

## X. Armenian

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#### 1. Introduction

Historical Armenia is a large plateau roughly bounded by the Caucasus Mountains, the Black and the Caspian Seas, Iran and Mesopotamia. The highest mountain is Mount Ararat, and the country has three major lakes: Urmia, Van, and Sevan. The most important river is the Araxes.

There are different theories about the origin of the Armenian people. The scholars who consider the steppes in the Southern part of Russia to be the homeland of the Indo-Europeans suppose that the Armenians arrived in their country from the Balkan Peninsula, probably during the second millennium BCE. However, according to other scholars, e.g. Thomas V. Gamkrelidze and Vjačeslav V. Ivanov, the Indo-European homeland roughly coincided with historical Armenia, so the Armenians were just the descendants of the Indo-European tribes settled in this area. A considerably different opinion is held by Mario Alinei. According to his “Paleolithic Continuity Theory”, no Indo-European invasion took place and the Indo-European languages spoken in Europe including, as we can guess, also Armenian, just continue the languages of the inhabitants of the Paleolithic period.

The history of the Armenian language can be divided into three main periods. For further information on this history see Ačařyan (1951); Nichanian (1989); Łazarean (2007). Discussion of toponomastic and anthroponymic issues is beyond our immediate concern.

#### 2. The early period (5<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> centuries)

2.1. We know nearly nothing about the Armenian language before the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE, when the Armenian script was invented by Mařtoc', a clergyman also called Mesrop in supposedly later sources. Around 387 CE, Armenia was divided between the Byzantine and the Sasanian states. The part under Byzantine influence was soon annexed by the empire, while the other maintained a sort of independence until 428. The most enlightened persons of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, such as the patriarch Sahak, Mařtoc', and King Vřamřapowh, were well aware that, with the loss of political independence, the existence of the Armenian ethnos was also threatened. The country had been officially Christianized in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century (the traditional date is 301), but the Armenian approach to Christianity was not fully acceptable to the Byzantines, whereas the Persians suspected that the Armenians, as a Christian people, certainly were in tacit agreement with the Western

enemy. Thus, the commitment of the Armenian language to writing was first of all necessary for survival and, furthermore, for religious purposes, in order to facilitate the preaching of the Christian faith among the people. Therefore, at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, the élite undertook the task of inventing a script for the Armenian language, and it was brilliantly performed by Maštoc' (traditionally, in 405–406).

2.2. After the invention of the alphabet, Maštoc' and his pupils involved themselves intensively in translation. Naturally, the first translated text was the Bible, a critical edition of which remains to this day a desideratum. The old edition by Zohrab (Yovhannēs Zōhrapean) printed in 1805 in Venice and reprinted as a facsimile in Delmar, New York, in 1984, offers only some variant readings, without any indication concerning the manuscript or manuscripts from which they are taken. Between 1985 and 2002 some Old Testament books (the Pentateuch, the Twelve Prophets, Maccabees) have been published in the series *Hay hnagoyn t'argmanakan yowšarjanner / Hay hnagowyn t'argmanakan howšarjanner* ('Oldest Armenian Translated Literary Monuments'), which was printed in Erevan, Ējmiacin (Armenia) or Antelias (Lebanon), while again Deuteronomy, Job, Daniel, and some Pseudepigrapha are available in other series.

As far as the New Testament is concerned, Künzle (1984) offers the transcribed text of the second and third-oldest manuscripts of the Gospels (respectively, Matenadaran 6200, copied in 887, and Matenadaran 2374, copied in 989), while the critical edition of the Acts of the Apostles has just appeared in the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (C.S.C.O.), edited in Louvain/Leuven.

After the Bible, works of Greek and Syriac authors, such as John Chrysostomus, Basil of Caesarea, Eusebius of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, Ephrem Syrus, Aphraates, and others were also translated into the classical Armenian language. The critical edition of some of these translations is available in C.S.C.O. Later on, probably starting from the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, another generation of translators became active. Their aim was to reproduce the original, usually Greek, text as faithfully as possible. In this way they translated many works pertaining to different fields: grammar (the *Tekhnē Grammatikē* by Dionysius Thrax), rhetoric (the *Progymnasmata* by Aelius Theon), philosophy (some works by Aristotle, Porphyry, David the Invincible, perhaps also Plato), as well as a number of books by Philo, Irenaeus, Timotheus Aelurus and others. Though the language of these translations is very artificial, containing numerous syntactic, semantic, and morphological calques, the translated texts of the so-called *Yownaban dproc'* ('Hellenizing school') remained as the reference books of higher learning for centuries. They provided the modern Armenian language with a rich vocabulary and especially with numerous technical terms used in various scientific fields. On the language of the Hellenizing school see Muradyan (2012).

