

Re: How does Armenian fit into the Indo-European family?

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- *From:* "Darkstar" <darkstar100@xxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* 18 Mar 2007 18:50:58 -0700
-

On Mar 18, 3:53 am, "John Atkinson" <johna...@xxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

"Darkstar" <darkstar...@xxxxxxxx> wrote ...

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<darkstar...@xxxxxxxx>
wrote...

John
Atkinson
wrote:

"Darkstar"
<darkstar...@xxxxxxxx>
wrote

[...]

.
Do
you
have
more
examples
[of
*w
>
g]

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gorc
<
*worgyo-
(E
work);
gitem
<
weid-
(E
wit);

But */w/ is
neatly
reflected as
/v/ in most
IE
languages.

It isn't in Germanic, Italic,
Celtic, or Greek, for starters.

See corrections below.

Isn't it
strange it's
so different
in
Armenian?

Why? It's a pretty common
shift. A recent example is
the western
Romance languages which
have borrowed words
starting with /w/ from
Germanic a millenium or so
ago, replacing the /w/ with
/g/ -- Germ
*werra, warD- > Spanish

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guerra, guardia, etc.

I think going from a bilabial phoneme to a dorsal g/k is going a little too far. Besides, originally it probably was <gUerra>/ <gUardia> as reflected in writing.

I agree. It was w > gw > g. (In Spanish, though not French, the "w" is still pronounced before a — as in guardia. And quite likely the same thing happened in Armenian — some people claim it did; it's certainly plausible, though, AFAIK, there is no actual evidence one way or another, since gw, if it existed, became g well before Armenian was first written down.

I would also assume the initial /g-/ indicates it was borrowed from Celtiberian, not Germanic (?).

No. These words (which often have to do with military vocabulary) are widespread in Western Romance, and were probably diffused via Latin before the main period of Germanic invasions, as a result of Roman contact with German "confederates". — but it has to have occurred after original Latin /w/ > /v/, of course!
I

can't recall any other evidence showing a direct transition w > g, especially in the Anlaut.

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The only
possible
explanation
is to
postulate an
initial */H/

What do you mean by /H/?
I've been using this symbol
to denote a
PIE
laryngal, which, in
Armenian as elsewhere, is
lost initially,
after
changing the vowel. It
seems you're using it for
something else
(?)

Okay, you're right. I probably mean an
aspirated */h/ or */x/,
although a laryngal–aspirated sound or some
other back consonant is
also possible here.

The actual pronunciation of the three or four PIE "laryngals"
is
unknown; in particular, it may not have involved the larynx.
So
we're
not in conflict there -- only about whether /H/ actually
occured in
the
particular words under consideration, and, if it did, whether it
was
still there after proto–Armenian separated from proto–Greek,
etc.

which was
lost in all

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other
branches
which had a
different
common
ancestor.
Consequently,
*/w/ was
lost
in
Proto–Armenian.
And I don't
think that
Greek
<organon>
and
<oido>
fit
the theory
of being
related to
their
Armenian
cognates or
they
should
be
<horganon>,
<hoido>,
etc.

Why? Initial /h-/ in Greek
usually comes from /*s-/.
Thus oida <
*wida
< PIE *weid- (cf Arm
gitem) and orge:, power
<*worg^he: (cf Arm
gorc).

I mean they should prbly be <kworganon>,
<kwoido> or <korganon>,
<koido>, see below. Here, you're keeping to
the point that g < w,
while I believe this is hardly possible in the
Anlaut: g < *h, that
is.

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Why is $g < *h$ any more plausible than $g < *gw < *w$?

If PIE had a distinctly enunciated $*gw$ or $*gv$, it would be found in the other IE languages. The initial $*h$ in $*hw$ was light, so it easily disappeared in most groups but got stronger in Celtic and Armenian. The transition $*gw < *w$ in the Anlaut is unlikely because it's hardly attested in the world phonology,

I disagree that it's "hardly attested".

therefore it could have been $*hw$
right from the start.

[...]

I will summarize what I'm trying to say
below.

