

## The place of Armenian in the Indo-European language family: the relationship with Greek and Indo-Iranian

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The dialectal position of Armenian has attracted the attention of Armenologists ever since Heinrich Hübschmann (1875/1877) proved that Armenian does not belong to the Iranian group of Indo-European languages and should be treated as an independent branch of the Indo-European family. It can be argued that there are a large number of connections between Armenian, Greek and Indo-Iranian on the one hand (set A), and between Armenian and Greek on the other (set B). The latter set of lexical agreements also involves European branches of the Indo-European language family, a large portion of which should be explained in terms of substrate rather than Indo-European heritage.

If we collate the two sets of correspondences, we observe that both sets have a roughly equal number of lexical agreements in the semantic fields of, e.g., physical world, fauna, animal husbandry and human body. As far as the domains of flora and agriculture are concerned, however, in A we find zero and five lexemes respectively, whereas B has 13 lexemes for each domain. Especially remarkable are sets of correspondences within a narrow semantic group, e.g. the three designations of plants of the legume family, all of Mediterranean origin: *oloṛn* ‘pea, bean’, *ospn* ‘lentil’, and *siseṛn* ‘chick pea’. Interestingly, all three Armenian words display an additional *-n* and belong to the *an*-declension class.

Another remarkable difference is that, in the domain of technical activities, set A has lexemes with more general meanings, such as ‘bond’, ‘grave’ and ‘threshold’, whereas B displays a number of specific technical terms such as ‘bridge’, ‘drying implement’, ‘hinge’, ‘pillar’, ‘potter’s wheel’ and ‘rein’.

### Table set A

Lexical isoglosses: Armenian, Greek and Indo-Iranian

physical world, time, space

Proto-form	Gloss	Sanskrit	Iranian	Armenian	Greek
*p <sub>1</sub> h <sub>1</sub> u-	Pleiades		*parūjainī-	alawunkʻ	Πλειάδες
*polio-/ieh <sub>2</sub>	wave; grey	(palitá-)	*parya-	ali-kʻ	πολιός, -ιάς
*sm(H)-eh <sub>2</sub> -	year	sāmā-	(ham-)	am, -a-	
*ṅ-b <sup>h</sup> ud <sup>h</sup> no-	bottomless	a-budhná-	MP a-bun	andund-, -o-	
A*sru-ti-	stream, etc.	srutí-		aṛu, i-stem	ῥύσις
B*sr(o)u-to-	stream, etc.	srótas-	OP rautah-	aṛu, -o-	ῥυτός
*h <sub>2</sub> re <sub>u</sub> -i-	sun	ravi-		arew	
*pro-h <sub>2</sub> en <sub>h</sub> 1-	air, breeze	prāṇá-	*frāna-	eran	
*loukeno-	luminous	rocaná-	raocana-	lusin, -o-	

* <i>prH<sub>2</sub>o-</i>	east./south.	<i>pūrva-</i>	<i>paurua-</i>	<i>haraw, -o-</i>
* <i>h<sub>3</sub>meig<sup>h</sup>-o-</i>	cloud, mist	<i>meghā-</i>	<i>maēya-</i>	<i>mēg, -o-</i>
* <i>kHl-eh<sub>2</sub></i>	stone, rock	<i>śilā-</i>		<i>sal, -i- (-a-)</i>
* <i>kub<sup>h</sup>-ro-</i>	shiny, pure	<i>śubhrā-</i>	Khot. <i>suraa-</i>	<i>surb, -o-</i>

### human, age, kinship

Proto-form	Gloss	Sanskrit	Iranian	Armenian	Greek
* <i>h<sub>2</sub>nēr</i>	man	<i>nār-</i>	<i>nar-</i>	<i>ayr, gen. arn</i>	<i>άνήρ</i>
A * <i>ǵerH-</i>	old	<i>jarás-</i>	<i>zar-</i>	<i>cer</i>	<i>γέρας</i>
B * <i>ǵerHont-</i>	old	<i>járant-</i>	Oss. <i>zæronđ</i>	<i>cer-un(-i)</i>	<i>γέρων</i>
* <i>mṛto-</i>	mortal	<i>-mṛta-</i>	<i>-māša-</i>	<i>mard, -o-</i>	<i>βροτός</i>