2.3. Starting from the 5<sup>th</sup> century, original works were also composed in addition to translations. Among those works are the *Elc Alandoc'* ('Refutation of the Sects') by Eznik Kołbac'i, discussing religious subjects, and the *Vark' Maštoc'i* ('Life of Maštoc'') by Maštoc''s pupil Koriwn. These are the most ancient original writings composed in Classical Armenian (also called *grabar*). In the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, a series of historiographic works were also written, among which we can mention the

*Patmowt'iwn Hayoc'* ('History of the Armenians') by Agat'angelos; the anonymous *Bowzandaran Patmowt'iwnk'* ('Epic Histories'), also known as the *Patmowt'iwn Hayoc'* ascribed to a certain P'awstos Bowzand; and the *Patmowt'iwn Hayoc'* by Łazar P'arpec'i. These three books form a sort of continuum on the history of Armenia, starting from the account of the events which led to the conversion of the country to Christianity and ending with the rebellion against the Persians in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. That rebellion is also dealt with in *Vasn Vardanay ew Hayoc' Paterazmin* ('On Vardan and the Armenian War') by Elišē, a late-5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>-century text. Another important historiographic work is the *Patmowt'iwn Hayoc'* (beginning with the events of earliest antiquity and reaching the year 439) by Movsēs Xorenac'i, traditionally considered a 5<sup>th</sup>-century author. In the opinion of some scholars, however, this work was composed later. It is impossible to list the editions of these notable texts in this brief overview; for details see Thomson (1995, 2007). It is worth mentioning, however, that original works from the 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the text of which is often based on earlier editions, are collected in the *Matenagirk' Hayoc'/Armenian Classical Authors* series, a work in progress, sponsored by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia and, from the 15<sup>th</sup> volume onwards, also by the Matenadaran of Erevan. Nineteen volumes, encompassing authors from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, have been published so far, since 2003, first in Antelias and then in Erevan. Some of these volumes are also available at: <http://www.matenadaran.am/?id=83&lng=3> (accessed on 2 February 2017).

2.4. Scholars dealing with Armenian literary sources know well that those texts have come down to us through manuscripts copied in much later periods. For instance, the oldest complete manuscripts of the Gospels are codex 1144/86 of the Venice Mechitarist Library (the so-called Queen Mlk'ē's Gospel), copied in or just before 862 and the above-mentioned codex 6200 of the Matenadaran, copied in 887. Thus, since the Gospels were translated into Armenian in the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, there is a span of four centuries between the translation and the oldest surviving complete copies. The situation is even worse when it comes to original works: the oldest complete witness to the biography of Maštoc' by Koriwn was probably copied between 1675 and 1703 and added as an insert to Matenadaran 2639 (dated 1672); Eznik's treatise is known to us thanks to one manuscript (Matenadaran 1097) dated 1280; the oldest complete manuscript of the *Bowzandaran* is Jerusalem 341, dated 1599, while that of Agat'angelos was copied in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Matenadaran 3782); the oldest copy of Łazar P'arpec'i's *History* is Matenadaran 2639, dated 1672, and that of Movsēs Xorenac'i's work is Matenadaran 2865, partly copied in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and partly in 1567. As we have already stated, all these works were composed in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, with the possible exception of Movsēs Xorenac'i's *History*. Thus, one can wonder whether a linguistic feature found in a text is really from the 5<sup>th</sup> century or pertains to a later period of the Armenian language. The limited number of older surviving fragments containing parts of those texts, dated only on paleographical bases, cannot really change this situation, though at times they permit us to evaluate how much a text has been changed during the manuscript tradition (see for instance, the large fragment of Agat'angelos, preserved in a palimpsest of the Mechitarist Library of Vienna, n. 56 according to Tašean's catalogue, and recently studied by Topchyan 2009).