The point of this thread is to see/show
whether Armenian is
different
from the mainstream IE languages, or
whether the latter share any
innovations.

So far, we have:

1) E. <work>, Gr. <orga->, L.<opera>,
probably also Russ.

<vershit'>,
etc, but Armenian <gorts>

2) Faroese <vita>, Sl. <vedat'>, Sanskrit
<vedas>, Gr. <eidos,
Feidos>

"I saw', 'shape', L. <videre> 'to see', except
Welsh <gwybod>

'know',
<gweled> 'see' where /gw/ is preserved,

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You say "preserved"; this is your *_assumption_*; others reckon *w > gw

but Armenian <giter> 'I know'.
3) G.<wetter> 'weather', Sl. <veter>, Lith. <vejas>, L.<ventus>, 'wind', Hindi <vayu>, Alb. <ere>, except Welsh <gwynt>, but Armenian <holm, kami> 'wind'

Are <holm> and <kami> cognate with all the rest? The others all come from <*we:-(nt)->, blow.

According to M&A, <holm> comes from *Henh1mos, breath, which also gives Latin animus, Greek anemos. Seems to me /nm/ > /lm/ is very plausible (cf Latin <anima> > Spanish <alma>, etc. I admit that this doesn't explain where the initial <h> in Armenian <holm> comes from!

But, it's not unique in this. In Armenian, h's are not infrequently added to vowel-initial words, leading to doublets like <ogi>, breath, vs <hogi>, spirit.

For no particular reason? Sometimes, the initial /h/ is acquired historically as in Armenian <hanal> 'fall' from Old Armenian <enkel> probably under influence of the velar /k/.

Do you know whether there's a word <olm>?

No, but I know there's a word <hosel> from <hosil> 'to fly' (< to soar in the wind?). And it's not <kami>, sorry, but <k'ami>, the same mistake you've been telling me about. Now with the <k'> there, the

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Armenian origin of the word becomes more obvious. Might be West Armenian, actually.

I don't know <kami>. If it's IE, it would presumably have come from *gwem-, come, which seems implausible semantically -- also none of the references I have derive <kami> from *gwem- -- M&A claims *gwem- has no cognate in Armenian. My guess is that <kami> comes from a non-IE language.

Japanese "kamikaze" :-) Seriously, with Armenian it's very hard to tell, because its phonology is very different from the rest.

But the sound change rules, PIE > Armenian, are pretty well defined, and exceptions are rare, no more common than in other branches of IE. The fact that the final results are "very different" is immaterial.

Okay, more proof below.

*hw or *wh could > k` (cf *sweso:r-, sister > *hweur- > <k`oyr>), but not k.

*w does > k in the cluster *k^w -- *k^wo:n-t-, dog, > *swund- > skownd> -- as mentioned before. But I can't see how this could apply to <kami>.

<Kami> indeed might be from another stock.

In any case, as you said yourself with respect to mi/mek, there's no way Armenian could have <m> in a word cognate with all those other words you listed in (3) above. This applies to both <holm> and <kami>.

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I disagree here. [...] a relatively natural, progressive assimilation in the Auslaut */hwent/ → */holt/ → */holn/ → Old Armenian <holm> → Modern <hov>. The transition to /m/ is influenced by the bilabial /o/ which is from the bilabial */w/. Hence, the existence of the original */w/ is supported by the presence of */o/. As a result, the process seem quite smooth and natural.

Doesn't "seem" natural to me. /we/ > /o/ is not unusual, but I don't think it happens in Armenian — I know of no examples.

A possible explanation is below.

What's more,
"the transition to /m/ is influenced
by the bilabial /o/" is obviously wrong, since /o/ isn't bilabial!

Well, /o/ is formed by rounding lips, isn't it?

Here we observe Armenian behaving differently from the rest by possibly preserving the initial */h/ from */hw/, which could have been an aspirated (or partly laryngeal?) consonant, reflected as /k-/ , /g-/ , /h-/ in Armenian

If so, there'd have to be a conditioning factor to determine which of the three it ended up as. What is that factor?

