

THE SURVIVAL OF ANCIENT ANATOLIAN AND MESOPOTAMIAN VOCABULARY UNTIL THE PRESENT

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THERE is little doubt that words from extinct Near Eastern languages have continued up into modern times. The words I am referring to are not those that survived through cognates in languages still alive, but rather those that survived through loans into unrelated languages which have continued up to our day. Thus some scholars have argued for the continuation of Hurrian and Urartian through Armenian, and others also suspect there is Akkadian and Hurrian vocabulary surviving in Persian. In addition, we see what must be Indo-European words of Anatolian shape prospering in Iranian, Armenian, and Turkish. Many rather solid examples can be offered,¹ and among them let us note first Akk. *šallūru* “a fruit, possibly of the medlar,² but most likely a plum,” Arm. *salor*, dialects *šlor* “plum.”³ This word does not exist elsewhere in Semitic or in Indo-European. It is likely that it is not original in Akkadian,⁴ since, as I. M. Diakonoff has pointed out, the plum did not grow in ancient Mesopotamia.⁵ Like

¹ Most of these etymologies have been offered obscurely over the last half century by Russian and Armenian scholars. By and large the first pairings of these words lacked any philological support. For citations, I give the most easily accessible reference in a Western language if available and, where appropriate, the first mention of the term in scholarly literature. Arm. *brut*: see Nerses A. Mkrtchian, “Otklonenija ot zakonomernocnej Armjanskogo jazykov svete dannyx akadnskogo jazyka,” *Istoriko-filologičeskij žurnal* 4 (1979): 219–34; esp. 216 (hereafter N. Mkrtchian 1979); *bur*: H. Adjarian, *Hayoc^c lezvi patmut^c ywn* (Yerevan, 1940), p. 196 (hereafter Adjarian 1940); *car*: I. M. Diakonoff, *Hurrisch und Urartäisch* (Munich, 1971), p. 85; idem “Ancient Near Eastern Substrata in Armenian,” *Annual of Armenian Linguistics (AArmL.)* 3 (1982): 13–18; *marx*: see my article “Two Points on Hurrian-Armenian Lexical Relationships,” in *Societies and Languages of the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honour of I. M. Diakonoff* (Warminster, 1982), pp. 117–19, esp. p. 117; *salor*: Diakonoff, “Ancient Near Eastern Substrata,” p. 17; M. L. Khachikian, *Khurriskij i Urartiskij jazyki* (Yerevan, 1985), p. 55; *r^conir*: N. Mkrtchian 1979, p. 224; G. B. Djahukian, “Akkadian Loan Words in Armenian,” *AArmL.* 3 (1982): 1–12, esp. p. 10; *zurna*: see my articles “The Anatolian Substrata in Armenian—An Interim Report,” *AArmL.* 3 (1985): 65–72, esp. p. 70; and

“The Etymology of Gr. σῦριγγς,” *Historische Sprachforschung* 3 (1990): 35–37; *ult*: N. Adontz, “Emprunts de haute époque en armenien,” *Revue des études indo-européennes* 1 (1938): 457–67, esp. p. 465; Diakonoff, *Hurrisch und Urartäisch*, p. 85.

² M. Zohary, *Geobotanical Foundations of the Middle East* (Stuttgart, 1973), p. 629, locates the medlar especially in the mesophilus forest of the northern Middle East, where it was possibly cultivated.

³ Dialect examples are numerous: Alashkert, Mush, Julfa *šlor*, Yerevan *slōr*, Tiflis *šlur*, Goris *šlēōr*, Gharabagh (Karabakh) *šälliwr*.

⁴ Nor is it likely that it came to Armenian via Akkadian; see my article “‘Akkadian’ Loan Words in Armenian,” *AArmL.* 10 (1989): 73–84, esp. p. 77.

⁵ D. Zohary and M. Hopf, *Domestication of Plants in the Old World: The Origin and Spread of Cultivated Plants in West Asia, Europe and the Nile Valley* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 157–58, confirm that the plum (*Prunus domestica*) was known only in the temperate areas of Europe and Turkey. Though the actual cultivation of plums is known specifically only from Roman times, pre-Neolithic carbonized plum-stones similar to those of the *P. domestica* have been found, implying that the *P. domestica* did result without human intervention. M. Zohary has stated earlier (*Geobotanical Foundations*, p. 629), that “the (Middle East) was probably never a site of domestication of plums.” He added, though, that the plum, along with other fruit trees and such hardwoods as the oak and beech, was abundant in Turkey and, to a lesser extent, in western Iran (*ibid.*, pp. 74–75, 376). H. L. Werneck and K. Bertsch, “Zur Ur- und Frühgeschichte der Pflaumen im oberen Rhein- und Donauräume,” *Angewandte Botanik*

the words for "lime" and "oven" which follow, we have an ancient word, known variously in ancient times, that has survived in Modern Armenian.

