 2010, 422-6).

The immediate IE proto-form \**pontH-* probably represents an analogical remodelling after the PIE mobile paradigm \**pónt-VH-* ~ \**pnt-H-*, clearly reflected in Avestan *paṇtā*, GEN *paθō* ‘road’, cf. also Skt. *pánthā-* ‘road’, Lat. *pons, pontis* ‘bridge’ (Olsen 1999, 194-5; Martirosyan 2010, 426). Apparently, this borrowing took place before the lenition of initial \**p<sup>h</sup>-* (from PIE \**p-*) to Arm. *h-* and before the raising of \**on* > *un*. The Georgian form is synchronically a consonant stem *pon-*, but it cannot be excluded that *-i* was originally part of the Armenian input form.

## 2.2 ‘Stream’

Ge. *ru* რუ, Old Ge. *ruy* რუი ‘small stream, channel’ ← PA \**r̥u(i)V-* < PIE \**sru-to/i-*, cf. Arm. *arow* առու (*i-*, *o-* or *a-*stem) ‘brook, channel’ (Ačarjan 1971-79, 1: 265).

As in the example of ‘ford’, the IE pedigree of this word is well established, cf. Skt. *srutá-* ‘stream, river’, Gk. *rutós* ῥυτός (adj.) ‘flow-

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<sup>7</sup> As a prime example of such loans, cf. Finnish *kuningas*, Estonian *kuningas*, Votic *kunikaz* ‘king’ (etc.) < Proto-Finnic \**kuningas*, conserving to an almost perfect extent the Proto-Germanic form \**kuningaz* ‘king’, as opposed to its direct descendants like Old English *cyning*, Old High German *kuning* or Old Norse *konungr*.

ing', Swiss German *strod* 'jet, gulp' < Proto-Germanic *\*struþa-* (on the Armenian word see most recently Martirosyan 2010, 115).<sup>8</sup>

Old Georgian -y represents the marker of the NOM.SG and can thus not help determine whether the reflex of the PIE intervocalic *\*-t-* had been lost entirely at this point. It appears, however, that the addition of the prothetic vowel *a-* before initial *\*r-* had not yet taken place.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, it remains possible to assume that the prothetic vowel at this point had a rather weak articulation and was simply lost in the borrowing process.

### 2.3 'Wine'

Ge. *χvino* զՅԾԹ, Meg./Laz *χvini*, Svan *χvinel*, *χvinal* 'wine' ← PA *\*χ<sup>w</sup>ino-* (?) < *\*χiHno-*, cf. Arm. *gini* գինի (*wo/ea*-stem) 'wine' (Klaproth 1823, 106; Pedersen 1906, 458; Ačaryan 1971-79, 1: 558-9; Martirosyan 2010, 214-15; Gorton 2017, 22; Lipp 2019, 204).

This is probably the most famous, but also most controversial, of the commonly cited old armenisms in Kartvelian. The various IE forms for 'wine' may be quite solidly traced to an original *n*-stem *\*uēih<sub>1</sub>-ōn*, GEN *\*uīh<sub>1</sub>-n-ós*, derived from the root *\*uēih<sub>1</sub>-* 'to wind, turn, twist', cf. Hittite *uījan-*,<sup>10</sup> Gk. *oīnos* οἶνος, Albanian (Gheg) *venë*, and Lat. *vīnum*, Umbrian *vinu*, all meaning 'wine' (Beekes 1987; Gorton 2017; Lipp 2019).

The comparison seems to pose a chronological problem, however. Arm. *gini* should be mechanically reconstructed as *\*ue/oiHnijo-*,<sup>11</sup> developing first to *\*χ<sup>w</sup>ēnio-* > *\*gēni*, later affected by the vowel reduction *\*ē > i* in unstressed syllables. At the same time, an example

<sup>8</sup> In some works (e.g. Klimov, Xalilov 2003, 207-8), Ge. *ru* is considered a loan from Persian *rōd* 'river' (cf. Old Persian *rauta-* 'river'), but the loss of *-d* and subsequent transfer to a vocalic stem class would be unexplained; the Persian word would rather have been reflected as *\*\*rodi*.

<sup>9</sup> Note that the process of prothesis appears to have ended at some point during the influx of Parthian/Middle Persian loanwords, at least in the position before *r*; cf. *arat* առատ 'abundant' ← Parthian/Middle Persian *rād* vs *ročik* ռոճիկ 'salary, nourishment', cf. Middle Persian *rōzīg*.

<sup>10</sup> See Kloekhorst 2008, 1012 for a recent treatment of the Anatolian material.

<sup>11</sup> Morphologically explained as a thematisation of the oblique stem *\*uiHn-* with secondary full grade or *o*-grade (as in Greek and Albanian *\*uoin-o/eh<sub>2</sub>-*). The Armenian form also shows the productive suffix *-i*, OBL. *-wo/-ea-* (< *\*-ijo-*), but this could easily have been added at a relatively late stage. Cf. the semantically related *awli* աւլի 'strong alcoholic drink' < *awl-i* < *\*alut-ijo-*, cf. Old English *ealob* 'ale' and Old Russian *olъ* 'fermented liquor', Lith. *alūs* 'beer' (the Balto-Slavic words may be Germanic loans). Old Ge. *ludi* ლუდი (Rača, Tušeti *aludi*) 'beer' has no special relation to the Armenian word but must have been borrowed from an Alanic form *\*ælut*, cf. Oss. *ælut-on* 'a mythic drink said to allay hunger forever', which, in turn, is most likely a Germanic loan (Abaev 1958, 130; Thordarson 2011, 234).

like Arm. *višap* վիշապ ‘dragon’ along with Ge. *vešāpi* ვეშაპი ‘dragon’ ← Middle Iranian *\*μēšāp-* appears to show that this vowel reduction took place only after *\*μ* had changed into *\*g* (Hübschmann 1897, 397; Ravnæs 1991, 85 fn. 1). This problem may theoretically be overcome by the simple assumption that during the introduction of a phoneme /v/ in loanwords, the phoneme /ɣ<sup>w</sup>/ was still preserved for some time. On the other hand, the fact that the reduction *\*ē* to *i* is evidently late coupled with the fact that no Kartvelian language preserves a reflection of the sequence *\*-i̯o-* is a more serious problem, which makes it unlikely that the input was a direct ancestor of Arm. *gini*. A solution is proposed by Gippert (1994, 120) who suggests that the parallel formation *\*μih<sub>1</sub>no-* (cf. Lat. *vīnum*, Umbrian *vinu*), or even an ablauting paradigm, was preserved into Proto-Armenian but lost before the literary transmission. Such a form, with the PA development to *\*γ<sup>w</sup>ino-* would serve as a perfect input for the Kartvelian forms. Note that the apparent alternation between *wo*-stem (INSTR.SG *ginwov*) and *ea*-stem (INSTR.SG *gineaw*) in the Armenian Bible points to the existence of an old neuter form (Olsen 1999, 439-40).

All Kartvelian forms can be reconstructed as Proto-Kartvelian *\*γwin(o)-* (Fährnich 2007, 486). This may lead to the objection that such an early loan from Proto-Armenian is inherently unlikely (cf. Ravnæs 1991, 85 fn. 1). However, the formational bases of all the Kartvelian forms are also identical (*γvin-*) while the discrepancy between the Georgian vocalic stem, the consonant stems in Megrelian/Laz and the diminutive formation in Svan could suggest that this word spread across the Kartvelian language area at a later point. Note especially the solitary, mixed declension in Old Georgian: NOM. SG *γwno-γ* ვუნო, GEN.SG *γwn-isa* ვუნისა (Fährnich 1982, 43), apparently betraying the competition between consonantal and vocalic stems. Neri (cited in Lipp 2019, 204) proposes that this situation reflects different adaptations to the Armenian *\*i̯o*-stem, though we may also assume that it reflects the fact that within Armenian itself, there was competition between such forms as *\*γ<sup>w</sup>ēni̯o-* and *\*γ<sup>w</sup>ino-*.

While the suggestion of an internal Kartvelian derivation from *\*γun-* ‘to wind (etc.)’, advocated by Fährnich (2002, 35-6; 2007, 486) may seem attractive in and of itself, and would form a perfect semantic parallel to the PIE formation, the hypothesis of a Proto-Armenian borrowing into Kartvelian is arguably more parsimonious. The following item might offer additional, formal support for the assumption that Arm. *\*γ<sup>w</sup>* from PIE *\*μ* could have been borrowed as Kartvelian *\*γ<sup>w</sup>*, although its veracity is less certain. The fact that the first evidence for wine production is found in the Transcaucasian area is of little relevance here. In fact, wine production took place several millennia before the time we may assume Proto-Kartvelian to have broken up and does not provide circumstantial evidence for a supposition that Kartvelian languages had an impetus to derive their own word for it.



## 2.4 ‘Juniper’

Ge. *γvia* ჯვია, Old Ge. *γw(v)ay* ჯვ(ვ)ად; Svan *γwiw* ‘juniper’ ← PA *\*γ<sup>w</sup>i(θ)a-*, cf. Arm. *gi* գի (*o*-stem) ‘juniper’ (Ačarʿyan 1971-79, 1: 554; Martirosyan 2010, 212).

The Armenian form could derive from PIE *\*ǵiHt-* (cf. Gk. *ἰτέα* ἰτέα ‘willow’, Old High German *wīda* ‘willow’, Lat. *vītis* ‘vine’). This example would provide support for the assumption, made for the previous item, that Kartvelian *γw* can reflect Proto-Armenian *\*γ<sup>w</sup>* < *\*ǵ*, but it suffers from a few caveats. The cognacy of the Armenian word with the other Indo-European forms is somewhat doubtful. The required semantic shift from ‘willow’ (or some other tree?) to ‘juniper’ is not entirely trivial since these trees are very dissimilar. Secondly, the origin of the intervocalic *-w-* seen in the Old Georgian and Svan forms would not be clear. Perhaps it may somehow reflect PA *\*-θ-* (< *\*-t-*) or have been introduced as a hiatus breaker. Finally, the Georgian stem-final *-a* does not match the Armenian *o*-stem. These issues do not seem large enough to warrant a wholesale rejection of the etymology, however, considering the close similarity between the Armenian and Kartvelian forms.

## 2.5 ‘Kidney’

Ge. *tirkmeli* თირკმელი, Old Ge. *tirkumel-ni* თირკუმელნი (coll.) ‘kidney’ ← PA *\*t<sup>h</sup>rikmen-* (?), cf. Arm. *erikamn* երիկամն, often plurale tantum *erikamownk’* երիկամունք (ACC.PL *-owns*, GEN-DAT-ABL.PL *-anc’*) ‘kidney, entrails’ (Vogt 1938, 332; Gippert 2005, 150).

This ingenious proposal does require a few *ad hoc* assumptions to fall entirely into place. The Georgian form apparently shows a metathesis of the first syllable (*\*t<sup>h</sup>rik<sup>o</sup>* > *tirk<sup>o</sup>*) and a change of the stem final *\*-n-* > *-l-*, perhaps due to influence of other Old Ge. stems in *-el-* and/or dissimilation against the previous *-m-* (Gippert 2005, 150). The *-u-* of the Old Georgian form appears to be epenthetic, although Gippert (2005, 150) proposes that it shows the reflex of a PA labiovelar *\*k<sup>w</sup>*. The dating of this borrowing before the loss of *\*t<sup>h</sup>* (< *\*t*) before initial resonant (cf. Arm. *erek’* երեք ‘3’ < *\*trejēs*) is consistent with the example of *poni* ‘ford’, showing the preservation of *\*p<sup>h</sup>* (< *\*p*).

More serious is the problem that the Indo-European background of the Armenian word is quite obscure (cf. Ačarʿyan 1971-79, 2: 56; Olsen 1999, 940). Vogt’s own comparison with Lat. *trīcae* ‘trifles’, presupposing a root *\*treig<sup>w-</sup>*, is arbitrary from a semantic viewpoint, and a relation with Lat. *torqueō* ‘to twist’ is formally impossible. Vogt also compares Gk. *trépō* τρέπω ‘to turn’ which is now generally reconstructed as *\*trep-* (Rix et al. 2001, 650). The possibility that the

word shows a suffix traceable to *\*-mōn*, NOM.PL *\*-mones* etc.<sup>12</sup> (cf. Ols-  
en 1999, 503, 614) does, however, allow for the suspicion that it has  
an Indo-European pedigree.

## 2.6 ‘Mushroom’

Ge. *soḳo* სოკო, Meg./Laz *soḳo*, Svan *soḳû* ‘mushroom’ ← PA *\*sonkV(n)*  
(?), cf. Arm. *sownk(n)* or *sowng(n)* սոսկ(ս) ‘mushroom’ (Ačāryan  
1971-79, 4: 252).

This final example is also the least likely, but it appears worth con-  
sidering, especially because the *o*-vocalism of the Kartvelian form  
fits with the chronology of *poni* ‘ford’. We may thus assume that the  
borrowing took place before the Armenian change of *\*on > un*. The  
loss of the nasal in all Kartvelian forms is unexplained, however. The  
dialectal Arm. (Ararat) *sokon*, possibly a back-loan, might allow for  
the speculation that such a form once existed in Kartvelian (Ačāryan  
1971-79, 4: 252), which may pave the road for explaining the loss of  
the first *-n-* through dissimilation against the latter.

Martirosyan (2010, 587) notes the fact that the word is found in all  
Kartvelian languages. This does not appear to be a serious problem  
for a loan hypothesis, however, since the forms are identical (cf. also  
‘wine’) and may have spread at a later point in time. Similar words  
appear also in Nakh-Daghestanian, some of which may have been  
borrowed from Kartvelian (e.g. Akhvakh *šeḳu* ‘mushroom, tinder’,  
Avar *s:ak* ‘tinder’, Godoberi *seḳu* ‘mushroom’). Finally, the situation  
is complicated by the fact that the Armenian word itself appears not  
to be inherited from PIE, but a *Wanderwort* or substrate word akin  
to Gk. *spóngos* σπόγγος, *sp<sup>h</sup>ongos* σφόγγος ‘sponge’ and Lat. *fungus*  
‘mushroom’ (Frisk 1970, 770; Martirosyan 2010, 587).

## 3 Chronology

Having discussed six potential old armenisms in Kartvelian, a perti-  
nent question concerns the dating of these loans. It can be observed  
that when the first of these loanwords entered the Kartvelian lan-  
guages, the following sound changes had not been completed:

1. the loss of final syllables;
2. the change of *\*γ<sup>w</sup> > g*;

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<sup>12</sup> In order to arrive at the correct Georgian outcome, it is necessary to assume the  
existence of forms in *\*-men-*, which would entail that the transfer to the declension class  
characterised by *-an, -ownk’* is secondary in *erikamn*. This is an additional assumption  
that might jeopardise the etymology at hand.

3. the change of  $*p^h > h$ - and perhaps  $*t^hr > Vr$ ;
4. the raising of  $*oN > uN$  (thus probably also  $*eN > iN$ ).

At the very least, this establishes them as older than the first Iranian and Greek loanwords, to which none of these sound laws are applied anymore. The next layer of historic loans to which they can be compared are a small set of words borrowed from Urartian (and perhaps Hurrian) into Armenian (see Diakonoff 1985; Greppin 1991). Unfortunately, these can produce only the slimmest of evidence for the chronology of the sound changes listed above:

1. Arm. *p'ox* փոխ 'loan', cf. Hurrian *puḫ-* 'to exchange'. Although ultimately from Akkadian *pūhu*, *pāhu* 'exchange', the *o*-vocalism points to Hurrian or Urartian mediation (Diakonoff 1985, 599), which is also more likely for geographic reasons.
2. Arm. *don* դոն 'a kind of bread' (found in *Yaysmawowrk'* and dialects), cf. Hittite *t/duni* 'a kind of bread (in the shape of a footstool?)' (a Hurrian word, see Richter 2012, 470), which in Urartian may have corresponded to  $*donə$ . For an elaborate discussion, see Martirosyan (2010, 241-3), who favours a native derivation from  $*d^hoHneh_2$ - (following Ačaryan 1971-79, 1: 679), but his proposed assimilation of  $*u > o$  before  $*a$  does not find clear parallels.
3. *Kotom* Կոտոմ (toponym) ← Urartian *Qutumu-*.
4. *Van* Վան (toponym) ← Urartian *Biaine-lə*.<sup>13</sup>
5. *Ĵawaxk'* Ջավախք (toponym) ← Urartian *Zabaḫae*.

At face value, this material shows that the sound laws mentioned above had stopped operating when these Hurro-Urartian forms entered Armenian. We may therefore tentatively assume that the first loans from Proto-Armenian into Kartvelian took place before the first loans from Hurro-Urartian into Armenian. The fall of Urartu in the 7th century BC gives a reasonable *terminus ante quem* for the latter event, but the time frame is admittedly vague because it is impossible to exclude that some speakers of Urartian lingered after the fall of the empire.

After all, it is probable that the first identifiable Armenian-Kartvelian contacts can be pushed back to the latter half of the 2nd millennium BC. This might mean that a word like *poni* 'ford' was not loaned into Georgian proper, but into the Georgian-Zan proto-language, later disappearing from the Zan languages. This assumption can best

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<sup>13</sup> As previously mentioned, the fact that Armenian probably had a phoneme /v/ at this point does not necessarily entail that the phoneme /ɣ<sup>v</sup>/ had disappeared (cf. also Diakonoff 1985, 601), but the latter two examples might serve here as circumstantial evidence.

be corroborated by the existence of a loanword which is reconstructible to Georgian-Zan. In the following paragraph, the existence of exactly such an example will be postulated.

#### 4 A New Proposal. ‘Crane’

As an addition to the material adduced above, a new etymology is proposed here.<sup>14</sup> The groundwork has already been laid by Klimov (1986; 1994), who adduced a number of potential loanwords from Indo-European, some more compelling than others, into individual Kartvelian languages as well as their reconstructed ancestor clades Proto-Georgian-Zan and Proto-Kartvelian. Klimov rarely attempts to narrow down the potential sources of these loanwords. In the following example, the sound laws which must be assumed to produce the right outcome appear very likely to be specifically Armenian. Even if this observation turns out to be a mirage, it will hopefully stimulate the search for further material of this nature.

The Proto-Georgian-Zan form \**çero-* ‘crane’ can be reconstructed on the basis of Ge. *çero* ‘crane’ and Meg. *çaro* ‘a fishing bird’, the latter found in the dictionary of Orbeliani (1685-1716/1949, 885) and perhaps in the surname *Çaraia* (cf. Klimov 1998, 309). Klimov (1986, 198; 1994, 162-3) and Rogava (1988) consider this to be a loanword from an Indo-European language or directly from PIE, but neither of them attempts to determine the exact source of the borrowing.

For the PIE word for the crane, Kortlandt (1985, 120; 2018) reconstructs a mobile paradigm \**ğerh<sub>2</sub>-ōu*, \**ğrh<sub>2</sub>-u-* which may account for Lat. *grūs* ‘crane’, and the Balto-Slavic forms: Lithuanian *gėrvė*, Latvian *dzērve*, Old Prussian *gerwe* and Serbo-Croatian *žērāv*. It may be assumed that in these forms, \**ğr-* was depalatalised to \**gr-* (cf. Kortlandt 1978), after which the velar variant spread to the entire paradigm (Derksen 2015, 173). Scholars who oppose the idea of a Balto-Slavic depalatalisation have reconstructed the root as \**ger(h<sub>2</sub>-)*, but this reconstruction cannot straightforwardly account for the Iranian forms, viz. Oss. (Iron) *zyrnæg*, *zærnyg* ‘crane’ and Pashto *zāṇa-* ‘crane’, which Gašiorowski (2013, 56) is forced to explain through contamination with the word for ‘sing’ (e.g. Oss. *zar-*).

Arm. *krownk* կռռկ ‘crane’ has been explained as attesting a remnant of the depalatalised oblique stem and the *n*-suffix attested in the Iranian forms besides Gk. *géranos* γέρανος, *gérēn* γέρην, Old English *cran*, etc. Its exact development is unclear, however and the lack of metathesis in the cluster \**gr-* is most puzzling. Onomatopoeic influ-

<sup>14</sup> After the submission of the first draft of this paper, an anonymous reviewer pointed out that Viredaz (2019, 9) has independently advanced the same proposal.

ence may have played a role in the development of the word (see Martirosyan 2010, 377 with literature), and so may the obscure form *grē* զրէ or *greay* զրէայ ‘crane’ (*hapax*, Grigor Magistros), potentially an Iranian loanword (Greppin 1978, 103).

At any rate, nothing excludes the assumption that the old nominative survived long into the pre-literary period. Applying the usual sound laws to *\*ǵerh<sub>2</sub>ōu* vel sim., we would end up with *\*ceru*. This form happens to be almost identical to the reconstructed Proto-Georgian-Zan form. Other (known) Indo-European sources can be excluded because the reflection of PIE *\*ǵ* as a voiceless affricate is uniquely Armenian.

Unlike in the previously adduced words with a wider distribution in Kartvelian, we here find particular sound changes in the Megrelian form (*\*č > č̣, \*e > a*), confirming that the word existed at the Proto-Georgian-Zan clade. If its origin is Proto-Armenian, it would tie in with the chronology proposed above and support the supposition that linguistic contact between Armenian and Kartvelian must have taken place at this point in time.

## Abbreviations

ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
Arm.	Armenian
DAT	dative
Ge.	Georgian
GEN	genitive
Gk.	Greek
IE	Indo-European
INSTR	instrumental
Lat.	Latin
Meg.	Megrelian
NOM	nominative
OBL	oblique
Oss.	Ossetic
PA	Proto-Armenian
PIE	Proto-Indo-European
PL	plural
SG	singular
Skt.	Sanskrit

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# Classical Armenian Deixis Issues of Translation

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**Abstract** This paper explores the use of deixis in the Armenian translation of the Greek New Testament, with a focus on the medial deictic forms in the gospel of Matthew. Against the two-way deictic distinction in New Testament Greek with proximal οὗτος and distal ἐκεῖνος, the three-way system in Armenian based on the proximal *-s-*, medial *-d-* and distal *-n-* raises questions of how and why the Armenian medial forms are used. Through comparison with Latin, which also has a three-way system (proximal *hic*, medial *iste*, and distal *ille*), and close analysis of key passages, this paper highlights both the semantic values of the Armenian medial forms and the issues of translation that arise as a result of their employment.

**Keywords** Armenian Bible. Translation. Deixis. Gospel of Matthew. New Testament. Greek. Latin. Armenian.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 Medial Deixis in Armenian. – 3 Medial Deictic Forms in Matthew. – 3.1 Data. – 3.2 Analysis. – 4 Conclusions.



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## 1 Introduction

The Classical Armenian system of deixis is famously complex. Like the *hic*, *iste*, and *ille* of Latin, Armenian utilises a threefold deictic distinction. However, the Armenian system is richer, including not only pronouns, various adverbs, and pronominal adjectives, but also articles. This elaborate system of deixis heavily relies on physical and metaphorical distances, with often personal or emotional values attached to each. The deictic forms are based on the elements *-s-*, *-d-*, and *-n-*, signifying proximal, medial, and distal deixis, respectively.

Many grammar books describe a three-way system in classical Greek: ὅδε, οὗτος, and ἐκεῖνος, corresponding to proximal, medial, and distal deixis, respectively. Οὗτος and ὅδε can take on both deictic and anaphoric or cataphoric values: the distinction often made is that οὗτος as a deictic refers to something in the sphere of the addressee and as an anaphor refers to something already mentioned, whereas ὅδε as a deictic refers to something in the sphere of the speaker and as a cataphor refers to something subsequent.<sup>1</sup> As seen below, however, the language of Matthew utilises a two-way system, wherein οὗτος has assumed the semantic values of ὅδε.<sup>2</sup> Ὅδε only appears in its adverbial form ὧδε. When comparing the deictic systems of New Testament Greek, Vulgate Latin, and Classical Armenian then, the correspondences we would expect at the most basic level are the following (illustrated in [tab. 1]): Greek οὗτος corresponds to Latin *hic* and Armenian *-s-*, Greek ἐκεῖνος corresponds to Latin *ille* and Armenian *-n-*, and Latin *iste* corresponds to Armenian *-d-*.

<sup>1</sup> Smyth 1956, §§ 333, 1238-61; Schwyzer 1939, 611-12; Hadley, Allen 1884, §§ 695-8.

<sup>2</sup> We should also note the demonstrative properties of the Greek article. The article was originally a demonstrative pronoun, as seen in Homer (e.g. ἀλλὰ τὸ θαυάζω ‘but I marvel at this’, *Od.* 4.655), but it was gradually weakened to serve as the definite article, as already seen in Homer as well (e.g. αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσι γέρων ὄδδον ἠγεμόνευεν ‘but he, the old man, led the way for them’, *Od.* 24.255, where the noun γέρων ‘old man’ can be interpreted as either standing in apposition to the pronoun ὁ or already being defined by the definite article ὁ). Cf. Smyth 1956, §§ 1099-102; Schwyzer 1939, 610-11; Hadley, Allen 1884, §§ 653-5. The demonstrative force of the article later only survives with contrastive particles such as μέν, δέ, γέ etc. and in the nominative after καί (see Hadley 1884, §§ 654-5 for demonstrative uses in Attic prose). By the time of the New Testament, the demonstrative article is only found in ὁ μὲν...ὁ δέ, ὁ δέ, and ὁ μὲν οὖν constructions, the ὁ μὲν...ὁ δέ construction is found only once in Matthew: οἱ δὲ ἀμελήσαντες ἀπηλθον, ὁ μὲν εἰς τὸν ἴδιον ἀγρόν, ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμπορίαν αὐτοῦ ‘but they went away, not paying attention, this one to his field, that one to his business’ (22:5). Otherwise, there are no examples of the article as a demonstrative in the NT (Moulton 1998, 1: 81); see Peters 2014 for a comprehensive study of the article in the NT, ultimately arguing that the article “has moved further from this demonstrative origin than has historically been recognised and is in fact closer in function to the relative pronoun” (Peters 2014, 67).

**Table 1** Greek, Latin, and Armenian correspondences of deictic forms

Types of deixis		Greek	Latin	Armenian
Proximal	in the sphere of the speaker (first person)	οὗτος	<i>hic</i>	(-)s(-)
Medial	in the sphere of the addressee (second person)	—	<i>iste</i>	(-)d(-)
Distal	removed from both speech-act participants (third person)	ἐκεῖνος	<i>ille</i>	(-)n(-)

Two immediate observations from these correspondences point to 1) the lack of a medial deictic form in Greek, and 2) the apparent similarities between the Latin and Armenian systems. Therefore, we might hypothesise that a) the appearance of the Armenian medial forms in a translation of a Greek original might raise issues of fidelity, and that b) Latin and Armenian translations of the same Greek text might show similarities in their employment of deictic forms.

In order to address these hypotheses, this paper narrows its focus to the usage of medial deixis in the Armenian translation of the Gospel of Matthew. Focusing on the medial forms allows us to examine not only the semantics of the Armenian forms themselves, but also their relationship to their Latin counterparts, as well as the nature of their employment despite the nonexistence of an equivalent in the Greek original.<sup>3</sup> Key passages are analysed in order to highlight the fact that the psychological and emotional values ascribed to medial deictic forms may raise issues of translation ideology and expectations. In the absence of any study of this kind,<sup>4</sup> this short case study serves to initiate the discussion and highlight the importance of studying Armenian deixis and their semantics along with their implications for theories of translation.

<sup>3</sup> Edmunds also writes, “deixis, in general, sets limits upon the possibility of decontextualisation; and person-deixis, like certain kinds of modality, introduces an ineradicable subjectivity into the semantic structure of natural languages” (2008, 69).

