

*Linguistics*

## Urartian Sibilants in Armenian

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**ABSTRACT.** It is long known that Urartian has left certain loan words in Classical Armenian. Recent linguistic evidence points to the likelihood that the Urartians came westward from Central Asia after the Hurrians, passing south of the Caspian Sea but north of the area influenced by the Assyrians, and settled in the Sub-Caucasus; later, driven out in the mid first millennium by the Armenians and perhaps the Persians, the Urartians moved north to the South Caucasus, where their language now remains, becoming Proto-Lezgian, from which the modern Lezgian languages have evolved. This is the same as the change of Latin to Proto-Romance. Evidence showing that Urartian (and Hurrian) are related to the languages of the North-East Caucasus might be overstated. But the supposition that we can re-construct Proto-Lezgian and from there posit genetic parallels with Urartian remains an appealing consideration. © 2010 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

**Key words:** *Urartian sibilants, Lezgian languages, Proto-Lezgian, languages of the North East Caucasus.*

According to the Akkadian-based Urartian syllabary, there are three classes of sibilant-like sounds in Urartian: Urartian /s/, a simple sibilant of which Urartian has twenty-four examples in word-initial position; Urartian /š/, a palatalized sibilant of which there are thirty-eight in initial position, and /ʃ/, a rare emphatic sibilant of which there are only six known examples in initial position and less than ten medially or finally. They are reflected in Armenian loan words without exception in only two ways: as a simple sibilant /s/, and as an emphatic /ʃ/. Urartian /š/ is thus written in Armenian as /s/ and only as /s/; Urartian /ʃ/ appears as Arm. /c/ = [ts]. In addition, I have not found a single Armenian correspondence for Urartian /s/. There is no Arm./s/ derived from Urartian.

I will show below three etymologies linking actual Urartian words with /š/ to Armenian /s/ by loan<sup>1</sup> and two from Assyrian via Urartian to Armenian. I will also give five more loan etymologies from a reconstructed Urartian (Starostin and Nikolayev<sup>2</sup> 1994; reprint 2007) which equals proto-Lezgian. It is doubtful that any loans came directly into Armenian from Hurrian, a second millennium culture and language; rather, the source would be solely Urartian, the speakers of which shared much vocabulary with the Hurrians. Other suggestions for initial š- can be found in Diakonoff and Starostin 1986:35-41. The following are Urartians (or Hurrian words not known parallelly in Urartian) with /š-/ which actually came into Armenian through Urartian.

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<sup>1</sup> A summary of this loan phenomenon is in Greppin 1991, which includes earlier documentation by Ghapantsyan 1948 and Diakonoff 1971.

<sup>2</sup> This methodology, though still somewhat controversial, has been demonstrated in Greppin 1996 for the letter /b-/, and Greppin 2006, 2008, for the letter /k-/.

1. Armenian *astern* ‘to reveal one’s ancestry.’<sup>3</sup> Hurrian *ašti* ‘woman, wife’.<sup>4</sup>

2. Arm. *sur* ‘sword,’<sup>5</sup> Ur. <sup>GIŠ</sup>*šuri* ‘arms.’<sup>6</sup>

3. Arm. *san* ‘kettle,’<sup>7</sup> Ur. *šáni* ‘kettle.’<sup>8</sup>

4. Arm. *salor* ‘plum,’<sup>9</sup> Ur. *\*šalūru* ‘medlar.’<sup>10</sup>

5. Arm. *sarkwil* ‘quince, *Cydonia Mill.*’<sup>11</sup> Ur. *\*šarkapil* ‘id.’<sup>12</sup>

The following five Urartian terms are reconstructed from Proto-Lezgian. After the Urartians were driven out of the Armenian areas around Lakes Urmia, Sevan, and Van, they seemed to have migrated, the Per-

sians and the Armenians at their back, into the area where we now find the North-East Caucasian languages. This late Urartian movement bequeathed the Proto-Lezgian language which survives in a dozen or so extant languages, e.g., Udi, Tabasaran, Rutul, Lezgi itself, etc. For methodology, see Greppin 2008.

