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# ARMENO-PARTHO-SOGDICA \*

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## Abstract

The article deals with the Parthian lexical elements of East Iranian (Sogdian) origin in the Armenian language. The author gives a general outline of the problem and provides several new identifications.

The numerical aspect of the Iranian lexical elements in the Armenian language is so significant, and the Iranian loan-words are so organically adapted and integrated—both phonetically and semantically—in the Armenian vocabulary, that the view of the Iranian origin of Armenian had been the prevailing approach to the historical affiliation of this language until the last decades of the 19th century. This view was rigorously maintained by such authorities in the classical comparative linguistics as Paul de Lagard and Friedrich Müller. The Iranian nature of Armenian has been challenged only in 1875 by Heinrich Hübschmann who was able, by analysing the Iranian elements of Armenian, to show that the latter constitutes a separate branch of Indo-European (see Hübschmann 1875). At the same time, he pointed to the differing layers of Iranisms with regard to the chronology and sources of these elements in the Armenian vocabulary. In 1897, H. Hübschmann published his fundamental monograph, the *Armenische Grammatik*, which is still the most complete collection of the Iranian borrowings in Armenian. It includes a detailed analysis of 686 lexemes and 217 personal names of Iranian provenance in Classical and Middle Armenian. Hübschmann names these forms as Persian, though already in 1895 in his *Persische Studien*—the first comprehensive study on the historical phonology

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\* An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Second Biennial Convention on Iranian Studies, organised by the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies, held in Yerevan, Department of Iranian Studies, Yerevan State University; Caucasian Centre for Iranian Studies, Yerevan (April 2-5, 2004).

of Persian—alongside with additions and extensive commentaries on Paul Horn's *Grundriss der Neupersischen Etymologie*, he himself identified a considerable North-Western lexical stratum in Persian.

At the beginning of the 20th century a significant amount of texts in Parthian, Middle Persian, Sogdian, Bactrian, and in Khotan Saka were discovered in Eastern Turkestan. For the Armenistics the emergence of the Parthian Manichaean texts gained a particular importance. Formerly Parthian (named “Chaldeisch=Pehlevi”) had been mainly known by the Sasanian inscriptions of the 3rd century A.D. and the sealings. In 1904, soon after the first publication of the Manichaean texts from Eastern Turkestan, prepared by Fr. Müller (1904), Fr. Andreas from Göttingen<sup>1</sup> in his letter to Danish Iranologist Arthur Christensen defined a number of Manichaean texts as Parthian.<sup>2</sup> Andreas managed also to identify the language of the Sogdian Manichaean texts previously considered by Müller as an unknown “Pahlavi dialect”, the language of the Manichaean communities in the Turfan oasis (Müller 1908).

The most intensive penetration of the Parthian lexemes into Armenian took place during the reign of the younger branch of the Arsacid (Arm. *Aršakowni*) dynasty in Armenia from the years of 53 to 428 A.D. The Arsacids, originating from the Eastern Iranian tribal confederation of the Πάρνοι (or Ἄπαρνοι) and speaking one of the Saka dialects, invaded Parthia around 250 B.C., deposed the Seleucid satraps and were quickly assimilated by the Parthians; however, they managed to instill a modest layer of East Iranian lexicon into the vocabulary of Parthian. In the second half, or at the end of the 3rd century B.C., on the basis of the Aramaic alphabet, the Parthian written language with plenty of Aramaic ideograms emerged. The earliest monuments of the Parthian literature consist of more than 2750 economic documents on ostraca from the 2nd-1st centuries B.C.,

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<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Carl Andreas (1846-1930), the great German Orientalist of Armenian, German, and Malayan descent. We owe several important discoveries in the Iranian historical linguistics to Andreas: as one who identified the “Arsacid” (Parthian) and Sogdian texts in the Turfan materials; and the first in the European scholarship who recognised the ancient Daylamites as the remote ancestors of the Zāzās (Dimilis) (*apud* V. Minorsky 1932: 17: “l’ingénieuse théorie de F. C. Andreas sur l’origine dailamite des tribus zaza-Dimla”). However, the Daylamite-Zāzā ethno-genetic connection had been proposed much earlier by the Armenian author Andranik in a local publication in Armenian, in Tiflis (see Andranik 1900: 161, fn. 1).

