

## Armenian and Celtic *Towards a New Classification of Early Indo-European Dialects*

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**ABSTRACT.** On the analysis of the linguistic position of Armenian and Celtic within the Indo-European language family a new classification of early Indo-European dialects is proposed. © 2007 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

**Key words:** Armenian, Celtic, early Indo-European dialects.

0. This contribution consists of four parts:

1. On the linguistic position of Armenian within the Indo-European (IE) language family.

2. On some grammatical features which seem to prove early contact of proto-Celtic with eastern Indo-European languages.

3. On the possibility of revealing common features in morphology, syntax and word formation between proto-Armenian and proto-Celtic.

4. Towards a classification of the criteria for revealing linguistic features in prehistory.

1. The identification of Armenian as an autonomous IE language of non-Iranian descent starts with Hübschmann 1875 = 1976: 35 who comes to the conclusion: „Das armenische steht im kreise der arisch-slavolett. sprachen zwischen iranisch und slavolettisch”, disregarding, however, the particularly close connections between Armenian and Greek which since Pedersen 1924 = 1982: 308 are generally acknowledged: „daß das Arm. unter den lebendigen idg. Sprachzweigen etwa nach drei Seiten hin nähere verwandtschaftliche Beziehungen hat: w. zum Griech., ö. zum Indisch-Iran., n. zum Slavisch-Balt; das Alban., das als zwischen dem Arm. und dem Slav.-Balt. stehend betrachtet werden kann, wurde sich aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach, wenn es vollständiger überliefert wäre, dem Arm. noch bedeutend näher als das

Slavisch-Balt. stellen”<sup>1</sup>. In 1980: 39, extending the basis of comparison and referring to correspondences between the IE languages Armenian, Greek, Phrygian and Indo-Iranian”, I pointed out „that the coincidences between these languages were more extensive in prehistoric times, having since been obscured by later innovations. In other words, one may say that the unattested Armenian of the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C. must have had closer connections with Greek and Indo-Iranian than the historically attested Armenian of the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.” Fourteen years later, Clackson 1994: 202 stressed that „there is not sufficient evidence to suppose any closer link between Greek and Armenian than between either language and Indo-Iranian, and the reconstruction of a Greek-Armenian-Indo-Iranian dialect area is sufficient to account for these agreements”.

1.1. An important common innovation, of these languages, shared by Phrygian as well, is the *augment*, which is placed in front of the indicatives of the past tenses:

Old Phrygian εδᾶζ ‘he erected’: Hittite *dâiš*, Armen. *eber* < \**e-bher-e-t* =

Greek ἐφῆρε, Sanskrit *abharat* (Schmidt 1980: 42).

The interpretation of the *augment* as an IE category<sup>2</sup>, however, must be rejected, since this morpheme does not

<sup>1</sup> Cf, moreover, the authors cited by Schmidt 1980: 51, footnotes 9 and 10.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Grundriß II/1: 10f.

occur in a language attested as early as Hittite, and since, in addition to that, the *augment* already refers to tense and not to the earlier category of aspect.

1.1.1. In this context the *injunctive* (Injunktiv) may be mentioned as a verbal category which lacks both primary personal endings and augment. According to Hoffmann 1967: 35, this category was „als Primitiv eine der Keimzellen des indogermanischen Verbalsystems“, „aus der durch formale Differenzierung einerseits der Ind. Präs. (Primärendungen), andererseits Imperfekt raid Ind. Aor. (Augment) hervorgegangen sind“<sup>3</sup>. As to the synchronic function of the *injunctive*, the *noems* (Noeme) „lexikalische Bedeutung (einschließlich Aktionsart), Aspekt, Person (einschließlich Numerus), Diathese und Erwähnung“ are listed by Hoffmann 1967: 278f.