6. Arm. *sand* ‘pounding mortar, pestle.’<sup>13</sup> PLezgian *\*sand* ‘hammer.’<sup>14</sup>

7. Arm. *sunk* ‘mushroom.’<sup>15</sup> PLezgian *šwəmk* ‘mushroom.’<sup>16</sup>

8. Arm. *sařn* ‘hoar-frost, icicle.’<sup>17</sup> PLezgian *\*sVr-*

<sup>3</sup> This is a difficult word. It is a hapax appearing in Timothy Aelurus (6<sup>th</sup> C, *Timot’ kuz*: 83) with the likely meaning of ‘to reveal ones ancestry’: *I davt ‘ai ēr Koysn, ew Yovsēp’, or ardar elov ew pahapan awrini jwrmē hayenoy ew itanē astēr iwr zKoysn*: “The Virgin was from the house of David, and Joseph was a just man, and an observer of the law, and reveals his virgin (wife) to be from his ancestry and house”.

<sup>4</sup> In the Mittani *Letters*: ¶21:21 (Wegner 2007:174) un-du-ma-a-an in-na-me-e-ni-i-in še-e-ni-fw-wu-ú-e aš-ti ú-ni-e-et-ta “If the wife of my brother would now come” (Wegner 2007: 143 =Hitt. SAL-an (Laroche 1976:62). Ghapantsyan 1975:279.

<sup>5</sup> Bible, 5<sup>th</sup> C. *passim* = Gk ξίφος ‘id.’

<sup>6</sup> Letter of Sarduri 241.E<sub>36-38</sub> (Harutyunyan 2001:241: 36-37) <sup>d</sup>Hal-di-ni uš-ta-bi ma-si-ni e <sup>GIŠ</sup>šúri-e ka-ru-ni <sup>KUR</sup>Qu-ma-ha-ha-li-i KUR-ni te-qu-ni <sup>md</sup>SAR<sub>3</sub>-du-ri-ka-i / <sup>m</sup>Ar-giš-ti-hi-ni-e “Khaldi returned, and with his own arms subdued the country Qumakha; and Sarduri, the son of Argishti, threw himself down before him.” This term may specifically mean ‘spear,’ since *šuri* appears inscribed on such a weapon excavated at Ayanis (Gilingiroğlu and Salvini 1999). This correspondence is one of the earliest proposed, found in Ghapantsyan (1940:42, #21).

<sup>7</sup> Bible, 5<sup>th</sup> C. *passim* = Gk. λέβητος ‘id.’

<sup>8</sup> Letters of Išpununi and Menua. 30<sub>9-10</sub> (Harutyunyan 2001:25.9-10): na-ħu-ni / [URĠ.GAL]<sup>MES</sup> URUDU na-ħu-ni šá-ni-URUDU na-ħu-ni. “(Ishpunni son of Sardurihi) raised up the wonderful arms, the wonderful cattle, the wonderful copper standard, raised up the copper vessel.” The text is an Assyrian-Urartian bilingual where the Assyrian word for Ur. *šá-ni* is replaced by the Sumerogram UTÚL ‘kettle, vessel, pot’; it is earliest noted in Ghapantsyan 1940:42, #22.

<sup>9</sup> Arm. *salor* (Bible vacat) appears earliest in the *Galen Dictionary*, 6<sup>th</sup> C. (Greppin 1985:159), though it might not actually been that early, because of later scribal interference with the manuscript, glossed as κοκκυμηλέα ‘prune, plum, *Prunus domestica*.’ It is found positively dated in the *Fables* (#15) of Mkhitar Gosh: . . . salor ew damon ew ciran . . . vnasič emk’ orovayni. “we, the plum, prune and apricot, are harmful to the belly.” An alternate, Arm, *šlor* is mentioned in Diakonoff (1985:599#12) but it is a considerable later form, found in the modern eastern dialects (Greppin 1989:77). We might expect Arm *\*salor* (with dark *ħ*) in intervocalic position.