<sup>4</sup> There are a handful of other studies on Armenian deixis: Jungmann’s (1964) synchronic analysis takes readers through various biblical passages to discuss the syntax and semantics of the forms; Meillet’s (1962) work similarly provides a synchronic study with several examples from the Gospels as well as brief discussions of etymology and origin of the forms; Klein (1996) can be seen as a comprehensive expansion of Jungmann’s and Meillet’s works. Although his project is extremely thorough and invaluable, the focus is necessarily monolingual, and attention is only seldom paid to the Greek original and its relationship to the Armenian translation. Similarly, Weitenberg (1994) takes a philological approach to the deictic forms in the Gospel of Luke and explicitly ignores the Greek original: “I consider the Armenian text, the translation itself, as a given entity and I shall ignore the fact that this text is translated from Greek. Therefore, I shall not treat the question whether the presence or absence of the article in the Armenian text has any relation to the Greek facts” (Weitenberg 1994, 97). For a brief survey of scholarship on Armenian translation generally, see *infra* footnote 10.

## 2 Medial Deixis in Armenian

The medial deictic is strongly associated with the second person. It can express second person possession [tab. 2], something associated with the second person – or addressee – of the speech act [tab. 3], or ascribe pejorative or negative value to the referent [tab. 4].

**Table 2** Medial deictic *-d-* expressing second person possession<sup>5</sup>

with second person possessive pronoun	<i>et'e akn k'o ařat ē, amenayn marmind lusawor etic'i</i>	'if your eye is simple, <b>your</b> whole body will be radiant' (Mt 6:22)
without second person possessive pronoun	<i>arı ařmanukd ew zmayr iwr</i>	'come, take the child ( <b>of yours</b> ) and his mother' (Mt 2:13)

**Table 3** Medial deictic *-d-* expressing something associated with the addressee

<i>mı umek' asic'ēk' ztesild</i>	'do not relate to anybody <b>the vision (that you saw)</b> ' (Mt 17:9)
<i>i bāc' gnac'ēk' zi oč' et'e merēal ē atjikd ayt nnjē</i>	'move away, for <b>that girl (among you)</b> is not dead but is sleeping' (Mt 9:24)

**Table 4** Medial deictic *-d-* expressing something pejorative<sup>6</sup>

<i>hayhoyē da dok'a yetink'd mi řam gorcec'in, ew hasarakords mez ararer zdosa, or zcanrut'ıwn awurn barjak' ew ztawt'</i>	' <b>this man</b> is blaspheming' (Mt 9:3) ' <b>these last men</b> worked only one hour, and you've made <b>them</b> equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the heat' (Mt 20:12)
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<sup>5</sup> All translations are by the Author.

<sup>6</sup> In Mt 9:3, manuscript M has *ov ē sa or ew zmels t'olu* 'who's this man, who absolves his sins?', with 'his' referring to the paralysed man whom Jesus had just cured. This paper takes the Armenian text from Künzle's (1984) edition of manuscripts M and E. It is worth repeating Künzle's characterisation of the two manuscripts: "Je l'ai déjà signalé, le ms E peut être considéré comme un manuscrit 'bon et correct'; il est très bien conservé et, en outre, d'un intérêt certain pour l'histoire de l'art. En revanche, le ms M, qui offre peut-être un texte plus ancien et sans doute important pour l'établissement d'une édition critique des Évangiles, fut copié avec négligence et doit, pour cette raison, être apprécié avec circonspection en ce qui concerne la langue arménienne classique" (I have already pointed out that MS E can be considered a 'good and correct' manuscript; it is very well preserved and certainly of interest for art history. On the other hand, MS M, which is perhaps an older text and undoubtedly important for the establishment of a critical edition of the Gospels, was copied with negligence and therefore must be approached with caution with regards to the classical Armenian language) (Künzle 1984, 52).

### 3 Medial Deictic Forms in Matthew

#### 3.1 Data

Tables 5-6 provide an overview of the number of medial forms that occur in the Latin and Armenian translations of Matthew [tabs 5-6].<sup>7</sup>

**Table 5** Armenian medial forms and their counterparts in Greek and Latin found in Matthew

	Greek		Latin		
	proximal οὗτος	distal ἐκεῖνος	proximal <i>hic</i>	medial <i>iste</i>	distal <i>ille</i>
Arm. - <i>d</i> -	30	0	25	5	0

**Table 6** Latin medial forms and their counterparts in Greek and Armenian found in Matthew

	Greek		Armenian		
	proximal οὗτος	distal ἐκεῖνος	proximal - <i>s</i> -	medial - <i>d</i> -	distal - <i>n</i> -
Lat. <i>iste</i>	28	0	22	5	1

The Armenian medial forms appear 30 times, each translating Greek οὗτος ([tab. 5], first cell).<sup>8</sup> However, only five out of these 30 are matched with the medial *iste* in the Latin text (fourth cell), and the rest correspond to proximal *hic* (third cell). Of the 28 instances of Latin *iste* translating Greek οὗτος ([tab. 6], first cell), one corresponds to the Armenian distal *n*-deictic (fifth cell), and 22 to the proximal *s*-deictic (third cell). It is remarkable that both the Latin and Armenian medial forms always translate a Greek proximal οὗτος and never the distal ἐκεῖνος ([tabs 5-6], first and second cells).<sup>9</sup> More

<sup>7</sup> In the collection of these data, all instances of Greek οὗτος and ἐκεῖνος were collected first, and the corresponding form in the Armenian and Latin translations were then noted. Since the primary focus was on the issues of translation, instances of Armenian and Latin deictic forms appearing elsewhere (i.e., not with Greek οὗτος or ἐκεῖνος) were not counted.

<sup>8</sup> The Armenian medial form appears much more frequently than 30 times; to reiterate fn. 7 above, I emphasise that the 30 instances counted here are those that appear specifically beside a Greek deictic element, all of which happens to be a form of οὗτος (as opposed to that of ἐκεῖνος).

<sup>9</sup> As an anonymous reviewer points out, this distribution can straightforwardly be explained by the translators' knowledge of both NT and classical Greek: οὗτος can have proximal value in NT Greek or medial value in the grammar of classical Greek, with which the translators must have been familiar. Therefore, οὗτος was always ambiguous, leaving the translators to choose the deictic value that seemed more appropriate

importantly, however, the Latin and Armenian translations agreed on the use of a medial form only five out of the nearly 30 possible instances (fourth cell).

If we zoom out and consider all deictic forms (which includes adverbs in addition to pronouns and adjectives) in Matthew (**tab. 7**), this rate drastically decreases: if we consider each occurrence of the Greek proximal deictic as a possible locus for Latin and Armenian medial forms, we find that the Armenian and Latin translators agreed on their choice of medial deixis only five times out of a possible 155. More generally, of the 246 collected Greek deictic forms, the Latin and Armenian translations used the same correspondent 168 times, which is a 68.3% rate. Of the 168 instances, 159 showed the *expected* correspondent for each language - that is, there was a three-way agreement across all three languages - which means that nine of the 168 agreements occur where Latin and Armenian deviate from the Greek in the same way. We may be tempted to assume that, in the five instances where Greek proximal deictic forms are translated with both Latin *iste* and Armenian *-d-*, Latin and Armenian translators are in agreement on what relationship within the context should be emphasised with the medial deictic form. However, because of the relative paucity of instances where Latin and Armenian agree in their deviations, we must attribute these agreements to simple coincidence.

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to them. ἐκεῖνος, on the other hand, presented no such ambiguities and was invariably translated by a distal form in Latin and Armenian.

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**Table 7** Greek, Latin, and Armenian correspondences of all deictic forms in Matthew

	<b>Greek original</b>	<b>Latin translation</b>	<b>Armenian translation</b>	<b>Total occurrences</b>
Three-way agreements	proximal	proximal	proximal	72
	distal	distal	distal	87
				total: 159
Two-way agreement with one (Arm.) deviant	proximal	proximal	medial	27
	proximal	proximal	distal	22
	proximal	proximal	∅ (no form used)	3
	distal	distal	∅	1
			total: 53	
Two-way agreement with one (Lat.) deviant	proximal	medial	proximal	22
	distal	∅	distal	2
			total: 24	
Agreement in Lat./ Arm. deviations	proximal	medial	medial	5
	proximal	distal	distal	2
	proximal	∅	∅	2
			total: 9	
No agreement	proximal	medial	distal	1

### 3.2 Analysis

Although it is unfortunate that any relationship between the Latin and Armenian translations in this context is unlikely, the few deviations do offer a window into the syntax and translation technique of the individual languages. Of the different types of divergences in translation throughout Matthew, the insertion of medial deixis is one of the most difficult to reconcile. From a Translation Studies perspective, we may ascribe the Armenian and Latin use of medial deixis to linguistic idiom and permit – or simply expect – its insertion. To take it one step further, to disallow the use of *iste* or *d*-forms on the grounds that there is no Greek equivalent would cause the forms to disappear entirely from any literal translation<sup>10</sup> of a Greek

<sup>10</sup> Scholarly opinion on the nature of the Armenian Bible translation is divided. In contrast to the philosophical and scientific works translated by the Hellenising School of the 6th to 8th centuries, the Bible is often considered less literal: “a philosophical text meant for students, for example, may need to be translated in a manner closer to the original, and thus more ‘slavishly’, than a religious text meant for the general public, where accessibility and comprehensibility are of greater importance than textual fidelity” (Meyer 2018, 73); “the Armenian literary heritage of the sixth to eighth centuries is comprised for the most part of a vast corpus of translations from Greek, which, unlike biblical and theological translations of the Golden Age (fifth century), maintains the Greek word order or syntax” (Terian 1982, 175). However, as Meyer (2018, 76) demonstrates through

text and render this study useless. One might say that the insertion of medial deixis in the two languages is unproblematic; they might argue that the translators are simply observing the idioms and style of their own language and that no new meaning is introduced as a result. And they might further assert that the reference to the second person of the speech-act or to a negatively perceived referent is implicit, that the translators were simply expressing what was inexpressible but implied in the Greek. There are two significant issues with these arguments.

The first is that the implicit information contained in the Greek is variable and up to interpretation; if there were a clear and unambiguous implication in the Greek text, we would expect the Armenian and Latin versions to agree on when and where they insert the medial deixis. Evidently, this is not the case. For example, in Mt 23:36 the Latin focused on the second person referent of the pronoun and used *istam* for ‘upon *this generation [of yours]*’, but the Armenian translator did not pick up on the relationship, evidenced by its retention of the proximal deictic in *azgis aysorik* from proximal τὴν γενεὰν ταύτην:

ἦξει ταῦτα πάντα ἐπὶ τὴν γενεὰν ταύτην  
*venient haec omnia super generationem istam*  
*ekec’ē ayn amenayn i veray azgis aysorik*  
‘all these things will come upon *this generation* [Lat.: *of yours*]  
(Mt 23:36)

Conversely, in Mt 3:17, where Latin uses a proximal deictic with Greek οὗτος, the Armenian translation introduces a medial form:

οὗτος ἐστὶν ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός  
*hic est filius meus dilectus*

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his examination of Greek and Armenian relative clauses of the New Testament, the Armenian Bible is “far closer to its Greek Vorlage than is commonly presumed”. Coulie also notes the preservation of Greek features in the Armenian Bible, concluding that “les traductions arméniennes d’œuvres grecques ne doivent pas faire l’objet seulement d’analyses morphologiques, lexicales, ou syntaxiques; elles peuvent également être mesurées à l’aune d’un critère stylistique” (Armenian translations of Greek works should not only be analysed for morphological, lexical, or syntactic criteria, but for stylistic features, as well) (Coulie 1994, 57; see also Cowe 1990-91). As Meyer (2018) describes, this has significant implications for the stratification of the Armenian language, particularly with regards to the relationship between the languages of the Bible and of the (pre-) Hellenising School. The apparent reliance of the Armenian on Greek syntax and word order also raises questions about the characterisation of Biblical Armenian as an accurate representation of 5th-century Armenian. An in-depth exploration of these issues is outside the scope of this paper, but this author wishes to suggest that, while the Armenian Bible may rightly be labelled as a ‘literal’ translation based on its close adherence to Greek syntax, the application of the medial deictic pronouns, as discussed below, may call for a reassessment of our definition of ‘literal’.

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*dá ē ordi im sireli*  
'this is my beloved son' (Mt 3:17)

It is important to emphasise that what is implied is not always without ambiguity; all statements contain implicit information, and certainly more than one piece of implicit information is contained in each statement. As long as translation is a human endeavour, translators will naturally choose to focus on different parts of what is implied. Clearly the translators' decisions are not based on anything specifically indicated in the Greek, but on non-regularised personal interpretations of the relationships described in the text.

The second issue is that there are instances where the inserted medial form *does* in fact add significant meaning to the text, particularly in the Armenian version. One classic example of this occurs at Mt 16:18:

καὶ γὰρ δέ σοι λέγω ὅτι σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν

*et ego dico tibi, quia tu es Petrus, et super **hanc** petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam*

*ew es k'éz asem, zi du és vēm, ew i veray **áydr** vimi šinec'ic' zekelec'i im*

'and I say to you that you are Peter/stone, and on *this* stone, I will build my church' (Mt 16:18)

The subtle wordplay with Peter's name and the 'rock' in the original Greek famously becomes the basis for the Roman Catholic tradition that St Peter's Basilica was built over his burial site.<sup>11</sup> In the Armenian version, however, because the word 'rock' (*vēm*) does not sound like Peter's name, the pun cannot be replicated. Instead, the Armenian uses *vēm* and creates wordplay with the second person medial deictic adjective. Jesus tells his disciple that "you are a rock" (*du es vēm*), as opposed to Greek and Latin "you are Peter". By calling Peter a rock, Jesus makes very explicit the connection between the two clauses: the Armenian says, "you're a rock; and on *this* rock - name-

<sup>11</sup> "This line has been the object of much heated debate and much wasted ingenuity. 'This rock' has been identified variously with Peter's faith or confession, with his preaching office, with the truth revealed to him, with the twelve apostles, with Jesus, with Jesus' teaching, and even with God himself. All this is special pleading. The most natural interpretation of the Greek is that of Roman Catholic tradition: the rock is Peter" (Davies, Allison 2005, 269).

ly you, the rock - I'll build my church".<sup>12</sup> The connection is less obvious in Greek and Latin: "you're Peter; and on this rock I'll build my church". The changes made in Armenian, although the text remains very nearly lexically identical to the Greek,<sup>13</sup> is able to add exegetically significant meaning that was only weakly implied in the Greek.

The overwhelming pejorative values of *d*-deixis pervasive throughout Jesus' trial, condemnation, and crucifixion, however, are not explicit in the Greek text. In Mt 27:41-9, Armenian uses *d*-deixis six times. Three of them correspond with Greek anaphoric αὐτός,<sup>14</sup> one with proximal οὗτος, and twice with no correspondent in Greek. Only once does the Latin version agree with the Armenian in its use of a medial form (Mt 27:47). The text and translations are replicated below:

ὁμοίως καὶ οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς ἐμπαίζοντες μετὰ τῶν γραμματέων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων ἔλεγον· (42) Ἄλλους ἔσωσεν, ἑαυτὸν οὐ δύναται σῶσαι· βασιλεὺς Ἰσραὴλ ἐστίν, καταβάτω νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ ϑ, καὶ πιστεύσομεν ἐπ' αὐτόν. (43) πέποιθεν ἐπὶ τὸν θεόν, ῥυσάσθω ϑ νῦν, εἰ θέλει αὐτόν· εἶπεν γὰρ ὅτι Θεοῦ εἰμι υἱός. (44) τὸ δ' αὐτὸ καὶ οἱ λησταὶ οἱ συσταυρωθέντες σὺν αὐτῷ ὠνείδιζον αὐτόν. [...] (47) τινὲς δὲ τῶν ἐκεῖ ἐστηκότων ἀκούσαντες ἔλεγον ὅτι Ἥλιαν φωνεῖ οὗτος. (48) καὶ εὐθέως δραμῶν εἷς ἐξ αὐτῶν καὶ λαβὼν σπόγγον πλήσας τε ὄξους καὶ περιθεὶς καλάμῳ ἐπότιζεν αὐτόν. (49) οἱ δὲ λοιποὶ ἔλεγον· Ἄφες ἴδωμεν εἰ ἔρχεται Ἥλιος σῶσων αὐτόν.

(41) *similiter et principes sacerdotum inludentes cum scribis et senioribus dicentes* (42) *alios salvos fecit, se ipsum non potest salvum facere, si rex Israhel est, descendat nunc de cruce ϑ et credemus ei* (43) *confidet in Deo, liberet nunc eum, si ϑ vult, dixit enim quia Dei Filius sum* (44) *id ipsum autem et latrones qui fixi erant cum eo inproperabant ei [...]* (47) *quidam autem illic stantes et audientes dicebant Heliam vocat iste* (48) *et continuo currens unus ex eis acceptam spongiam implevit aceto et inposuit harundini et dabat ei bibere* (49) *ceteri vero dicebant sine videamus an veniat Helias liberans eum.*

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, in the following line, MS E follows the Greek use of the anaphoric αὐτός with *na*: καὶ πύλαι ἧδου οὐ κατισχύσουσιν αὐτῆς is translated as *ew drunk' d'zoxoc' zna mi yalt'aharesc'en* 'and the gates of Hades will not overpower it [the church]' (the Latin also has *et portae inferi non praevallebunt adversus eam*). In MS M, however, *zna* is replaced by *zk'ez*, the second person singular accusative pronoun, which further continues the wordplay in the first half of the verse.

<sup>13</sup> πέτρος does mean 'rock', and the only other difference is the use of the second person deictic adjective *aydr*.

<sup>14</sup> The Classical Greek use of αὐτός in the oblique cases as a third person pronoun (Smyth 1956, § 1204) continues in New Testament Greek (Funk 1961, § 277; Moulton 1998, 3: 40). See also Manolesou 2001.

(41) *noynpēs ew k’ahanayapetk’ jalēin handerj dprōk’n ew cerovk’ ew aseın* (42) *zayls aprec’oyc’, zink’n oč’ karē aprec’uc’anel, et’e t’agawor ē ĪĒĪ, ijč’ē ayžm i xač’ēd, ew hawatasc’uk’ dma* (43) *et’e yu-sac’aw yĀĀ, p’rkesc’ē ayžm zda, et’e kami zda. k’anzi asac’ et’e ĀY orđi em* (44) *znoyn ew awazakk’n or xač’eal ein ənd nma naxatēin zna [...]* (47) *omank’ yagnc’anē or andn kayin ibrew luan aseın, zĒĒia karday da<sup>15</sup>* (48) *ew vałvałaki ənt’ac’aw mi omn i noc’anē. ar’ spung li k’ac’axov hareal yełegan. et əmpel nma* (49) *ew kēs’k’n aseın, t’ot, tesc’uk’ et’e gay ĒĒia p’rkel zda*

(41) In the same way, the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked [him] and said (42) He saved others; he can’t save himself; if he is the King of Israel, let him descend from *that* cross, and we will believe *him* (43). If he trusted in God, let God deliver *him*, if he desires *him*. For he said “I am the son of God” (44) and in the same way the robbers who were crucified with him reproached him [...] (47). Some of those who were there, when they heard [him], said, “*This man* is calling Elijah” (48) and immediately one of them ran, took a sponge full of vinegar, sticking it on a reed, [and] gave it [to him] to drink (49) and the others said, ‘Leave [him], let us see if Elijah comes to save *him*’. (Mt 27:41-9)

The derogatory and negative connotations of this passage begin with the verb *jalēin* ‘they mocked’ and are first picked up by the enclitic *-d* with *i xač’ēd* ‘from *that* cross’. Greek has no deictic marker with the prepositional phrase ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ ‘from the cross’; this is the first major Armenian innovation of the passage, where pejorative value is ascribed to not only Jesus, but to his cross, as well. The mockery and ridicule are overt: a loose English translation that incorporates some of the emotional colouring provided by the Armenian might be something like, “he can’t even save himself! If he really is the King of Israel, shouldn’t he be able to come down from the damned cross? If he did, we’d believe the guy”. Each subsequent reference to Jesus, excluding those of the narrative, is also made with a pejorative form in *-d-*. Apart from the verb of mockery in the participle ἐμπαίζοντες ‘mocking’, however, there is no obvious indication of any negative connotations in the Greek, and even in Latin, the pejorative *iste* is used only once in verse 47. It is true that some of the *d*-forms with Jesus are governed by deictic consistency and may therefore be considered coincidental.<sup>16</sup> However, the second *d*-pronoun in verse 42,

<sup>15</sup> The pronoun *da* is omitted in MS M.

<sup>16</sup> Deictic consistency is the principle by which deictic forms are retained throughout a discourse fragment so long as no change in discourse perspective intervenes (Klein 1996, 57-9). For example, in Mt 26:27-9, Jesus’ cup is first introduced with a me-

as well as the enclitic with the cross, are most certainly Armenian embellishments that attach pejorative value to Jesus. The use of the pronoun *da* in verse 47 also reveals the deliberate choice of the Armenian (and Latin) translators to insert disparagement, given that it appears in a new discourse fragment that is not bound by deictic consistency. What is remarkable is that Armenian is able to add such a blatant layer of ridicule and scorn while still adhering to the vocabulary and word order of the Greek. Therefore, the Armenian version is extraordinary in its ability to translate nearly word for word while simultaneously providing a subtle interpretation of the text.

This all must answer to the rebuttal, however, that, although there is no explicit suggestion of a negative context at Jesus' crucifixion or of a second person reference in the *petros* passage in the Greek syntax, one could certainly argue that it is *implied* in the Greek text overall. In modern translation theory, this is referred to as "explication" and is a common feature of translation (Pym 2009, 13).<sup>17</sup> The Armenian language allows the translator to assess and express aspects of the narrative where the Greek is unable to do so, and the translation is therefore based on the interpreter's decision of how best to render the text as a whole. From this standpoint, one could easily argue that, for example, the Greek verb of mockery in Mt 27:41 and the larger context of Jesus' condemnation and crucifixion serve to clearly indicate the negative connotations of the passage, and that the Armenian rendering is in fact no different from the original. However, the Latin language offers the same option to the translator, and yet Jerome rarely makes the same choices as the Armenian translator. This seems to suggest that, even if the translators are interpreting with an eye to the relational values that Greek is unable to express, the urge to explicate them is felt on an individual basis with no incontrovertible or tangible foundation in the Greek text.

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dial deictic form: *arbēk' i dmanē amenek'in* 'drink from *that* (which I give to you), all of you'. In its next occurrence, the *d*-form is retained, despite the presence of the first person possessive *im*: *zi ayd ē ariwn im noroy uxti* 'for *this* is my blood of a new covenant'. The use of the *d*-form persists into the following verse: *yoržam arabic' zda and jez nor yark'ayut'ean hawr imoy* 'when I drink *it* with you anew in my Father's kingdom'. Armenian adheres to deictic consistency so strictly that it can risk ambiguity. In Mt 27:32 (*ew ekeal artak's gtin ayr mi Kiwrenac'i anun Simovn, zna kalan pahak zi barjc'ē zxač'n nora* 'and having come out they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; they forced him to bear his cross'), *zna* refers to Simon, but the following *n*-form *nora* refers to Jesus, to whom reference had been made continuously with the *n*-deictic in the preceding verses (Mt 27:27 *nora*; 27:28 *zna, znovaw*; 27:29 *nora*; 27:30 *na, nora*; 27:31 *zna, nmanē*).

**17** However, it is often risky to impose modern theory on ancient practices: "it's not always possible for the models provided by translation studies to be applied on the ancient world without some adaptation" (McElduff, Sciarrino 2011, 2). Pym also notes as a "universal of translations", for example, that unique linguistic elements of a target language that cannot be replicated in the source language tend not to appear in translations, which of course we have found not to be the case.

## 4 Conclusions

It is an unavoidable fact that the linguistic means at one's disposal must govern the nature and contents of one's translation. The use of different pronouns alters the text not only on a lexical level but on the psychological level, as well. Given that the three-way system in Armenian differs from the two-way system in Greek, the translator had available the stylistic option of adding psychological meaning. We have found that the Armenian translation at times provides extra context or commentary that goes beyond what is explicitly or implicitly indicated in the Greek. At the same time, however, it also remains extremely faithful; Rhodes (1977, 180) quotes Lyonnet and Lagrange (1935, 351), who write,

The differences are quite minimal and very definite. If they are kept in mind, the model followed by the translator can be reconstructed: for the same care which he took in rendering precisely the nuances of an expression prevented him from ignoring details, and also led him to model his sentence structure on that of his exemplar whenever possible. This is what makes the Armenian version so valuable for the exegete, and what makes it possible to identify clearly the nature of his exemplar.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the systems of deixis in Armenian with the hope that the translation of the Greek deictic forms may reveal something about the techniques of the translator. We have found that, by employment of a medial deictic rather than a proximal to render the Greek forms of οὗτος, the Armenian translator successfully produces a lexically faithful translation that also functions occasionally as a commentary.

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# Grammaticalization of the Definite Article in Armenian

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**Abstract** The Classical Armenian definite article system is unusual for Indo-European, but paralleled in prehistoric common Kartvelian. It may represent an intermediate stage in grammaticalization between demonstratives and definite articles. The Kartvelian articles progressed further down the path of grammaticalization, becoming markers of argument status, and eventually being incorporated into the case system. It has been suggested that the modern Armenian definite article has also progressed further than the stage of definiteness marking, becoming a marker of specificity, but in fact, its non-definite uses are better described as associated with nominalisation, and in particular with core argument status, than with specificity.

**Keywords** Armenian. Indo-European. Kartvelian. Language Contact. Definite article. Definiteness. Specificity. Grammaticalization.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 Definite Articles in Classical Armenian. – 3 Definite Articles in Kartvelian. – 4 Grammaticalization of Definite Articles. – 5 Definite Articles in Modern Armenian. – 5.1 General Overview. – 5.2 Personal Article. – 5.3 Definite Article. – 5.3.1 Article as Definiteness Marker. – 5.3.1.1 General Overview. – 5.3.1.2 Main Uses of Definite Articles. – 5.3.1.2 Main Uses of Definite Articles. – 5.3.1.3 'Inherently Definite' Expressions. – 5.3.2 Definite Article and Specificity. – 5.3.3 Definite Article, Nominalisation, and Core Argument Status. – 6 Conclusion.



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## 1 Introduction

The grammaticalization of definite articles from demonstratives is a cross-linguistically common process, which is said to have occurred separately in various branches of Indo-European. The Classical Armenian definite article system seems to be unique in old Indo-European, and has been described by Vaux (1994-95) as an intermediate stage of grammaticalization between demonstrative and definite article. A similar system is proposed to have existed in prehistoric common Kartvelian (Harris 1985), so it is possible that language contact in prehistoric times could have played a role in this development.<sup>1</sup> The common Kartvelian definite articles were eventually lost, but before their loss, they seem to have developed into markers of argument status, which were ultimately incorporated into the case system. This type of process, whereby demonstratives are grammaticalised into definite articles, which are ultimately further grammaticalised so that they lose their association with definiteness and become purely functional elements such as noun markers or case markers, is cross-linguistically common, and was first identified by Greenberg (1978). The modern Armenian definite article, which developed from the distal form of Classical Armenian, has also been suggested to have progressed somewhat further down the path of grammaticalization than the stage of pure definite article. Sigler (1996) describes it as a marker of specificity, representing stage III on Greenberg's (1978) grammaticalization pathway. However, closer investigation of the data reveals that, while it is still used to mark definiteness in all the main functions identified by Lyons (1999), it cannot be straightforwardly described as a marker of specificity. It does, however, have some uses that are associated neither with definiteness nor specificity, but can be described as marking argument status, showing restrictions on appearing with particular case forms. Thus it appears to be following a pathway similar to that taken by the prehistoric common Kartvelian articles.