2.5. In addition to these literary texts, the linguist has also a number of early medieval inscriptions at his disposal, the dates of which are usually known, as well as graffiti,

many of them from Sinai. Some of them go back to the first centuries of the history of Armenian, as e.g. the two graffiti of Nazareth and the inscription of Tekor (all three dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> century). The information drawn from these sources, albeit often reduced to proper names (especially in many graffiti), reflects the oldest phase of the language. The Armenian inscriptions are collected in the *Divan hay vimagrowt'yan/ Corpus Inscriptionum Armenicarum*, 9 volumes of which have been published so far in Erevan (between 1966 and 2012). In this series, also available at: <http://serials.flib.sci.am/openreader/test/index.html> (accessed on 2 February 2017), the inscriptions are presented according to their location. For a synopsis of the early Armenian inscriptions, see Greenwood (2004).

2.6. Loanwords, both into and from Armenian, represent another source of possible linguistic information. As a result of linguistic contacts before or in the 5<sup>th</sup> century or later, Armenian borrowed a certain number of Iranian, Greek, and Syriac words and proper names. Such loans bear witness to the phonological status of Armenian or, in some cases, of a variety of it. For example, there are two lateral consonants in Armenian, which are represented by separate letters transliterated as <ł> and <ł̄>. In many loans from Greek, the “lambda” is rendered by <ł> (e.g. *hiwl* ‘matter’, *salmos* ‘psalm’, *mlon* ‘mile’, *taland* ‘talent’ and some names: *Alek'sandros*, *Lazar*, *Agat'angelos* etc.), and this is the case in some loans from Syriac as well. All these words and names are attested in 5<sup>th</sup>-century works; consequently, the way of rendering the Greek lateral should be evaluated in order to establish the exact phonological value of the two lateral consonants in 5<sup>th</sup>-century Armenian.

Linguistic information can also be obtained through Armenian words preserved in foreign languages. For example, in the so-called *Narratio de Rebus Armeniae*, a history of the Armenian Church composed in Greek by an Armenian at the beginning of the 8<sup>th</sup> century (text in C.S.C.O., Louvain, 1952), one can find numerous Armenian toponyms and personal names in the Greek script, which could give information about the phonology of at least a variety of the Armenian language.

2.7. Another source of information is provided by some authors who at times speak about peculiarities of Armenian or refer to current opinions about it. For instance, in the *Elc Alandoc'* by Eznik (I, 23) and in the Armenian version of Dionysius Thrax (Adontz 1970: 14), alleged dialectal words are mentioned. Furthermore, the 8<sup>th</sup>-century commentator on Dionysius, Step'annos Siwnec'i, offers a list of alleged Armenian dialects (Adontz 1970: 187).

2.8. Finally, there are two unique documents from the first period of the history of Armenian which provide information about the language. The first is a papyrus coming from Egypt. It previously consisted of four fragments, which are now attached to one another as if they represent one unbroken text. The papyrus is housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris (BnF Arm 332). Both the recto and the verso contain texts, a sort of sketch of the Greek language (short conversational phrases, verbal paradigms, lists of words, some stories and maxims) written in Armenian script. Thanks to this document, the corresponding Armenian and Greek letters can be compared and the phonological values of certain Armenian sounds can be clarified. Based on paleographic features, the

papyrus has been dated to the period between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, making it one of the oldest witnesses to the Armenian script. See the text in Clackson (2000, 2002).

The other important document is a short Latin-Armenian glossary, copied at the end of a manuscript kept in the seminary of Autun (France). The manuscript was supposedly written at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, but it seems that the glossary is a copy of an earlier text reflecting an older status of Armenian. The Autun glossary contains ninety entries, all in Latin script, including days of the week, numerals, nouns referring to food and drinks, the sun and stars, parts of the body, and religious concepts. Rendering Armenian by Latin characters, this document gives a dialectal pronunciation of the corresponding words. See the text in Carrière (1886).

### 3. The middle period (12<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries)

3.1. Classical Armenian was obviously a literary language, written and also spoken alongside other varieties of Armenian. In the course of time it became only a learned language, while the common people used different vernaculars (different forms of *ašxarhabar*), one of which gradually became the basis of a new literary language in the period in question. Also, two new letters, <ō> and <f>, were added to the Armenian alphabet during this period.