There can be several different factors at work. Right from the top of my head, */hwe/, /hwo/ → */gi/, */go/ is regular, but /ho/ may be partly onomatopoeic. Cf. the many languages with the initial /f/, /h/, /b/, /v/, /u/ in <blow>, <wind>, etc., like Japanese <fubuki> 'storm', Korean <param> 'wind', Hindi <heva>, Persian <bad> 'wind', Lithuanian <pusti> 'to blow', Greek <fuso>, Czech <fukati> etc. In fact, words denoting 'wind' with an initial /g/ are not so easy to find. But again the Japanese "kaze".

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and as /g-/ in Celtic. Here I assume that /w/
cannot
transform into /g/ directly, at least not in the
beginning of the
word.

Therefore,
*<hw-> or *<Hw-> --- > <w> in most IE
languages
--- > <gw-> in early Celtic
--- > <kh->, <g-> or <k-> in Armenian

Although one might immediately object that
this is not a pure
innovation, just a loss or rise in strength of
an aspirated /h/.

But
judging the amount of the mainstream IE
languages, it would be
unlikely the loss was so regular in so many
dialects, therefore we
might assume there was a common ancestor
which did not include
Armenian.

The reason why it's important to set
Armenian apart is the
following.

IMO, the initial /d/ in *<duwo> or /tr/ in
*<treyes> have no direct
connection to <erku>--<erek>

Armenian for "three" is <erek`>, not <erek>. Here <k`>
denotes the
aspirated velar stop, which replaced <s> as a plural suffix, as
I
pointed out before. This apparently isn't a sound change, it's
a

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substitution. Reason: /s/ > /k`/ doesn't seem to occur anywhere except in the plural suffix -- elsewhere, /s/ > /0/ (mostly), or remains unchanged (especially after n).

Okay. It's probably should be denoted as /x/ to avoid confusion (?).

What, then, would you do with <p`> and <t`>? Anyway, "x" in IPA (and Russian!) denotes the voiceless velar fricative, not the voiceless aspirated velar stop. So to transcribe <k`> as "x" would be much more confusing!

The outcome of this paragraph is that /kh/ doesn't come from the /s/ of */treys/. More reason to believe these words are not directly cognate.

I've just pointed out that "k`" regularly substitutes for "*s" in plurals. <otk`>, feet, cf Greek <podes>; (-mk`>, 1st person plural ending, cf Latin <-mus>, etc etc etc.

Whether or not the ending -k` is cognate with *-s (and, as I said, it quite likely isn't), has nothing to do with whether <ere-> is cognate with */treye->

Armenian clearly distinguishes aspirated and unaspirated voiceless stops, and has done so as far back as the written evidence goes. Please don't use the same symbol for different phonemes, it confuses everyone.

Point taken.

, because the direct reconstruction is far too complex phonologically. A simple one would be:

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In Armenian:

*<THEThhaus> --> *<eThhau> -->

*<erhu> --> <erku>

*<Therese> --> *<Thereh> --> <erekh>

This time at least you show the aspiration!

Maybe you think this is pedantic, but please don't use <..>
for
postulated _sounds_. <...> denoted orthography, a
transliteration of
the _written_ language.

Right again. Was in a hurry.

For all those starred bits, you should use
either /.../ (if they're meant to be phonemes), or [...] if they're
supposed to be actual (postulated) sounds. (Or ".." if you
want to
be
intentionally vague :-)

This is what's always confused me. The IPA has [...] for phonemes.

No it doesn't. IPA is a _phonetic_ alphabet, not a _phonemic_ alphabet.
It has nothing to do with phonemes. Though people wanting to discuss
the phonemes of particular languages do find it convenient to "borrow"
IPA symbols to denote them.

Why /.../ for phonemes, then? What do you mean by 'actual' sounds?

Phones. What comes out of your mouth, as measured instrumentally.

Ok, I see.

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Aren't phonemes actual?

That's a controversial question. For those that claim they are (or those, like me, who don't care much, but find the concept useful), phonemes are what the hearer, a native speaker of the same language, thinks he hears. One phoneme can correspond to several different "actual sounds" (allophones).

Is there a formally accepted standard?