<sup>10</sup> The name for this malaceous tree was brought into Urartian probably through Assyrian *šallūru* ‘plum, medlar.’ A well known example of this Semitic intrusion into Urartian is found in Assyrian *kubšu* ‘helmet’ = Urartian *kubuše* ‘a hat of some sort,’ for which there is no PLezgian equivalent. It seems rather unlikely that earliest Armenian received direct loans from Assyrian (Diakonoff 1985:599:12; Greppin 1989). That the Urartians had knowledge of Assyrian is clear from Urartian-Assyrian bilingual inscriptions.

<sup>11</sup> Bible vacat; Ghazaryan 1981 #1086. This term cannot be dated, but there is no evidence that it is a new term. It is the only word for ‘quince’ in the Armenian language. See Diakonoff (1985:597:12) and Greppin (1989:74-84) for Assyrian intrusions into Armenian, which must have come via Urartian. See footnote nine above.

<sup>12</sup> The Assyrian term *sapu/argilu* ‘quince’ arrived in Armenian via Urartian *\*šarkapila* with metathesis, and the later shift of *\*-VpV- > \*-VbV- > Arm. -VwV-*.

<sup>13</sup> An uncommon word; Bible vacat. It appears in Nonnus 6<sup>th</sup> C. (Manandian 1903:31) anak‘sarkos arkeal i sand, hareal linēr ngov p’aytelinaw “The Lord of the Flesh, having cast the hammer, was beaten by its wooden part.”

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Lezgi *sant* ‘hammer,’ Agul *sant* ‘hammer,’ Rutul *sant* ‘hammer,’ Tsakhur *sant* ‘mason’s chisel’ (Starostin and Nikolayev 1994:959).

<sup>15</sup> A somewhat uncommon word, Bible vacat, first appearing in the *Galen Dictionary* (6<sup>th</sup> C.) = Gk. μύκης ‘mushroom’ (Greppin 1985:77). The term is not ancient and its appearance in the *Galen Dictionary* might be the result of later scribal contamination. It is solidly attested first in the *Girk’ Vastakoc’* (13<sup>th</sup> C). Mushrooms, a forest plant, appear to be a late addition to the Armenian table. As noted in footnote 20 below, plant names could hibernate, appearing only later in the literary language.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Lezgian *\*s:(<sup>w</sup>)Vmk*, Udi *šalmk:al* ‘mushroom’; more common in Avar-Andi as *\*siku*, Godoberi *sek’u*. (Starostin and Nikolayev 1994:960).

<sup>17</sup> Bible (*Job* 6:16) = Gk. κρύσταλλος; ‘ice.’

‘frozen, icicle.’<sup>18</sup>

9. Arm. *sułran* ‘six-rowed barley, *Hordeum hexastichon* L.’<sup>19</sup> PLezgian \**sol*, \**solso* ‘type of cereal.’<sup>20</sup>

10. Arm. *selan* ‘table, stall.’<sup>21</sup> PLezgian \**s:el* ‘shed, stall.’<sup>22</sup>

I could find no Armenian reflexes of PLezgian \*š. Glossed by Starostin (1994:20) as a voiceless hissing-hushing (= palatalized) fricative. There are only fourteen examples in initial position extant, compared to thirty-five

for the simple sibilant /s/.

There are two Armenian words that support a relationship between Urartian emphatic /s-/ and Arm. c- = [ts]. Those Urartian words are not found in the North-East Caucasian lexicon nor specifically in Proto-Lezgian, and remain solely Urartian-Armenian isoglosses.