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<sup>1</sup> For discussion of the possibility of Kartvelian influence on the early development of Armenian, see e.g. Schmidt 1992; Gippert 2005; Aslanov 2018. The close similarity of the consonant system of Armenian to that of Kartvelian and the loss of IE contrastive vowel length and grammatical gender are features that have been linked to this influence. There are few confirmed ancient lexical borrowings from Kartvelian into Armenian, but Thorsø (in this volume) presents possible examples of early borrowings from Armenian into Kartvelian. Note that in cases of substrate influence, it is common to find structural influence (phonological and syntactic, sometimes also morphological) without extensive lexical borrowing, as, for example, in the case of Dravidian influence on Sanskrit (see e.g. Thomason, Kaufman 1988).



## 2 Definite Articles in Classical Armenian

Proto-Indo-European is thought to have lacked a definite article, with those found in daughter languages resulting from separate developments from demonstrative elements. Classical Armenian had an unusual system, whereby the article, which was enclitic on the noun, showed a three-way deictic distinction parallel to the system of demonstratives (see also the paper by Aghababian in this volume):

(1)	այր-ս	այր-դ	այր-ն
	ayr-s	ayr-d	ayr-n
	‘the man [close to the speaker]’	‘the man [close to the addressee]’	‘the man [close to neither]’

Vaux (1994-95, 21) proposes that this situation represents an intermediate stage in the development from demonstratives to definite articles.

There was also a parallel series of demonstrative pronouns, formed with these same ‘deictic suffixes’ and a demonstrative stem *ay-* (2), as well as a number of other deictic adverbs which showcase the same tripartite distinction:

(2)	այս	այդ	այն
	ays	ayd	ayn
	proximal	medial	distal

The Classical Armenian article system is quite different from those that are found in Greek or Semitic, where the article does not have deictic distinctions. In Greek, Classical Arabic, and Biblical Hebrew, the article precedes the noun, although in Aramaic, the lingua franca of the Achaemenid and Parthian empires, therefore presumably the main written language used by Armenians before the 5th century AD, it was a suffix (Doron, Khan 2015, 46). Hurrian and its later relative Urartian, which were most probably in contact with pre-Classical Armenian (see e.g. Greppin, Diakonoff 1991), also had a suffixal article, although this, too, lacks the deictic distinction we find in Armenian, and it precedes case endings, rather than following them, as in Armenian:

(3)	<i>tiwē-na-šē</i>
	object-ART-GEN.PL
	‘of the objects’.
	Hurrian

(Wegner 2000, 54-5)

- (4) *Argište-šə Menua-ḡi-ne-šə*  
 ‘Argišti (ergative), son of Menua (ergative)’.  
 Urartian (Wilhelm 2008, 112)

### 3 Definite Articles in Kartvelian

Although the modern Kartvelian languages lack a definite article, it is proposed that prehistoric common Kartvelian had a very similar system to that of Armenian, traces of which can be seen in the case-marking systems of the modern languages (Harris 1985). It is thus possible that contact with prehistoric Kartvelian could have played a role in the development of the Classical Armenian system. Georgian case endings have two forms, a ‘bare’ form, and an ‘articulated’ form, which consists of the bare form plus an additional element, which is thought to derive from the bare form plus the old definite article, distal *-i* or proximal *-a*: *-i* is associated with a “deictic prefix *i-* [...] reconstructed for the remote demonstrative in [Common Kartvelian]” (Harris 1985, 77), *-a* is identified with “the deictic prefix of the proximal article, *-a*” (Harris 1985, 84):

(5)		Bare	Articulated	
	NOM	<i>ḡac ‘man’</i>	<i>ḡac-i</i>	(Harris 1985, 80)
	DAT	<i>ḡac-s</i>	<i>ḡac-s-a</i>	
	GEN	<i>ḡac-is</i>	<i>ḡac-is-a</i>	(Harris 1985, 84)
	INS	<i>-it</i>	<i>-it-a/-it-i</i>	(Harris 1985, 86)

The narrative (ergative) articulated form *-man* is proposed to have been the narrative case of the distal demonstrative/article, while *-i* is derived from its nominative form. The non-articulated narrative is unmarked, like the non-articulated nominative (Harris 1985, 83).

Although there is some variation as different forms have been generalised to different extents, the basic generalisation is that the ‘articulated’ forms are used for core arguments such as subjects and objects (except for inherently definite elements such as proper names and pronouns, which cross-linguistically often do not receive the definite article), while the ‘non-articulated’ forms are found in adverbial expressions such as time and location, compounds, incorporated objects etc. (Harris 1985, 80-5).

Old Georgian, like Armenian, developed independent demonstrative pronouns based on the same deictic elements proposed to have been found in the old article:

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(6)	Proximal <i>ese</i>	Medial <i>ege</i>	Distal <i>igi</i>
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As in Classical Armenian, these could either follow or precede the noun:

(7)	<i>այն</i> <i>ayn</i> <i>igi</i> DEM3	<i>այր-ն</i> <i>ayr-n</i> <i>կաւ-ի</i> man
	<i>այր-ն</i> <i>ayr-n</i> <i>կաւ-ի</i> man	<i>այն</i> <i>ayn</i> <i>igi</i> DEM3

After the old articles had ceased to be used as such (as we can see, in Old Georgian the supposed old distal article has become a case ending), the same grammatical process begins to repeat itself, as the postposed forms of the demonstrative begin to be used as definite articles in Old Georgian:

(8)	<i>igi</i> DEM3 'that man'	<i>կաւ-ի</i> man-NOM	<i>կաւ-ի</i> man-NOM 'the man'	<i>igi</i> DEF
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(Harris 1985, 77)

Thus we have a system of postposed definite articles with a three-way deictic distinction, directly parallel to that of Classical Armenian:

(9)	<i>կաւ-ի ւս</i> <i>այր-ս</i> man DEF.PROX	<i>կաւ-ի ւց</i> <i>այր-ւ</i> man DEF.MED	<i>կաւ-ի ւց</i> <i>այր-ն</i> man DEF.DIST
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However, these articles gradually became less obligatory, and died out around the 12th century. Harris (1985, 78) proposes that before they disappeared, they had developed from markers of definiteness to markers of specificity:

(10)	<i>նաւս</i> boat.DAT	<i>մաս</i> ART
	'into a (certain) boat'.	

## 4 Grammaticalization of Definite Articles

The development of the definite article into a marker of specificity, as seen in Old Georgian, represents stage III in Greenberg's (1978) proposal concerning universal grammaticalization patterns of definite articles:

stage I                          > stage II                          > stage III                          > stage IV  
demonstrative pronoun    definite article    specific article    noun marker

However, it appears that this is not the only possible grammaticalization pathway for definite articles. The development of the prehistoric common Kartvelian definite article into a marker of argument status corresponds to stage III of a slightly different grammaticalization pathway proposed by Doron and Khan (2015, 45):

stage I                          > stage II                          > stage III                          > stage IV  
demonstrative pronoun    definite article    marker of argumenthood    class marker

## 5 Definite Articles in Modern Armenian

### 5.1 General Overview

In modern Armenian, the spatial deictic function of the articles is no longer current, although it is reported to be preserved in Hamshen dialect:

- (11) *as*                          *oiv-es*  
DEM1                          shepherd-ART1  
'this shepherd'.

(Vaux 2007, 266)

The proximal and medial articles are now mainly used to denote person (section 5.2), while the distal article has become a true definite article (section 5.3), and also has some uses that may be considered to indicate that it has progressed further down the path of grammaticalization, as discussed in sections 5.3.2 and 5.3.3.

## 5.2 Personal Article

In modern Armenian, the proximal and medial articles have become associated with first and second person respectively. They may be used to mark person on nouns or adjectives. This usage is also found with the old distal article, in addition to its usage as a true definite article:

(12)	1SG	1PL
	որդի-ս	ամենք-ս
	<i>ordi-s</i>	<i>amenk'-s</i>
	'I, the son'	'all of us'
	2SG	2PL
	որդի-դ	ամենք-դ
	<i>ordi-d</i>	<i>amenk'-d</i>
	'you, the son'	'all of you'
	3SG	3PL
	որդի-ն	ամենք-ն
	<i>ordi-n</i>	<i>amenk'-n</i>
	'he, the son'	'all of them'

According to Petrosyan (1976), this usage was quite widespread in Classical Armenian. It is still current in modern Armenian, though not particularly frequent. Ačar'yan (1952, 183-4) suggests that the link between the originally essentially spatial deictic distinction and person, which gave rise to the 'personal article' use, was reinforced by a) the use of the distal demonstrative as a third-person personal pronoun, and b) the fact that the proximal and medial forms coincidentally share the same consonant with the first and second person singular personal pronouns *es* and *du*.

The main usage of these 'personal articles' in modern Armenian is to denote a possessor:

(13)	որդի-ս	որդի-դ	որդի-ն
	<i>ordi-s</i>	<i>ordi-d</i>	<i>ordi-n</i>
	'my son'	'your son'	'his/her son' (or 'the son')

A unique development of the ‘personal article’ is found in Khoy dialect, where it may attach to verbs and function as an object clitic:

- (14) *əmnor t'p'el=i=s*  
 every.day beat.IPT\*=3SG.PRS=ART1  
 ‘s/he beats me every day’.  
 \* IPT = imperfective participle (անկատար դերբայ)  
 PPT = past participle (վաղակատար դերբայ)  
 RPT = resultative participle (հարակատար դերբայ)

- (15) *oroxkec'-əs üres tun-ə*  
 send.3SG.AOR=ART1 3PL.GEN house.DEF  
 ‘s/he sent me to their house’.

- (16) *yür i oroxkeli=t*  
 where be.3SG.PRS send.IPT=ART2  
 ‘Where is s/he sending you?’

(Asatryan 1962, 136)

Ačaryan (1911, 284) proposes that the influence of Persian object clitics (e.g. *didem-et* ‘I saw you’) played a role here:

- (17) (a) POSSESSOR  
*barādar=at*  
 brother=2S  
 ‘your brother’.
- (b) DO  
*mī-bīnam=at*  
 ind-see.PRS.1S=2S  
 ‘I see you’.
- (c) IO  
*goftam=at*  
 say.PST.1S=2S  
 ‘I told you’.

(Khan 2019, 393)

A similar situation, with multifunctional clitics used for both possessor and object, is found in other languages of North-Western Iran, including Talyshi, Sorani-Mukri, and (only for certain verb forms) some dialects of North-Eastern Neo-Aramaic (Stilo, Noorlander 2015, 474; Khan 2019, 393). It seems likely that the use of the ‘possessive article’ cliticised on the verb to express a direct object in Khoy dialect is an example of borrowing this pattern of usage, i.e. extending the

functions of the Armenian possessive clitics to match the scope of functions of the equivalent form in the bi/multilingual speaker's other language(s).

In the standard modern Armenian languages, these 'possessive articles' could be described in more general terms as genitive clitics, as they are used to express other kinds of genitive elements than just possessors, for example, postpositional object:

- |      |     |               |                |                   |
|------|-----|---------------|----------------|-------------------|
| (18) | (a) | իմ հետ        | քո հետ         | նրա հետ           |
|      |     | <i>im het</i> | <i>k'o het</i> | <i>nra het*</i>   |
|      |     | 1SG.GEN with  | 2SG.GEN with   | 3SG.GEN with      |
|      | (b) | հետ-ու        | հետ-դ          | հետ-ը             |
|      |     | <i>het-s</i>  | <i>het-d</i>   | <i>het-ə**</i>    |
|      |     | with-ART1     | with-ART2      | with-ART3         |
|      |     | 'with me'     | 'with you'     | 'with him/her/it' |

\* Note that 1st and 2nd person objects of many postpositions appear in the literary language with dative case, but in some dialects, including the spoken language of Erevan, they generally appear in genitive case, like 3rd person.

\*\* The '3rd person' article in Classical Armenian always has the form *-n*, as seen, for example, in (1), but in modern Armenian its equivalent takes the form *-ə* when preceded by a consonant and not followed by a vowel.

This also applies to the genitive subjects of participial verb forms:

- |      |     |                    |                  |                  |
|------|-----|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| (19) | (a) | իմ                 | կարդացած         | գիրքը/ս          |
|      |     | <i>im</i>          | <i>kardac'ac</i> | <i>girk'-ə/s</i> |
|      |     | 1SG.GEN            | read.RPT         | book-DEF/ART1    |
|      | (b) | կարդացած           | գիրք-ու          |                  |
|      |     | <i>kardac'ac</i>   | <i>girk'-s</i>   |                  |
|      |     | read.RPT           | book-ART1        |                  |
|      |     | 'The book I read'. |                  |                  |

In Standard Western Armenian (WA), 1st and 2nd person possessive pronouns must be accompanied by the appropriate possessive clitic on the possessed noun, as in (20a). In Standard Eastern Armenian (SEA) this is not obligatory; the ordinary definite article (originally the distal/3rd person article) may be used instead, as in (20b):<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> As Bert Vaux (personal communication) points out, the form with the ordinary definite article is preferred in SEA (EANC has 610 examples of *im tun-ə* vs 54 examples of *im tun-s*).

- (20) (a) իմ տուն-ս  
*im tun-s*  
 1SG.GEN house-ART1
- (b) իմ տուն-ը  
*im tun-ə*  
 1SG.GEN house-DEF

### 5.3 Definite Article

#### 5.3.1 Article as Definiteness Marker

##### 5.3.1.1 General Overview

This usage developed from the Classical Armenian deictic article use described in section 2. Petrosyan (1976, 31) notes that in Classical Armenian, the personal function of the *-n* article, as opposed to the *-s* and *-d* articles, was weak, while the deictic function was dominant. This led to the emergence of the *-n* article as a definite article in the post-classical period, while *-s* and *-d* were eventually confined to personal/possessive use. Lyons (1999, 28) describes grammatical definiteness as essentially the grammaticalization of the pragmatic property of *identifiability*, i.e. that the addressee is assumed by the speaker to be able to identify the referent. He divides the various uses of definite articles into three main groups (Lyons 1999, 158), here presented with examples from modern Eastern Armenian (EA).

##### 5.3.1.2 Main Uses of Definite Articles

**a) Anaphoric**, in which the context in which the referent is to be identified is linguistic, i.e. the discourse:

- (21) Մեր շենքում ապրում է մի  
*Mer šenk'-um aprum ē mi*  
 1PL.GEN building-LOC live.IPT be.3SG.PRS one  
 ոստիկան և մի ուսուցիչ: **Ուսուցիչը**  
*ostikan ew mi usuc'ič' Usuc'ič'-ə*  
 policeman and one teacher Teacher-DEF  
 դիմացի դպրոցում է աշխատում:  
*dimac'-i dproc'um ē ašxatum.*  
 opposite-GEN school-LOC be.3SG.PRS work.IPT  
 'In our building live a policeman and a teacher. The teacher works at the school opposite'.



This also includes *cataphoric* uses, where the referent may be introduced into the discourse following, rather than preceding, the definite expression, as in the case of the relative clause below:

- (22) (այն) աղջիկը, որը սիրում է ինձ  
 (ayn) aljik-ə, vor-ə sirum ē inj  
 DEM3 girl-DEF which-DEF love.IPT be.3SG.PRS 1SG.DAT  
 ‘the girl who loves me’.

**b) Situational**, in which the referent is to be identified in the physical situation:

- (23) Դուռը փակիր:  
**Dur-ə** p'akir.  
 door-DEF close.2SG.IMP  
 ‘Close the door’.

**c) General knowledge**, in which the addressee is assumed to be able to identify the referent using general background knowledge not necessarily related to the discourse:

- (24) Արևը փայլում է:  
**Arew-ə** p'aylum ē.  
 sun-DEF shine.IPT be.3SG.PRS  
 ‘The sun is shining’.

Lyons also identifies a fourth group:

**d) Associative** definites, in which a combination of anaphoric and general knowledge information is used to identify the referent:

- (25) Մենք կարող ենք ծորակը բաց  
 Menk' karot enk' corak-ə bac'  
 1PL.NOM able be.1PL.PRS tap-DEF open  
 անել և ուղղակի ջուրը խմել:  
 anel ew uttaki jur-ə xmel  
 make.INF and just water-DEF drink.INF  
 ‘We can turn on the tap and just drink the water’.

We identify the water as the water that comes out of the previously mentioned tap, based on our knowledge that water comes out of taps.

In a corpus of spoken Eastern Armenian texts collected by the author and discussed in Hodgson (2012), we find examples of use of the definite article in stories, for referents that have not been mentioned before:

(26)	իսկ <i>isk</i>	Հիսուսը <i>Hisus-ə</i>	հանում <i>hanum</i>	է <i>ē</i>	իր <i>ir</i>
	and	Jesus-DEF	take.out.IPT	be.3SG.PRS	3SG.GEN
	գրպանից <i>grpan-ic'</i>	թաշկինակը, <b>t'aškinak-ə,</b>	սրբում <i>srbum</i>	է <i>ē</i>	իրա <i>ira</i>
	pocket-ABL	handkerchief-DEF	wipe.IPT	be.3SG.PRS	3SG.GEN
	երեսը <i>eres-ə</i>	էր <i>ēd</i>	թաշկինակով <i>t'aškinak-ov.</i>		
	face-DEF	DEM2	handkerchief-INS		

'and Jesus takes the handkerchief [not previously mentioned] out of his pocket, he wipes his face with that handkerchief'.

(27)	Նա <i>Na</i>	թողել <i>t'otel</i>	ա <i>a</i>	թռչունին <i>t'ič'un-i-n,</i>	և <i>ew</i>
	3SG.NOM	let.PPT	be.3SG.PRS	bird-DAT-DEF	and
	նա <i>na</i>	գնացել <i>gnac'el</i>	ա <i>a</i>	բերել <i>berel</i>	ա <i>a</i>
	3SG.NOM	go.PPT	be.3SG.PRS	bring.PPT	be.3SG.PRS
	հետը <i>het-ə</i>	<b>տերևը</b> <b>terew-ə</b>			
	with-ART3	leaf-DEF			

'He let the bird go, and it went and brought with it the leaf [not previously mentioned]'.

According to one consultant, the reason why these are definite is because they are such well-known stories that it is taken for granted that the hearer is familiar with the entity in question, so that these would be essentially general knowledge definites; she claimed that if the speaker was telling a new story, he would not use the definite article in these cases.

### 5.3.1.3 'Inherently Definite' Expressions

However, it is indeed the case that the definite article in modern Armenian is used in some instances where it would not be present in English, for example. One category of such uses involves expressions that could be described as 'inherently definite'. Languages possessing a definite article vary as to whether it is used for such expressions or not.

**a) Proper nouns** always take the definite article in literary EA, but not in Classical Armenian and some other dialects.

**b) Personal pronouns** generally do not take the definite article, with the possible exception of the third person *ink'ə*.

**c) Demonstratives adjectives:** *ays* (close to speaker), *ayd* (close to hearer, also often anaphoric), *ayn* (distal, also cataphoric use with heads of relative clauses) require the presence of the definite article on the noun they modify:

(28)	այս/	այդ/	այն	մարդը
	<i>ays/</i>	<i>ayd/</i>	<i>ayn</i>	<i>mar-d'*(ə)</i>
	DEM1	DEM2	DEM3	person-DEF
	'this/that person'.			

#### d) Possessives

Lyons (1999) points out that semantically, possessives are not inherently definite. This is shown by the fact that in some languages, including Modern Greek, they can occur in indefinite expressions with the indefinite article:

(29)	<i>énas</i>	<i>fílos</i>	<i>mu</i>
	a	friend	my
	'a friend of mine'.		

However, in some languages, including, according to Lyons (1999, 23, 130), Armenian, the possessive construction renders the possessed NP grammatically definite. Possessive pronouns must co-occur either with the definite article (a) or a possessive article (b):

(30)	(a)	իմ	տունը
		<i>im</i>	<i>tun-ə</i>
		1SG.GEN	house-DEF
		'my	house'
		քո	տունը
		<i>k'ə</i>	<i>tun-ə</i>
		2SG.GEN	house-DEF
		'your	house'
		նրա	տունը
		<i>nra</i>	<i>tun-ə</i>
		3SG.GEN	house-DEF
		'his/her	house'

(b)	(իմ)	տունս
	(im)	tun-s
	1SG.GEN	house-ART1
	‘my	house’
	(քո)	տունդ
	(k’o)	tun-d
	2SG.GEN	house-ART2
	‘your	house’
	(նրա)	տունը
	(nra)	tun-ə
	3SG.GEN	house-ART3/DEF
	‘his/her	house’

However, Lyons’s assertion (1999, 130) that possessives are inherently definite in Armenian is called into question, as although the article seems to be obligatory when the possessor is expressed by a pronoun, this is not inevitably the case when the possessor is a noun in the genitive:

(31)	Աշոտը	կատարեց	Արմենի	մեկ	այլ	<b>խնդրանք</b>
	Ašot-ə	katarec’	Armen-i	mek	ayl	<b>xndrank’</b>
	Ashot-DEF	carry.out.3SG.AOR	Armen-GEN	one	other	request
	‘Ashot carried out another request of Armen’s’.					

However, it is possible to use the article in such constructions:

(32)	Հունաստանի	կառավարությունը	համաձայնվել է		կատարել
	Hunastan-i	kařavarut’yun-ə	hamajaynvel	ē	katarel
	Greece-GEN	government-DEF	agree.PPT	be.3SG.PRS	carry.out.INF
	եռյակի	մեկ	այլ		<b>պահանջը</b>
	erjak-i	mek	ayl		<b>pahanj-ə</b>
	troika-GEN	one	other		demand-DEF
	‘The government of Greece has agreed to carry out another of the troika’s demands’.				

(33)	մեկ	այլ	<b>խնդրանքը</b>
	mek	ayl	<b>xndrank’-d</b>
	one	more	request-ART3
	‘another request of yours’.		

Also note that, unlike the Turkish agreement markers, which show some parallels with the Armenian ‘possessive articles’, the article is not obligatory after genitives used as modifiers (instead of adjectives) rather than possessives:

(34)	Սա	Հայաստանի	ծիրան	է:
	<i>Sa</i>	<i>Hayastan-i</i>	<i>ciran</i>	<i>ē.</i>
	DEM1	Armenia-GEN	apricot	be.3SG.PRS
	'These are/this is (an) Armenian apricot(s)'.			

Thus the association with genitive marking and definite/possessive article has not been grammaticalised totally, unlike that of genitive marking and agreement markers in Turkish, where, if there is genitive marking on a modifier, the noun must have an agreement marker agreeing in person with the possessor (according to Haig [1998], the obligatory, 'grammatical' nature of this relationship is a fairly recent phenomenon in Turkish).

### e) Generics

For generics, the definite article is sometimes present, sometimes not:

(35)	(a)	Գինին	համով	բան	է:
		<i>Gini-n</i>	<i>hamov</i>	<i>ban</i>	<i>ē.</i>
		Wine-DEF	tasty	thing	be.3SG.PRS
		'Wine is a tasty thing'. (Generic subject)			
	(b)	Գինի	սիրում	եմ:	
		<i>Gini</i>	<i>sirum</i>	<i>em.</i>	
		Wine	like.IPT	be.1SG.PRS	
		'I like wine'. (Generic object)			

It appears to be more commonly used for generic subjects than for objects, implying that some issue of topicality may be at play.

**f) NPs with *all*, *every*, *each*** (approximating to universal quantifiers: a formal device indicating that the open sentence that follows is true of every member of the relevant universe of interpretation – the predication of a property or relation to every member of the relevant set of entities).

The quantifier *bolor* 'all' always co-occurs with the definite article, both when it is modifying a nominal and when it occurs independently:

- (36) **Բոլորը / բոլոր**      **ներկաները**      հիացան      տեսնելով  
**Bolor-ə / bolor**      **nerka-ner-ə**      *hiac'an*      *tesnel-ov*  
all-DEF      all      present-PL-DEF      admire.3PL.AOR      see.INF-INS  
աղջկա      պարելը  
*atjka*      *parel-ə*  
girl.GEN      dance.INF-DEF  
'Everyone / all those present were enraptured seeing the girl's dancing'.

Nominals modified by the distributive quantifier *amen* 'every', unexpectedly, are usually indefinite:

- (37) Այս      երկրում      **ամեն**      **մարդ**      *իր*  
*Ays*      *erkr-um*      **amen**      **mard**      *ir*  
DEM1      country-LOC      every      person      3SG.GEN  
արհեստն      ունի:  
*arhest-n*      *uni*.  
craft-DEF      have.3SG.PRS  
'In this country, every person has a (lit. his) craft/skill'.

- (38) Այստեղ      **ամեն**      (մի)      տուն      հին      է:  
*Aystel*      **amen**      (*mi*)      **tun**      *hin*      *ē*.  
Here      every      one      house      old      be.3SG.PRS  
'Here every house is old'.

It is interesting that in Modern Greek, too, the distributive quantifier *κάθε* 'every' is the only one of the expressions Lyons (1999) designates as semantically definite that does not necessarily take the definite article.

However, nouns modified by *amen* can also take the definite article, with no obvious difference in meaning:

- (39) Հայաստանն ունի      տարբեր      գավառներ, տարբեր      մարզեր,  
*Hayastan-n*      *uni*      *tarber*      *gavar-ner,*      *tarber*      *marz-er,*  
Armenia-DEF      have.3SG.PRS      various      region-PL      various      province-PL  
ինչպես      նաև      **ամեն**      **մի**      **երկիրը**:  
*inč'pes*      *naew*      **amen**      **mi**      **erkir-ə**.  
like      also      every      one      country-DEF  
'Armenia has various regions, various provinces, like every country'.

*Yurak'anč'yur* 'each, every' can be definite or indefinite, with apparently no difference in meaning:

- (40) Մոլորակի յուրաքանչյուր երրորդ բնակիչ գործազուրկ է:  
 Molorak-i **yurak'anč'yur errorđ bnakič'** gorcazurk ē.  
 planet-DEF each third inhabitant unemployed be.3SG.PRS  
 'Every third inhabitant of the planet is unemployed'.  
<https://www.tert.am/am/news/2012/01/24/jobs/426491>
- (41) Հայաստանի յուրաքանչյուր երրորդ բնակիչն աղքատ  
 Hayastan-i **yurak'anč'yur errorđ bnakič'-n** atk'at  
 Armenia-GEN every third inhabitant-DEF poor  
 է եղել:  
 ē etel.  
 be.3SG.PRS be.PPT  
 'Every third inhabitant of Armenia has been poor'.  
<https://bit.ly/3V2B9ME>

Sigler (1996, 137) notes that in Western Armenian, *amen* and *yurak'anč'yur* require the definite article with objects, and cannot co-occur with it on subjects. For EA, such restrictions do not seem to apply: see the previous two examples for subjects, and for objects too it appears to be similarly optional:

- (42) Այս թաղամասում թափառող ամեն/ յուրաքանչյուր  
 Ays t'atamas-um t'ap'arot **amen/ yurak'anč'yur**  
 DEM1 neighbourhood-LOC wander.SPT every/ each  
 շան(ը) կերակրում են:  
 šan(-ə) kerakrum em.  
 dog.DAT-DEF feed.IPT be.1SG.PRS  
 'I feed every/each dog that wanders round this neighbourhood'.

Some consultants preferred this with the article, some without, but all agreed that it was essentially optional here.