3.2. From the historical point of view, one of the most noteworthy facts in this period is the foundation of an independent Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia, that is to say, outside historical Armenia. Probably starting from the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century, Armenians migrated to this country. Later on a principality was created and finally, in 1198 or 1199, Prince Lewon II acquired royal status, thereby becoming Lewon I and receiving his crown from a legate of Emperor Henry VI. During the Crusades, the Armenian kingdom was an important ally of the Western powers. Within the kingdom itself, a composite society was created, where both Armenians and Europeans (“Franks” according to the terminology of that time) lived and worked side by side. The kingdom ceased to exist in 1375, but what happened in it during a period of less than two centuries is worth noting, also from a linguistic point of view.

3.3. In this period, the split between the classical and the spoken languages was completed, and the former remained as the language of culture, especially religion. On the other hand, the administrative cadres of the new kingdom were people who only partially mastered the classical language. Therefore, a specific literature was created for them, dealing with technical subjects and written in a language more or less close to the spoken one. Such works were both original and translated (from Syriac, Arabic, and French), pertaining to medicine, veterinary science, agronomy, and law. They were written in a language reflecting features of Western Armenian dialects. Among those works are the *Ĵermanc' mxit'arowt'iwn* (‘Consolation of Fevers’), written in 1184 by Mxit'ar Herac'i, the *Datastanagirk'* (‘Law-Code’) by Smbat Sparapet (1208–1276), the *Ansiz Antiok'ay* (‘Assizes of Antioch’), the *Girk' vastakoc'* (‘Book of Farm Labors’), the *Bžškarán jioy*

*ew aṙhasarak grastnoy* ('Medical Book for Horses and for Beasts of Burden in General').

As we have already stated, Cilician Armenians were in touch with Europeans, especially nobles and merchants, and at times Cilician Armenian kings granted or renewed trade privileges to some of them (Genoese, Venetians, merchants from Catalonia, Provence, Montpellier, and others). Those documents, too, were often written in a language close to spoken Armenian: they are collected in Langlois (1863).

The influence of the "Franks" on Cilician Armenia was evident in many aspects of daily life. It is also documented by many loanwords from European languages, especially French, which penetrated into Armenian, and which provide information on the phonology of both the source and the recipient languages.

3.4. We should also note the Latin cultural and linguistic influence, especially on the church. In this respect, the so-called *Fratres Unitores* (*Elbark' Miabanolk'*) played a significant role. They were a group of friars, both of European and Armenian origin, who helped Bartolomeo di Bologna (or de Podio, †1333) in his missionary activity in Armenia and continued his mission after Bartolomeo's death. These *Fratres*, who became active in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, wrote in Classical Armenian (or rather, what was supposed to be Classical Armenian in that period), because *grabar* remained the language of educated people. The *Unitores* also dealt with grammar, and one of them, Yovhannēs K'ṙnec'i (†1347), composed a grammatical work. Unlike previous grammars, it is not a commentary on the Armenian version of Dionysius Thrax's *Tekhnē Grammatikē*. The author shows knowledge of the works of Latin grammarians and devotes a part of his work to syntactic problems. Yovhannēs was also the first Armenian grammarian who gave examples from Middle Armenian, the current language spoken and written in his time.

## 4. The modern period (17<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> centuries)

4.1. After the fall of the Cilician Kingdom, no independent Armenian state existed until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this time-span the Armenians were Ottoman or Persian, later on also Russian subjects, often involved in world trade. At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, New Julfa was founded on the outskirts of Isfahan, becoming an important trade and cultural center. The Armenians also had trade colonies in Amsterdam, Venice, Leghorn (Livorno), Marseille, and elsewhere.

4.2. The first Armenian books were printed in Venice, circa 1511, by Yakob Melapart ('The Sinner') who published at least five books. Only one of them, a mass-book, is dated (1513). The others, printed before or after this missal, had more popular contents (prayers and spells, horoscopes, a calendar, and poetry) and were addressed especially to merchants. After Yakob, the Armenians founded other printing houses, again in Venice, but also in Leghorn (Livorno), Amsterdam, Marseille, and other Western and Eastern

cities. Worth mentioning is the Bible printed in 1666–1668 by Oskan vardapet Erewanc'i (1614–1674) in Amsterdam.

4.3. Simultaneously with the more or less ephemeral activity of Armenian publishers, two Western printing houses which also printed books in Armenian, were founded: one in Milan, at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana (a library founded by Cardinal Federico Borromeo and inaugurated in 1609), and the other in Rome, by the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, a congregation founded in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV.