1.1.2. Typologically, the IE injunctive may be compared with the Old Georgian *permansive* (Permansiv), an archaic category (Deeters 1930: 1/ff., Schmidt 1969). As to its syntax and morphology, the *permansive* is constructed as an aorist ending in a suffix / plus present tense personal endings (Deeters 1930: 111); as to semantics, *permansive* and *injunctive* bear a close resemblance to each other: the *permansive* „drückt allgemeingültige Wahrheiten aus, die zeitlos gelten, steht also in Sätzen und - der Natur der Texte entsprechend - besonders häufig in Aussagen, die sich auf Gott beziehen“ (Deeters 1930: 11 If.); the *injunctive* „bezeichnet das distinktiv-relevante Noem Erwähnung ... seine sachgemäße Benennung wäre demnach Memorativ“ (Hoffmann 1967: 279). „Ein Eigenwert des Injunktivs besteht also in seiner Zeitstufenlosigkeit“ (Hoffmann 1967: 266). *Injunctive* expresses „eindeutig allgemeingültige Wahrheiten, Erkenntnisse und Erfahrungen, wie z.B. naturgesetzliche Tatbestände, Rechtsnormen, Gebrauche, Sprichwörter und ähnliches“ (Hoffmann 1967: 114).

1.2. A second important common innovation of Phrygian, Armenian and Greek, which, however, is lacking in Indo-Iranian, is the so-called *prothetic vowel*, generally explained as the reflex of an older laryngeal:

Phryg. *αναρ*, man', Armen. *ayr*, Greek *ἀνήρ* < *h<sub>2</sub>ner-* vs. Sanskrit *nar-*, Oscan *ner* etc. (Schmidt 1980: 38; Pokorny 1959: 765).

1.3. The two common innovations (*augments* *prothetic vowel*) acknowledge that there must have been a time when the languages involved were in close contact with each other, according to the principle that „Die Kriterien einer engeren Gemeinschaft können nur in positiven Übereinstimmungen der betreffenden Sprachen, die zugleich Abweichungen von den übrigen sind, gefunden werden“ (Leskien 1876 [1963] XIII).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This theory, however, is partly outdated, as the *augment*, as stated above (1.1), cannot be reconstructed for proto-IE, but only for the IE dialects Greek, Armenian, Indo-Iranian, Phrygian.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the recent discussion of „the common innovation hypothesis“ by Clackson 1994: 17-28.

2.1. As regards the traditional assessment of the position of Celtic within the IE language family, it was mainly Lottner 1858: 193; idem 1861 who established the Italo-Celtic hypothesis.<sup>5</sup>

2.2. On the other hand, later on Myles Dillon 1973: 5 comes to the conclusion that „facts of language, literature, institutions and religion from India and from Ireland“ „are rather survivals in lateral areas of an old Indo-European inheritance“ (5).

2.3. What needs to be investigated, however, are the innovations which seem to prove early contact of Proto-Celtic with eastern IE languages. Evidence for this is given by three grammatical features which meet the requirements of three basic principles:

a) They are restricted to Celtic and eastern IE languages.

b) They are not attested in Italic.

c) On the basis of Leskien's maxim of 1876 (see above no. 1.3), they do not reflect the IE proto-language, but the result of later developments.<sup>6</sup>

2.3.1. Feature no. 1 is the inflected RELATIVE PRONOUN *\*yos* which, according to principle no. 1, is attested both in eastern IE languages (Indo-Iranian, Greek, Slavic, Phrygian) and in Celtiberian:

*yomui... somui* (Botorrta IA 7)

*ias... saum* (Botorrta IA 8)

*ios... auseTi* (Botorrta IA 10)

(Schmidt 1996: 24f.).<sup>7</sup>

2.3.2. Celtic also satisfies the requirement of principle no. 2, as Italic deviates from Celtic by the use of the interrogative pronoun *\*k<sup>n</sup>o-l\*k<sup>n</sup>i-* in relative function. As this has its parallel in Hittite<sup>8</sup> and Tocharian<sup>9</sup>, it must

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Schmidt 1996: 10f. with further references.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Schmidt 1991: 16; 1992: 464-466; 1996: 21-26; 2000: 21. In his critical but somewhat superficial review of Schmidt 1996 even Lindeman 1999: 236 acknowledges „that Professor Schmidt's thoughts about early eastern influences on Celtic may well be basically true.“

The question of eastern contacts of proto-Celtic has already been discussed earlier among others by Kretschmer in 1896: 125ff. and Wagner in 1969; cf. also Falileev 2003, 2005a, 2005b. Schmidt's theory has been accepted and expanded by De Bernardo Stempel 1997 and Isaac 2004; cf. also Stempel 1996: 309 and Kalygin (in the press).