<sup>2</sup> This letter was published in Copenhagen in the Danish daily newspaper *Berlingske Tidende* (11 July, 1905).

found by archaeologists during the excavations of the city complexes of Old and New Nisa in Turkmenistan (18 km from Ashgabad in the territory of the village of Bagir, a name derived from the Old Iranian \**Patigrabana*- “custom service”).<sup>3</sup>

The Arsacids in Parthia, as well as in Armenia, were familiar with the Hellenistic culture and art. Suffice it to mention that the Parthian king Orodes the Second and his relative, the Armenian king Artavasdes (Artavazd), one summer day of the year 53 B.C., were watching the *Bacchae* of Euripides, when the Parthian commander Silaces (Shirak) presented the head of the Roman commander Marcus Crassus, killed at the battle of Carrhae, on a silver platter to Orodes.

The studies on the Middle Iranian languages after the discovery of the new texts in Eastern Turkestan, revealed a substantial amount of Iranisms in Armenian, which Hübschmann had not marked or had ascribed to the genuine Armenian lexicon.<sup>4</sup>

Giancarlo Bolognesi thoroughly investigated the historico-phonetic developments characterising the North Western Parthian and South Western Middle Persian loan-words in Armenian, as well as the differences between the two strata of Parthianisms—the early (“paleoparthico”) and the late (“neoparthico”) ones (see, e.g. Bolognesi 1960; idem 1962). It has been stated that Parthianisms could be found both in the everyday Armenian lexicon—nouns, adjectives, adverbs, denominative verbs, and in the administrative and religious vocabulary, whereas the Middle Persian loan-words are mainly traced in the administrative, military and, to a certain extent, in the religious terminology (often as parallels to the Parthian respective forms; cf. e.g., Arm. *mogpet*, from the early Parth. \**mogpet*, Manich. Parth. *maybed* vs. Arm. *movpet*, from the early Middle Persian *movpet*—“the highest Zoroastrian priest”).

The productivity of verb formation in Armenian from the Iranian stems can be compared to the New Persian denominatives from the Arabic nouns (cf. *fahmīdan* “to understand”, *fahmānīdan* “to explain, to make somebody understand”, from Arabic *fahm* “comprehension, understanding”), and also with the late Khwarezmian (12-14cc.) de-

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<sup>3</sup> Parthian was a living language probably until the 6th-7th centuries A.D. The latest inscriptions in Parthian were found in Lax-mazār near Birjand in Khorasan.

<sup>4</sup> The bibliography of the most important works on this topic can be found in Schmitt 1983.

nominatives from the Arabic lexemes (cf. *bismīr-* (*bsmyr-*) “to sacrifice the animal”, from Arab. *bismillāh*; *tafsīrī-* (*tfsyry-*) “to comment the Qur’an”, from Arab. *tafsīr*, etc.—see Benzing 1983: 178, 611).

The Iranisms in the Armenian lexicon represented by the Armenian phonemic alphabet have an important role for the clarification and reconstruction of the phonetic structure of their Parthian and Middle Persian equivalents. The fact that Armenian has preserved many lexemes lost in Parthian is also of great value for the history of the Iranian languages. For instance, *erašx* “guarantee”, from Old Iranian \**raxši-* (cf. Old Indian *rakṣ-* “to defend”); *hraparak* “place, square”, from Old Iranian \**frapādaka-*, borrowed from an unattested Parthian dialect, where the prefix *fra-* is reflected as *hra-*, cf. Syriac *hrapadak* (*hrpdk*), also Armenian *hraman* “order”, *hramatar* “manager, supervisor” along with Parthian *framān*, *framadār*; *nirh* “drowse”, from Old Iranian \**nidrā-* (cf. Vedic *nidrā*) (see Hübschman 1897: 204, No 444); *parwand* “fetters, chains”, from Old Iranian \**pādabanda-* (Old Indian *pādabandhā-*); *patowhan* “window”, from Old Iranian \**pati-frāna-*); *šēn* “settlement, village” (Avestan *šaiiana-* “dwelling, abode”), a form, which is probably concealed by the Aramaic ideogram QRYT’ (*qarītā*) “village” in the Parthian documents from Nisa; etc.