### body, perceptions, mentality, belief

Proto-form	Gloss	Sanskrit	Iranian	Armenian	Greek
* <i>ueh<sub>2</sub>g-nu-</i>	sound	<i>vagnú-</i>		<i>gang</i>	
* <i>pr(e/o)Hkt-</i>	buttocks	( <i>pr̥ṣṭhá-</i> )	( <i>paršta-</i> )	<i>erastan-k'</i>	<i>προκτός</i>
* <i>h<sub>1</sub>erk<sup>w</sup>-o-</i>	song	<i>arká-</i>		<i>erg, -o-</i>	
* <i>m(e/o)rmen-</i>	body	<i>mārman-</i>		<i>marmin</i>	
* <i>skHel-</i>	to err	<i>skhálati</i>		<i>šil / sxal</i>	<i>σφάλλομαι</i>
* <i>pe/orġ-u-</i>	rib, side	<i>pársu-</i>	<i>pərašu-</i>	( <i>y-</i> ) <i>ors-</i>	
A * <i>ǵ<sup>wh</sup>er-os-</i>	warmth	<i>háras-</i>		<i>jer, -o-</i>	<i>θέρος</i>
B * <i>ǵ<sup>wh</sup>(e)rnu-</i>	to be warm	<i>ghṛnóti</i>		<i>jeřnum</i>	
* <i>(p)ste/ēn-</i>	wom. breast	<i>stána-</i>	<i>fstāna-</i>	<i>stin</i>	<i>στήνιον</i>

### movements, speech and other activities

Proto-form	Gloss	Sanskrit	Iranian	Armenian	Greek
* <i>s(e)Hd<sup>h</sup>-jo-</i>	succeed	<i>sídhyati</i>		<i>aǰ(-)</i>	
* <i>h<sub>2</sub>r-nu-</i>	gain; allot		<i>ərənauu-</i>	<i>ařnum</i>	<i>ἀρνουμαι</i>
A * <i>k<sub>1</sub>e/o<sub>2</sub>-</i>	to go, move	<i>cyav-</i>	<i>šauuaitē</i>	<i>č'og-</i>	<i>σεύομαι</i>
B * <i>k<sub>1</sub>u-to-</i>	moved	<i>cyutá-</i>	<i>-šūta-</i>	<i>č'u, -o-</i>	<i>-σσοτος</i>
* <i>kHs-ti-</i>	punish, etc.	<i>śiṣṭi-</i>		<i>sast, i-st.</i>	
* <i>(s)peud-</i>	zeal, haste		Parth. <i>pwd-</i>	<i>p'oyt'</i>	<i>σπουδ-ή</i>

### fauna

Proto-form	Gloss	Sanskrit	Iranian	Armenian	Greek
* <i>h<sub>2</sub>lV(u)pēk-</i>	fox	<i>lopāśá-</i>	* <i>raupaśa-</i>	<i>ahuēs</i>	<i>ἀλώπηξ</i>
* <i>h<sub>2</sub>rǵipió-</i>	eagle, etc.	<i>rjipyá-</i>	<i>ərəziřiō.</i>	<i>arcui</i>	<i>αἰγυπιός</i>
* <i>tġiH-(e)no-</i>	bird of prey	<i>šyená-</i>	<i>saēna-</i>	<i>c'in, o-stem</i>	<i>ικτίνος</i>
* <i>Hkek-ih<sub>2</sub>-</i>	weasel	<i>kaśiká-</i>		<i>ak'is, i-stem</i>	
* <i>h<sub>1</sub>eg<sup>wh</sup>-i-</i>	snake, adder	<i>áhi-</i>	<i>aži-</i>	<i>iž, i-stem</i>	<i>ἔχις</i>

*sing <sup>h</sup> o-	lion, panther	simhá-		inj
*g <sup>w</sup> ou-d <sup>h</sup> eh <sub>1</sub> -	lizard	godhá-		kov-a-di-ac'
*g <sup>h</sup> ei-o-	horse	háya-	(*zaya-)	ji, -o-