<sup>7</sup> Szemerényi 1990: 223 explains the relative pronoun *\*yos* as an innovation of the *sati m* languages, a theory that is as little convincing as his supposition „Dagegen muß *yo-* im Hispano-Keltischen (s. K.H. Schmidt, BCS 26, 1976, 385) und im Keltischen im allgemeinen als unabhängige Neuerung angesehen werden“ (I.e.224).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Friedrich 1960: 68: „Im lebendigen Paradigma existiert nur der Stamm *kui-*, der substantivisch und adjektivisch, als Interrogativum wie als Relativum gebraucht wird“.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Krause/Thomas 1960: 165 „Das gewöhnliche toch. Interrogativpronomen hat gleiche Formen für alle Genera und Numeri. Die gleichen Formen werden im Wtoch. auch als Relativum gebraucht, während im Otoch. bei relativer Verwendung eine Partikel *ne* angefügt wird.“

be regarded as pretty old. Because of that, and as we cannot reconstruct an autonomous independent relative pronoun for IE, \**yos* in Celtic and eastern IE meets the requirement of principle no. 3 (common innovation).

**2.3.3.** Feature no. 2 is „the DESIDERATIVE formation, marked by reduplication as well as by a thematically inflected *s*-suffix, which in roots ending in a resonant is preceded by a laryngeal” (Schmidt 1996: 23). This formation is restricted to Indo-Iranian and Celtic. In Indo-Iranian it functions as a desiderative, in Celtic it is used as a future (Thurneysen 1946: 414):

Olr. *céla* < \**cehlā* < \**kiklH-se-/so-*: pres. *celid* ‚conceals’ (Rix et al. 2001: 322f.); Skt. *cikīrṣate* < \**k<sup>w</sup>i-k<sup>w</sup>lH-se-/so-*: *kar-*, ‚make’, part. pres. pass. *kr̥tá-* (Rix et al. 2001: 391f.); OIr. *génaid*, ‚will wound’ = Skt. *jighāmsati*, ‚will kill’ < *g<sup>wh</sup>ig<sup>wh</sup>lH-se-/so-*<sup>10</sup>.

**2.3.4.** Feature no. 3 is the FUTURE in \**-sye-/syo-*, which is attested in Gaulish as well as in Indo-Iranian, Baltic, Slavic, and possibly Greek. The Indo-Iranian, Slavic and possibly Greek record confirms the insertion of a laryngeal after roots ending in a resonant, in the same way as it is attested in the desiderative formation (2.3.3):

Gaulish (Chamalières) *bissiet*, ‚he will split’: *b<sup>h</sup>eid-*, \**b<sup>h</sup>id-*, *toncnaman toncsiōntio* (Cham.), ‚who will swear the oath’, *pissiu mi* (Cham.) < \**k<sup>w</sup>is-siō* ‚I shall see’; *marcosior* (peson de fuseau), ‚que je chevauche’ (Lambert 1995: 63).

Skt. *kar-i-ṣyá-ti*, ‚he will make’ (with laryngeal) vs. *vak-ṣyá-ti*, ‚he will speak’, Avest. *vax-šyā*, ‚I shall speak’ (without laryngeal), Old Church Slavonic *byšęšteje*, *byšęšteje* < \**b<sup>h</sup>uH-sye-/o-*, τὸ μέλλον [‘what is to be’], Greek κείοντες κοιμηθησόμενοι [‘about to sleep’] = Vedic *śay-i-sya-nt-*.