For particular languages, yes, usually. But a phonemic analysis is unique to a particular language (or even a particular dialect of a language), so a "formally accepted standard" that would apply to all languages is an absurd concept.

I don't want to get involved in yet another discussion of the phoneme concept — it's been done to death here before, and others here are much better qualified than me to deal with it. I advise you to read any basic linguistics text (or Wikipedia, whose article on the subject is quite good, IMO).

Wiki can be excellent if used carefully.

Okay, back to the main point.

First off, more examples on the *hw-correspondences.

4) Old Arm <havgit>, but Welsh <wy>, pl.<wyau>, Breton <vi>, Irish <ubh>, Latin <ovum>, Greek <augo, avgho>, Frisian <eike>, Alb <veja, veze>, Slovak <vajce>, Latv <ola>, Pers <xaya>. Apparently, from either */hwavg-/ or */wavg-/.

Again, we have the same correlation (Arm. */h-/ vs. others */w-/, /v-/.) But this time the Celts have no initial /gw-/. The /gw/ in */gwavg/ did not survive, due to phonetic complexity, hence possibly */wevg/ or */wuvg/ > /ubh, wy/

Also note the preservation of the ending /-it/ in Arm, which is not found in the rest of IELs.

5) Old Armenian /hot/ 'flower', but Lusitan /kwet/, Polish /kwiat/, Lithuanian <kvietka>, Welsh <gwellt> 'grass', Frisian <gjers> 'grass', Hindi <ghas>, Marathi <gevet>, Greek <khortari>

6) Old Arm /kanac/ 'green', [/delin/ 'yellow'], but Welsh /gwyrd/, Lat. /verd-/ 'green', /helvus/ 'yellow', Slav. /zelen-/ 'green', /zholt-/ 'yellow', Lith /zha~lias/ 'green', Alban /gjelber/ 'green', /verdh/ 'yellow', Snkt. /haris/ 'green', Avest /zairi/ 'yellow'.

"Green" and "yellow" have the same base in IELs, but possibly not in Armenian.

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7) Old Arm. /kin/, but Welsh /gwraig/, Lith /zmona/, Slovenian /zhenā/, Goth /qino/, E 'wife' Alb /gruja/, Persian /zan/, Icelandic /kona/, Snsk /janis/

8) Arm /erb/ 'when', /ur/ 'where', /inc/ 'what' but the IELs with their classical interrogative *kwo–, *kwe– base.

9) Arm /ord/ 'worm', but Welsh /gallt/, G /wurm/, L /vermis/, Hindi /kira/, Greek /s–kuliki/, Lith /kirmis/, Sl. /cherv'/, Baluchi /kirm/, Alb /krimb/

In these two examples the initial */h/ in Armenian must have been lost early on.

The outcome is that IE *hw/gw behaves predictably in Arm., but changes into a lot of other things in the mainstream IELs (except in Celtic, where it's mostly *gw–). This indicates that the transitions in Arm. occurred very early, while the mainstream IELs had time to progressively develop distinct vowels (*hwa, *hwe, *hwi, *hwo) and strengthen the /hw/–part in different ways (*kv, *gw, *hv, *w, etc), which finally gave rise to the differences in assimilation of *hw. This might mean that the emergence of strong /w/ in *hw in the mainstream IELs was a recent innovation that took place after Armenian had already branched off. To disprove this conjecture, one could try to find some examples of /b–/, /p–/, /v–/ that would result from the transformation of *hw– in Armenian, and thus indicate the presence of a bilabial phoneme at an early state. But there seem to be none in Swadesh's 200–word list, which implies that /w/ of *hw never existed in Arm.! Therefore, this /w/ sound could actually be an *innovation* in the mainstream IELs...

Therefore, we have

*/hu–, ho–/ --> /k'V–/, /hV–/, /V–/ in Arm

*/hu–, ho–/ --> */hw–/ --> mostly as /gw/ in Celtic, but variously as /v/, /u/, /o/, /g/, /h/, /k/, /g/, /kw/, /gw/, /hw/ in most IELs.

Or what do you think?

.