### 5.3.2 Definite Article and Specificity

It has been claimed that the modern Armenian definite article has developed into a marker of specificity (Sigler 1996, 113 ff.), as it is said to be obligatory on nouns modified by genitives (43) (though see exceptions, e.g. 34) and partitives (44), even if these are not semantically definite:

- |      |     |  |   |
|------|-----|--|---|
| (43) | (a) | եկեղեցիին<br><i>eketec'i-i-n</i><br>church-GEN-DEF<br>'the church's roof'  | տանիք*(ը)<br><i>tanik'-(*)ə</i><br>roof-DEF |
|      | (b) | եկեղեցիի մը<br><i>eketec'i-i-mə</i><br>church-GEN-IND<br>'a church's roof' | տանիք*(ը)<br><i>tanik'-(*)ə</i><br>roof-DEF |

(Sigler 1996, 113)

- |      |                                  |             |                |                         |
|------|----------------------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| (44) | օթոներէն                         | երեք        | հատ(*ը)        | զողցվեցան               |
|      | <i>ōt'o-ner-ēn</i>               | <i>erek</i> | <i>hat-(ə)</i> | <i>gof-ts-ve-ts-an</i>  |
|      | car-PL-ABL-DEF                   | three       | CL-DEF         | steal-CAUS-PASS-AOR-3PL |
|      | 'three of the cars were stolen'. |             |                |                         |

(Sigler 1996, 114)

However, this is in fact better described as a syntactic phenomenon, whereby the definite article is used when the nominal syntagm is modified by particular categories of elements typically associated with definiteness or specificity, such as a genitive or definite noun, a demonstrative, or certain types of quantifier (see DeLisi 2008, 49), rather than being defined by the semantic property of specificity in itself.

This can be understood from the fact that specific indefinites which do not appear in such constructions do not receive the definite article. In Eastern Armenian, there is a grammatical phenomenon that is sensitive to the semantic property of specificity, namely differential object marking. Animate direct objects receive dative case marking if they are definite (45a), but also if they are specific indefinite (45c), while non-specific indefinites are not marked in this way (45b):

- |      |     |  |                               |   |
|------|-----|--|-------------------------------|---|
| (45) | (a) | Ոստիկանին<br><i>Ostikan-i-n</i><br>policeman-DAT-DEF<br>'I am looking for the policeman'.                      | եմ<br><i>em</i><br>be.1SG.PRS | փնտրում.<br><i>p'ntrum</i><br>look.for-1PT  |
|      | (b) | Ոստիկան<br><i>Ostikan</i><br>policeman<br>բայց<br><i>bayc'</i><br>but<br>չեմ<br><i>č'-em</i><br>NEG-be.1SG.PRS | եմ<br><i>em</i><br>be.1SG.PRS | փնտրում<br><i>p'ntrum</i><br>look.for-1PT<br>կարող<br><i>karot</i><br>able<br>գտնել:<br><i>gtnel.</i><br>find.1FT |
|      |     | 'I am looking for a policeman, but I can't find one'.  |                               |   |
|      | (c) | Մի ոստիկանի(*ն)<br><i>Mi ostikan-i(*-n)</i><br>one policeman-DAT(*-DEF)  | եմ<br><i>em</i><br>be.1SG.PRS | փնտրում<br><i>p'ntrum</i><br>look.for-1PT   |



որի	անունը	Պողոս	է:
<i>or-i</i>	<i>anun-ə</i>	<i>Potos</i>	<i>ē:</i>
which-GEN	name-DEF	Poghos	be.3SG.PRS

'I am looking for a policeman whose name is Poghos'.

As seen in (45c), this does not coincide with the distribution of the definite article. Thus the latter cannot be straightforwardly described as a marker of specificity, as proposed by Sigler (1996).

### 5.3.3 Definite Article, Nominalisation, and Core Argument Status

Asatryan (2004, 96) states that the definite article may be used simply as a marker of nominalisation, converting non-nominal parts of speech to nominal use. In this role, it is not necessarily associated with definiteness, as seen in the following example (46), where the nominalised adjective *nor-ə* 'a new one' has a (non-specific) indefinite interpretation:

(46) Եթե	մտադրվել	ես	մեքենա	գնել,
<i>Et'e</i>	<i>mtadrvel</i>	<i>es</i>	<i>mek'ena</i>	<i>gnel,</i>
if	decide.PPT	be.2SG.PRS	car	buy.INF
ավելի	լավ	կլինի	<b>նորը</b>	գնել:
<i>aveli</i>	<i>lav</i>	<i>klini</i>	<b><i>nor-ə</i></b>	<i>gnel.</i>
more	good	FUT.be.3SG	new.DEF	buy.INF

'If you have decided to buy a car, it will be better to buy a new one'.

If Greenberg's (1978) grammaticalization pathway is considered to be universal, it appears that we have a violation here, as the definite article is used as a noun marker (stage VI) but not as a marker of specificity (stage III). However, it appears that what we are dealing with could be more accurately described as a marker of argument status, rather than simply of nominalisation. Thus it could be said to represent stage III on a different grammaticalization pathway, that proposed by Doron and Khan (2015). One possible piece of evidence for this comes from restrictions on the occurrence of the definite article with certain cases. There are two main restrictions, both of which apply in SEA. One of these concerns genitive case: the definite article may not appear on nouns in genitive case (used for nouns that modify another noun, i.e. entities conceived of in relation to another entity; the relationship can be of various kinds, including possession, origin, material, part, also subject of nominalised verb forms and object of true nouns derived from verbs), as opposed to the oth-

erwise identical dative case, which is mainly used for arguments of the clause (direct and indirect objects, also some adverbials, mainly denoting endpoint or resting place). The restriction (47a) is found in Ararat (inc. SEA), Mush, Van and Khoy dialects, not Karabagh, Agulis, or mainstream WA (47b):

- |      |     |   |  |
|------|-----|---|--|
| (47) | (a) | քաղաքի(*ն)<br><i>k'atak'-i(*-n)</i><br>town-GEN                           | կենտրոնը<br><i>kentron-ə</i><br>centre-DEF |
|      | (b) | քաղաքին<br><i>k'atak'-i-n</i><br>town-GEN-DEF<br>'the centre of the town' | կենտրոնը<br><i>kentron-ə</i><br>centre-DEF |

The other restriction concerns ablative, instrumental and locative cases, which are typically associated with adverbial elements rather than core arguments of the clause. The definite article is not used with these cases in SEA:

- |      |     |  |
|------|-----|--|
| (48) | (a) | քաղաքից(*ը)<br><i>k'atak'-ic'(*-ə)</i><br>town-ABL(*-DEF)<br>'from the town' |
|      | (b) | քաղաքով(*ը)<br><i>k'atak'-ov(*-ə)</i><br>town-INS(*-DEF)<br>'by the town'    |
|      | (c) | քաղաքում(*ը)<br><i>k'atak'-um(*-ə)</i><br>town-LOC(*-DEF)<br>'in the town'   |

Thus in SEA, the definite article is restricted to use with nouns in nominative and dative case, i.e. the cases that are associated with core arguments of the clause (there is no separate accusative case in modern Armenian, except on some WA pronouns). Note, however, that the link between this phenomenon in SEA and core argument status is not direct, as the restriction is completely grammaticalised, so that the objects of verbs that take ablative or instrumental objects do not take the definite article, even though they may be considered core arguments:

- |      |                            |                |            |            |                     |
|------|----------------------------|----------------|------------|------------|---------------------|
| (49) | Ես                         | հիանում        | եմ         | այս        | մարդով(*-ը):        |
|      | <i>Es</i>                  | <i>hianum</i>  | <i>em</i>  | <i>ays</i> | <i>mard-ov(*-ə)</i> |
|      | 1SG.NOM                    | admire.IPF     | be.1SG.PRS | DEM1       | man-INS(*-DEF)      |
|      | 'I admire this man'.       |                |            |            |                     |
|      |                            |                |            |            |                     |
| (50) | Ես                         | վախենում       | եմ         | այս        | մարդուց(*-ը):       |
|      | <i>Es</i>                  | <i>vaxenum</i> | <i>em</i>  | <i>ays</i> | <i>mard-uc(*-ə)</i> |
|      | 1SG.NOM                    | be.afraid.IPT  | be.1SG.PRS | DEM1       | man-ABL(*-DEF)      |
|      | 'I am afraid of this man'. |                |            |            |                     |

However, there is further evidence that also suggests a link between the definite article and core argument status. This involves certain essentially adverbial elements that take nominative (i.e. zero) case but do not receive the definite article even if semantically definite, notably elements denoting destination (51a) and location (51b):

- |      |     |  |                |               |                |                |
|------|-----|--|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| (51) | (a) | Վարդանը                                    | գնում          | է             | Երևան/         | խանութ:        |
|      |     | <i>Vardan-ə</i>                            | <i>gnum</i>    | <i>ē</i>      | <i>Erewan/</i> | <i>xanut'.</i> |
|      |     | Vardan-DEF                                 | go.IPT         | be.3SG.PRS    | Erevan         | shop           |
|      |     | 'Vardan is going to Erevan / to the shop'. |                |               |                |                |
|      | (b) | Վարդանը                                    | Երևան/         | խանութ        | է:             |                |
|      |     | <i>Vardan-ə</i>                            | <i>Erewan/</i> | <i>xanut'</i> | <i>ē.</i>      |                |
|      |     | Vardan-DEF                                 | Erevan         | shop          | be.3SG.PRS     |                |
|      |     | 'Vardan is in Erevan / at the shop'.       |                |               |                |                |

The definite article is also, as expected, not used with nouns in existential predications formed with the existential verb 'to be' (see Apresjan, Polinsky 1996, 25):

- |      |                              |                 |               |
|------|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| (52) | սենյակում                    | շուն(*-ը)       | կա            |
|      | <i>senyak-um</i>             | <i>šun(*-ə)</i> | <i>ka</i>     |
|      | room-LOC                     | dog(*-DEF)      | exist.3SG.PRS |
|      | 'in the room there is a dog' |                 |               |

Thus it can be seen that the article is particularly associated with subject and object roles. Apresjan and Polinsky (1996, 25) state that it is obligatory even with indefinites when these are what they describe as 'topical' subjects (53) or indirect objects (54):

- |      |  |  |                            |  |
|------|--|--|----------------------------|--|
| (53) | մարդը<br><i>mard-ə</i><br>man-DEF<br>'a man/the man came'. | եկավ<br><i>ekav</i><br>come.3SG.AOR      |                            |  |
| (54) | ես<br><i>Es</i><br>1SG.NOM                                 | կատվին<br><i>katv-i-n</i><br>cat-DAT-DEF | կաթ<br><i>kat'</i><br>milk | սվեցի<br><i>tvec'i</i><br>give.1SG.AOR |
- 'I gave milk to the/a cat'.

(Apresjan, Polinsky 1996, 24)

Donabédian-Demopoulos (2010) interprets this type of data in terms of semantics rather than the pragmatic property of topicality alone, stating that when bare nouns do appear in subject or object position, their main function is to modify or complete the meaning of the verb, similar to the role of an adjective with regard to a noun. Similarly, Kalomoiros (2021) states that bare nouns in Armenian denote kind-level, not object-level properties, thus the definite article can function to convert an element denoting kind-level properties to one denoting object-level properties, which can fulfil the role of a true argument of a verb rather than an adverb-like modifier.

## 6 Conclusion

The classical Armenian definite article system is typologically unusual, showing a suffixal article with a three-way deictic distinction. Such a system is unique within ancient Indo-European languages, but shows parallels with that proposed for prehistoric Kartvelian, implying that language contact could have played a role in its development. In modern Armenian, the definite article has lost its deictic distinctions, but continues to function as a marker of definiteness as defined by Lyons (1999). However, there are some instances of its usage which cannot be associated with definiteness, implying that it is being grammaticalised further. It has been proposed that it is more appropriately described as a marker of specificity (Sigler 1996). However, comparison with the distribution of EA differential object marking, which is sensitive to semantic specificity, shows that this is not the case, as the article is not used with specific indefinites in general, but in fact its usage appears to have been grammaticalised when the noun is associated with particular categories of modifiers. It has also been described as a marker of nominalisation (Asatryan 2004), which, if it is not a marker of specificity, would mean that it has skipped a stage on Greenberg's (1978) grammaticalization pathway. However, a closer look at the data, notably its association with case-

marking patterns, reveals a possible link with core argument status, suggesting that it may be following a different grammaticalization pathway, that cited in Doron and Khan (2015), in which stage 3 corresponds to ‘marker of argument status’, rather than ‘specific article’.

## Abbreviations

ABL	ablative
AOR	aorist
ART	article
ART1	1st person/proximal article
ART2	2nd person/medial article
ART3	3rd person/distal article
CAUS	causative
CL	classifier
DAT	dative
DEF	definite
DEM1	proximal demonstrative
DEM2	medial demonstrative
DEM3	distal demonstrative
DIST	distal
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
IMP	imperative
IND	indefinite
INF	infinitive
INS	instrumental
IPT	imperfective participle
LOC	locative
MED	medial
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative
PASS	passive
PL	plural
PPT	past participle
PROX	proximal
PRS	present
PST	past
RPT	resultative participle
SG	singular
SPT	subject participle

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# The Forms of the Indefinite Article in Eastern Armenian Pre-Modern, Early and Colloquial Eastern Armenian Sources

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**Abstract** This paper studies the formal distinction of the indefinite article from the quantifier ‘one’ in Early and pre-Modern Armenian texts by three 18-19th century authors as well as in a colloquial Modern Eastern Armenian dialogue. The key question is whether these sources use the same forms for both functions. The paper gives typological, diachronic, and areal perspectives to the analysis of non-standard data rarely included in discussions of the historical grammar of Armenian. It also touches upon some general issues of grammaticalization of the forms of ‘one’ as an indefinite article and the use of numeral classifiers in colloquial Eastern Armenian.

**Keywords** Indefinite article. Numeral ‘one’. Eastern Armenian. Historical grammar. Pre-modern Armenian. Colloquial Eastern Armenian. Abovyan. Gilanentz. Erewantsi.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 Indefinite Articles in the World’s Languages. – 3 The Indefinite Article in Armenian: Early and Pre-Modern Eastern Armenian Data from a Diachronic Perspective. – 4 Conclusions and Future Prospects.



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## 1 Introduction

While there are a few studies on the indefinite article or at least mentions of it in grammars of the standard varieties of Armenian (Classical, Eastern and Western), its use in modern and historical non-standard varieties has hitherto never been touched upon. Non-standard varieties often show a different linguistic picture than standard varieties and, thus, their study may contribute to a fuller understanding of the diachronic processes of grammaticalization paths of certain grammatical units and language change in general. The choice of non-standard texts of Armenian from a period that is linguistically understudied, namely post-Classical and pre-Modern (roughly 12th-19th cc.), aims to contribute to filling this knowledge gap.

The paper is organised as follows. The next paragraph will include a brief introduction to the relevant terminology and a typological perspective on the formal distinction between the indefinite article and the numeral ‘one’ based on evidence from other languages.

Paragraph 3 discusses the data from three 18th-19th-centuries Armenian texts (Abovyan, Erewantsi, Gilanents) and compares it with a colloquial Modern Eastern Armenian dialogue. A summary of the main results is given in section 4. A list of abbreviations not included in “Leipzig Glossing Rules”<sup>1</sup> in section 5 and a list of references in section 6 conclude the paper.

## 2 Indefinite Articles in the World’s Languages

To put the notion of ‘indefinite article’ into a wider perspective, it is worth giving definitions of the terms ‘reference’, ‘definiteness’, ‘indefiniteness’, and ‘specificity’.

Reference in linguistics can be described semantically or pragmatically. *Semantic reference* (something *expressions* do) can be ascribed to morphemes, phrases, and even whole sentences. *Pragmatic reference* is what *speakers* do, and in this understanding, only noun phrases<sup>2</sup> can bear reference (Gundel, Abbott 2019, 2). Reference in the latter sense (i.e. as a speech act) is the speaker’s ability to draw on discourse participants (humans, objects, notions) that have either already been mentioned in the given discourse or are general knowledge and are as such present in the discourse universe (Germ. *Re-deuniversum*). By referring to speech units, the speaker can assume that the hearer knows the referent that is invoked, in which case the

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1 See <https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>.

2 Nominal phrases, NPs, or determiner phrases, DPS, according to different linguistic approaches.

referent is at least pragmatically *definite*. The referent is on the contrary at least pragmatically *indefinite* if the speaker assumes that the referent is new to the hearer.

NPs with an indefinite status can still be of different types. Indefinite discourse units that the speaker can refer to are often divided into *specific* and *nonspecific* ones. Although specificity is not the focus of the present research, definitions of specific and nonspecific indefinite articles will also be given.

In the present paper, these two terms are used in the following sense, mostly relying on Heine 1997 (see also below): *specific* referents apply to those discourse participants that are identifiable for the speaker, but not for the hearer. *Nonspecific* referents still imply individual representatives or instances of a concept (humans, objects, notions), but neither the speaker nor the hearer know them, nor is it relevant for the given discourse if they do. A further distinction can be made between nonspecific and *generic* referents, the difference being that the latter type applies a concept and not individual representatives or instances thereof. Consider the following examples:

- (1) German (a), English (b)
  - a. ***Eine Frau***, die ich nicht kannte, war gestern hier. Sie war Ingenieurin.
  - b. **A woman**, whom I did not know, was here yesterday. She was an engineer.
  
- (2) German (a), English (b)
  - a. ***Eine Frau*** war gestern hier und kein Mann.
  - b. **A woman** was here yesterday, not a man.
  
- (3) German (a), English (b)
  - a. ***Eine Frau*** war gestern hier. Hat meine Nachbarin gesagt.
  - b. **A woman** was here yesterday, said my neighbour.

In each of the examples, the sentences a. (German) and b. (English) have the same meaning and represent the same type of indefinite NPs (in italics) that are, with the exception of the second indefinite NP in (1a), marked with the indefinite article 'eine' in German and 'a(n)' in English.

In example (1) the NPs Germ. '*eine Frau*' and Eng. '*a woman*' refer to a certain, identifiable woman, as becomes evident from the subsequent context. We can say the NPs in question in (1) are *specific*. Another type of specificity are the examples in (2): '*eine Frau*' and '*a woman*' still refer to an identifiable woman, but as opposed to the examples in (1), her identity does not matter and is only incidental for the given context (cf. Givón 1981, 36-7). The NPs in question in (3) also refer to an identifiable woman; however, neither the speaker nor the hearer know her, only a third person (the 'neighbour') who conveyed the information at the given context to the speaker. This type can be called *cited specificity*.

Compare further the following examples:

- (4) German (a), English (b)  
a. Ich lese gerade **ein Buch**. Es geht darin um die Komponistinnen des 19. Jh.  
b. I am reading **a book**. It talks about 19th century composers.
- (5) German (a), English (b)  
a. Jeden Abend liest sie **ein Buch**. Am liebsten liest sie Krimis und Reiseberichte.  
b. She reads **a book** every evening. She likes crime thrillers and travel reports the most.
- (6) German (a), English (b)  
a. **Ein Buch** muss die Axt sein für das gefrorene Meer in uns. (Kafka)  
b. **A book** must be the axe for the frozen sea within us. (Kafka)

The indefinite NPs in (4) refer to a certain identifiable book, so that ‘*ein Buch*’ and ‘*a book*’ are specific again. One interpretation of the indefinite NPs in (5a) and (5b) can be that they are *nonspecific*, since they refer to not just one but several representatives of the category of books. Another possible interpretation would be that the indefinite NPs in (5) are nonspecific and *generic*, or just generic since they might also refer to the category itself. However, ‘*a book*’ in the examples in (6) can only refer to the whole category of books, not to identifiable representatives of it, which makes the indefinite articles ‘*a*’ and ‘*ein*’ in (6) nonspecific and *generic*, or just generic. If both (5) and (6) are interpreted as nonspecific, then (5) can be seen as less nonspecific than (6). In fact, in some contexts it is hard to decide whether a specific, nonspecific, or generic use of the indefinite article is employed, and it might be handier to think about specificity as a continuum.

The terms ‘definite’ and ‘indefinite’, as well as ‘specific’, ‘nonspecific’, and ‘generic’, can either be understood as only concerning “the informational status of the referents of the nominals” (Khan 2001, 85) or as grammaticalized categories. Pragmatically definite or indefinite NPs do not have to be marked as such formally, morphologically, or otherwise. This is true both cross-linguistically and regarding different kinds of (in)definiteness within individual languages. Thus, some languages express (certain) definite or indefinite meanings formally, others do not. For instance, while English and German differ only in marking a nominal predicate referring to a category as in ‘*Ingenieurin*’ vs ‘*an engineer*’ in example (1), other languages might mark the other types of specific indefinite NPs in (1)-(3) differently, or even further types not discussed here. The same might apply to examples (5) and (6).

Strategies of expressing definiteness and indefiniteness can be grammaticalized to different degrees in different languages (see below). Under the term ‘indefinite article’, Heine includes:

independent words, particles, clitics or affixes; they may be segmental or suprasegmental; and they may precede or follow the noun they determine. (Heine 1997, 67)

Heine (1997, 72-6) and Heine, Kuteva (2006, 104-5) propose five stages of grammaticalization of the indefinite article starting from the numeral for 'one'. Languages at the first stage lack indefinite articles and the numeral for 'one' is used only as a quantifier. The second stage is called the "presentative marker stage" (Heine, Kuteva 2006, 104), a stage at which the speaker introduces to the hearer or into the discourse new discourse participants that are going to be "taken up as definite in subsequent discourse" (Heine 1997, 72). At stage 3, the numeral for 'one' functions as a *specific marker*, with its use being extended to any participant in discourse whom the speaker assumes to be unknown to the hearer, whose identity matters and who is not incidental to the given discourse. At stage 4, the *nonspecific marker* introduces even discourse participants whose identity is known neither to the speaker nor to the hearer.<sup>3</sup> At stage 5, the use of the *generalised article* implies that it "is expected to occur on all types of nouns", even nouns in the plural (Heine, Kuteva 2006, 105).

The *World Atlas of Language Structures Online* (WALS; Dryer 2013) lists 214 languages that have indefinite articles (out of a total of 534),<sup>4</sup> among them 102 (first type) that are said to have an indefinite article which is different from the numeral for 'one' (regardless of etymology). In 112 languages (second type), the numeral for 'one' is used as an indefinite article. Languages are treated as having only one form for both the quantifier 'one' and the indefinite article if the difference between these two functions is only stress (like e.g. German) or if the indefinite article has a different syntactic position in the noun phrase (like e.g. Turkish or Classical Armenian).<sup>5</sup> Some other languages use a morphophonologically reduced form of 'one' as an indefinite article

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**3** The use of an indefinite article is obligatory in Street Hebrew if the discourse participant remains "salient", as opposed to cases where "pragmatically" their "exact identity is incidental to the communication" (Givón 1981, 36-7; italics in original). Street Hebrew would, therefore, be at stage 3, and any language that uses indefinite articles also for discourse participants whose identity is incidental to the communication, would be at stage 4.

**4** Among the remaining 320 languages, 24 have an indefinite affix on nouns, 98 have no indefinite article but a definite article, and 198 languages have neither; see Dryer 2013.

**5** Some of the languages included in WALS are treated there as using the numeral 'one' also as an indefinite article although the grammatical descriptions of these languages lack such information. The authors of the Atlas have included these languages in the second type (i.e. languages that use 'one' for both functions), if at least in some contexts described in the grammars of these languages English would use an indefinite article and not the numeral 'one'. Especially salient is the use of 'one' as an indefinite article in languages that allow a marker of indefiniteness in plural noun phrases (Dryer 2013).

(such as Dutch); these are treated in the WALS map as having two distinct forms for the indefinite article and the numeral for ‘one’.<sup>6</sup>

### 3 The Indefinite Article in Armenian: Early and Pre-Modern Eastern Armenian Data from a Diachronic Perspective

The starting point of this research was the unexpectedly high number of occurrences of *mēk* մէկ ‘one’ in Abovyan (see below) also functioning as an indefinite article. Example (7) is an instance of such a use.

(7) Abovyan

Էս մէկ աղաթ էր. աչքը բաց էր արել, էնպէս էր տեսել

ēs        **mēk** **adat**‘ ēr;                    ač’k’-ə                    bac’ ēr  
DEM1\* a    habit COP.3SG.PST    eye.ACC-POSS3\*\*    open AUX.3SG.PST

\* DEM1: Demonstrative pronoun, proximal; DEM3: demonstrative pronoun, distal.

\*\* Possessive pronoun, third person singular.

ar-el,        ēnpēs        ēr                    tes-el  
do-PRF    so.DIST        AUX.3SG.PST        see-PRF

‘This was **a habit**; he had seen it so since he was born, that [...]’.

(Abovyan 1-1: 53 - Abovean 1858, 17)

This use is unexpected because of what we know about the forms of the indefinite article in Eastern Armenian (see below). From here, the following questions arise: where does the use of *mēk* մէկ as an indefinite article in Abovyan come from? What possible implications does this have for the use of indefinite articles in Armenian from a diachronic perspective?

To start with, all the forms of the indefinite article in Armenian go back to one or another derivation of the numeral for ‘one’, something that is most of the times (if not always) the case also in other languages of the world. The three standard varieties of Armenian, Classical, Eastern and Western,<sup>7</sup> are said to make a formal distinction between the quantifier ‘one’ and the indefinite article, be it via its position in the noun phrase or (additionally) via the form of ‘one’.

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<sup>6</sup> See Heine, Kuteva (2002, 220-1) for further examples from the world’s languages where the numeral for ‘one’ functions as an indefinite article.

<sup>7</sup> Due to the scarcity of evidence and lack of study on Middle Armenian (also called Cilician Armenian), as well as the lack of consensus as to whether there was a standardised variety of it, Middle Armenian will not be included in the present analysis.

However, at least for Eastern Armenian, this seems to be only true for its standard variety (see below). According to previous research, the following variants of the numeral ‘one’ are employed in the function of an indefinite article in the standard varieties of Armenian.

In Classical Armenian, *mi ūh* as a quantifier is preposed to its head and as an indefinite article is postposed to it and unstressed.<sup>8</sup> According to Müth (2014, 16) the use of *mi ūh* in Classical Armenian is restricted to only singular NPs.<sup>9</sup>

Standard Western Armenian possibly continues the grammaticalization path of Classical Armenian. More specifically, it retains a postposed albeit phonetically reduced form of *mi ūh* as an indefinite article, namely *mə ūp*, as opposed to the numeral for ‘one’ which has the form *mēk ūtł*.<sup>10</sup> The latter can be traced back to *miak ūhul* ‘only, sole’, where *-ak -ul* is a diminutive suffix. As distinct from standard Eastern and Classical Armenian, the indefinite article *mə ūp* in Western Armenian can also determine noun phrases in the plural (cf. Feydit 1948, 274). Together with the reduced form of *mi ūh* (i.e. *mə ūp*) appearing as an indefinite article, this might indicate that Western Armenian is in a more advanced stage of grammaticalization compared to standard Eastern and Classical Armenian. Unfortunately, Western Armenian must remain beyond the scope of the present paper and can only be dealt with on another occasion.

WALS classifies Eastern Armenian (along with Western Armenian) as a language that distinguishes between the numeral for ‘one’ and the indefinite article without mentioning the source of this information (Dryer 2013). The forms of the numeral for ‘one’ and the indefinite article are *mek ūtł*<sup>11</sup> and *mi ūh* respectively in Eastern Armenian. Some grammars of Armenian, like e.g. Petrosyan (1987) and Movsessian (cf. 1959, 255 ff.), lack any mention of the ‘indefinite article’ as a grammatical category in Eastern Armenian. Malxaseanc’ (1944, 3: 314, 319) ascribes both meanings to both forms.

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**8** Cf. Künzle 1984, 2: 464 ff.; Meillet 1936, 22; Müth 2014, 17; Minassian (1976, 51) contains two contradictory statements: on the one hand that Ancient (= Classical) Armenian does not have indefinite articles, and on the other hand that the numeral for ‘one’, *mi ūh*, when postposed, can function as an indefinite article or an adjective.