Akk. *pīlu*, *pūlu* and Arm. *buř*, "plaster, lime"; Gk. *πῶρος* "tufa, stone"; Ur. *pulusi* "stone, stele": it seems most probable that we are not dealing with a word that is original to Akkadian (no cognates exist in other Semitic languages) but rather some ancient wandering word from an unspecifiable language. That both Urartian and Akkadian show an *-l-* while Armenian and Greek show *-r-* might imply that Urartian and Akkadian are somehow linked separately while Greek and Armenian have their own approximate relation. The ultimate source of the word is not known, but an ancient Anatolian or Mesopotamian origin is probable.

The case of Akkadian *tinūru* "oven" is slightly different. Its Semitic parallels are demonstrated in Hebrew *תנור* (*tanūr*), Aramaic *ܬܢܘܪܐ* (*tanūrā*), and Arabic *tanūr*. Yet the word is also known in Middle Persian as *tanūr*, a word that continues without change into modern Persian. Yet the Hebrew form is considered a loan from Akkadian,⁷ while the Arabic is a loan from Aramaic which in turn comes from Iranian, and that in turn from Akkadian. There are even further loans northward: Armenian has *t^oonir*, and there is metathesized Georgian *toren*, while small Udi, also with metathesis, sports *tarun* and *tarna*.⁸ In the form *tandır*, the word is known in Turkish, while Azeri has a similar *təndir*.⁹ Thus this ancient Mesopotamian word has survived through the intermediacy of Persian, and is a working word still in the various languages of the Caucasus where to this day village bread is made in communal ovens.

Other terms have survived on a less dramatic level. Urartian *šarə* "orchard" turns up as Arm. *cař* "tree" and in Georgian presumably as *c'aravi* "bushy" and *c'aropi* "small grove of willows." An etymology of great clarity joins Urartian *ultu-* to Arm. *ult*, both having the meaning "camel."¹⁰ We might refer to other instances. Hitt. *purut-* "clay" is continued in Armenian as *brut* "potter."¹¹ A Kurdish parallel, *pūrūd* "potter," exists but

33 (1959): 19–33, suggest that *P. domestica* is indigenous at least to central Europe. And though no claim has yet been made for *P. domestica* in Turkey, there is no real reason to suspect that the natural development of the plum would have been different there; see also Diakonoff, "K drevnevostočnomu substratu v armjanskom jazyke," *Istoriko-filologičeskij žurnal* 1 (92) (1981): 56–78, esp. 71 (hereafter Diakonoff 1981); and idem, "Ancient Near Eastern Substrata," p. 17.

⁶ Lime (calcium oxide) is derived from native limestone usually by burning the stone in a kiln; limestone is especially common and, with the kindred dolomites, represents about 10 percent of all sedimentary rocks, occurring on every continent.

⁷ S. A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, AS 19 (Chicago, 1974), p. 108, notes that the word "seems" Semitic, but the origin is obscure. It appears in Akkadian only from the Middle Babylonian period (Alalakh). See also L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden, 1985).

⁸ Other Daghestani forms are Khinalug *tonur*, *tonar* and Tabasaran *itarin*, "oven." However, Vinogradova and G. A. Klimov, "Ob armenizmax v dagistanix jazykax," *Étimologija* 14 (1979): 154–58,

esp. p. 157, consider both these terms Armenian loans; see also V. Ghukasian, *Udinsko-Azerbajdžansko-russkij slovar*² (Baku, 1974).

⁹ The word moved on into India, and we find there Urdu *tandūr*, Punjabi *tanūri*, *tandūri* (see W. P. Hares, *An English-Punjabi Dictionary* [New Delhi, 1988]), Nepali *tanūr*, "clay oven," etc. The word is apparently not known in the Dravidian languages, since this type of oven is not used in those cultures.