These printing houses also published dictionaries and grammars of Classical Armenian, written by both Armenian and European scholars. The novelty of these grammars was that they were not traditional commentaries on the Armenian version of Dionysius Thrax, which until the 17<sup>th</sup> century was conceived by the Armenians as the only grammar (the above-mentioned work by Yovhannēs K'fneč'i was an exception). They applied the current Western framework (represented by the so-called “extended Latin grammar”, as it was defined by Sylvain Auroux) to their works. We cannot discuss all those works now; let us just mention Francesco Rivola's *Dictionarium Armeno-Latinum*, printed in Milan in 1621 and reprinted in Paris in 1633. The author, putting together Armenian words and loans from other languages, offers an overview of what was regarded as Classical Armenian in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Rivola also wrote a *Grammatica Armena* (Milan 1624, reprinted in 1634 in Paris). Among the Propaganda's productions are the grammars written by Yovhannēs Holov (or Ioannes Agop, 1635–1691), printed in 1674 and 1675. All the works just mentioned, particularly those published by the Propaganda, are also notable for another reason: they not only imitate the Latin model in their grammatical description, but also try to mold “Classical Armenian” on Latin, thus creating an artificial language, the so-called *latinatip* or *latinaban hayerēn* (‘Latinized Armenian’) used in both original and translated works.

4.4. In addition to the “classical” language, a new variety of written Armenian was in use in this period: it was the language of the merchants coming from different regions, known as *vačařakanakan hayerēn* (‘merchant Armenian’). This form of Armenian was very close to the so-called *lingua civilis*, about which both Yovhannēs Holov (e.g. in his *Puritas Haygica*, Rome, 1675: 1) and Johannes Joachim Schröder (1680–1756) in his *Thesaurus Linguae Armenicae* (Amsterdam, 1711: 301–302) speak, describing it as a mixed language, halfway between the language of the learned and that of uneducated people, used both by preachers and merchants.

While in the 17<sup>th</sup> century *vačařakanakan hayerēn* was a kind of unitary language, containing features of Western or Eastern dialects (according to the origin of the writer), in the following century, on the contrary, it progressively split into two varieties: Eastern and Western Armenian. *Vačařakanakan hayerēn* was used to write letters, ledgers or travel journals like the *Ōragrowth'iwn* (‘Diary’) by the merchant Zak'aria Agowlec'i (1630–1691). Also, books for merchants were printed in that language: for example, the *Arhest hamarolowt'ean ambolj ew katareal* (‘The Complete and Perfect Art of Calculation’), a handbook of elementary arithmetic printed in Marseille in 1675, or the *Ganj čap'oy, kšřoy, t'woy ew dramic' bolor ašxarhi* (‘Treasury of Measures, Weights, Numbers and Coins of the Whole World’), printed in Amsterdam in 1699. The dialogues contained in the *Skzbownk' italakani lezowi* (‘A Primer of the Italian Language’), itself a part of the *Girk' aybowbenic' ew kerp owsaneloy zlezown italakan* (‘Spelling-book and a Way

of Learning the Italian Language', Marseille, 1675) are also written in *vačarakanakan hayerēn*.

4.5. As already stated, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century we find two varieties of the written language, which progressively became quite different from each other. The classical language, too, was still in use, but it was full of loans from several contemporary languages (Turkish, Persian, and Arabic). Besides, morphological and syntactic calques from Latin were also abundant in it; therefore, one of the main goals of the Mechitarist fathers, a congregation founded by Mxit'ar Sebastac'i (1676–1749) in Constantinople in 1700, was to cleanse the classical language of all these “foreign elements”. However, in doing so they stimulated a similar puristic approach towards Modern Armenian. In 1715 Mxit'ar moved to Venice (from 1717 onward he was in San Lazzaro). After his death the Mechitarists split: a group of friars moved to Trieste (in 1773) and then to Vienna (in 1810). We are indebted to both branches of the congregation for numerous studies pertaining to various fields of learning and for many editions of classical Armenian authors, as well as for the thesaurus of Classical Armenian, the two-volume *Nor Baṙgirk' Haykazean Lezowi* ('New Dictionary of the Armenian Language', Venice 1836–1837; reprinted in Erevan, 1979–1981) by Gabriēl Awetik'ean, Xač'atowr Siwrmēlean and Mkrtič' Awgerean.