**3.** Armenian is characterized by two peculiarities which complicate the reconstruction of its position within the IE language family: a) it is a typical „language in contact” being strongly influenced by outside interference of other languages; b) in comparison with Indo-Iranian, Greek, Phrygian and Celtic its tradition is rather late<sup>12</sup>.

**3.1.** Foreign influence on Armenian is quite strong, particularly in the field of vocabulary, since only a small percentage of words can be traced back to direct inheritance from IE. Kapancjan and Abaev 1978: 47<sup>13</sup> speak of

<sup>10</sup> Rix et al. 2001 reconstruct wrongly \**k<sup>w</sup>i-k<sup>w</sup>-k<sup>w</sup>r-sé-* (p. 391) and \**g<sup>wh</sup>ig<sup>wh</sup>lH-se-* (p.218f.) (without laryngeals).

<sup>11</sup> Lambert 1995: 63 explains *marcosior*, *bissiet*, *toncsiōntio* as „Futur: desideratif en *-sie/o-*, parfois déponent”, but his attempt to reduce *bissiet* to the root \**b<sup>h</sup>eu* with \**b<sup>h</sup>wi-* > *bi-* (I.e. !58) explains the double ss just as little as his reconstruction of *pissiumii* < \**k<sup>w</sup>isiō* (pres.) instead of \**k<sup>w</sup>is-siō* (flit.) (Schmidt 1981: 265).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the earliest traditions of the languages in question: Rigveda 1000 BC, Greek 1400 BC, Old Phrygian 8<sup>th</sup> c. BC, Celtic 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC vs. Armenian 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD.

<sup>13</sup> G.A. Kapancjan. *K proisxoždeniju armjanskogo jazyka* 1946: 31 (quoted by Abaev 1978: 47).

10 % (in comparison with 35 % in Ossetic). In his masterly organized *Armenische Grammatik* of 1897 Hübschmann registered the different (Iranian, Syriac, Greek, etc) loanword strata before making a list of the words of genuine Armenian etymology<sup>14</sup>.

**3.2.** An important contribution to the investigation of Kartvelian influence on Armenian has been made by Deeters in his early work *Armenisch und Südkaukasisch*, with the significant subtitle *Ein Beitrag zur Frage der Sprachmischung* (1926/1927).<sup>15</sup>

**3.3.** As to the rather late tradition of Armenian, I advanced the hypothesis that „the linguistic differences between Old Armenian and Greek or Indo-Iranian respectively decrease as we go back in time, the languages having also been closer to each other geographically in pre-historic times” (Schmidt 1980: 39f.).

**3.4.** On the basis of this theory (no. 3.3) an attempt shall be made to consider the probability of the existence of features in pre-Armenian which are no more attested in the Old Armenian record, starting with the three Celtic examples, discussed above (no. 2.3).

**3.4.1.** The position of Armenian within the IE language family may be considered as an argument for the etymology of the Armenian relative pronoun *or* < \**yor*, recently proposed by Pisani 1966: 239<sup>16</sup>. The original differentiation between the relative pronoun \**yō-* and the interrogative pronoun \**k<sup>w</sup>ō-*, \**k<sup>w</sup>i-* in Armenian, assumed by Pisani I.e., has its parallel in Celtic<sup>17</sup>. Probably, the development in IE has been the following: \**&w<sup>w</sup>-*, \**k<sup>w</sup>ō-* interrog. pronoun > \**k<sup>w</sup>i-*, \**k<sup>w</sup>ō-* interrog. and relat. pronoun (Italic, Hittite, Tocharian) > \**k<sup>w</sup>i-*, \**k<sup>w</sup>ō-* interrog. pronoun vs. \**yō-* relat. pronoun (Celtic and east IE languages, including Armenian). That means that \**yō-* is an innovation shared by Armenian and Celtic.