¹⁰ It is difficult to say with confidence how this word is further related to Akk. *udru* "camel" or whether that term is itself related to Av. *uštrō*, Per. *uštur* "camel," Skt. *uštra-* "camel, buffalo." Certainly a relationship is possible, if not likely.

¹¹ There is good support for the movement of pottery terms. During the central Anatolian Middle Bronze Age (ca. 2150–1875 B.C.), J. Mellaart (*The Archaeology of Ancient Turkey* [London, 1978], p. 45), relates, for instance, that there were widespread trade contacts between the Hittites and Mesopotamia. There also appears a wheel-made monochrome ware in MBI that corresponds to similar patterns in the east. Mellaart, however (ibid., p. 48), feels that this represents a diffusion to central Anatolia, not from it. Robert Dyson, in the *Cam-*

cannot be a direct Iranian extension; rather, it is more likely, because of its consonantism, a loanword from a West-Armenian dialect.

There are two words which are particularly complicated. One, presumably of Hurrian origin, is continued on in Iranian and Armenian; another, of unknown Anatolian origin (but clearly Indo-European), also is continued in Iranian, Armenian, Georgian, and Turkic.

Let us first consider the word that appears in Armenian as *zuřna* "horn." The root *z-r-n* clearly reflects the same source as Lat. *cornu*, and Goth. *haurn*, IE **k-r-n*-. It is known in Hieroglyphic Luwian with palatalization, formerly as *řurna*, or *surna*, but now as *zurni* with an initial [ts].¹² That it existed with initial palatalization elsewhere in Anatolia is evident from Gk. $\sigma\upsilon\rho\iota\gamma\zeta$ "oriental pipe,"¹³ a loan word which parallels the consonantism of Skt. *řřnga*- "horn."¹⁴ The word is known beyond Armenian as Georgian *zurna*, Udi *zurna*, Ingush *zurma*,¹⁵ Turk. *zurna* "oriental pipe." Persian has two terms, *surnā* and *zurnā*.¹⁶ It is difficult to determine which form was original, though F. Meniński says that *zurnā* is a secondary form.¹⁷ This makes a certain amount of sense since Turkish has a tendency to voice a foreign *s*. Even Turkish *salata* can be pronounced *zalata* (though spelled *salata*), and the powerful Arabic word *sunna* "habitual practice" (whence "Sunni") appears, glossing Lat. *lex* as *zuna* in a transcription text, the *Dictionarium latino epiroticum*.¹⁸ Armenian *zuřna* cannot be a direct descendant, for it

bridge Ancient History, suggests that the polychromatic pottery in the Urmia basin (ca. 2000 B.C.) was derived from Central Anatolia Alishar III; see R. H. Dyson, "The Archaeological Evidence of the Second Millennium B.C. on the Persian Plateau," *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 2, pt. 1 (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 686-715, esp. p. 699. But this view was rejected by C. Burney and D. M. Lang, *The Peoples of the Hills: Ancient Ararat and the Caucasus* (London, 1971), p. 101. We are left, nonetheless, with clear evidence for an exchange of pottery, and foreign terms related to that pottery could easily have followed.

Additionally, there might be an ancient relationship between *brut* "potter," and *bur* "plaster." A suffix in *-ut* does exist in Armenian, as a collective formant (*nřut* "full of almonds") and as an adjectival formant (*eřegnut* "reedy"). See my *Classical Armenian Nominal Suffixes: A Historical Study* (Vienna, 1975), pp. 144-45.

¹² *řurna*, E. Laroche, *Les Hiéroglyphes hittites* (Paris, 1960); *surna*, P. Meriggi, *Hieroglyphisch-hethitisches Glossar* (Wiesbaden, 1962); idem, *Manuale di eteo gereglifico, Parte I: Grammatica* (Rome, 1966), p. 22; *zurni*, H. C. Melchert, "PIE Velars in Luvian," in C. Watkins, ed., *Studies in Memory of Warren Cowgill (1929-1985)* (Berlin, 1987), pp. 182-204.

¹³ That the term can mean a "pipe" in one language and "horn" in another has parallels: the English horn is a reed instrument, while the French horn is not. The contemporary *zuřna* uses a reed.

¹⁴ Cognates are abundant in the Indic dialects: Pali *řinga*-, Prakrit *řinga*-, Hindi *řg*-, etc.; and in the Nuristani languages: Ashkun *řřn*-, Waigali *řřn*-,

řřn-, etc. See R. L. Turner, *A Comparative Dictionary of the Indo-Aryan Languages* (London, 1966), p. 730.