The extant written materials in Sogdian are much richer than those in Parthian; they provide a huge bulk of word-forms, which enable to identify Sogdian equivalents of several Armenian Parthianisms deprived of attestations in the original texts. Cf., for instance, Arm. *erax* “mouth” having a fair parallel in Sogdian, *raxā* (*rx’h*) “chink, mouth”, attested in a Buddhist Sogdian fragment from the Central Asian Collection of the Institute of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg (Ragoza 1980: 33, 107) and in a dipinti accompanying the wall-paintings discovered in 1964 at Afrasiab (the site of Old Samarkand). The beginning of the inscription, containing the speech of the ambassador of the ruler of Čayānyān (a principality in the Surkhandarya valley) before the king Avarhumān of Samarkand (50-s of the 7th century A.D.), reads: “When the king Avarhumān (from the clan of) Unshu approached, (the ambassador) opened his mouth (*raxā āpānāy*) and said...”. The Sogdian *raxā* is inherited by Yaghnobi, the descendant of one of the Sogdian dialects; Yaghn. *rax* “mouth, aperture” was recorded at the 20-s of the last century by M. S. Andreev and E. M. Peščereva (1957: 312-313); cf. also New Pers. *rax* “crack, chink”. Armenian obviously never had direct contacts with Sogdian, therefore one can assume, that the Middle Iranian \**rax(ā)* “mouth,

crack” existed also in Parthian, though this word is not attested in the available Parthian materials.

As early as in 1916, Robert Gauthiot (1916: 125-129) pointed at some Armenian-Sogdian parallels: Arm. *moyr* “beggary, alms”, *muram* “to beg”, Sogd. *mωδ* (*mōδ*) id., from Old Iranian \**mud-* (not attested in Old Indian); Sogd. *məyδē* (*mγδ’k*), *məyδaw* (*mγδ’w*) “fruit”, Arm. *mirg* (from Iranian \**migda-*, with *metathesis* \**midga-*); later, Parth. *miḡḡ* “fruit”, in *miḡḡēn* (*myḡdyyn*) “of fruit” (also *miḡḡdag* “fruit”) was detected also in the Manichaean texts (Boyce 1977: 59). Gauthiot noted also the Armenian *margarē* “wizard, magician, foreteller”, comparing it with Sogdian *mārkarē* (*m’rkr’y*, *m’rkr’k*) id., from Old Iranian \**manθra-kara-* (Avestan *manθra-*, Old Indian *mántra-* “speech, encomium, incantation”), cf. also Manichaean Parthian *mārēgar* (*m’rygr*), as well as probably New Persian *mārgīr* “wizard”, literally, by a *Volks-etymologie*, “snake seizer”, hence “Schlangenbeschwörer” (Yarshater, *apud* Henning 1958: 93, Anm.1). Among the Sogdian words penetrated into Armenian *via* Parthica Gauthiot placed also Armenian *kari* “very”, from Sogd. *kādi/e* (*k’ḡy*, from Old Iranian \**kadiya-*<sup>5</sup>); Arm. *baw* “ample, abundant, enough”, Buddh. Sogd. (SCE, 290) *vāw* (*β’w*) “satisfy, satisfaction”.