11. Arm. *cař* ‘tree.’<sup>23</sup> Ur. <sup>[GIŠ]</sup>*řari* ‘tree, grove, fruit orchard.’<sup>24</sup>

12. Arm. *cov* ‘sea’.<sup>25</sup> Ur. *řue* ‘sea.’<sup>26</sup>

## ენათმეცნიერება

# ურარტული სიბილანტები სომხურში

## ჯონ გრუპინი

კლდედენდის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, კლდედენდი, ოპაიო, აშშ

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიკოს თ. გამყრელიძის მიერ)

ურარტულ ლექსიკურ ნასესხობათა ანალიზი ძველ სომხურში სამუალებას იძლევა მივიჩნიოთ ძველი ურარტული (აგრეთვე ხურიტული) ენა აღმოსავლურ-კავკასიური ლეზგიური ენების უძველეს ამოსავალ პროტო-ლეზგიურ ენად.

<sup>18</sup> This word is better attested in Avar-Andi: \**soV-* ‘hoar-frost,’ Avar *sawú* ‘id.’ Godoberi *saji-li* ‘cold.’ But Lezgian \**s:(<sup>w</sup>)V-rV* ‘cold’; (Starostin and Nikolayev 1994:967) seems further related to PLezgian \**sirsul*, Rutul *sirsil* ‘hoar-frost,’ Tsakhur *řurřul* ‘icicle.’ Also Dargwa \**siris* ‘hoar-frost,’ which has two dialect forms, both as *siris* ‘hoarfrost’ (Starostin and Nikolayev 1964:964).

<sup>19</sup> Ghazarian (1981: 20, 198.b). The term is noted earliest in two nineteenth century lexicons: Kajuni, and Norayr’s French dictionary (*‘escourgeon*’), according to Adjarian’s *HAB*. The suffix in *-an* regularly forms noun, adjectives, and adverbs (Greppin 1975:38, #134), on a stem *solr-*; otherwise the *-r-* could be the regular noun forming suffix as in *melu* ‘bee,’ *metr* ‘honey.’

<sup>20</sup> Avar-Andi \**sosur*, Andi *susr* ‘a kind of weed.’ Akhvakh *řiřu* ‘oats,’ Tindi *susur* ‘bran,’ Lak *sus* ‘rye,’ Lezgi *sil* ‘rye,’ Tabasaran *sursul* ‘id,’ Kryz *silsil* ‘id’ (Starostin and Nikolayev 1994:964-65).

<sup>21</sup> NHB: τράπεζα ‘table’: arasc’es selan yanp‘ut‘aytic’ “you will make the table from wood that does not rot” (NHB); also Bible (*Judith* 4:10) = Gk. θυσιαστήριον ‘altar’ (LXX *Judith* 4.12) and following. For the noun-forming suffix *-an* see note nineteen above.

<sup>22</sup> Agul *sal* ‘stall,’ Tsezi *řurV-* ‘cattle-shed,’ Ginukh *zoro* ‘id,’ Bezhta *řujo* ‘id,’ Gunzub ‘id.’ (Starostin and Nikolayev 1994:967).

<sup>23</sup> Common since the 5th century; Bible *passim* = Gk. δένδρον ‘tree.’

<sup>24</sup> A common word, known sixteen times in Urartian texts, The root is not found in surviving Lezgian languages; the Urartian word is found in the inscriptions of Rusa III. 421:10-11, with the Sumerogram GIŠ, marking it as ‘wood’: i-e-še-i-ni <sup>GIŠ</sup>ul-di-e / te-ru-ř-bi GÁN <sup>GIŠ.ŠAM</sup>ŠE GIŠřa-ri. “(And thus) I destroyed this vineyard, the sewn fields, the fruit-orchard” (Harutyunyan 2001:344-45). First noted in Ghapantsyan 1940:45. #18.

<sup>25</sup> Common since the 5th century; Bible *passim* = Gk. θάλαττα ‘sea.’

<sup>26</sup> Known twenty times in Urartian texts, but not surviving into the Lezgian languages. The Urartian term is found in the inscriptions of Sarduri II: 241E.50-51 (Harutyunyan 2001:241.50-51). . . . <sup>URU</sup>Ha-al-pa -ni / URU LUGÁL-nu-si-řu-i-in-i-ři-ni ma-un řa-ř-b[i] “the city of Khalpani, a royal city (which was) on the sea, I destroyed.”

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