¹⁵ No doubt the terms appear elsewhere in Daghestan, but lexical access to these languages is difficult; see Ghukasian 1974, p. 119.

¹⁶ Folk etymology holds that Per. *surnā* is composed of Per. *sūr*, "wedding," and *nay* "horn." See I. A. Ozdoev, *Russko-Injuřskij slovar*² (Moscow, 1980), p. 225.

¹⁷ F. Meniński, *Thesaurus linguarum orientalium turcicae, arabicae, persicae, praecipuas* . . . (Vienna, 1680); I. A. Vullers, *Lexicon persico-latinum etymologicum* (Bonn, 1855-67; reprint Graz, 1962).

¹⁸ This is one of the so-called Turkish transcription texts. See T. Majda, "Present State and Perspectives of the Studies of Ottoman Turkish Linguistic Monuments in Phonetic Transcription (Non-Arabic Scripts)," in A. Gallotta, ed., *Studi preottomani e ottomani: Atti del Convegno di Napoli (24-26 settembre 1974)* (Naples, 1976), pp. 179-80, which give clues to the pronunciation of medieval Turkish through the use of a non-Arabic script. The transcription texts exist in Latin, Armenian, Georgian, Syriac, Cyrillic, Greek, and Hebrew, the oldest dating from ca. 1400. (I would like to thank here Andrzej Pisowicz of Cracow and Robert Dankoff of Chicago for their suggestions on Turkish matters.) See also F. Blanchus, *Dictionarium latino epiroticum: Una cum nonnullis usitatoribus loquendi formulis* (Rome, 1635), reprinted as M. Roques, ed., *Le Dictionnaire albanais de 1635* (Paris, 1932), p. 47. The force of this observation is diluted when we note that there is elsewhere in Turkish other confusion with the voicing of sibilants. To

is known in Armenian only from the nineteenth century, being noted in Riggs' *Lexicon* as a recent loan from Turkish.¹⁹ This point is reinforced by a Turkish-Armenian glossary of two thousand words, drawn up wholly in Armenian script by an Armenian merchant in Erzurum, in 1724.²⁰ The compiler lists, as a Turkish word, *zurna*, and glosses it with the Armenian terms *nuak* 'melody' and *dudulag*,²¹ a dialect form for the *dudak*, "an oriental pipe." Considering the chronology of the arrival of Turkic people into western Asia and Anatolia, it is likely that Turkish got the word from Persian.²² Yet Turkish has used the noun with great vigor, and it became a common loan word in Serbo-Croatian (*zurne* [pl. t.]), as well as in Macedonian and Bulgarian (*zurna*); perhaps Polish *surma*²³ 'trumpet' is somehow related.

The second term is Arm. *marx* or, as it is often spelled, *maxr*,²⁴ but in any case "a type of resinous conifer." This term first appears in the Armenian *Geoponica* (1877: 145 = *mls*),²⁵ *kitāb al-fālahin*, of which one manuscript exists: University of Leiden OR 414, a document probably of the tenth century. There we are told that roots can be made rid of infestations of worms by pouring pine pitch into their holes.²⁶ The term is not genus specific but refers to the pitch of any resinous conifer. This point is confirmed in the *Haybusak*, which give its Ottoman equivalent as *čra*, now *çira*, 'resinous pine wood'. It has parallels in Persian as *marx*²⁷ and in North Kurdish as *mārkh* "juniper tree."²⁸ The term, without etymology in Iranian or Armenian, would possibly continue the Hurrian arboreal term *māhri*.²⁹ Though this Hurrian word does not appear in E. Laroche's

gloss Italian *tempo* Blanchus (ibid., p. 210) gives *saman* instead of a more accurate *zaman* (here compare, of course, Per. *zamān*, though Lat. *aqua*, "water," is glossed appropriately by a voiceless *su* (p. 215); and in spite of the pervasive devoicing of final *z* in Turkish, the transcription text of Blanchus reveals it erratically, showing the gloss of Lat. *novem* "nine" as *docuz* on the one hand (p. 189), but *dokus* (p. 190), and *dochus* (p. 68) elsewhere.

¹⁹ E. Riggs, *Vocabulary of Words Used in Modern Armenian but Not Found in Ancient Armenian Lexicons* (Izmir, 1847).