**9** According to Künzle (1984, 2: 472), *min ūh* ‘the one, one of’ (*mi-n* ‘one’ + def. art.) is used only in opposition to *miws-n ūhlu-ū* ‘the other’.

**10** Cf. Movsessian 1959, 38; Feydit 1948, 48, 65, 274; Gulian 1902, 4-5.

**11** *Mēk ūtł* and *mek ūtł* are merely orthographic variants, the latter being written in modern orthography introduced in Soviet Armenia in the 1940s.

**Table 1** The numeral for ‘one’ and the indefinite article in the standard varieties of Armenian

	‘one’	indef.art.
Classical Armenian	<i>mi</i>	<i>mi</i> POSTP
Modern Eastern Armenian	<i>mēk</i> / <i>mek</i>	<i>mi</i>
Modern Western Armenian	<i>mēk</i>	<i>mə</i> POSTP

According to Mūth (2014, 19), *mēk* մէկ functions as the quantifier ‘one’ and *mi* մի as an indefinite article in the Modern Eastern Armenian written standard. The same author (2014, 16 ff.) also argues that the distinctive features of the indefinite article, namely its position within the noun phrase and its accentuation, are not consistent in Classical Armenian. She assumes that the preposing of the indefinite article has led to the introduction of a new form of ‘one’ (spelt as *mēk* մէկ or *mek* մէկ, see footnote 11 for the orthographic difference) as a numeral in Eastern Armenian. On the other hand, the postposed and, at least supposedly, unstressed indefinite article մի *mi* of Classical Armenian has developed into *mə* մը in Western Armenian.

However, a closer look at the use of the indefinite article vs the quantifier ‘one’ in a sample corpus search shows that the differences are not as clear-cut in Eastern Armenian. This has also been pointed out by Dum-Tragut (2009, 105-8), who provides a more detailed account of the use of the indefinite article in Eastern Armenian. According to her, *mi* մի is used for both functions and *mek* մէկ is only used as a quantifier ‘one’ and is in general very rare in the colloquial language.

As several authors have pointed out (Breu 1994, 53; Heine, Kuteva 2006, 108), involving non-standard varieties into the research may reveal a picture of the use of the articles that is different from that of the standard varieties. The present study will, therefore, also look at three forms of the numeral for ‘one’ that appear in three Eastern Armenian texts from the 18th and 19th centuries as well as in a Modern Eastern Armenian text from the EANC, namely, *mi* մի, *mēk* մէկ, *min* մին,<sup>12</sup> as well as *mi hat* մի հատ lit. ‘one piece’ for Modern Eastern Armenian.

Table 2 shows the distribution of the quantifier ‘one’ and the indefinite article in a sample oral text in colloquial Eastern Armenian (8,844 tokens) [table 2]. The chosen text is a dialogue, rich in new stories (and thus in new discourse participants) that the dialogue collocutors exchange and introduce all the time.

<sup>12</sup> *Min* մին is a form of *mi* մի extended by the definite article -n -ն; see also footnote 9.



**Table 2** *Mi, mek* in a colloquial EANC text (polylogue 076, 2006)

	<i>mi</i>			
	<i>mi hat</i>		remainder	
total number	54		92	
'one'	2	ca. 4%	20	ca. 22%
<b>indef. art.</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>ca. 48%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>ca. 12%</b>
other uses*	26	ca. 48%	61	ca. 66%

\* These include *mi* մի functioning as an adverb 'circa, like, etc.', *mi erku* մի երկու 'several', *mi hat* մի հաս as a particle (cf. Ger. *mal*), or adverbials like *mi k'ič'* մի քիչ 'a little, some', *mi k'ani* մի քանի 'a few, some', *mi tesak* մի տեսակ 'kind of', *mi kerp* մի կերպ 'somehow', *mi hat* (ēl) մի հաս (էլ) 'once (again)'.

It is important to bear in mind that the numbers in the table indicate only tendencies since the assignment of the exact function of the given forms of 'one' remains a matter of interpretation. The following remarks are based on my own reading of those functions.

Not represented in the table are 15 instances where *mek* մեկ is the first component of the adverbial *mek ēl* մեկ էլ 'then, suddenly, also, etc.'

As the table shows, indefinite articles are mostly expressed by means of *mi hat* մի հաս, with 26 instances of which only two might be interpreted as nonspecific. Three or four instances of *mi* մի might as well be interpreted as nonspecific. (8) is an example of a specific use of *mi hat* մի հաս.

- (8) Colloquial Eastern Armenian (EANC)  
Մի հաս աղջիկ էր, երկար սև մազեր ուներ

**mi hat atjik** ēr, erkar sew maz-er une-r  
one grain girl COP.PST.3SG long Black hair-PL have-PST.3SG  
'It was **a girl**, (she) had long black hair'. (EANC, polylogue 76, 2006)

According to the table, 20 cases of the quantifier 'one' are expressed by means of *mi* մի; however, this number needs some explanation. For one, *mi* մի appears with mensural numeral classifiers<sup>13</sup> like, e.g. *mi bažak ĵur* մի բաժակ ջուր 'a glass of water'. The only few instances in which *mi* մի appears as a bare numeral are those with nouns denoting time (*mi tari* մի տարի 'one year', *mi rope* մի րոպե 'one minute', *mi šabat'* մի շաբաթ 'one week' etc.) or measurement (*mi metr*

**13** *Mensural* numeral classifiers are those that occur with nouns of low countability, like 'water', 'sand', 'ink'. By contrast, *sortal* numeral classifiers are those that are used with nouns of high countability, such as 'child', 'book', 'cat' (cf. Gil 2013).

մի մետր ‘one meter’, *mi santimetr* մի սանտիմետր ‘one centimeter’, *mi tak (ktor)* մի տակ (կտոր) ‘one fold (of fabric)’, etc.).

Another type is cases where *mi* մի appears with a negated verb, as in example (9):

- (9) Colloquial Eastern Armenian (EANC)

մի տեղ մի բան չկա իրա մասին

**mi**      **teġ**    mi      ban    č'-ka      ira      masin  
even\_one place even\_one thing NEG-exist.3SG REFL.3SG.GEN\* POSTP.about\*\*  
‘There is *nothing* about him **anywhere**’. (EANC, polylogue 76, 2006)

\* REFL: reflexive pronoun.

\*\* POSTP: postposition.

A further 15 instances of մի *mi* include nouns denoting time, thus forming temporal adverbials in which they do not function as numerals, like *mi օր* մի օր ‘one/some day’, *mi pah* մի պահ ‘(for) a moment’, *mi angam* մի անգամ ‘once (upon a time); the other day’. The meaning of *mi* մի in these phrases is not transparent and it is hard to decide whether it has the function of an indefinite article there.

The following conclusions can be drawn from these observations.

1. In the spoken standard of Modern Eastern Armenian, *mi* մի as a quantifier is usually accompanied by numeral classifiers, including mensural ones like ‘glass’ (of water), ‘fold’ (of fabric), etc., or the sortal numeral classifier *hat* հատ ‘grain’ that has been grammaticalized as a universal numeral classifier. Modern East Armenian also makes use of *mi hat* մի հատ (lit. ‘one grain’) as an indefinite article in addition to *mi* մի (cf. Stilo 2018; see below).

In general, the spoken standard of Modern Eastern Armenian does not seem to use bare numerals and *mi* մի seems to be used rather as a bound form. However, more research regarding these two issues is needed.

2. Further, the spoken standard of Modern Eastern Armenian does not seem to make much use of *mēk/mek* մէկ/մեկ, neither as a numeral ‘one’ nor as an indefinite article (there are no instances of *mēk* մէկ in these functions in the colloquial text, as mentioned above).

In this light, the functions of *mēk* մէկ as both an indefinite article and the numeral ‘one’ in Abovyan’s *Wounds of Armenia* come all the more as a surprise. In addition to Abovyan, two other primary sources written in spoken varieties that are closer to the Modern Eastern (rather than Western) Armenian standard from the 18th century were analysed in an attempt to shed more light on the forms of the indefi-

nite article in Eastern Armenian dialects before its standardisation in the 19th century.

Here is a short description of the three Early and pre-Modern Armenian texts from the 18th and the 19th century that are used for my analysis and their authors:

**A:**<sup>14</sup> Khachatur Abovyan's historical novel *Wounds of Armenia* (Abovean 1858), colloquially known as *Vērḳ'* ՎԷՐԿ, is considered to be the first written record of Modern Eastern Armenian. At first glance, its language seems to be much closer to today's spoken standard than to the written one. Abovyan (1809-1848) himself was a native of what is now a suburb of Erevan (*K'anak'eṙ*). He worked as a translator of Russian and Persian and learned German and French along with other languages during his later studies in Tartu (Dorpat), Estonia.

**E:**<sup>15</sup> Abraham Erewantsi's *History of the Wars* (Čemčemean 1977) is an account of the events in the South Caucasus and Iran at the beginning of the 18th century. Little is known about the author, only that, as his name indicates, he should have been a native of Erevan, too. His text is composed in a mixed language, Classical Armenian with Eastern Armenian influences.

**G:**<sup>16</sup> As its title states (*Chronicle by Petros di Sargis Gilanentz Written in the Dialect of Julfa*), this chronicle (Gilanēnc' 1863) is written in a variety that was spoken by Armenians in New Julfa (*Nor Ĵuḷa*), Iran, at the beginning of the 18th century. No further biographical details are known about the author of the *Chronicle* (except that he died in a battle in Rasht in 1724).

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**14** 88,821 tokens in total.

**15** 132,833 tokens in total.

**16** 14,080 tokens in total.

**Table 3** Distribution of *mi*, *mĕk* and *min* in A, E, G, sample search

	<i>mi</i>		<i>mĕk</i>		<i>min</i>	
<b>A analysed</b>	<b>54</b>		<b>199</b>		<b>5</b>	
‘one’	2	3,7%	71	ca. 35%	-	-
<b>indef. art.</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>c. 9,2%</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>c. 28%</b>	-	-
other	47	c. 87%	72	c. 36%	5	100%
<b>E analysed</b>	<b>54</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>97</b>	
‘one’	2	3,7%	2	20%	12	ca. 12 %
<b>indef. art.</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>c. 70%</b>
other	5	9,2%	6	40%	17	c. 18%
<b>G analysed</b>	<b>3</b>				<b>86</b>	
‘one’	2	c. 67%			33	c. 38%
<b>indef. art.</b>	-				<b>31</b>	<b>c. 36%</b>
other	1	c. 33%			22	c. 26%

Table 3 shows the functional distribution of the forms of the numeral ‘one’ in Abovyan, Erewantsi, and Gilanentz [table 3].<sup>17</sup> To exclude ambiguities as much as possible, NPS like *mĕk/min angam* մէկ/մին անգամ ‘once’, *mĕk/min օր* մէկ/մին օր ‘one day’, *mĕk/min k’ani* մէկ/մին բանի ‘some, several’, *mĕk/min pok’r* մէկ/մին փոքր ‘a little bit’, etc.<sup>18</sup> were excluded from the analysis, since the meaning of the forms of ‘one’ is not transparent in these phrases. However, the numbers given in table 3 are, again, to be understood rather as tendencies.

The key observation here is that all three texts have one main form for expressing both functions of interest. In Erewantsi, those passages that are closer to Classical Armenian in their language prefer the form *mi* մի while those that are written rather in the vernacular of the author tend to contain *min* մին for both functions, so that the difference in usage of these two forms is rather stylistic as examples (10) and (11) show.

(10) Erewantsi

գնաց եհաս Սալիայվայ կասեն, մին գեղ այ, որ նորա մէջի մարդն փախել էր ի մէջ Հայնայրան

gnac’ ehas Salhayvay k-ase-n, **min get** ay,  
go.AOR.3SG reach.AOR.3SG Salhayva HABIT-say-3PL a village COP.3SG

<sup>17</sup> Total numbers of *mi* մի: 142 in **A**, 129 in **E**, and 3 in **G**; of *mĕk* մէկ 1,189 in **A**, 10 in **E**, and 0 in **G**; of *min* մին 5 in **A**, 271 in **E**, and 86 in **G**.

<sup>18</sup> In Abovyan, most of the cases of մի *mi* can be identified as what Heine, Kuteva (2006) call ‘grammatical use patterns’, namely in phrases that have a high frequency of occurrence and are loosely established without being grammaticalized.

or nora mēj-i mard-n p'ax-el ēr Haymaydan  
that.REL DEM3.GEN inside-GEN people-DEF flee-PRF AUX.3SG.PST Hamadan  
'He reached what is called Salhayva, **a village** whose inhabitants had fled to Hamadan'.  
(Erewantsi 8: 136)

(11) Erewantsi

ի վերայ նոցա զիշխան մի, Ֆրավոտոն անուանեալ, զորավար  
կացուցանէր

i	veray	noc'a	<b>z-išxan</b>	<b>mi</b>	Fravōtōn
NL	on	PERS.3PL.GEN	NA-ruler.ACC	a	Fravoton
anuan-eal,	zōravar		kac'uc'anē-r		
name-PP	ruler		appoint-IPF.3SG		

'He appointed **a ruler** by the name of Fravoton upon them'. (Erewantsi 1: 151)

The indefinite articles identified in the three texts are mostly specific, with the exception of մէկ *mēk* in Abovyan: among the 56 instances of this element, 41 (!) nonspecific or generic meanings were identified. Cf. example (12) with examples (6a) and (6b) in Section 2:

(12) Abovyan

Մէկ ազգի պահողն էլ լեզուն ա ու հաւատը

<b>mēk</b>	<b>azg-i</b>	pah-oł-n	ēl	lezu-n	a
a	nation-GEN	keep-PTCP.SUBJ-DEF	and.CONTR	language-DEF	COP.3SG
u	hawat-ə				
and	religion-DEF				

'Language and religion are what keeps **a nation** alive'. (Abovyan Intro: 116 - Abovean 1858, 9)

A further crucial difference between the colloquial Eastern Armenian text discussed above and Abovyan is that the latter author provides only one instance of *mi hat* մի հատ (1-6 1.76) and one instance of *mēk hat* մէկ հատ (1-6 1.126), in both cases functioning as quantifier 'one'. On the other hand, what Abovyan and the colloquial text have in common is that in all cases *mi* մի occurs (probably, also as a bound form) with numeral classifiers as in example (13), that is, with nouns denoting time or measurement, and not as a bare numeral. Note that *mēk* մէկ still outnumbers *mi* մի in instances where the numeral 'one' is used with nouns denoting time or measurement.

(13) Abovyan

Սաքի որ շատ էլ մալ, դօվլաթ ունեցայ, աշխարհի տէր էլ դառայ, ho էլի պտի հողը մտնիմ: Իմն ա մի բուռը հողը, մէկ գագ կտատը

sak'i	or	šat	ēl	mal	dōvlat'	
if	SUB	much	even.ENCL	cattle.ACC	wealth.ACC	
unec'-ay	ašxark'-i	tēr	ēl	dař-ay,		
have-AOR.1SG	world-GEN	owner	even.ENCL	become-AOR.1SG		
hō	ēli	pti	hoť-ə	mtni-m.	im-n	
after_all	still	DEB	DEB	enter-1SG	POSS.1PL-DEF	
a	<b>mi</b>	<b>buřə</b>	<b>hoť-ə,</b>		mēk	
COP.3SG	one	handful	soil-DEF		one	
gaz	ktaw-ə.					
gaz	linen-DEF					

‘(Even if I had a lot of wealth and were at the peak of the world, I still have to die.) All I will take with me is **a handful of soil** and **a piece of linen**’. (Ch. 1, pt. 2, sentence nos 95-6; Abovyan 1858, 32)

The data of tables 2 and 3 can be summarised as follows:

1. neither the colloquial Eastern Armenian text nor texts A, E, or G show a clear formal distinction between the functions of a quantifier ‘one’ and an indefinite article. What follows from the colloquial Eastern Armenian text and Abovyan is that մի *mi* does not appear as a bare numeral but instead accompanies numeral classifiers as quantifiers or appears with nouns denoting time, measurement, etc. to form adverbials. The distinction between *mi* մի and *min* մին in Erewantsi is rather stylistic. The formal distinction between the two functions in the literary languages – with *mi* մի being an indefinite article and *mēk* մէկ a quantifier ‘one’ – might thus be an artificial one, created during the standardisation of Eastern Armenian in the 19th century. Further, a general difference between these forms consists in the fact that, in contrast to *mi* մի, only *mēk* մէկ and *min* մին (as well as *mi hat* մի հաս) can be used as non-bound forms, i.e. as indefinite pronouns.
2. The use of *mēk* մէկ as an indefinite article, especially as a nonspecific or generic one, in Abovyan seems very non-typical compared to both standard and colloquial Modern Eastern Armenian varieties on the one hand, and to Gilanentz and Erewantsi on the other. What triggered this peculiarity is a question for further research involving additional data from Early Eastern (and Western) Armenian texts. The influence of Western Armenian, Classical Armenian, or other languages of the time that the scholars standardising Armenian were

aware of, like German or French or contact languages of Armenian, might also play a role.

The WALS map of distribution of different types of languages in terms of the use (or absence) of indefinite articles suggests no “strong areal patterns”, but languages that do distinguish between a numeral ‘one’ and an indefinite article “are somewhat more common in Africa and Europe” (Dryer 2013). On the other hand, Heine and Kuteva consider language contact to be “a relevant factor in the evolution of articles in Europe” (Heine, Kuteva 2006, 109-10). This is true of several languages of Eastern Europe that “are on the way to acquiring articles in this way” (110). Especially evident is that articles are emerging only in those Slavic languages that have been in contact with strongly developed article systems (110, citing Putzu 2002, 250). Heine and Kuteva further observe that the evolution of the indefinite articles shows “a gradual geographic transition” in “the languages to the east of Romance and Germanic as well as to the north of Greek” (2006, 120).

Thus, it might prove worthwhile putting the grammaticalization of the indefinite article in Armenian, too, in the context of areal tendencies. For instance, Stilo (2018) discusses the use of a word for ‘grain → piece, unit’ as a (sortal) numeral classifier in a number of languages of the Araxes-Iran linguistic area,<sup>19</sup> in parts of which Armenian is also spoken. The same author (2018, 144) states that the word for ‘grain’ never appears with nouns denoting time and measurement, an observation that is confirmed by the data used in this paper.

A detailed comparison with the contact languages of Armenian is beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore, what follows is only a brief account of the most important contact languages.

Russian<sup>20</sup> and Georgian do not have articles and only rarely use the numeral for ‘one’ as an indefinite article; its use is, moreover, not obligatory in any context.<sup>21</sup> In Azerbaijani, the numeral ‘one’ *bi(r)* occurs as a marker of specificity (stage 3).<sup>22</sup> In Turkish, the numeral for ‘one’ *bir* has a different position in the noun phrase when functioning as an indefinite article (Dryer 2013). All these languages use the same form of the numeral ‘one’ as a quantifier and in the (rare) function of an indefinite article.

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**19** Persian, Vafsi, Tati, Talyshi and other Iranian languages; Armenian, Georgian, Azerbaijani of both Iran and Azerbaijan, Turkish, Neo-Aramaic, etc.

**20** According to Breu (1994, 53), in North Russian colloquial varieties, unlike standard Russian, definite articles are attested.

**21** In Georgian, *erti*, the cardinal numeral for ‘one’ can be employed as indefinite article, if “there is felt to be a need to underline the indefiniteness of a noun” (Hewitt 1995, 62).

**22** Personal communication with Murad Suleymanov.

Modern Persian has two different forms for expressing the indefinite article and the numeral ‘one’, which also occur in different positions within the noun phrase: the indefinite article *-ī* is enclitic, whereas the quantifier *ye(k)* ‘one’ is proposed to the head noun. The indefinite article *-ī* can further occur on nouns in plural.

Consequently, a formal distinction between the two functions in question seems indeed to be rare among the languages consulted in this paper, with the exception of Modern Persian (as well as Western Armenian). When it comes to the grammaticalization stage of the indefinite article in colloquial Eastern Armenian and in the first sources written in Eastern Armenian, this remains a matter for further study. Presumably, standard and colloquial Modern Eastern Armenian show differences here, too.

#### 4 Conclusions and Future Prospects

The study of the development of indefinite articles has been one of the desiderata in the study of the Armenian language even for the standard varieties and especially from a diachronic perspective. A look into three non-standard texts from the 18th and 19th centuries and a colloquial Eastern Armenian text showed that the study of indefinite articles in Armenian would profit from including non-standard sources, too.

The present paper tries to demonstrate that standard and colloquial Modern Eastern Armenian show significant differences when it comes to the forms of indefinite articles used. Early and pre-Modern Eastern Armenian sources show further differences in comparison to the spoken and standard Modern varieties. One important conclusion is that *mi ūh* does not seem to function as a bare numeral in colloquial Armenian and occurs mostly in NPs that also contain a numeral classifier (of which *hat huun* is the most grammaticalized instance) or function as adverbials together with nouns denoting time or measurement. Further, *mēk ūtq* is only used in the modern standard language and its use in Abovyan might be an influence from Western Armenian or other languages that the scholars standardising Eastern Armenian were aware of and used as an example in the standardisation process. Including additional Early Eastern as well as Western Armenian sources will contribute to future research.

Another general conclusion is that the formal distinction between the functions of a quantifier ‘one’ and an indefinite article in standard Modern Eastern Armenian might be an artificial one that was introduced during the standardisation of Eastern Armenian. This assumption stems from the analysis of a colloquial dialogue in Modern Eastern Armenian and three texts from the 18th and 19th centuries (Abovyan, Erewantsi and Gilanentz). Neither of these sources shows a clear-cut distinction of the two functions distributed between two forms of ‘one’.



The grammaticalization stage of the indefinite article in Modern Eastern Armenian and the syntactic environments in which one or the other form tends to be used in colloquial Armenian is a question for further study based on a larger and more heterogeneous corpus of Eastern Armenian, be it chronologically or register-wise. A corpus-based approach to the study of the indefinite articles in Classical and Western Armenian varieties may provide a more fine-grained picture of their use in all three standard (and colloquial) varieties of Armenian.

### List of Glossing Abbreviations<sup>23</sup>

CONTR	contrastive
DEB	debitive
DEM1	demonstrative pronoun, proximal
DEM2	demonstrative pronoun, medial
DEM3	demonstrative pronoun, distal
ENCL	enclitic
HABIT	habitual
IPF	imperfect
NA	nota accusativi
NL	nota locativi
PERS	personal pronoun
POSS3	possessive pronoun, third person
POSTP	postposition
PP	past participle
REFL	reflexive pronoun
REL	relative pronoun
SUB	subordinator
SUBJ	subjective (participle)

### Primary and web sources

- A** *Khachatur Abovyan* (Wounds of Armenia). Source: Digilib (Digital Library of Armenian Literature), available at <https://www.digilib.am>. Based on Abovean 1858.
- E** *Abraham Erewantsi* (History of the Wars). Source: Digilib (Digital Library of Armenian Literature), available at <https://www.digilib.am>. Based on Čemčemean 1977.

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**23** For abbreviations used in glossing and missing in the list, see <https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>.

- G**        *Petros Gilanentz* (Chronicle by Petros di Sargis Gilanentz Written in the Dialect of Julfa). Based on Gilanēnc' 1863.
- EANC**    *Eastern Armenian National Corpus*. <http://www.eanc.net/>.

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# Constructions clivées en arménien moderne

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**Abstract** As in French or English, cleft constructions in Modern Armenian are biclausal constructions with a matrix clause and a relative-like clause, with an identificational clause as a matrix clause headed by a copula (in present or past), while in the relative-like clause introduced by the main subordinator, the relativised argument is coindexed with the argument of the copula. Typologically, cleft constructions are considered typical of languages with rigid word order; however, they are common in Modern Armenian, a language with flexible word order. It is argued that the intensity of focalisation depends on the strategy used, with simple prosody marking associated with the lowest level of intensity, and preverbal position and clefts associated with intermediate and high-intensity focalisation respectively. The existence of cleft-like constructions in Classical Armenian and both Modern Armenian standards is argued to be evidence of diachronic continuity and a possible grammaticalization path from cleft constructions to the auxiliary movement focus strategy.

**Keywords** Armenian. Syntax. Cleft constructions. Focalisation. Grammaticalization.

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## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Les constructions clivées sont généralement considérées comme typologiquement caractéristiques des langues à ordre des mots rigide (Jespersen 1927 ; Lambrecht 2001). Pourtant, en arménien moderne (ci-après arménien sauf indication contraire), langue pro-drop à ordre flexible, elles sont bien représentées et assez courantes, tout comme dans d'autres langues typologiquement comparables de l'aire (cf. Kazenin 2002 ; Erschler 2012 ; Komen 2015 ; Forker 2021).

La stratégie de focalisation préverbale de l'arménien oriental a donné lieu à plusieurs travaux (cf. Comrie 1984 ; Tamrazian 1991 ; Megerdumian 2011 ; Kahnemuyipour, Megerdumian 2017 ; Semanova 2014a ; 2014b). En revanche, à notre connaissance, aucune recherche n'a été conduite sur les constructions clivées en arménien. Le marquage de la structure informationnelle en arménien occidental reste d'ailleurs un champ largement inexploré. Enfin, Dum-Tragut (2009, 625) considère que : « Le clivage en tant que type de dislocation à gauche n'est pas attesté »<sup>2</sup> en arménien oriental.

Notre propos ici est donc de fournir un aperçu des clivées et quasi-clivées en arménien, en comparant ces constructions aux stratégies concurrentes marquant la saillance informationnelle, comme la prosodie et le mouvement verbe/auxiliaire. Nous décrirons les principaux types de constructions clivées (CC) avec leurs caractéristiques, et étudierons les propriétés discursives et fonctionnelles spécifiques qui distinguent les clivées des autres stratégies de marquage de la saillance informationnelle. L'étude est conduite dans une approche intravariationnelle (prenant en compte les deux standards de l'arménien moderne) et typologique. On fait valoir que les clivées précèdent en diachronie l'apparition de la stratégie de mouvement de verbe/auxiliaire, et que cette dernière pourrait être le résultat d'une grammaticalisation des CC, en synergie avec des facteurs aréaux. Cette recherche est largement basée sur une étude de corpus qualitative et quantitative.

Sauf indication contraire, les données de l'arménien oriental présentées ici proviennent du Corpus national de l'arménien oriental ([www.eanc.net](http://www.eanc.net), environ 110 millions de mots), et celles de l'arménien occidental de la Bibliothèque numérique de littérature arménienne ([www.digilib.am](http://www.digilib.am)), ainsi que d'un corpus d'arménien occidental plus restreint construit sous Nooj. Les données de l'arménien classique, elles, sont tirées du corpus aligné de la Bible en arménien classique et en anglais ([www.arak29.am](http://www.arak29.am)).

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1 Cet article est une version française abrégée de Khurshudyan, Donabédian 2021.

2 « Clefing as a type of left dislocation is not exhibited [in Eastern Armenian] » (Dum-Tragut 2009, 625). Toutes les traductions sont réalisées par les Auteurs.

Après cette introduction, nous examinerons dans la section 2 les stratégies de marquage du focus en arménien, et procéderons dans la section 3 à la description et à l'analyse des différents types de constructions clivées et quasi-clivées, avant de procéder à la conclusion.