Subsequently, Henning, examining the Armenian-Parthian and Armenian-Sogdian lexical correspondences, noted that there were some other Eastern forms in the Manichaean Parthian texts, including *hand* “blind” (West Iranian *kōr*); *nixrēs-* “blame, abuse” (from Old Iranian \**nixrausaya-*, not revealed in West Iranian); *izyōl-* “listen”, with *-l-* from *-š-*, along with *niyōš-* “listen”, *frayōš-* “postpone” (cf. New Persian *faryōl* “postponement, extention”, possibly from Bactrian); *širgāmag* “friend” (cf. *širkāmagīf* (*šyrkmkpy*)) in the Parthian version of Narseh’s inscription in Paikuli); the proper names *Šir*, *Širak*, *Širkirpak*, *Širfarn* in the documents from Nisa with the East Iranian *šir* “good”, cf. Avestan *sīra-*, Old Indian *śrīlā-* (Henning 1958: 93-94). Henning suggested that the East Iranian forms in Parthian, and through Parthian in Armenian, were connected with the substrate layer in Parthian left by the tribal confederation of the Πάρφοι, the clan of the Arsacids.

Following Gauthiot, Emile Benveniste (1964: 3), examining the East Iranian anthroponyms *Šawasp* (< \**Syāwāspa-*) and *Šawarš* (Avestan *Sīāvaršan-*) in Armenian, assumed that they entered Armenian

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<sup>5</sup>Hübschmann (1897: 166) suggested the connection of Arm. *kari* with *kar* “power”, but could not find the Iranian equivalent.

from the East Iranian epic tradition: Old Iranian \*syāwa- “black” is reflected in Parthian as syāw (sy’w), hence Armenian *seaw*, in Sogdian šāw (š’w) (Yaghn. šōw), Khwarezmian sāw (s’w), and in Ossetic *sau*.<sup>6</sup>

The Armenian *tarāžam* “untimely, inopportune, inappropriate” (Sogdian *taržamanu* (*trzmnw*), *taržamanē* (*trzmny*), *taržamančīk* (*trzmncyk*) id.) was also referred to by Benveniste (ibid.: 5) as a Parthian loan-word in Armenian. Possibly, all the Armenian words with the prefix *tar-* are derived from Parthian; to hitherto known Parthian forms with *tar-* can be added also *tarkōf* (*trkwp*) “tramontana, ultramontane” in the documents from Nisa—an adjective used with the ideogram ’TPH (Aramaic *itapa*, from Accadian): ’TPH *trkwp* (*yōy tarkōf*) “irrigating channel (named) Tramontana”.

Among the Armenian-Sogdian lexical convergences Benveniste (ibid.: 6) put also the Armenian *patšač* “corresponding, appropriate”, *patšačem* “to agree”, from \**patsač-*, with the assimilation *s-č > š-č*, cf. Sogd. *patsāč-* (*pts’č-*) “to arrange, order”. I assume, that the Armenian *kaušik*, *kōšik* “boot, shoe” (Hübschmann 1897: 173-174), *kauškakar* “shoemaker” can be connected not only with New Persian *kafš*, *kafš-gar*, but also with the supposed Parthian \**kafš*, cf. Sogd. *kafš* (*kβš*) “boot”, Yaghn. *kafš* “shoe, galosh” (Andreev/Peščereva: 269), as well as in Yazghulami *kāfš*, Oroshori *kāpič* “shoe, clog”, etc.

He also compared Armenian *varm* “hunting net” with Sogd. *warmīčya* (*wrm’yčyh*) attested in a Buddh. text (TSP: 15, l-s. 271-274) in the following passage: *anyu awē šu warmīčya patxwāyānd tuti anyu awē wivāndē ti anyu wyā dāmē* “one (lit. another) (animal) is killed in the hunting net, another one—in the (hunting) snare, and another one—in a trap” (Benveniste 1964: 31). The Armenian verb *zenul* “to kill, sacrifice” was connected with the Sogdian word *zēn* (*zyn*, *zyyn*) “knife, dagger, weapon” (ibid.: 33), though as a source for the Armenian denominative, Parthian (or Middle Persian) *zēn* “weapon, sword” could also act (Boyce 1977: 105).<sup>7</sup> From the Sogdian compounds penetrated into Armenian through Parthian, Benveniste mentioned *warδyōn* (*wrdywn*) “the colour of rose, pink”, Armenian *vardagoyñ* (cf. New Persian *gulgōn*).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the Khwarezmian legend on the coins of the kings of Kwarezm in the middle of the 8th century A.D.—*MR Y MLK’ Sāw(ə)šfan(n)* “king s’wšpn”, lit. “(possessing) the glory of Syavush”; in the Sogdian legend on the same coins—*Sāwašfarn* (*š’wšprn*).