²⁰ B. L. Chookaszian, ed., *Elia Muşel'yan Karneci: T'urk'eren-Hayeren Baġaran* (Yerevan, 1986).

²¹ Both these terms would have Western dialect consonantism. The dialect of Erzurum (Arm. Karin) is briefly described in J. A. C. Greppin and A. A. Khachaturian, *A Handbook of Armenian Dialectology* (Delmar, New York, 1986), pp. 91–102; a fuller description can be found in H. M. Mkrtchian, *Karno barbaġ* (Yerevan, 1952).

²² One cannot but wonder if Anatolian *surna* could somehow have survived up to the twelfth century, until the Turks came to Western Asia, and then entered Ottoman Turkish directly.

²³ Near the end of the eighteenth century, a type of strident band music described as "Turkish," or "Janissary," became popular in Europe, and it is perhaps at this time that a word such as *surma* passed into Polish.

²⁴ This is the rather common non-literary form, preserved in such eastern Armenian dialects as Hachin as *mōxġ*, Hamshen *maxr*, Svedia *miwxġ*.

²⁵ . . . ew ar alēk ger marx ew šinea c'ic's, ew ḡc jiw't'ovd, ew zark i yordnacakern pint k'arov. The history of the development of the Armenian *Geoponica* from its ultimate Greco-Roman source is outlined in my article "The Armenian and the Greek *Geoponica*," *Byzantion* 57 (1987): 46–55. The Armenian version we have corresponds most closely to the Arabic.

²⁶ This information corresponds generally to the views stated in the Greek *Geoponica*, where the treatment of roots with pitch is noted, 5.9.1: Σωτίων δὲ παραίνει, καὶ κεδρία ἐλαχίστη τὰ ἄκρα τῆς ἔδρας τοῦ φυτόυ χρίειν.

²⁷ From an earlier **maxr*, for which there is a parallel metathesis: note NPer. *čarx* "wheel," Av. *čaxra*. The term is used with, and is partially synonymous with, 'afār "a quickly igniting (resinous) kindling wood." See also *Haybusak kam haykakan busabarut'yun* (Venice, 1895), p. 409.

²⁸ The juniper is abundant in Western Asia, and P. H. Davis, *Flora of Turkey*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1965), p. 81, shows the plant well distributed around the Lake Van area. Greater detail can be found in K. Browicz, *Chorology of Trees and Shrubs in South-East Asia and Adjacent Regions*, vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1982), pp. 71–72. R. Germer, *Flora des pharaonischen Ägypten* (Mainz am Rhein, 1985), p. 10, notes that a type of juniper was imported from Syria into pharaonic Egypt.

²⁹ There is an Akkadian correspondent, *mehru*, a term known only from the later periods of Assyrian and Babylonian (ninth–sixth centuries). It is doubtful, though, that this could be the source of modern *maxr* since it lacks the proper vowel.

Glossaire,³⁰ it is noted in a list of arboreal terms edited by V. Haas and M. J. Thiel,³¹ where we also find *tabrana* “juniper,” *šerminḫi* “cypress,” *kišipsuwā* “reed,” *ḫinzuri* “(apple) tree,”³² and *taškarḫi* “beech tree.”

The system we have discussed here is clearly a small one, and these words, derived apparently from ancient and extinct languages of Anatolia and Mesopotamia, survived until our time because of different factors. We note certain obvious semantic parameters. All these are terms for very specific things. There are two tree terms; there is the plum and camel, and a term pertinent to pottery; there is lime, and two quite particular items, the *tanur* oven and the *zurna* pipe. These are, to varying degrees, unique terms, terms for items often identified with a place, such as plum or clay and lime, or terms for specific items, such as oven or horn. What is important to note is that these terms did not survive in other languages because there were special relationships among the languages.³³ Rather, these words survived because they were precise terms for unique articles, and their names followed the article as it moved to distant lands as surely as a camp following a plodding army.

³⁰ Laroche, *Glossaire de la langue hourrite* (= *Revue hittite et asianique* 34–36) (Paris 1976–77).

³¹ V. Haas and M. J. Thiel, “Ein Beitrag zum hurritischen Wörterbuch,” *Ugarit-Forschungen* 11 (1979): 337–52, esp. p. 351.

³² Here note Arm. *xnjor* “apple,” surely a loan from Hurrian (or the kindred Urartian, where this term is not attested).

³³ I refer to relationships such as we have between French and English or Aramaic and Middle Persian.