### animal husbandry

Proto-form	Gloss	Sanskrit	Iranian	Armenian	Greek
*h <sub>2</sub> (e)ig-	goat	(eḍa-)	(īzaēna-)	ayc	αἴζ
*h <sub>1</sub> s-en-	male anim.	(ṛṣabhá-)	aršan-	aṛn	ἄρσην
*u <sup>h</sup> h <sub>1</sub> ēn	lamb	úran-	*varn-	gaṛn	φαρίην
*h <sub>1</sub> eǵ <sup>h</sup> -ih <sub>2</sub> -	cow, ox	ahī-	azī-	ezn, g. ezin	
*g <sup>w</sup> ou-io-	of cow	gávyā-	gaoiia-	kogi	-βο(φ)ιος
*h <sub>3</sub> eui-peh <sub>2</sub> -	shepherd		avi-pā-lá-	hoviw, -a-	
*ker-e/os-	cream	śáras		ser	

### agriculture

Proto-form	Gloss	Sanskrit	Iranian	Armenian	Greek
*h <sub>2</sub> leh <sub>1</sub> -ur <sub>5</sub>	flour			alewr	ἄλευρον
*h <sub>2</sub> (e)lh <sub>1</sub> -	to grind	(MInd. ātā)	*arna-	aṭam	ἄλέω
*h <sub>2</sub> (e)lh <sub>1</sub> -tr-	grinder		*a/ārθra-	atawri	ἄλετρις
*h <sub>2</sub> erh <sub>3</sub> uer/n-	arable land	urvárā-	uruuarā-	harawun-k'	ἄρουρα
*ke/omieh <sub>2</sub>	yoke-pin	śámyā-	simā-/sami-	sami, ea-st.	(κάμας)

### house, housekeeping, crafts, implements, building

Proto-form	Gloss	Sanskrit	Iranian	Armenian	Greek
*h <sub>2</sub> énHt-ieh <sub>2</sub>	threshold	(ātā-)	aiθiiā-	*and-i-	
*h <sub>3</sub> nēb <sup>h</sup> -	nave, hub	nābhi-		aniw 'wheel'	
*b <sup>h</sup> eh <sub>2</sub> g-	lot, estate	(bhāgá-)	*bāga-	bak	(φαγεῖν)
*d <sup>h</sup> mb <sup>h</sup> -	tomb, grave		*daf-ma-	damban	τάφος
*k <sup>h</sup> (e)r(H)-	to tie, form		*sar-	sarem	
*k <sup>h</sup> (e)r(H)ieh <sub>2</sub>	band			sari-k', -ea-	κε/αιρία
*deh <sub>1</sub> -	to bind	dā-/dyāti	dā-	*ti-	δέω
*dh <sub>1</sub> -ti-	bond	-diti-		*tay	δέσις

### Table set B

Lexical isoglosses: Armenian, Greek, etc.

### physical world, time, space

Proto-form	Gloss	Armenian	Greek	Other 1	Other 2
*ant <sup>h</sup> -r-	coal	*ant'-(a)r-	ἄνθραξ		
*h <sub>2</sub> (e)g <sup>h</sup> l-	mist, fog	aļ-	ἀγλῦς	OPr. aglo	

*an(t)ēr	cave	ayr	ἄντρον	
*h <sub>2</sub> (e)rti	now, (near)	ard(i)	ἄρτι	(Lith. artì)
*Héh <sub>2</sub> m-(ō)r	day	awr, g. awur	ἡμᾶρ	
A *d <sub>1</sub> ueh <sub>2</sub> -ro-	long	erkar	*δῆρός	
B *d <sub>1</sub> ueh <sub>2</sub> -n-	long	erkayn	*δῆν	
*tumbo-	mound	t'umb	τύμβος	
*mar-mar-	to shimmer	*mar-m(a)r-	μαρμαίρω	
*me-ġ <sup>h</sup> sr-i	near	merj(i-)	μέχρι	
*noti <sub>1</sub> eh <sub>2</sub>	wetness	nay, i-stem	νοτία	
*ken(e)uo-	empty	sin, -o-	*κενός	