<sup>7</sup> As a possible parallel of the Arm. form, H. Ačařean (1973: 91) regarded Sogdian *ōzyān* (’wzy’n) “slaughter, murder”.

An interesting case of a Sogdian grammatical formant—the Nom.-Acc. ending *-ē/-ī*—in several Armenian words has been demonstrated by H. W. Bailey (1930: 19). He compares the *-ī* ending in such Arm. forms as *patasxani* “answer”,<sup>8</sup> *aržani* “worthy”, and *asori* “Syrian” with *-ī* in Christ. Sogd. *pāčaynī/ē* (*p’čyny*) (see below), or *-ī* in Christ. Sogd. *ramakānī* “people, heathen”, etc.

Most recently Garnik Asatryan (1989: 156–157, 160) has indicated some other Armenian-Sogdian correspondences, which may have Parthian intermediaries. He listed, for instance, Arm. *bowrvar* “cencer”, Buddh. Sogd. *βōδvaran* (*bwδβrn*) id. (VJ, 14, 94), from Old Iranian \**baudi-barana-* (Benveniste 1945: 71); Arm. *patiw* “honour, respect”, Buddh. Sogd. *patβay-* (*ptβy*) id. (SCE, 74, 521), from OIr. \**pati-baya-*; Arm. *soyr-* (*suram*) “to hurry, hasten”, Buddh. Sogd. *swδ-* (*sōδ-*) id., from OIr. \**saud-* (\**sud-*) (Bailey 1979: 12; also Considine 1984: 56, fn. 1); Arm. *awazan* “pool, pond”, Buddh. Sogd. *āwaz(e)* (Buddh. ”w’zh, ”wz’k, Manich. ”wzyy) “pond, lake, swamp” (TSP: 119, l-s. 8, 30, emended in VJ: 136; GMS, Add., § 1056; Szemerényi 1977: 243),<sup>9</sup> from OIr. \**ā-waz-a-* (*āna-*) (Asatryan, *ibid.*); Arm. *katak* “joke, game”, Buddh. Sogd. *kāte* (*k’t’k*), id. (VJ, 283, 288), Kwarezmian *k’t* (Benveniste 1945: 73),<sup>10</sup> etc.

<sup>8</sup> The reference by I. Gershevitch in GMS, § 674 to H. W. Bailey’s mentioned paper for qualifying Sogd. *pāčaynī* and Arm. *patasxani* as etymologically related forms, I think, is a result of misunderstanding. H. W. Bailey meant, of course, the common endings, not the words. The Arm. form, being an Iranism, is derived from OIr. \**pati-sahwan-*, while Sogd. *pāčaynē* goes back to a quite different etymon (see below). Deplorably, this misunderstanding has crept from GMS into the new publications on Sogdian as well (cf., e.g. Gharib 1995: 256, N 6409).