**3.4.2.** As concerns feature no. 2, the desiderative formation limited to Indo-Iranian and Celtic, this must be considered as an archaic innovation of Celtic and east IE languages preserved only in Celtic and Indo-Iranian<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> On later collections of loanword strata in Armenian cf. Schmidt 1980: 36ff. „A statistical analysis of isoglosses” between Armenian and „each of the other Indo-European languages” is given by Djahukian 1980.

<sup>15</sup> Further investigations into the field cf. at Schmidt 1974; 1980.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. also Szemerényi 1990: 224 with the misprint 1967 instead of 1966.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the Celtic interrogative pronoun: OIr. *cía* ‚who?’ = OW. *pui* < \**k<sup>w</sup>ei* (Thurneysen 1946: 292) and see Jordán Cólera 1998: 101.

<sup>18</sup> The distribution is similar to that of the feminine forms of the numerals ‚3’ and ‚4’, clearly attested only in Indo-Iranian and Celtic, which Stempel 1996: 309 explains „als gemeinsame Neuerungen”, „da das Genus femininum als relativ jung einzustufen ist.”

3.4.3. In contrast to feature no. 2, feature no. 3, the future formation in *\*-sye-/-syo-* (no. 2.3.4), is preserved not only in Indo-Iranian and Celtic but also in Baltic, Slavic and possibly Greek. The lack of this formation in Armenian must be the result of innovation, as is proved for the following reasons: a) The merger of subjunctive and future is one of the typological correspondences of Old Georgian (OGeo.) and Classical Armenian (Cl. Arm.): OGeo. present *davsc'er* 'I write it': subjunctive-future (subj.-fut.) *davsc'erde*, aorist *dayc'ere*: subj.-fut. *davc'ero*; Cl. Arm. pres. *sirem* 'I love': subj.-fut. *siric'em*, aor. *sirec'i*: subj.-fut. *sirec'ic'*<sup>19</sup>.

b) The use of a completely new formans, i.e. *-(i)c'* - < IE *\*-(i)skē-*, which is also attested in Greek:

Arm. *siric'em* < *\*sire-isk' -e-mi, tam*, I give': Aor. *etu*: subj. *tac'* < *\*dāsḱō*: Greek *ἐνρ-ισκω, ἄλ-ισκομαι* (Schmidt 1985: 232).

c) There are typological parallels for new formations of future stems, as e.g. the Old Irish/future which is restricted to weak verbs. „The stem of the/future has the suffix *-fa-* and is inflected like an a-subjunctive” (Thurneysen 1946: 396).

4. The reconstruction of prehistoric stages of Proto-Indo-European is based on different methods: As pointed out by Jakobson 1971: 530, „the typology of languages looks for the invariant in a variation. The number of grammatical categories or distinctive features and their combinations is restricted, and languages are confined to a limited number of structural (grammatical or phonemic) types”. In contrast to this approach, „it may then be assumed that Proto-Indo-European has been reconstructed as an earlier historical stage of Indo-Iranian, Greek, Albanian and so on” (Lehmann 2002: 3). What needs to be investigated, however, is the prehistoric reconstruct of an IE language as e.g. Armenian. Starting from a couple of correspondences Armenian shares with eastern IE languages, we come to the conclusion that the rather late attested Armenian language must have had even more correspondences in common with those languages in prehistoric times. The evidence is increased by the fact that Proto-Celtic which is generally taken as a western IE language is characterized by features of an eastern IE language as well.

სემიოტიკა და ენათმეცნიერება

სომხური და კელტური.

ადრეული ინდოევროპული დიალექტების ახლებური კლასიფიკაციისათვის

კარლ ჰორსტ შმიდტი

ბონის უნივერსიტეტი, გერმანია

ძველი სომხური და კელტური ენების ანალიზის საფუძველზე მოცემულია ახლებური კლასიფიკაცია ადრეული ინდოევროპული დიალექტებისა, რომლის მიხედვითაც დასავლურ და აღმოსავლურ დიალექტებს მეტი საერთო სტრუქტურული მახასიათებლები უნდა ჰქონოდათ.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Schmidt 1964.

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