### human, age, kinship

Proto-form	Gloss	Armenian	Greek	Other 1	Other 2
*pre(i)sg <sup>w</sup> u-	elder	erēc', u-st.	πρεσβυς		
*g <sup>w</sup> neh <sub>2</sub> ik-	wife, woman	*kanay-	γυναικ-		
*meh <sub>2</sub> truieh <sub>2</sub>	stepmother	mawru, -a-	μητριᾶ		
*suekur-eh <sub>2</sub>	moth.-in-law	skesur, -a-	έκυρά		

### body, perceptions, mentality, belief

Proto-form	Gloss	Armenian	Greek	Other 1	Other 2
*h <sub>3</sub> k <sup>w</sup> k <sup>w</sup> on	eye	akn	ὄκκον		
*h <sub>2</sub> n(e/ōr)io-	dream	anurj, -i/-o-	ὄνε/οιρος	Alb*andërrë	
*d <sup>h</sup> (e)h <sub>1</sub> s-	god	di-k'	θεός	(Lat. fēriae)	
*pr(e/o)Hk̄t-	buttocks	erastan-k'	προκτός		
*ues-nu-	put on cloth.	z-genum	έννυμι		
*ġ(e)lh <sub>2</sub> -s-	laughter	calr, g. calu	γέλως, γαλ-		
*mēd-es-h <sub>2</sub>	mind	mit-k', mt-a-	μήδεα		
*mor-m-	she-monster	mor-m	Μορμώ(v)	Lat. formīdō	
*srung <sup>h</sup> -	snout	rung(n)	ρύγχ(ε)ος		
*ps(e)ud-os-	false, lie	sut, -o-	ψεῦδος		

### movements, speech and other activities

Proto-form	Gloss	Armenian	Greek	Other 1	Other 2
A *h <sub>3</sub> b <sup>h</sup> el-	to sweep	awel(-)	ὄφείλω		
B *h <sub>3</sub> b <sup>h</sup> el-	to increase	awel-	ὄφείλω		
*b <sup>h</sup> er-(e)n-	load	bern	φερνή	Alb. bárrë	('child')
*b <sup>h</sup> h <sub>2</sub> -ti-	word,rumour	bay, i-st.	φάσις, φάτις		
*k̄(e)r(H)ieh <sub>2</sub>	band	sari-k', -ea-	κε/αιρία		
*k̄eud <sup>h</sup> (-s)-	to hide	soyz	κεύθω	OEng. hȳdan	

### fauna

Proto-form	Gloss	Armenian	Greek	Other 1	Other 2
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* <i>h<sub>1</sub>el-(h<sub>1</sub>)n-</i>	deer	<i>etn</i>	έλλός	Lith. <i>ėlnis</i>	Mr. <i>ailit</i>
* <i>pter-</i>	feather, wing	<i>t'er(t')</i>	πετέρον		
* <i>lu(n)k̂-</i>	lynx	<i>lusa(m)n-</i>	λύγξ	Lith. <i>lūšis</i>	OHG <i>luhs</i>
A * <i>karid(-iā)</i>	crayfish	<i>karič, -a-</i>	κάρις, -ί/ιδος		
B * <i>ko/ōr-i-</i>	crayf., scorp.	<i>kor, -i</i>	κουρίς κωρίς		
* <i>dḡ<sup>h</sup>uH-</i>	fish	<i>jukn</i>	ιχθύς	Lith. <i>žuvīs</i>	
* <i>h<sub>1</sub>e/oḡ<sup>h</sup>ino-</i>	hedgehog	<i>ozni</i>	έχῖνος	(OHG <i>igil</i> )	(Oss. <i>wyzyn</i> )
* <i>iork̂-o-</i>	deer, game	<i>ors, -o-</i>	ϊορκος ζορκ-	Corn. <i>yorch</i>	
* <i>sk(o)rp-i-</i>	asp, scorpion	<i>k'arb, i-stem</i>	σκορπίος		