## 2 Stratégies de marquage du focus en arménien

Nous suivons ici la définition du focus proposée par Lambrecht :

the focus of a sentence, or, more precisely, the focus of a proposition expressed by a sentence in a given utterance context, is seen as the element of information whereby the presupposition and the assertion differ from each other. The focus is that portion of a proposition which cannot be taken for granted at the time of speech. It is the unpredictable or pragmatically non-recoverable element in an utterance. The focus is what makes an utterance into an assertion. (Lambrecht 1994, 207)

On peut distinguer deux types principaux de focus en arménien : 1. le focus par défaut (nucléaire, rhématique), marqué par l'accent nucléaire présent dans tout énoncé, y compris à structure informationnelle neutre ; 2. le focus marqué, ou total, caractérisé par un degré élevé de saillance prosodique. Le sens véhiculé par ce dernier est variable selon le contexte (le plus souvent il s'agit d'un focus de contraste ou d'identification) et son marquage obéit à des stratégies spécifiques. Dans les exemples ci-dessous, le focus, qu'il soit nucléaire ou marqué, est identifié par des majuscules, et les segments faisant l'objet de l'analyse sont marqués en gras.

En arménien, on peut relever trois stratégies principales de focalisation marquée, chacune d'entre elles étant plus ou moins pertinente respectivement pour l'arménien oriental et occidental :

- le focus prosodique (courbe et intensité);
- l'ordre des constituants (focus préverbal);
- les constructions clivées (tour syntaxique dédié).

Certaines de ces stratégies peuvent se combiner entre elles. La focalisation prosodique in situ est marquée exclusivement par un accent sur le constituant focalisé, sans impact sur la syntaxe de l'énoncé.

Il existe également certaines particules ayant une affinité avec la focalisation avec une charge sémantique supplémentaire (par exemple *henc* 'juste', *isk* 'exactement', *al* 'aussi' [MWA], *ēl* 'aussi' [MEA], etc.). Elles peuvent être antéposées ou postposées, cliticisées ou non. Parmi elles, la particule *al/ēl* 'aussi' est de loin la plus fréquente, en particulier dans le discours oral. Elle est toujours encliticisée, et en arménien oriental elle entraîne un déplacement de la

copule (ou de l'auxiliaire en cas de temps verbal analytique). L'auxiliaire ou la copule étant lui aussi enclitique, cela donne lieu à une séquence de deux enclitiques apparaissant dans un ordre contraint, la particule précédente nécessairement l'auxiliaire ou copule (1-2).

- (1)\* IRENK' ĒL en da əndun-um.  
they also be.AUX.3PL that.MEDL accept-IPFV  
'Eux aussi l'admettent'. (MEA, əl + AUX)

\* Le système de translittération adopté dans l'article est une adaptation du système Hübschmann-Meillet. N'étant pas phonétique, mais basé sur la graphie arménienne, il ne reflète pas les différences phonétiques entre l'arménien occidental et oriental. Comme c'est l'usage dans un grand nombre de travaux de typologie linguistique, la glose interlinéaire de nos exemples est en anglais, bien que l'article soit en français.

- (2) Aybbaran-ner-i pakas-i HARC'-N ĒL  
alphabet.book-PL-GEN lack-GEN question-DEF also  
Ē lurj.  
be.COP.3SG serious  
'La question de l'absence d'alphabet aussi est sérieuse'. (MEA, əl + COP)

### 3 Constructions clivées et quasi-clivées

#### 3.1 Propriétés distinctives des constructions clivées

Les constructions clivées sont généralement décrites comme :

a complex sentence structure consisting of a matrix clause headed by a copula and a relative or relative-like clause whose relativized argument is coindexed with the predicative argument of the copula. Taken together, the matrix and the relative express a logically simple proposition, which can also be expressed in the form of a single clause without a change in truth conditions. (Lambrecht 2001, 467)

Les CC ont été d'abord analysées à partir des données de l'anglais et du français, langues dans lesquelles les constructions concernées ont des propriétés syntaxiques très convergentes. L'un des principaux défis d'une approche typologique des CC est donc d'identifier un faisceau de propriétés sémantiques et syntaxiques permettant de délimiter le champ des constructions concernées.

En arménien, les CC sont des constructions biphrastiques constituées d'une proposition principale et d'une proposition relative. La



principale est une prédication d'identification avec copule au présent ou au passé, et la relative se caractérise par un argument relativisé co-indexé avec l'argument de la copule de la principale (3, 4). Comme dans la définition de Lambrecht (2001, 467) ci-dessus, en arménien, le contenu propositionnel des clivées, qui est exprimé dans la proposition relative, pourrait aussi bien être exprimé dans une phrase simple, sans impact sur ses conditions de vérité.

- (3) Es [LENIN-I-N ē, or] tesn-um em.  
I [Lenin-DAT-DEF COP.3SG that] see-IPFV be.AUX.1SG  
'C'est Lénine que je vois'. (MEA)
- (4) [ir nazeli GLUX-N ē, or] kə tesn-em.  
[self.GEN gracious head-DEF COP.3SG that] PROG see-1SG  
'C'est sa jolie tête que je vois'. (MWA)

L'arménien présente d'autres constructions qui ont certaines caractéristiques en commun avec les CC : les propositions relatives, finales, conditionnelles, etc. ; cependant, certains critères sont distinctifs des clivées :

- Accord : dans les constructions clivées, l'argument relativisé est co-indexé avec l'argument de la proposition principale, qui peut être soit un argument prédicatif (l'attribut), soit le sujet pronominal de la copule. Dans le cas des constructions à attribut, qui sont équivalentes aux clivées à sujets vides observées en anglais et en français, la copule ne s'accorde pas avec l'attribut. Ce trait peut cependant être soumis à certaines variations, comme on le verra plus loin.
- Prosodie : alors que dans les constructions relatives libres, l'accent de phrase est positionné en fonction de la structure informationnelle, les CC impliquent nécessairement que le constituant clivé porte un accent de focus (d'identification ou de contraste).
- Pragmatique : la simple suppression de la copule de la proposition principale et du relativiseur d'une CC n'affecte pas le contenu propositionnel de l'énoncé. Une telle manipulation sur une proposition relative ne peut pas aboutir à une proposition ayant les mêmes conditions de vérité (5b) que la relative initiale (5a), comme c'est le cas entre une clivée et la proposition simple qui en découle (5c, 5d) ainsi que (3, 4).

(5a) Sa hin hovvergakan mi BALLAD ē,  
 this old pastoral a ballad COP.3SG  
 or erg-um en minč'ev aysōr  
 that sing-IPFV be.AUX.3PL until today  
 irlandakan gyuť-er-um harsanik'-ner-i žamanak.  
 Irish village-PL-LOC marriage-PL-GEN time  
 'Ceci est une vieille ballade pastorale que l'on chante jusqu'à maintenant dans  
 les villages irlandais pendant les mariages'. (MEA, proposition relative)

(5b) Sa hin hovvergakan mi ballad erg-um  
 this old pastoral a ballad sing-IPFV  
 en minč'ev aysōr irlandakan gyuť-er-um  
 be.AUX.3PL until today Irish village-PL-LOC  
 harsanik'-ner-i žamanak.  
 marriage-PL-GEN time  
 (MEA, issu de la transformation de 5a en phrase simple)

(5c) hin hovvergakan mi BALLAD ē, or  
 old pastoral a ballad COP.3SG that  
 erg-um minč'ev aysōr irlandakan  
 sing-IPFV until today Irish  
 gyuť-er-um en harsanik'-ner-i žamanak.  
 village-PL-LOC be.AUX.3PL marriage-PL-GEN time  
 'C'est une vieille ballade pastorale que l'on chante jusqu'à maintenant dans  
 les villages irlandais pendant les mariages'. (MEA, CC)

(5d) hin hovvergakan mi BALLAD en erg-um  
 old pastoral a ballad be.AUX.3PL sing-IPFV  
 minč'ev aysōr irlandakan gyuť-er-um  
 until today Irish village-PL-LOC  
 harsanik'-ner-i žamanak.  
 marriage-PL-GEN time  
 'On chante jusqu'à maintenant une vieille ballade pastorale dans les villages  
 irlandais pendant les mariages'. (MEA, issu de la transformation de (5c) en  
 phrase simple)

- Complémenteur : Alors que la proposition relative peut être introduite soit par une série de pronoms relatifs/interrogatifs flexionnels, soit par le relativiseur/complémenteur invariable *or* (prononcé [vor]) 'que' (pour plus de détails sur les propositions relatives en arménien moderne, voir Hodgson 2019, entre autres), dans le cas des clivées, seul ce dernier est possible. Mal-

gré ses origines communes avec le pronom/adjectif interrogatif déclinable *or* 'qui', le complémenteur invariable *or* est un marqueur autonome, un complémenteur générique avec un très large éventail d'usages syntaxiques et sémantiques : relativiseur dans une proposition relative ; conjonction ou complémenteur (factif/non-factif, but, temps, condition, cause); marqueur modal ou discursif (scepticisme, doute, étonnement, focus etc.)

Dans les constructions clivées, la proposition principale portant le constituant clivé est toujours placée avant la pseudo-relative, et elle est souvent placée en début de phrase (4, 5c), bien que les clivées puissent également être concaténées dans la pseudo-relative pour permettre de viser tout argument de la phrase (3). En arménien, le constituant clivé est adjacent à la copule enclitique qui précède le complémenteur introduisant la proposition relative. Aucune scission n'est possible entre ces trois constituants. La position du constituant clivé avant la copule est conforme à la stratégie de marquage du focus préverbal selon laquelle le constituant focalisé est toujours en position préverbale.

Comme mentionné ci-dessus, l'auxiliaire ou copule fonctionne toujours comme un clitique lorsqu'il est à la forme affirmative, et ne peut être accentué que lorsqu'il est à la forme négative. L'auxiliaire ou copule négatif n'est cliticisé qu'après un constituant focalisé. Contrairement à l'arménien oriental, les auxiliaires ou copules négatives en arménien occidental sont toujours accentués, même lorsqu'ils viennent après l'élément focalisé.

### 3.2 Rôles syntaxiques des clivées en arménien

Comme c'est le cas dans d'autres langues (cf. Nichols 1994, 76), l'arménien n'impose pas de restriction particulière concernant la fonction syntaxique de l'argument clivé. Les exemples (6, 7 : S) et (8, 9 : OD) montrent des arguments de base clivés respectivement en arménien occidental et oriental.

- (6) ES    ē            or            z-ink'-ə            Šarant'on            tar-i.  
I            COP.3SG    that            ACC-self-3POSS    Charenton            take-AOR.3SG  
'C'est moi qui l'ai conduit à Charenton'. (MWA, S-focus)

- (7) MENK' Č'-Ē, or Nairi Hunanyan-i  
 we NEG-COP.3SG that Nayiri Hunanyan-GEN  
 het ēink' zugahef-el Sołomon  
 with be.AUX.1PL.PST compare-PFV Soghomon  
 T'ehleryan-i-n.  
 Tehleryan-DAT-DEF  
 'Ce n'est pas nous qui avons comparé Nairi Hunanyan avec Soghomon Tehleryan'. (MEA, S-focus)

- (8) Ays hogekan ARŽĚK'-N ē or hay  
 this spiritual value-DEF COP.3SG that Armenian  
 žołovurd-ə kə nermuc-ē.  
 people-DEF PROG introduce-3SG  
 'C'est cette valeur spirituelle que le peuple arménien introduit'. (MWA, COD-focus)

- (9) Miayn K'EZ ē, or č'-ēi  
 only you.DAT COP.3SG that NEG-be.AUX.1SG.PST  
 uz-um tesn-el.  
 want-IPFV see-INF  
 'Ce n'est que toi que je ne voulais pas voir'. (MEA, COD-focus)

Les compléments adverbiaux sont fréquemment clivés en arménien (10, 11, 12).

- (10) U HOS Ē or kə sks-i  
 and here COP.3SG that PROG begin-3SG  
 hakasut'iwn-ə.  
 contradiction-DEF  
 'Et c'est là que commence la contradiction'. (MWA, Circonstanciel de lieu-focus)

- (11) asor HAMAR ē or č'-ekay.  
 that.DAT for COP.3SG that NEG-come.AOR.1SG  
 'C'est pour cela que je ne suis pas venu(e)'. (MWA, Complément de cause-focus, GN postposé)

- (12) ayd KERP-OV ē or kə xorh-in.  
 that way-INS COP.3SG that PROG think-3PL  
 'C'est comme cela qu'ils pensent'. (MWA, Complément de manière-focus, oblique)

Les constructions à constituant adverbial clivé sont parmi les plus fréquentes non seulement en arménien (13, 14), mais aussi typologiquement. Ce type de clivée implique principalement des adverbes de manière, de lieu ou de temps clivés. Au total 7570 correspondances ont été trouvées pour ADV + COP + *or*, dont environ 40% impliquant des copules affirmatives et négatives au présent, 15% avec une copule au passé et seulement 4% avec une copule négative au passé. Ce nombre est assez élevé, sachant que l'exploration du corpus devrait présenter une proportion limitée de bruit. La fouille de EANC a révélé dans certains cas une nette prédominance parmi les formes attestées de la copule. On observe par exemple une nette prédilection pour la copule affirmative dans la plupart des adverbes de temps (par exemple, la requête « quantificateur + *tari* 'an' + COP + *or* 'que' », signifiant « cela fait X ans que... ; depuis X ans maintenant... » a 642 correspondances avec la copule affirmative contre 39 avec la copule négative). Au contraire, la copule négative prévaut avec l'adverbe *mišt* 'toujours' (1156 occurrences avec copule négative pour 38 à l'affirmative). Cela peut s'expliquer par les propriétés inhérentes de *mišt* 'toujours', qui affecte les conditions de vérité du verbe plutôt qu'il n'identifie une circonstance.<sup>3</sup>

- (13) AYSTEĒ ē, or mtavorakanut'yun-ə iren piti  
here COP.3SG that intelligentsia-DEF self.DAT DEB  
c'uyč' t-a.  
manifest give-SBJV.3SG  
'C'est ici que l'intelligentsia se montre'. (MEA, Lieu-focus)

- (14) Ulił mi TARI ē, or č'-em tes-el  
right a Year COP.3SG that NEG-COP.1SG see-PFV  
k'ez.  
you.DAT  
'Cela fait exactement un an que je ne t'ai pas vu'. (MEA, Temps-focus)

<sup>3</sup> Dans la paire *mišt* 'toujours' / *mišt* + NEG 'pas toujours', la forme négative peut être considérée comme plus saillante que l'affirmative, ce qui la rend plus susceptible d'apparaître dans une CC que l'affirmative (cf. résultats comparables pour la requête « quantificateur + *angam* 'time' + COP + *or* 'que' » pour laquelle les occurrences à copule négative sont environ quatre fois plus nombreuses que celles à l'affirmative, ce qu'illustre l'exemple : « Ce n'est pas la première fois que... »). Le comportement des adverbes de marquage temporel absolu tels que *mišt* 'toujours', *erbek* 'jamais' (incompatible avec une construction clivée) ou *hazvadep* 'rarement' (uniquement à l'affirmative dans des constructions clivées) mériterait une étude plus approfondie.

Les clivées temporelles sont formées comme des clivées substantivales, bien qu'elles s'en distinguent sémantiquement et formellement. On distingue deux types principaux de CC temporelles :

- Clivées de localisation temporelle (15) situant un procès dans un point ou un segment temporel spécifique, par exemple *maintenant, hier, l'année dernière, la semaine prochaine* etc.

(15) ayn ATEN ē, or P'ier' zg-ac' t'ē  
 that moment COP.3SG that Pierre feel-AOR.3SG that  
 irapēs anōt'i ēr.  
 really Hungry COP.PST.3SG  
 'C'est à ce moment que Pierre sentit qu'il avait vraiment faim'. (MWA)

- Clivées duratives (16a) référant à l'étendue temporelle du procès. Ces constructions correspondent au français « cela fait X<sub>t</sub> que... ». L'arménien se distingue ici du français par le fait qu'il permet d'exprimer le même contenu propositionnel sans focalisation par simple suppression de la copule et du complément (16b), là où en français la phrase simple a recours à d'autres constructions, par exemple « depuis X<sub>t</sub> »).

(16a) erku GIŠER ē or č'-ē ek-ac.  
 two night COP.3SG that NEG-be.AUX.3SG come-RES  
 'Cela fait deux jours qu'il n'est pas venu'. (MWA)

(16b) erku GIŠER č'-ē ek-ac.  
 two night NEG-be.AUX.3SG come-RES  
 'Il n'est pas venu deux soirs'. (MWA)

Contrairement aux clivées prototypiques, dans ce type spécifique, le complément *or* 'que' n'est pas obligatoire, la proposition relative pouvant être introduite par la conjonction *inč'* 'quoi, que' (17a) (possible uniquement en arménien oriental), le complément *or* 'que' (17b) ou le marquage zéro (17c). Ainsi, même si la manipulation (16b) ci-dessus est possible, ce qui suggère que, contrairement à la construction analogue en français, la construction arménienne est une véritable clivée, cette fluctuation du relativiseur montre qu'en arménien cette construction est tout au moins dans une certaine mesure idiomatique.

(17a) Šurj k'sanhing TARI ē, inč' metak's-i  
 about 25 year COP.3SG that silk-GEN  
 kombinat-um ē.  
 factory-LOC COP.3SG  
 (MEA)

- (17b) Šurĵ k’sanhing TARI ē, or metak’s-i  
 about 25 year COP.3SG that silk-GEN  
 kombinat-um ē.  
 factory-LOC COP.3SG  
 (MEA)
- (17c) Šurĵ k’sanhing TARI ē, metak’s-i  
 about 25 year COP.3SG silk-GEN  
 kombinat-um ē.  
 factory-LOC COP.3SG  
 ‘Cela fait/Il y a environ 25 ans qu’il est dans l’usine de soie’.  
 (MEA)

Une autre particularité des clivées duratives est la possibilité d’avoir en position de copule le verbe *linel* ‘être’ (18) à tous les temps, ou le verbe défectif *ka* ‘exister’ (19a), par contraste avec l’usage exclusif du verbe défectif *ē* ‘être’ dans toutes les autres clivées (cf. le verbe *linel* ‘être’ comme copule à l’aoriste [19b]). Tant *linel* ‘être’ que *ka* ‘exister’ ont une sémantique plus stative que *ē* ‘être’.

- (18) k’ani mə tari KAY or əmpelik’  
 how.many a year EXIST.3SG that drink  
 č’-ē gorcac-er.  
 NEG-be.AUX.3SG use-PFV  
 ‘Il y a quelques années qu’il n’a pas bu d’alcool’. (MWA)
- (19a) erek’ tari K-LIN-I, or menk’ irar  
 three year COND-be-3SG that we each.other  
 č’-enk’ tes-el.  
 NEG-be.AUX.1PL see-PFV  
 ‘Cela fait/doit faire trois ans que nous ne nous sommes pas vus’. (MEA)
- (19b) erek’ tari EŁ-AV, or menk’ irar  
 three year be-AOR.3SG that we each.other  
 č’-enk’ tes-ac.  
 NEG-be.AUX.1PL see-PFV  
 ‘Cela fait trois ans que nous ne nous sommes pas vus’. (MWA)

### 3.3 Argument prédicat vs argument sujet dans les clivées

Contrairement à l'anglais ou au français, la proposition principale des clivées arméniennes ne contient pas de pronom vide (par exemple, *it [is]...* (angl.); *c'[est]...* (fr.) etc.). Le constituant focalisé fonctionne comme un véritable prédicat, et peut avoir une lecture de construction impersonnelle. L'accord de la copule avec le constituant clivé et la concordance des temps avec la proposition relative ne sont pas obligatoires. Il est possible d'avoir un accord complet, comme dans (20)-(21), où la copule s'accorde en nombre et en temps (voir la remarque sur le statut de la variation des temps à la fin de cette section).

- (20) Tntes-i                      jayn-ə                      Č'-ĒR,                      or  
 steward-GEN                      voice-DEF                      NEG-COP.3SG.PST                      that  
 art'n-ac'r-ec'                      nran.  
 wake-CAUS-AOR.3SG                      he.DAT  
 'Ce n'est pas la voix de l'hôte qui le réveilla'. (MEA)

- (21) Usucič'-ner-ə                      Č'-EN,                      or                      otk'-i                      kə  
 teacher-PL-DEF                      NEG-COP.3PL                      that                      foot-DAT                      PROG  
 b'n-en                      varžaran-ner-ə.  
 take-3PL                      college-PL-DEF  
 'Ce ne sont pas les enseignants qui tiennent l'école sur pieds'. (MWA)

Mais on peut également avoir une copule avec la forme par défaut au présent de la troisième personne du singulier (cf. 22) où le constituant clivé est au pluriel avec une copule au singulier et le prédicat de la proposition relative est à l'aoriste.

- (22) Bolor                      c'ankac'ot-ner-ə                      Č'-Ē,                      or                      nerka  
 all                      desirous-PL-DEF                      NEG-COP.3SG                      that                      present  
 gtn-v-el                      karotac'-an.  
 find-MED-INF                      can-AOR.3PL  
 'Ce ne sont pas tous les intéressés qui ont pu être présents'. (MEA)

De la même manière, les pronoms personnels clivés peuvent recevoir une copule à la troisième personne par défaut (6, 23, 24, 25).

- (23) orov                      MENK'                      ē                      or                      k' ōgn-enk'                      iren  
 because                      we                      COP.3SG                      that                      PROG help-1PL                      she.DAT  
 krc'-ac-n-u-s                      č'ap'.  
 can-RES-PL-GEN-1POSS                      measure  
 'Parce que ce sont nous qui l'aidons autant que nous pouvons'. (MWA)



- (24) ES    č' -ē,                    or    petk    ē                    xorhurd  
I       NEG-COP.3SG       that    DEB       COP.3SG       advice  
ta-m                    irenc'.  
give-SBJV.1SG       they.DAT  
'Ce n'est pas moi qui dois les conseiller'. (MEA)
- (25) MENK'                    ē,                    or    ēsteł    hašv-um    enk'  
we                    COP.3SG       that    here       count-IPFV    be.AUX.1PL  
vayrkyan-ner-ə.  
second-PL-DEF  
'C'est nous qui comptons les minutes ici'. (MEA)

La copule de la clivée à la troisième personne du singulier correspond à la forme impersonnelle par défaut, de même que le présent par défaut plutôt qu'un passé conforme à la concordance des temps, concordance qui n'est par ailleurs pas grammaticalement contraignante en arménien (26).

- (26) NA    as-ac',                    or    uz-um    Ē                    ga-l  
he       say-AOR.3SG       that    want-IPFV    be.AUX.3SG       come-INF  
inj       mot.  
I.DAT    near  
'Il a dit qu'il voulait venir auprès de moi'. (MEA)

Il reste cependant possible d'avoir dans la clivée le sujet syntaxique de la principale avec une copule à une forme personnelle (27, 28, 29).

- (27) DU    ēir,                    or    stipeč'-ir    inj    mn-al.  
you    COP.2SG.PST       that    force-AOR.2SG    I.DAT    stay-INF  
'C'est toi qui m'as obligé(e) à rester'. (MEA)
- (28) ES    em                    or    kə    storagc-em.  
I       COP.1SG       that    PROG    underline-1SG  
'C'est moi qui souligne'. (MWA, S-focus)
- (29) ES    č' -em                    or    piti    as-em.  
I       NEG-COP.1SG       that    DEB    say-SBJV.1SG  
'Ce n'est pas à moi de le dire'. (MEA, S-focus)

Les tables 1-2 mettent en évidence la distribution des pronoms personnels clivés sujets ou prédicats [tabs 1-2].

**Tableau 1** Distribution des pronoms personnels en fonction de prédicat clivé dans EANC

Prédicat clivé	COP	NEG. COP	COP.PST	NEG. PST	Sous total	%
1SG « c'est moi qui »	12	179	1	0	192	43%
2SG « c'est toi qui »	1	47	0	1	49	16%
3SG « c'est lui/elle qui »	397	105	214	40	756	100%
1PL « c'est nous que »	15	67	0	1	83	43%
2PL « c'est vous que »	1	28	0	0	29	21%
3PL « c'est eux que »	6	13	0	0	19	11%
<b>Totale</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1128</b>	

**Tableau 2** Distribution des pronoms personnels en fonction de sujet clivé dans EANC

Sujet clivé	COP	NEG. COP	COP.PST	NEG. PST	Totale	%
1SG « je suis que »	148	28	63	16	255	57%
2sg « tu es que »	143	23	40	56	262	84%
3SG « il/elle est que »	397	105	214	40	756	100%
1PL « nous sommes que »	77	14	13	8	112	57%
2PL « vous êtes que »	40	15	23	31	109	79%
3PL « ils /elles sont que »	105	8	39	6	158	89%
<b>Totale</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>1647</b>	

Les résultats montrent que la proportion de copules à la forme négative est inverse à la tendance générale favorisant un sujet clivé plutôt qu'un prédicat clivé. Les occurrences de première personne du singulier *es* 'je' et *menk'* 'nous' sont respectivement de 86% et 83%, et de 67% et 65% pour *du* 'tu' au singulier et au pluriel respectivement. Ces chiffres pourraient s'expliquer par un phénomène d'attraction, à savoir qu'à la forme affirmative, le pronom personnel et la copule sont adjacents, ce qui favorise une tendance à utiliser une copule à la forme personnelle correspondante, alors qu'à la forme négative, les pronoms personnels sont séparés de la copule par le préfixe négatif et l'attraction est moins forte. L'auxiliaire/copule à la forme affirmative étant clitique en arménien, la séquence pronom personnel + auxiliaire/copule accordé a tendance à être plus accessible aux locuteurs que celle avec un auxiliaire à la troisième personne du singulier. Par ailleurs, les cas de deuxième personne du singulier et du pluriel en position de sujet clivé sont environ trois fois plus fréquents qu'en position de prédicat clivé (84% vs 16% et 79% vs 21% respectivement). Un autre point intéressant est l'absence presque totale de copule au passé (aussi bien affirmative que négative) avec des pronoms personnels clivés prédicats [tab. 1].

Le nombre et la personne des constructions à pronoms personnels clivés suit l'accord de la copule avec le sujet de la proposition princi-

pale. On note aussi dans les exemples une variation dans l'emploi des temps qui n'est pas imputable à l'accord, mais plutôt à des facteurs discursifs. Dans les cas où la proposition quasi-relative est au passé, la co-indexation temporelle de la copule dans la proposition principale marque l'ancrage de l'ensemble de la phrase clivée dans la narration historique, tandis que l'absence de co-indexation, comme dans les exemples (6) et (7) (proposition principale au présent et proposition quasi-relative au passé), marque l'ancrage de la proposition principale dans le moment de l'énonciation. Cela pourrait être démontré avec des exemples de contexte large, ce que les limites du présent article ne nous permettent pas de faire ici.

### 3.4 Constructions quasi-clivées en arménien

La question des limites du domaine des clivées est particulièrement complexe, notamment concernant la stratégie de relativisation concurrente, prénominale et non finie (30a, 30b), bien connue dans la typologie des propositions relatives et bien représentée dans l'aire Caucase-Anatolie en général (Gandon 2016) et en arménien (Hodgson 2019 en particulier). Cette stratégie se présente comme une alternative aux constructions clivées canoniques pour la focalisation de tout pronom personnel ou syntagme nominal argument (S, et dans une moindre mesure COD), et elle est très fréquente en arménien, avec différents ordres possibles (43a, 43b).

(30a) Storagc-ot-ə                      ES            em.  
underline-SBJ-DEF                      I            COP.1SG  
(MWA)

(30b) ES            em                      storagc-ot-ə.  
I                      COP.1SG            underline-SBJ-DEF  
'C'est moi qui souligne'.  
(MWA)

Les constructions non finies présentent une série de propriétés distinctives par rapport aux constructions clivées canoniques. Contrairement à la clivée canonique, la stratégie non finie implique une construction monophrastique, avec des contraintes syntaxiques (elles correspondent aux clivées sujet, et peut-être à certaines clivées objet), et un ordre des mots relativement libre. La différence d'ordre des mots entre les CC canoniques et leurs analogues non finies entraîne des contours prosodiques différents pour ces deux constructions. Alors que dans les clivées finies, la proposition quasi-relative est toujours postérieure à l'accent de la phrase (porté par le constituant focalisé

initial) et reçoit un contour prosodique correspondant à un statut informationnel de mise en arrière-plan, dans les constructions non finies monoprastiques, le constituant focalisé est par défaut en position pré-finale (30a), et la construction marque un degré de focalisation moindre que celui d'une clivée finie biphrastique, même si l'ordre alternatif est également possible (30b). Par conséquent, malgré la similitude fonctionnelle avec les CC canoniques, il convient de classer les constructions non finies comme des constructions quasi-clivées.