<sup>9</sup> However, Henning seems to be the first who compared the Sogdian form with its Armenian equivalent. In a handwritten marginal note to the respective *loci* in his *Sogdica* (Henning 1940: 51), sent to me by the author many years ago, he wrote: “Sogd. ”wz- : cf. *āvaze* ‘lake, swamp’, Minorsky, *Ḥudud*, 56, 185, and Arm. *awazan* ‘pond’, etc.”. Pahlavi *ābzān* “bath” hardly corresponds to Sogdian ”wzh (as in Zarshenas 2004: 247), though the Classical New Persian *ābzān* with the meaning “pond” might be indeed a folk etymological adaptation of the latter. The Pahlavi form is a simple compound of *āb* “water”, with the verbal stem *zan-* “strike, hit” (cf. Kurdish *āvē xistin* “to bath (lit. hit, strike the water)”). Also there is no way to explain *āwaze* as a borrowing from Akkadian *absū* (Sumerian *abzū*) “deep water, etc.” (*ibid.*: 248); the similarity of forms and meanings are surely adventitious.

<sup>10</sup> Despite the fact that this word occurs also in Middle Persian (*kādag* (*k’t’k*) id.), Arm. *katak* is most probably borrowed from an early Parthian \**kātak*; presumably, the Pahlavi form itself should be a Parthianism, as in the New Iranian area this lexeme is attested mainly among the North-Western dialects. Cf., e.g., Joushaqani *koy* “game, play”, Zaza *kay* (Asatryan 1995: 410); Abyeanei *kāya/e* id. (Asatryan, *Field Materials*), etc.

Asatrian (ibid.: 156) refers also to an Armenian-Sogdian phraseological parallel: Arm. *yowłi arkanem* (*yowłarkem*) “to send, let go (lit. “throw to the road)””, Buddh. Sogd. *rāθu wāč-* (*r’θwh w’č-*) id. (VJ, 1056).

Here are some other Sogdian lexemes, etymologically related to the Armenian Parthianisms, which are not attested in the available texts in Parthian.

Manich. Sogdian *kartarē* (*krtry*), Pl. *kartarti* (*krtrtyy*) “insidious, cunning” (GMS: 40, § 249, n. 1), = Arm. *čartar* “expeditious, agile” (cf. Hübschmann 1897: 189, where the Armenian *čartar* is compared to Avestan *čaratar-* “dodger, contriver”);

Christ. Sogdian *nizand* (*nznt*) “humble, poor”, the Manich. Sogdian abstract noun *nizandyā* (*nzndy’h*) “humility, humbleness” (from Old Iranian \**hunazanta-*) = Armenian *hnazand* “subordinate, obedient” (Henning, *apud* GMS: 61, § 397);

Sogd. *pātčaynē/ī*, *pāčaynē/ī* (*p’tcyny(y)*, *p’cyny*, *pcyny*) “answer, reply letter” (cf. Hebrew *patšagn*), from OIr. \**pati-čagnaka-* = Arm. *patčēn* “copy of an official letter”.

Buddh. Sogdian *pačārt* (*pč’rt*) “because of, as a result”, Christ. Sogdian *pačaru* (*pč’rw*) “instead”, from Old Iranian \**pati-kart-*, \**pati-karam* = Armenian *patčaraw* id., *patčar* “motive, cause”, from Old Iranian \**pati-čarana-* (Henning, *apud* GMS: 39, § 247, cf. also 105, § 674, n. 1);

Buddh. Sogdian *iwang* (*yw’ank*) “joint”, from Old Iranian \**wi-wanka-*, Iron Ossetic *wäng*, *ong*, Digor. *iong* “part of body, limb” (cf. Old Indian *vañk-* “bend, curve”) = Armenian *yawd* “joint, articulation” (Henning, *apud* GMS: 35, § 220, n. 1; Abaev 1973: 228-229; Benveniste 1959: 14-15);

Buddh. Sogdian *arn* (or *aran*) (*’rn*, *’rnh*) “misdeed, sin, defect”, *ark* (*’rk*, *’rkh*) “work, job”, Yaghn. *ark*, Waxi *yark*, from Old Iranian \**ar-* “to work”, Khotan Saka *ārra-* “sin, misdeed”, Avestan *arənač-čāēša-* “working for reward” = Armenian *arnem*, *arar* “to do” (Bailey 1979: 22-23). According to Hübschmann (1897: 420), this verb belongs to the genuine vocabulary of Armenian.

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