### animal husbandry

Proto-form	Gloss	Armenian	Greek	Other 1	Other 2
* <i>h<sub>2</sub>(e)iḡ-</i>	goat	<i>ayc</i>	αἴζ	(Skt. <i>eda-</i> )	(Av. <i>īzaēna-</i> )
* <i>b<sup>h</sup>rug/ḡ-</i>	dewlap	<i>erbuc, -o-</i>	φάρυγξ	Lat. <i>frūmen</i>	
* <i>g<sup>l</sup>gt-</i>	milk	<i>kat 'n</i>	γάλακτ-	Lat. <i>lact-</i>	
* <i>mosḡ<sup>h</sup>-o/io-</i>	young bov.	<i>mozi</i>	μοσχ-		
* <i>h<sub>1</sub>en<sub>h</sub>orḡ<sup>h</sup>-</i>	male anim.	<i>γ-orj</i>	ἔν-ορχ-		
* <i>diḡ<sup>h</sup>/ḡ<sup>h</sup>-</i>	goat	<i>tik, -a-</i>	δίζα	OHG <i>ziga</i>	
* <i>poHl-/pōl-</i>	young anim.	<i>ul, -o-</i>	πῶλος	Goth. <i>fula</i>	Alb. <i>pélë</i>

### flora

Proto-form	Gloss	Armenian	Greek	Other 1	Other 2
* <i>h<sub>1</sub>oi(h<sub>1</sub>)ueh<sub>2</sub></i>	yew, vine	<i>aygi, -ea-</i>	οἴη	Lat. <i>īva</i>	OHG <i>iwa</i>
* <i>ureh<sub>2</sub>d-</i>	branch, root	<i>argat</i>	ῥᾶδιζ	Lat. <i>rādīx</i>	Goth. <i>waurts</i>
A * <i>d<sup>h</sup>lh<sub>1</sub>ro-</i>	green, fresh	<i>dalar, -o-</i>	θαλερός		
B * <i>d<sup>h</sup>él(H)-n-</i>	twig, herb	<i>del, -o-</i>	θαλλός	(Mr. <i>duilne</i> )	(OEngl. <i>dile</i> )
* <i>ptel-</i>	elm, Ulmus	<i>t'eli</i>	πετέλεα	(Lat. <i>tilia</i> )	
* <i>t<sup>h</sup>u(ō)iko-</i>	fig, (vulva)	<i>t'uz, -o-</i>	σῦκον, τῦκον	Lat. <i>ficus</i>	
* <i>g<sup>v</sup>h<sub>2</sub>-eno-</i>	acorn	<i>kahin, -o-</i>	βάλανος	(Lat. <i>gland-</i> )	(ScR. <i>žělūd</i> )
* <i>kalam-</i>	aspen, plane	<i>kalam-ax(i)</i>	καλαμίν-δαρ		
* <i>kast(an)-</i>	chestnut	<i>kas(t-)k-</i>	κάστανον		
* <i>mor-</i>	blackberry	<i>mor(š)</i>	μόρον	(Lat. <i>mōrum</i> )	
* <i>p<sup>y</sup>or<sup>h</sup>o-</i>	sprout, twig	<i>ort', -o-</i>	π(τ)όρθος		
* <i>h<sub>3</sub>orḡ<sup>h</sup>i-</i>	orchis	<i>(xol)orj</i>	ὄρχις		
* <i>spongos</i>	mushroom	<i>sunk/gn</i>	σπ/φόγγος	Lat. <i>fungus</i>	

### agriculture

Proto-form	Gloss	Armenian	Greek	Other 1	Other 2
A * <i>h<sub>2</sub>leh<sub>1</sub>-u<sub>1</sub></i>	flour	<i>alewr</i>	ἄλευρον		
B * <i>h<sub>2</sub>(e)lh<sub>1</sub>tr-</i>	grinder	<i>atawri</i>	ἀλετρις	Iran * <i>ārθra-</i>	
* <i>h<sub>1</sub>os-γ-(e)h<sub>2</sub></i>	harvest	* <i>ar-a-</i>	(ὀπ-)ώρα	(Goth. <i>asans</i> )	(CS <i>jeseně</i> )
* <i>drepan-eh<sub>2</sub></i>	*sickle	<i>artewan, -a-</i>	δρεπάνη		