Outre les propositions relatives non finies, toute une série de constructions (31, 32, 33, 34) présente des similitudes avec les clivées en arménien.

- (31) inč' (or) as-um es, im gorc-ə  
 what REL say-IPFV be.AUX.2SG my affair-DEF  
 č'-ē.  
 NEG-COP.3SG  
 'Ce que tu dis n'est pas mon affaire'. (MEA)
- (32) ban-n AYN ē, or ayd  
 thing-DEF that.DIST COP.3SG that that.MEDL  
 aprank-ner-ə poxadr-v-um en Vrastan-i  
 goods-PL-DEF transport-MED-IPFV be.AUX.3PL Georgia-GEN  
 tarack'-ov.  
 territory-INS  
 'Le truc, c'est que cette marchandise transite par le territoire géorgien'. (MEA,  
 « Le truc, c'est que / le fait est que ... », 3017 occurrences dans EANC)
- (33) INČ'PE°S ē, or germanac'i-ner-ə jez  
 How? COP.3SG that German-PL-DEF you.DAT  
 č'-en tar-el?  
 NEG-be.AUX.3PL take-PFV  
 'Comment cela se fait que les Allemands ne vous ont pas emmenés?' (MEA  
 « comment cela se fait que... »)
- (34) Aram-ə ka, or kar-a mez ōgn-i.  
 Aram-DEF exist.3SG that can-3SG we.DAT help-SBJV.3SG  
 'Il y a Aram qui peut nous aider'. (MEA, « il y a X qui »)

Une de ces constructions introduites par *or* inclut une principale, souvent avec une copule (à la négative ou dans une question rhétorique) et une subordonnée, et semble sémantiquement proche d'une proposition finale (cf. (35) dans laquelle le complément *or* peut être interprété comme un marqueur de but : « pour que, afin de »).

- (35) Erkir-ə erku harevan-ov TUN č‘-i,  
 country-DEF two neighbor-INS house NEG-COP.3SG  
 or vat harevan-i patčar-ov cax-es  
 that bad neighbor-GEN cause-INS sell-SBJV.2SG  
 gn-as mi uriš p‘otoc kam k‘atak‘.  
 go-SBJV.2SG a other street or city  
 ‘Le pays, ce n’est pas une maison entre deux voisins, que tu peux vendre parce  
 que l’un des voisins est mauvais, pour déménager dans une autre rue ou une  
 autre ville...’

Ces constructions sont souvent introduites par le marqueur discursif emphatique *ba* ‘mais, et, donc’ en tant que question rhétorique (36, 37) (on relève dans EANC plus de 500 correspondances pour de telles constructions introduites par *ba*). Lorsque la proposition principale a un verbe équatif négatif, le prédicat de la proposition subordonnée est souvent au subjonctif. Traditionnellement, les propositions subordonnées dans de telles constructions sont considérées comme attributives (Abrahamyan 2004, 155).

- (36) ba sa GO<sup>◦</sup>M ē, or menk‘ mej-ə  
 whether this.PROX stable? COP.3SG that we in-DEF  
 aprank‘ enk‘ pah-um?  
 cattle be.AUX.1PL keep-IPFV  
 ‘Mais est-ce un hangar, pour que nous y entreposions des marchandises?’

- (37) ba sa GO<sup>◦</sup>RC ēr, or du  
 whether this affair? COP.PST.3SG that you  
 brn-ec‘ir?  
 catch-AOR.2SG  
 ‘Mais était-ce du travail, ce que tu as entrepris là?’

Dans le discours oral arménien oriental, il est assez fréquent d’avoir des interrogatives avec un *or* final (38, 39). Il s’agit très probablement du même marqueur que dans les constructions mentionnées ci-dessus avec un sens de raison/argumentation implicite, c’est-à-dire que de telles constructions reviennent à inverser pragmatiquement le contenu propositionnel de la proposition principale.

- (38) Drank‘ OVK‘E<sup>◦</sup>R en or?  
 that.MEDL.PL who.PL? COP.3PL that  
 ‘Mais qui sont-ils donc?’ (MEA)

- (39) Du           kp-ar,                            es    I<sup>o</sup>Nĉ'            ar-ec'i       or.  
you       touch-AOR.2SG           I       what?       do-AOR.1SG   That  
'C'est toi qui l'as touché, qu'est-ce que j'ai fait, moi ?' (MEA)

Un autre type de construction combine une principale contenant un sujet (souvent exprimé par un pronom) et le verbe équatif *ê* 'être', et une proposition subordonnée introduite par *or* avec seulement un verbe équatif statif *kam* 'être', co-indexé avec la proposition principale (40). La construction a une sémantique d'identification emphatique, souvent intensifiée par l'adverbe *henc'* 'exactement, juste'.

- (40) (Henc')       ES    em,            or       ka-m.  
(just)        I       COP.1SG    that       exist-1SG  
'C'est exactement moi !' (MEA)

Fait intéressant, une construction similaire avec deux verbes existentiels synonymes en miroir existe en azéri (41), mais pas en arménien occidental, en persan ou en turc, ce qui semble aller dans le sens d'un effet de contact, restant à démontrer par l'exploration plus systématique de données aréales.

- (41) Mən-əm       ki       var-am.  
I-COP.1SG       that    EXIST-1SG  
'C'est exactement moi !' (Azéri)

Nous considérons que toutes les constructions présentées dans cette section sont des constructions quasi-clivées, car elles s'écartent d'une manière ou d'une autre des clivées canoniques décrites plus haut pour l'arménien, et dont elles ne présentent pas toutes les caractéristiques distinctives. Déterminer si chacune de ces constructions doit être considérée ou non comme des constructions clivées à part entière nécessiterait une étude plus approfondie.

### 3.5 Les clivées en arménien classique

La diachronie fournit des données intéressantes pour une analyse holistique des clivées et de leur interaction avec d'autres stratégies de marquage de focus en arménien moderne. On trouve des constructions similaires (42a, 42b) en arménien classique.

(42a) Ew oč' es inč' z-ogi-s-d kam  
 and not I that ACC-soul-PL-2POSS or  
 z-kean-s-d jer šnorh-ec'i ew oč'  
 ACC-life-PL-2POSS your.PL grant-AOR.1SG and not  
 z-kerparan-s-d jer z-iwrak'anč'iwr es  
 ACC-image-PL-2POSS your.PL z-each I  
 nkar-ec'i ew oč' z-hasak-s-d jer  
 draw-AOR.1SG and not ACC-height-PL-2POSS your.PL  
 cn-eal ew snuc'-eal.  
 be.born-PFV and nourish-PFV  
 (Arménien classique, 2Mac 7,22)

(42b) ES č'-ē, or jez kyank' u hogi  
 I NEG-COP.3SG that you.DAT life and soul  
 em pargew-el ew oč' ēl kerparank'  
 be.AUX.1SG grant-PFV and not either image  
 tv-el jezan-ic' yurak'anč'yur-i-n oč' ēl  
 give-PFV you.PL-ABL each-DAT-DEF not either  
 jez sn-el hasc'r-el em ays  
 you.DAT nouris-PFV carry-PFV be.AUX.1SG this.PROX  
 hasak-i-n.  
 height-DAT-DEF  
 '[Je ne sais pas comment vous avez apparu dans mes entrailles :] ce n'est pas moi qui vous ai gratifiés de l'esprit et de la vie ; ce n'est pas moi qui [pas plus que ce n'est moi qui] ai donné forme à chacun de vous, ni qui ne vous ai nourri et élevés'. (MEA, 2Mac 7,22)

Dans l'exemple (42a), le constituant focalisé est *es* 'je', qui est précédé d'une négation et suivi de *inč'* 'quoi, que'. Le statut de ce *inč'* 'quoi, que' est souvent ambigu dans les textes arméniens classiques, et il est considéré comme un simple calque du grec, ou un marqueur emphatique (43a, 43b).

(43a)	Et'ē	ok'	kam-i	z-kam-s	nora	aġn-el
	if	any	wish-3SG	ACC-will-PL	his	do-INF
	git-asc'ē		vasn	vardapetut'ean-s		y-Astucoy
	know-SBJV.3SG		about	doctrine.DAT-1POSS		PREP-God.ABL
	ic'ē	ardewk'	et'ē	es	inč'	y-anjn-ē
	be.SBJV.3G	whether	if	I	that	PREP-person-ABL
	imm-ē	xōs-im.				
	I-ABL	speak-1SG				
	(Arménien classique, Jn 7,17)					

(43b)	Et'e	mek-ə	uz-um	ē	nra	kamk'-ə
	if	one-DEF	wish-IPFV	be.COP.3SG	his	will-DEF
	katar-el	k-iman-a	ays	usuc'man	masin	
	do-INF	COND-know-2SG	this	doctrine-DAT	about	
	t'e	Astc-uc'	ē	ard yok'	t'e	
	whether	God-ABL	be.AUX.3SG	perhaps	or	
	es	ink'-s	injn-ic'	em	xos-um.	
	I	self-1POSS	I-ABL	be.AUX.1SG	speak-IPFV	
	'Si quelqu'un veut faire sa volonté, il connaîtra si ma doctrine est de Dieu, ou si je parle de mon chef'. (MEA, Jn 7,17)					

Malgré le caractère ambivalent de *inč'* dans certains contextes en arménien classique, les parallèles avec les constructions clivées et certains cas de *inč'* semblent convaincants. Cela peut être renforcé par des correspondances entre les traductions en anglais, français et arménien oriental, qui recourent toutes à des constructions clivées. De plus, en arménien, *inč'* peut fonctionner comme un pronom ou conjonction corrélatrice, et il peut même remplacer le relatif *or* dans des quasi-clivées temporelles en arménien oriental (17).

Les clivées sont considérées comme une construction facilement empruntable (une des hypothèses concernant l'origine des clivées dans les langues du Caucase du Nord-Est est le contact avec les langues de la région, notamment l'arménien, Harris [2001, 161]). Les données de l'arménien classique montrent cependant une continuité dans le développement des CC en arménien et indiquent un caractère inhérent plutôt qu'emprunté. En outre, la présence de clivées en arménien classique pourrait également être un indice d'une grammaticalisation des clivées en arménien moderne. Selon Harris et Campbell (1995, 166), sur le plan typologique, les constructions monoprastiques de mis en avant sont souvent issues de structures bi-



phrastiques, clivées ou anti-clivées.<sup>4</sup> Harris et Campbell (1995) proposent trois étapes pour une telle voie de développement, la première étant une structure biphrastique, se développant ensuite en un type mixte combinant des traits biphrastiques et des traits monophrastiques, puis aboutissant à une structure monophrastique. Le développement de la stratégie du mouvement de l'auxiliaire/verbe en arménien oriental pourrait être le résultat d'une grammaticalisation de ce type. Une telle évolution pourrait éventuellement être renforcée par des effets de contact. Cela est encore plus évident lorsqu'on aborde les différences entre arménien occidental et oriental, l'arménien occidental n'ayant conservé que les constructions clivées biphrastiques et participiales, tandis que l'arménien oriental a développé à la fois une stratégie monophrastique de mouvement de l'auxiliaire/copule et des constructions clivées biphrastiques et participiales.<sup>5</sup>

### 3.6 Clivées et stratégies alternatives de marquage du focus en arménien

Comme indiqué ci-dessus, en arménien oriental, les clivées sont une des trois stratégies de focalisation disponibles : 1. le marquage prosodique (44a); 2. le marquage par l'ordre des constituants (focus préverbal) (44b) et 3. les constructions clivées (44c) (cf. le « focus postverbal » en géorgien, Skopeteas, Fanselow 2010).<sup>6</sup>

(44a)	Azganun-ov surname-INS	kanč'-um call-IPFV	en be.AUX.3PL	miayn only	dproc'-i school-GEN
	DIREKTOR-I-N. director-DAT-DEF 'On appelle par son nom de famille seulement le directeur de l'école'. (MEA, SVO)				

<sup>4</sup> « Monoclausal highlighting constructions often originate as biclausal structures - clefts or anti-clefts ».

<sup>5</sup> Cf. la proposition de Harris (2001, 167) pertinente également pour l'arménien oriental : « The copula, which seems to be a reflex of the copula of the main clause of the cleft, seems at the same time to be involved as an auxiliary in the tense-aspect-mood system of some languages » (La copule, qui semble être un reflet de la copule de la clause principale de la clivée, semble en même temps être impliquée comme auxiliaire dans le système TAM de certaines langues).

<sup>6</sup> Cette stratégie est cohérente avec celle de focalisation préverbale, puisque dans (15a) le remplacement de la forme périphrastique par une forme synthétique (par exemple l'aoriste : *kanč'-ec'-in*) aboutirait à un ordre OV qui distinguerait les focus neutres (stress nucléaire) et contrastifs non seulement en termes syntaxiques, mais aussi par l'intensité de la prééminence prosodique.

- (44b) Miayn dproc'-i DIREKTOR-I-N en kanč'-um  
 only school-GEN director-DAT-DEF be.AUX.3PL call-IPFV  
 azganun-ov.  
 surname-INS  
 'Seul le directeur de l'école est appelé par son nom de famille'. (MEA, Mouvement de l'auxiliaire/copule)
- (44c) Miayn dproc'-i DIREKTOR-I-N ē, or  
 only school-GEN director-DAT-DEF COP.3SG that  
 kanč'-um en azganun-ov.  
 call-IPFV be.AUX.3PL surname-INS  
 'Ce n'est que le directeur de l'école qu'on appelle par son nom de famille'.  
 (MEA, Clivée)

On pourrait penser qu'en termes de typologie linguistique, l'existence de clivées parallèlement à d'autres stratégies de marquage syntaxique du focus est inattendu. Or, l'arménien n'est pas la seule langue, du moins dans l'aire concernée, à présenter plusieurs possibilités (cf. Kazenin 2002 ; Erschler 2012 ; Komen 2015 ; Forker 2021).

Une explication possible de l'existence de clivées en arménien malgré la diversité des stratégies de marquage de focus disponibles est que les clivées marquent le focus de manière syntaxique et sans ambiguïté, même lorsque la prosodie n'est pas disponible. Ainsi, il s'agit d'une stratégie de marquage de focus préférable dans le discours écrit par rapport à la stratégie de marquage de focus in situ, qui peut avoir des lectures différentes sans prosodie. Comme on l'a montré, la stratégie préverbale peut aussi marquer un constituant sans ambiguïté, tant qu'il y a le mouvement d'auxiliaire/copule. Cette stratégie n'étant pertinente que pour l'arménien oriental, les clivées seraient particulièrement 'préférées' en arménien occidental, ainsi qu'en arménien oriental lorsque des formes verbales synthétiques sont utilisées. Les données de l'EANC montrent une nette préférence pour les clivées dans le discours écrit par rapport à l'oral en arménien oriental (70% contre 30% respectivement). Confirmer l'hypothèse d'une distribution des CC selon des paramètres discursifs en arménien oriental et occidental nécessiterait cependant un recueil de données complémentaires.

## 4 Conclusion

Les clivées en arménien sont des constructions grammaticalisées avec une fréquence d'utilisation élevée, qui permettent le clivage de tout constituant à l'exception du verbe. La présente étude exploratoire met en évidence quelques questions intéressantes tant du point de vue de l'arménien que de celui de la typologie des clivées.

Les clivées sont une des nombreuses stratégies de focalisation disponibles en arménien, incluant la prosodie, des constructions syntaxiques spécifiques basées sur l'ordre des mots ou des mécanismes de subordination. La question de l'ordre des mots neutre en arménien (SOV ou SVO) est discutée avec des indices clairs d'un ordre à prédominance de tête finale en arménien occidental (Donabédian-Demopoulos 2010 ; 2018) et beaucoup moins en arménien oriental (proportional (Samvelian et al. à apparaître). Certains ordres peuvent être identifiés en termes de structure informationnelle, comme les positions préverbaux (ou préfinales) et postverbaux pour différents types de marquage de focalisation. Malgré quelques différences mineures, l'arménien oriental et occidental affichent tous deux une asymétrie entre les constructions périphrastiques affirmatives et négatives. La généralisation des constructions périphrastiques (plus radicale en arménien oriental qu'en arménien occidental) est une des questions les plus difficiles pour la typologie diachronique de l'arménien. Comme les clivées ont été documentées depuis l'arménien classique, une évolution peut être tracée entre les clivées phraséologiques et la stratégie grammaticalisée de focalisation par mouvement de l'auxiliaire en arménien oriental.

Pour caractériser les clivées en arménien, plusieurs paramètres, tels que l'accord, la prosodie, le type de connecteur et la corrélation entre une clivée et son équivalent neutre, ont été définis. L'accord dans les clivées implique deux dimensions : l'accord intraphrastique et interphrastique. Comme l'arménien ne connaît pas de pronom vide, le trait impersonnel est rendu par l'absence d'accord entre sujet et copule dans la proposition principale, ce qui nous permet de distinguer les clivées prédicats (impersonnelles sans accord) des clivées sujet (copule co-indexée avec des pronoms personnels sujet). Nos données de corpus ont montré une représentation inégale de ces deux types de clivées (sans distinction formelle pour les sujets 3SG) en fonction de la personne et de la polarité, ce qui est conforme aux tendances courantes dans les constructions clivées dans les langues du monde.

L'équivalent neutre d'une clivée en arménien peut être obtenu en supprimant la copule et le complément, ce qui est l'un des principaux critères pour distinguer les clivées des autres constructions biphrastiques similaires.

En arménien, les constituants postérieurs à l'accent de phrase (dans notre cas, après le constituant focalisé) ont des propriétés pro-

sodiques associées à la mise en arrière-plan. Ainsi, le constituant focalisé étant initial dans les constructions clivées, tout le reste de la phrase se trouve en position d'arrière-plan. Les clivées non finies ne requièrent pas une telle contrainte d'ordre.

À l'exception de la construction clivée durative de l'arménien oriental qui peut avoir *inč'* comme complément, le complément utilisé dans les constructions clivées est exclusivement le connecteur générique *or* 'que', qui marque le début de la position post-focus caractérisée comme étant en arrière-plan avec une prosodie d'incise.

Les constructions clivées de l'arménien marquent un degré spécifique de focalisation, parallèlement à d'autres moyens de marquage de focalisation. En réalité, le marquage du focus en arménien pourrait être présenté comme un continuum plutôt qu'une séquence de degrés identifiés. L'échelle de focalisation dépend du type de marquage du focus en arménien, le marquage prosodique simple étant le plus faible, et les clivées le plus fort, avec un degré intermédiaire représenté par la position préverbale.

Contrairement au focus préverbal, qui présente un certain nombre de différences importantes entre l'arménien oriental et l'arménien occidental, la comparaison des constructions clivées dans les deux normes n'a pas montré de réelles différences. L'existence de clivées avec les mêmes caractéristiques syntaxiques et pragmatiques en arménien oriental et en arménien occidental pourrait constituer la preuve que les constructions clivées ont une continuité diachronique en arménien, ce qui renforce l'hypothèse d'une grammaticalisation allant des constructions clivées à la stratégie de focalisation par mouvement de l'auxiliaire, bien que l'influence du contact aéal ne doive pas être négligée.

Typologiquement les constructions clivées marquent un degré d'émphase plus élevé et que leur distribution dépend de facteurs discursifs. Comme les pronoms personnels peuvent apparaître soit comme sujets clivés, soit comme prédicats clivés, nous pouvons discerner une corrélation entre la personne et la polarité et la préférence pour le clivage syntaxique. Puisqu'en arménien nous avons d'une part la construction clivée syntaxique biphrastique sans pronom vide et d'autre part la stratégie du mouvement d'auxiliaire/copule (monophrastique), la catégorie des pronoms personnels en tant que sujets clivés occupe une position intermédiaire sur ce continuum.

Comme la coexistence de constructions clivées et d'autres stratégies de marquage focal (in-situ/préverbal, particules ayant une affinité avec le focus) est typologiquement rare dans les langues du monde, il serait intéressant de comparer les données de l'arménien avec d'autres langues à marquage de focus préverbal (en particulier celles avec la stratégie de mouvement d'auxiliaire, comme les langues caucasiennes).

Nous avons tenté de dresser ici un tableau général des constructions clivées en arménien. Cependant, des recherches supplémen-

taires sont nécessaires pour une analyse plus approfondie de ces constructions d'un point de vue sémantique et pragmatique, ainsi que des pseudo-clivées présentées dans cet article. Outre l'arménien oriental et occidental, les deux variantes standard de l'arménien, l'intégration des dialectes arméniens dans cette recherche serait d'un grand intérêt pour compléter les données du continuum arménien moderne, notamment pour vérifier la validité de l'hypothèse de la grammaticalisation des constructions clivées vers le marquage d'auxiliaire préverbal/copule.

## Abréviations

1	1st person
2	2nd person
3	3rd person
1POSS	1st person possessive
2POSS	2nd person possessive
3POSS	3rd person possessive
ABL	ablative
ACC	accusative
AOR	aorist
AUX	auxiliary verb
CAUS	causative
COND	conditional mood
CONNEG	connegative participle
COP	copula
DAT	dative
DEF	definite article
DIST	distal
DO	direct object
DST1	destinative participle 1
EXIST	existential
GEN	genitive
IMP	imperative mood
INF	infinitive
INS	instrumental
IPFV	imperfective participle
LOC	locative
MED	medio-passive
MEDL	medial
NEG	negation
PFV	perfective participle

PL	plural
PREP	preposition
POST	postposition
PROG	progressive
PROH	prohibitive
PROX	proximal
PRS	present
PST	past
RES	resultative participle
SBJ	subjective participle
SBJV	subjunctive mood
SG	singular
SIM	simultaneous participle

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# The Armenian-Italian Joint Expedition at Dvin Report of 2021 Activities

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**Abstract** This paper aims to show the preliminary results of the first excavation campaign at Dvin/Dabil (Armenia), conducted by the Italian-Armenian research group in Autumn 2021. The excavations involved two areas in distinct sectors of the city. While the Armenian team re-opened the investigation in the so-called Market, the Italian group opened a new digging area in the south portion of the citadel, the South Tower area. Preliminary documentation of the material contexts and laboratory analysis of ceramic samples were included in this mission. Chemical analysis of pottery aims to define the origin of the raw materials used and, hopefully, provide some information about the places of production.

**Keywords** Medieval archaeology. Eurasia. Dvin/Dabil. Excavation. Urban topography.

**Summary** 1 Introduction. – 2 Excavations at the Dvin Market. – 2.1 Background to the Research. – 2.2 Activities of the 2021 Season. – 2.3 Materials. – 3 Excavations of the Lower Fortress. Area 1000. – 3.1 Background to the Research. – 3.2 Activities of the 2021 Season. – 3.3 Materials. – 3.4 Final Remarks on the 2021 Excavation of Area 1000.



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## 1 Introduction

From 10 October to 20 November 2021, the joint Armenian-Italian expedition represented by the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia and the University of Florence carried out archeological research on the site of Dvin, one of the largest medieval urban centres in Armenia. The site has a history of almost a century of archaeological research.

After a long break, this excavation season marked a new stage of Dvin archeological research.

The excavations concentrated on three sites [fig. 1]: 1) the area called 'Dvin Market' (4th site), where archeological excavations begun in the 1950s were left incomplete; 2) the south-eastern part of the Lower Fortress, where the Italian team initiated stratigraphic excavations in an area of 5 × 5 square metres (area 1000); 3) exploratory excavations were carried out about 200 metres south of the market in a residential-economic complex opened during a tree planting in the garden of one of the villagers.

The architectural structures and materials uncovered are datable to the 5th-13th centuries, but most material dates to the 12th-13th centuries.

Before starting the excavations proper, the joint Armenian-Italian team delineated the borders of the selected area to be excavated. Namely, work was planned in the so-called "Lower Fortress" (6th site) (Łafadaryan 1952, 24) and in the Dvin "Big Market" (4th site) (Łafadaryan 1982, 106). The names of these archeological sites refer to the work of previous expeditions, as well as the numbering of sites in the scholarly literature.

The Italian team, whose members represent the Chair of Medieval Archeology at the University of Florence, SAGAS Department, mainly concentrated their work in the "Lower Fortress" area.

*Expedition staff.* From Armenia: archaeologists Hamlet Petrosyan, Tatyana Vardanesova, Ruben Hovsepyan, architect Lyuba Kirakosyan, drone operator Vanik Yepiskoposyan, intern Victoria Hakobyan. From Italy: archaeologists Michele Nucciotti, Elisa Pruno, Leonardo Squilloni, Kristina Alecsic, armenologist Zaroui Pogossian, architect Laura Aiello.<sup>1</sup>

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Elisa Pruno: co-director of the Italian Archaeological Mission *The Making of the Silk Roads in Armenia*, ERC Project *ArmEn* researcher for Material Sources - section 3.3.



**Figure 1** The area of the monument with the indication of the excavation sites of 2021

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## 2 Excavations at the Dvin Market

### 2.1 Background to the Research

The “Big Market” or the “Market” of Dvin, which was numbered as the 4th site by the expedition in the 1950s (Łafadaryan 1982, 106-9), is located about 400 metres south-west of the Central district of Dvin, at the edge of Hnaberd village. This site was cleared in the early 1940s and explored in the 1950s and 1960s. Partial excavations outlined a large structure with four rows (9 columns in each row, and a total of 36 columns) of anchors and the remains of round columns, which occupied an area of about 3,000-3,500 square metres (Łafadaryan 1982, 106-8). Today the area marked by external signs is 1,500 square metres (50 × 30 m). As can be seen from the combination of old and new ground plans [fig. 2], the northern part of the building today shows no

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Lyuba Kirakosyan: Dr. in Architecture, Prof. of Architecture, Yerevan State University of Architecture and Construction - contributed to section 2.

Tatyana Vardanesova: Dr. in Archaeology, Senior Research Fellow, Yerevan State University - contributed to section 2.

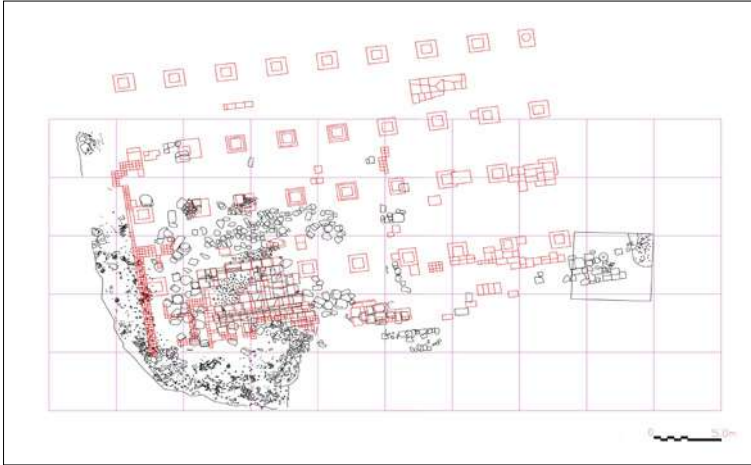
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external signs and is part of the adjacent private land. Considering the monumental architectural features of the structure, its extraordinary size, and the almost identical volume and sculpture of some anchors in comparison with the anchors in the central district of Dvin, Karo Łafadaryan considered it as a market and dated it to the 5th-7th centuries (Łafadaryan 1982, 34-5, 106). Subsequently, the next head of the Dvin expedition, Aram K'alant'aryan, assumed that the structure with 36 columns was a caravanserai, the architectural composition of which was not fully clarified (K'alant'aryan 1990, 171).