4.6. The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries are also notable for the publication of periodicals in Armenian. The first of them, *Azdarar* ('The Monitor'), was published monthly in Madras (India) between 1794 and 1796 (18 issues of it were printed). Furthermore, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the first studies dedicated to Armenian dialectology and folklore appeared. In the second half of the century, a discussion (the so-called *grapyk'ar* 'language struggle') started among learned people concerning the form of language (either classical or vernacular, or a mixture of both) which the Armenians were to use for teaching and writing.

In summary, the written varieties of both Western and Eastern Armenian had finally been formed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, more or less influenced by the classical language, which was still in use. As for the spoken language, in addition to the two literary varieties, local dialects were also certainly spoken.

4.7. The main historical events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were the genocide of 1915–1917 and the annexation of Armenia to the Soviet Union. In consequence of the former, the Armenian-speaking population of the Ottoman Empire was drastically reduced and the survivors were forced to find refuge abroad, so that today Western Armenian is almost exclusively spoken, as a second language, in the Armenian diaspora. As to the second event, it took place in 1921: Armenia, previously a part of the Russian Empire, was incorporated into the Soviet Union after a short period of independence (1918–1920). In the new Socialist republic, an orthographic reform was carried out in order to make the orthography of Eastern Armenian adhere more closely to its pronunciation. The reform started in 1922 and was completed in 1940. Later on it was also adopted for Eastern Armenian used in other Soviet republics, as well as for Western Armenian used in Romania and Bulgaria, while Western Armenian in the diaspora and Eastern Armenian in Iran and India were still written according to the old orthography. We should also add that Eastern Armenian underwent the influence of Russian, mostly in vocabulary and at times in syntax as well. Today an influence of English can be noticed too.



On the other hand, Western Armenian, being spoken only as a second language, was influenced by the main language of the given country, so that there are differences between the varieties spoken, for instance, in France and in the U.S.A. Furthermore, after 1989, the mass emigration from the (former Soviet) Armenian Republic to the countries already having Armenian communities resulted in a new situation. The newcomers, whose mother tongue is Eastern Armenian, sometimes form a larger part of the Armenian-speaking population than the descendants of the genocide survivors, who speak Western Armenian only as a second language. This may presage a continuous influence of Eastern Armenian upon Western Armenian and, sooner or later, the death of the latter.

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## 61. The phonology of Classical Armenian

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### 1. Introduction

Armenian is a living branch of Indo-European with fairly rich inscriptional and substantial textual attestation. The earliest inscriptions in *Old Armenian* (OA) date from the period after the creation of the Armenian alphabet by Mesrop Maštoc' in ca. 406 CE. The textual attestation of the so-called *Grabar* (lit. 'literary [language]'), or *Classical Armenian* (CA) in its broad sense, consists of more than 30,000 extant manuscripts dating from 862 (*Gospels of Queen Mlkē*) to ca. 1700 (Stone et al. 2002: 42<sup>159</sup>, 118; Stone 2006: 467 f., 487 f.).

The terms OA and CA are often used interchangeably. This is when the term CA is used in its narrow sense to refer to the form of OA codified before ca. 450 CE, the period of the so-called *Golden Age* reflected in the Bible translation and the writings of the earliest Armenian authors such as Eznik and Koriwn (ca. 406–ca. 450). The distinction between this "classical" form of the language and that of the later manuscript tradition was first recognized by the Viennese Mekhitarist grammarians Č'alōxean and Aytənean (1885).

The extant CA manuscripts exhibit traits classified by Ĵahowkyan (1969) as *Post-CA* (ca. 450–ca. 700) and *Pre-Middle Armenian* (ca. 700–ca. 1100); however, Jungmann and Weitenberg (1993: 4) point to the insufficiency of the linguistic criteria used for this conventional periodization. The term *Middle Armenian* is synonymous with *Medieval Cilician* (ca. 1100–ca. 1350) which coexisted with CA as a literary language (cf. Karst 1901). The intermediate stage between OA and modern Armenian vernaculars spoken in Armenia proper up to ca. 1700 is conventionally referred to as *Medieval Armenian* (cf. Weitenberg 1995: 7).