*g <sup>h</sup> rī(d <sup>h</sup> )	barley	<i>gari, -ea-</i>	κριθ-ή, κριθή	Alb. <i>drithë</i>	OHG <i>gersta</i>
*el(e/a)iw-	olive, oil	<i>ewł, iwł-o-</i>	έλαιο	Lat. <i>oleum</i>	
*sk <sup>(h)</sup> odoro-	garlic	<i>xstor/sxtor</i>	σκόρο(ο)δον	Alb. <i>húrdhë</i> <i>húdhër</i>	
*gorio-	drain	<i>kori</i>	γοργύριον		
*(H)olur-	pea; spelt	<i>olořn, -řan</i>	όλοραι		
*osp-	legumen	<i>ospn</i> ‘lentil’	όσπριον		
*si/ek <sup>h</sup> u-	melon, gourd	<i>sex</i>	σικάβα		
*kiker-	chick pea	<i>siseřn, -řan</i>	(κίκερροι)	Lat. <i>cicer</i>	OPr. <i>keckers</i> Alb. <i>thjer(r)</i>
*(s)k <sub>l</sub> -ne/o-	to hoe, weed	<i>k’atem</i>	σκάλλω	(Lith. <i>skėlti</i> )	

### house, housekeeping, crafts, implements, building

Proto-form	Gloss	Armenian	Greek	Other 1	Other 2
*aġu(s)ieh <sub>2</sub> -	path, road	<i>acu</i>	άγνια		
*h <sub>2</sub> er-	fix, put tog.	<i>ařnem, ar-ar</i>	άραρισκω		
*b <sup>h</sup> urg <sup>h</sup> -	tower	<i>burgn</i>	πύργος		
*d <sup>h</sup> rog <sup>h</sup> -	wheel	<i>durgn</i>	τροχός	OIr. <i>droch</i>	
*sep <sup>h</sup> -s-	to boil, cook	<i>ep’em</i>	έψω		
*t(a)rp-eh <sub>2</sub>	basket	<i>t’arp’ / t’arb</i>	τάρπη		
*t(o)rs-	drying impl.	<i>t’arř</i>	ταρσός	OHG <i>darra</i>	
*h <sub>1</sub> ul(e/o)h <sub>1</sub> ro-	thong, rein	<i>lar, -o/i/a-</i>	ελληρα	Lat. <i>lōrum</i>	
*ġinyl(u)m-	hinge	<i>clxni, -ea-</i>	γί(γ)γλυμος		
*glieh <sub>2</sub> /glineh <sub>2</sub>	clay	<i>kařjn</i>	γλία, γλίνη	Russ. <i>glína</i>	Engl. <i>clay</i>
*g <sup>w</sup> em/b <sup>h</sup> urġeh <sub>2</sub>	bridge	<i>kamurġ, -a-</i>	γέφωρα		
*per-(i)on-	awl, pin	<i>heriwn, -ean</i>	περ-όνη		
*k <sup>h</sup> san-t(e)r-	comb	<i>sant/dr</i>	ζάντρ-		
*(s)kī(ū)ōn	pillar	<i>siwn</i>	κίτων	OHG <i>skina</i>	
*stġneh <sub>2</sub>	post, pillar	<i>*stal-a-</i>	στήλη	OHG <i>stollo</i>	

### Preliminary conclusions

We may preliminarily conclude that Armenian, Greek, (Phrygian) and Indo-Iranian were dialectally close to each other or even formed a dialectal group at the time of the Indo-European dispersal. Within this hypothetical dialect group, Proto-Armenian was situated between Proto-Greek (to the west) and Proto-Indo-Iranian (to the east). On the northern side it might have neighbored, notably, Proto-Germanic and Proto-Balto-Slavic.

After the Indo-European dispersal, Armenian developed isoglosses with Indo-Iranian on the one hand and Greek on the other. The Indo-Iranians then moved eastwards, while the Proto-Armenians and Proto-Greeks remained in a common geographical region for a long period and developed numerous shared innovations. At a later stage, together or independently, they borrowed a large number of words from the Mediterranean / Pontic substrate language(s), mostly cultural and agricultural words, as well as animal and plant designations.

On the other hand, Armenian shows a considerable number of lexical correspondences with European branches of the Indo-European language family, a large portion of which too should be explained in terms of substrate rather than Indo-European heritage.

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