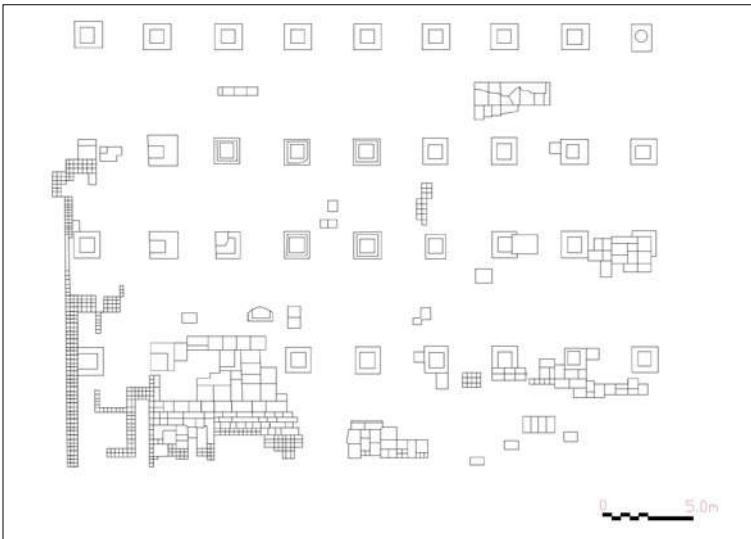
The plan prepared as a result of previous excavations [fig. 3] indicates traces of a wall made of burnt bricks preserved in some of the edges of the structure. Moreover, some parts of the floor of the building are also made of burnt bricks. According to the head of the expedition Karo Łafadaryan, this wall does not belong to the original building, as, according to him, the use of burnt bricks in Dvin started later (Łafadaryan 1982, 107). This opinion was also based on the presence of a trench 2-3 metres wide and 1 metre deep between the wall and the floor, which is visible today in the western and southern parts of the structure. The impression is that the paving and the wall are not immediately attached to each other. Moreover, almost all the anchors and fragments of the pillars were collected and deposited in the western trench. It was probably accumulated here for the purpose of future relocation, but that project was not implemented or remained incomplete [fig. 4]. Łafadaryan also hypothesised that the structure may have collapsed due to the earthquake of 893, only to be later rebuilt in the 10th century with the widespread use of brick and finally destroyed in the middle of the 13th century. Due to the economic activities of the local population, the building suffered greatly, as it was turned into a quarry for the villagers to procure bricks and stones for their buildings. The area was fenced off in the 1980s, but later the housekeeper of the adjacent property moved the northern part of the fence, thus including the northern part of the structure in his plot, where now there are no visible surface traces.

When it comes to the chronology of the use of burnt bricks in Dvin, although there is no specific study on this topic, according to scattered remarks in various works, it appears that burnt square bricks were widely used in Dvin since the 5th century (K'alant'aryan 1970, 20; Hakobyan 2005, 205; Hakobyan et al. 2015). Moreover, the walls, various architectural details, stairs etc. were lined with burnt brick. The measurements of the early bricks are remarkable: 22-5 × 20-5 × 4-5 cm. These are identical to the size of the market bricks: 23-5 × 22-3 × 5 cm [fig. 5]. Small lumps of pottery are mixed with clay, they are yellowish on the outside, pink on the inside. It should be noted that at least from the 10th century onwards, coloured bricks of different sizes were widely used in Dvin: 35 × 34 × 5 cm yellow bricks, 19-22 × 19-22 × 5 cm yellow and pink bricks, pink

split bricks ( $17.5 \times 17 \times 5$  cm in size, [fig. 6]). Let us add that the widespread use of burnt bricks in Armenia is attested at least since the 2nd century AD (Kanec'yan 2015). The initial impression is that the market bricks are closer to the early medieval findings. Hopefully, further excavations and subsequent physico-chemical analyses will provide data for a more accurate dating.



**Figure 2** Comparison of the previous plan of the market with the situation as of 2021



**Figure 3** Market plan according to previous research



**Figure 4** Accumulation of architectural details of the market in the western trench



**Figure 5** Complete bricks discovered during the excavations of 2021





**Figure 6** 12th-century bricks from the excavations of the structure at the western foot of the Citadel

## 2.2 Activities of the 2021 Season

The main goal of the expedition begun in 2021 was to fully open and study the structures of the Market, with an understanding that a complete study will require at least four to five years. The excavations in 2021 focused on the structural and chronological interrelationships between the paving of the structure and the outer brick wall. The north-western part of the structure was selected for excavation, where the remains of a brick wall were clearly visible next to the largest preserved part of the smooth paving. The surface of the building, which covers an area of 1,250 square metres (25 × 50 metres) was divided into squares of 5 × 5 m. Of the overall surface, a portion of 20 × 25 m in the north-western part [fig. 12] was singled out and the main excavations were concentrated there. For a more complete picture, the excavations were carried out in 2-4 squares at the same time. Considering the average thickness of the bricks - 5 cm, the step (depth) of the excavation layer was 5-10 cm. The excavated soil was sifted and accumulated off site. Most of the sifted soil was reused at the end of the excavations to cover a special waterproof layer stretched over the excavated sections. Note that this is our first attempt to preserve the excavations in such a way. We will be able to judge its effectiveness at the beginning of the 2022 season, when the soil layer will be removed.



**Figure 7** The appearance of the western part of the market before cleaning



**Figure 8** The appearance of the western part of the market after cleaning





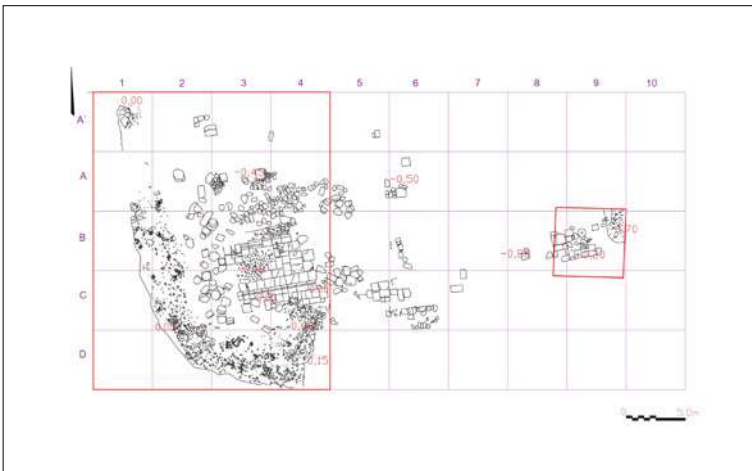
**Figure 9** Metal household waste removed from the excavation area



**Figure 10** Paving section in the eastern part



**Figure 11** A layer of bricks and lime mortar in the eastern part



**Figure 12** Plan of the western part of the market after the excavations of 2021



**Figure 13** The paving of the western part after cleaning



**Figure 14** The stream-hole passing through the centre of the western paving





**Figure 15** The lime concrete platform of the western wall and the arrangement of bricks



**Figure 16** The south-western corner of the brick wall



**Figure 17** The section of the southern wall



**Figure 18** The oval part of the base of the southern wall



**Figure 19** The outer plaster of the oval part of the southern edge



**Figure 20** Remains of a wall leading from the oval section to the paving





**Figure 21** Overview of the market at the end of the 2021 excavations



**Figure 22** General view of the southern edge of the market at the end of the excavations



**Figure 23** The general appearance of the western edge of the market at the end of the excavations

The site had been abandoned for years: the area was covered with rich vegetation and household waste [fig. 7]. First of all, it was necessary to clean the area from garbage. The area was cleaned twice, in May 2021 and just before the excavations, in October [fig. 8]. The excavations started on 11 October with the cleaning of the area, which took a week. A large amount of metal and household waste was taken out of the area [fig. 9]. After cleaning the area, modern garbage holes became visible there. Some of the potholes reached up to the pavement, as confirmed in the eastern part of the structure, where in a  $6 \times 6$  m trench, a part of the pavement was lined with flat slabs and a part of the anchorage [fig. 10]. In the upper part of the trench, a part of the collapsed wall was opened with fragments of lime concrete and burnt bricks [fig. 11]. Some of the holes were deep in the floor: their cleaning was left for the future, when the initial paving will be fully uncovered. As the floor of the structure and the supposed wall adjacent to it were better visible in the south-eastern part of the structure, excavations began from there, including squares A1-4, B1-4, C1-4, D2-4 [fig. 12].

First of all, in the central part of the excavation, the floor in the highest position was exposed (B3-4, C3-4 squares, about 80 square metres [fig. 13]). The opening of stream-holes in both parts of the pavement is especially noteworthy. This feature is not reflected in the previous plan. The northern stream-hole (length 2.20 m, width 14-15 cm,



depth 6-8 cm) has an interruption, which is probably a result of the reconstruction of the pavement. The southern stream-hole (length: 6.45 m, width: 14 cm, depth: 6-8 cm) definitely belongs to the original structure. Here, the paving was built with the water-channel in the longitudinal axis [fig. 14]. Such reclamation channels have been identified in medieval caravanserais (Selim, Haržis, Alnjajor), in the stables built near monasteries (Havuc' T'ar, St Sargis of Ošakan, Amaras) and in the barns of medieval villages (Ernjatap'). In our case it was probably located within the area of the building and likely had a sanitary-hygienic function.

After unearthing the paving, the excavations concentrated in squares A1-2, B1-2, C2, D2-4, at the level created by the collapse of the western and southern walls. Here, excavations of certain sections of the collapsed and excavated wall in the western part revealed horizontal layers of lime concrete and rows of burnt bricks placed in a horizontal position [figs 15-16]. The incision made in the southern part of the wall resulted in the laying of bricks, which were somewhat dilapidated as a result of further excavations, but placed in horizontal rows [fig. 17]. Some whole bricks were also found here. These findings also confirm that we are dealing with a stationary wall. It should be noted that that part of the southern side of the excavation is not marked on Karo Łafadaryan's map, while on his plan he marked a wall in the western part, which does not exist at present. It is possible that the wall was demolished by the residents after the excavations in order to remove bricks. In the southern part (square D4) at a depth of 0.75 m, the base of a wall with an oval layout was uncovered. It was lined with rough boulder blocks and lime concrete mortar [fig. 18]. From the outside it is covered with lime concrete plaster [fig. 19]. This is a very important piece of evidence in favour of the opinion that we are really dealing with a solid plaster wall that prevents the penetration of moisture. A slightly ruined wall branches from this wall to the paving [fig. 20]. We can assume that we are dealing with the entrance to the structure, but this assumption must be explored and clarified during the next excavation season.

To sum up, the architectural-structural situation revealed through the excavations of 2021 [figs 21-23] allows us to propose the following preliminary hypothesis: that the original structure had rich interior architectural solutions (tuff polished paving, tuff polished anchors, columns, caps). It also had burnt brick walls rising on a stone and lime foundation. It should be noted that the 5th-century Catholicos's Palace excavated in the central district of Dvin had a similar internal structure and layout (three rows of tuff anchors arranged in two rows). These are more massive type anchors decorated with triangular protrusions. The market with its volumetric and sculptural solutions was surrounded by a wall made of raw brick, and the floor was covered with clay (Łafadaryan, K'alant'aryan 2002, 62-5). We further

suggest that the paving of the market floor and the stream-holes were built taking into consideration sanitary-hygienic concerns, likely in view of its use for pack animals. Hopefully, further excavations of the market will allow us to test this initial hypothesis.

### 2.3 Materials

The largest number of findings are broken brick specimens, and in rare cases complete ones.

The total number of findings from the 2021 excavations is 1,760. All of them are approximately square, almost the same size (23.5 × 22.3 × 5 cm [fig. 5]), yellowish and pink in colour. There are only two fragments that bear fingerprints. Small pieces of gypsum decoration were found [fig. 24]. In other cases, the bricks are flat and do not have patterns or signs. Two fragments of refractory stamped bricks were found in one of the garbage wells. The brick is modern, but the stamp has not been deciphered yet [fig. 25]. The main mass of simple and glazed pottery originates from the upper excavated layers and belongs to the 12th-13th centuries. The fragments of ordinary pottery are made of white clay [fig. 26], and the fragments of glazed vessels are covered with green and three-coloured glasses: green, yellow and brown [fig. 27]. It is still difficult to date the structure or any part of it via glazed pottery. It should be noted that the last flourishing of the city dates back to the 12th and the first half of the 13th century, and glazed pottery from that time is abundantly scattered throughout the city.



**Figure 24** Fragments of patterned brick and gypsum decoration from the 2021 excavations



**Figure 25** Stamp-bearing brick, 20th century



**Figure 26** Fragments of ordinary pottery, 12th-13th centuries



**Figure 27** Fragments of glazed pottery, 12th-13th centuries

### 3 Excavations of the Lower Fortress. Area 1000

#### 3.1 Background to the Research

Armenia has been investigated through archaeology for almost two centuries, in different cultural and political conditions and under varying ideological and methodological frameworks (Maranci 2001). A widely discussed question is whether medieval-Islamic pottery productions in Armenia originated from local, Islamic and/or Eurasian know-how. Different authors alternately placed Armenia and the surrounding Caucasian regions as belonging to the “Anatolian-Transcaucasian province”, the “Mediterranean cultural world”, the “Iranian-Mesopotamian-Caucasian world”, the “Caspian-Aegean world”, the “Circumpontic cultural province” or the “Eurasian world” (K’alant’aryan et al. 2009).

The site of Dvin (Dabil in Arabic sources) is the main archaeological observatory located in the present day Republic of Armenia that can lead to a deeper understanding of ceramic production-consumption cycles, and that would make it possible to study in detail the relationship between the local community, the Christian and Islamic State(s) of the region, and Eurasian trade networks. To this end, the investigated stratigraphy of the site covers the period from the 4th to the 13th centuries CE, between the late Arsacid and Mongolian eras, thus providing solid ground for understanding if, how and when local “little traditions” (LaBianca 2007; Nucciotti, Pruno 2021, 84-8) developed into internationally traded/exported types.

In particular, Aram A. K’alant’aryan, in his comprehensive summary on Dvin (K’alant’aryan 1996), has highlighted a number of main issues that need to be clarified in order to assess the international role of the site in the frame of Eurasian ceramic technologies (and as a production hub). They have been reformulated as research objectives by the Florence University team of Medieval Archaeology, in order to use them for framing the following research tasks:

1. a global chrono-typology of Dvin pottery and particularly of Faience production;
2. special focus on the early medieval pottery of Dvin (4th-8th centuries);
3. a detailed study of stratigraphy in order to build a reliable stratigraphic sequence.

The Florence University SAGAS Department, in collaboration with the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, started research in Dvin in 2021 with the specific aim of answering the aforementioned research questions. The methodology adopted by the team aimed at a micro-stratigraphic analysis and recording of deposits and archi-

tructures, to be compared with published and unpublished stratigraphies made available to the project by the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of Armenia. The purpose was to enhance the time resolution of the Dvin site-formation process.

This year's excavations were combined with a survey, archaeometric analysis (thin-section petrography, XRD, and XRF of ceramics) and 3D modelling of strata and architectural units. In the future, comparisons will be carried out between the excavated materials and unpublished materials from the Dvin dig-house. We plan to report on these results in the 2022 Excavation Report. Through such an extensive approach we aim at better contextualising Dvin-Dabil within the cultural history of Eurasia and highlighting the new potential for scientific uses of the materials excavated at the site throughout the 20th century.



**Figure 28** Location of Area 1000 in the aerial photo of the Dvin archaeological site

### 3.2 Activities of the 2021 Season

Investigations by the Florence University team involved the opening of a stratigraphic excavation of a  $5 \times 5$  m area (Area 1000), located in a flat zone south of the citadel, more precisely between the latter and the excavations conducted around 2010 at the south tower of the curtain wall [fig. 28]. The 2021 excavation campaign focused on the area of the so-called 'south tower', which had already been investigated



previously. The earlier excavations, located immediately south of the digging area opened in 2021 (a 5 × 5 m square), exposed an articulated stratigraphic column that covers the chronological period between the 6th and the end of the 13th centuries. Moreover, the location of the new square was defined taking into consideration that this portion of the site, between the south tower area and the south slope of the citadel, had never been excavated before. Hence, it is hoped that this will allow us to establish a complete stratigraphic column, including the de-urbanisation phases of Dvin. On the other hand, as expected, the upper portion of the archaeological deposit was covered by considerable natural sediment (thickness of 0.90-1.20 m) made of washed-away soil from the upper portion of the citadel. The sediment (SUs 1000-1003, 1006) was composed of micro-layers (a few millimetres thick with abundant crushed stone fragments of very small dimensions superimposed on one another) with a great number of pottery fragments. It is noteworthy that all the sherds are laid horizontally, which can be attributed to the sliding down of the slope. The materials are mainly dated within a large temporal range (12th-14th centuries).<sup>2</sup> However, a few samples of Bronze Age pottery (polished on the external surface and with a fine and well-cooked black ware) were also found.

The first anthropic layers were identified in the eastern portion of the square. These (SUs 1004, 1005, 1007, 1011 - **fig. 29**) were characterised by orange and dark brown/black soil with masses of ash, which clearly displays that fire was lit in the given location. Those layers had a semi-circular shape, underlined by an irregular boundary of black ash and burnt soil on the western and northern sides, while they continue under the southern and eastern sections of the digging area. Currently, we cannot identify a chronological framework for the fire, since the excavation has yet to be completed; however, we can hypothesise that it follows the phases of decline and progressive de-urbanisation of the site (second half of the 13th century according to traditional interpretations). In these layers, a conspicuous number of pottery fragments and abundant animal bones were found. These finds show burning traces only in a few cases. After a preliminary analysis, the ceramic context seems to refer to a timeframe between the 12th and 14th centuries.

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**2** From an interpretive perspective it is necessary to take into consideration the time spans of most chronologies of Armenian pottery classification, due to the lack of stratigraphic excavations conducted with up-to-date methods. The main aim of the post-excavation analysis will be to study all these materials against the stratigraphic column established by us in order to determine a more detailed chronology.



**Figure 29** SU 1007, with ash and charcoal traces

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In the eastern portion of the square, the layers with fire traces covered a round floor made by a preparation of clayish-sandy soil of different textures – soft and plastic in the southern portion, more compact to the north. This preparation (SUs 1012, 1016, 1010) appeared as a series of pourings with a South-North orientation (according to their physical relations). The upper surface of the layers created a horizontal plan (deepness between 0.76 and 0.78 m). Actually, these layers are *in situ* and their removal is one of the goals of the next season. However, the scarcity of material and the widespread presence of coal have already been noted. Finally, on the surface of MSU 1010, it was possible to recognise the negative imprints of three squared bricks aligned with West-East orientation [fig. 30]. Even more than the others, this element seems to support the interpretation of those layers as an open-area walking surface, on which the architectural elements stood in a non-determinable period.





Figure 30 Brick imprints in SU 1010



Figure 31 Sample in NE corner of Area 1000

In order to clarify the function and composition of SU 1010 - the northern portion of the ground level - and to obtain the widest stratigraphic column for this season, a small trench of  $1.50 \times 1$  m was made at the NE corner of the digging area [fig. 31]. Immediately under SU 1010, a small portion of an ash layer (SU 1018) with frequent little fragments of charcoal, lumps of mortar and pottery fragments

was intercepted. Because of the scarce visibility of this layer, located in the south-eastern corner of the trench, it is not possible to suggest an interpretation about its formation. However, the presence of an ash deposit under SU 1010 corroborates the hypothesis that the latter was a floor plan and not a vertical structure. Under this, three layers (SUs 1021, 1023, 1025, from the earlier to the later one) of compact clayish soil with lumps of mortar, fragments of charcoal and fragments of mud bricks were uncovered. The mud brick fragments were made of a mixture of compact clay, rod-shaped organic inclusions and chamotte. Even if it is not possible to suggest reliable hypotheses about those actions because of the restricted size of the trench, they appear like a series of shallow layers of preparation for the ground level embodied by SUs 1010, 1012 and 1016.

### 3.3 Materials

As for the finds, abundant quantities of ceramics and animal bones were found, but the presence of metals (including a coin datable to the end of the 12th century) was also widespread. Ceramics, which undoubtedly constitute the most represented class of artefacts, have been the subject of a preliminary analysis, aimed at their categorisation according to technologies of production and chronology (based on existing studies). Most of them are unglazed ceramics (sometimes externally decorated), but a conspicuous quantity of glazed pottery was also found (green glazed on white engobe, engobes and engraved with transparent/light yellow glaze overlaid, engobes and painted with transparent/yellow glaze clear, engobes and engobes with engravures under blue/blue glaze, faience or fritware with blue or blue) [fig. 32].



Figure 32 Glazed pottery sherds from Area 1000

During this field season we selected all the materials to be sent for archaeometric analyses. All the sherds were documented photographically. Moreover, a photogrammetric survey was applied to each fragment that helps identify the shape of the original pottery article. This last step is crucial for carrying out a metric survey and a 3D model of each piece [fig. 33]. The next step is to complete the documentation of the fragments by calculating the IMN (Individual Minimum Number) of each typology found thus far.

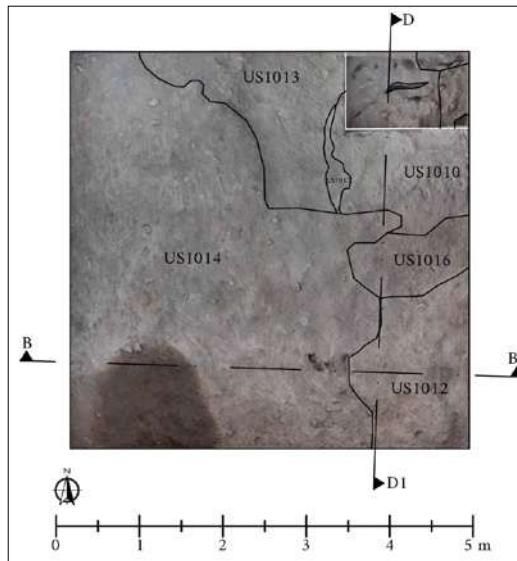


Figure 33 Photogrammetric survey process and 3D modelling of pottery from Area 1000

In order to better understand the production chain of the glazed and unglazed pottery, archaeometric analyses were carried out.<sup>3</sup>

### 3.4 Final Remarks on the 2021 Excavation of Area 1000

In conclusion, the 2021 archaeological season in area 1000, by the south tower portion of Dvin's citadel, allowed the team to investigate the most recent portion of the stratigraphic deposit<sup>4</sup> which can be framed in a chronological horizon contemporary and/or subsequent to the phase of decline of the city (second half of the 13th century). Under a thick natural sediment, anthropic actions referable to two actions and phases were intercepted: preparation of a floor and evidence of burning activities. Future research will aim at identifying and documenting the abandonment phases of urban occupation in area 1000 and to expose 13th century occupation layers (tasks for the 2022 season).



**Figure 34** Plan at the end of this year's excavation and running/cumulative section lines

**3** Laboratory analyses were carried out in collaboration with the Laboratory of Archaeometrical Analysis, Department of Geological Sciences, University of Brno (Czech Republic). The following analyses were performed: 1. Non-destructive analysis of glaze chemical composition by tablet-top ED-XRF; 2. A polychrome glaze map by SEM-EDX; 3. Petrographic analysis and glazes by SEM-EDX; 4. LA-ICP-MS.

**4** [figs 34-7] respectively represent the plan at the end of this year's excavation, B-B1 section, D-D1 section and the Harris Matrix for area 1000.

The elaboration of the stratigraphic context allows us to prepare the Allen Matrix and to define the first phasing of this Area, as we can see in [fig. 37]:

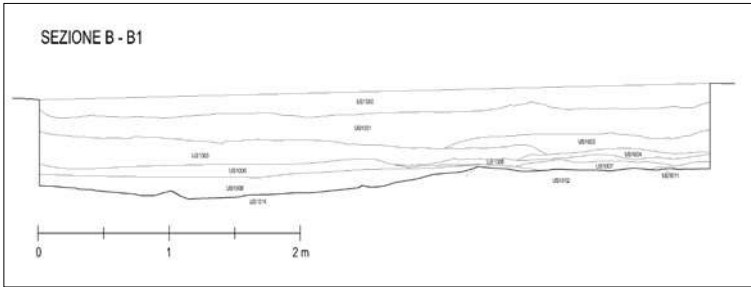


Figure 35 B-B1 section

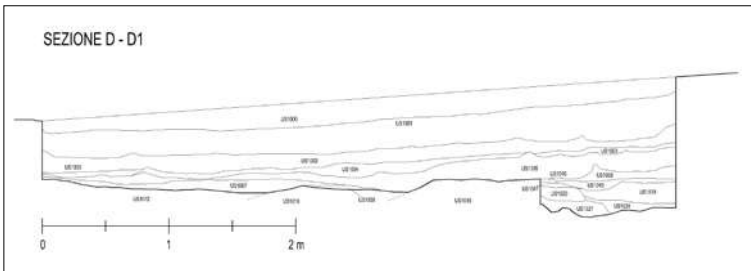
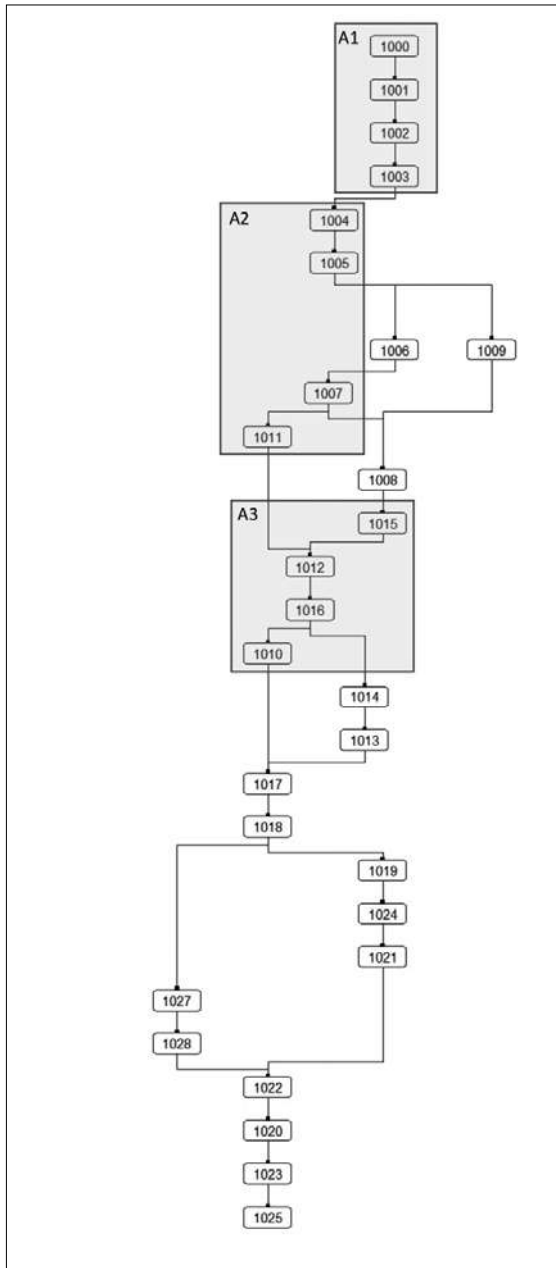


Figure 36 D-D1 section



**Figure 37** Area 1000 Harris Matrix for season 2021  
 A1: thick natural sediment made of washed-away soil from the upper portion of the citadel, the more recent phase; A2: first anthropic phase recognised in area 1000, with burnt traces; A3: open area surface, with negative traces of bricks

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