

*Greek, Syriac and Iranian loanwords in ancient Armenian: reflexes of stop consonants in word initial-position*

The lexicon of ancient Armenian contains a considerable number of words borrowed from other languages that had a high prestige among the Armenian élites. The lexical loanwords from Iranian languages (Parthian and Middle Persian), from Syriac and from Greek have been studied in detail since Hübschmann's work *Armenische Grammatik* (Leipzig 1897). During the 20<sup>th</sup> century many contributions by Antoine Meillet, Émile Hrač'ya Ačařyan, Giancarlo Bolognesi, Gevorg Ĵahowkyan, Rüdiger Schmitt, Birgit Olsen and others returned on the topic with important particular and general remarks; more recently Moreno Morani reconsidered the Greek and the Syriac loanwords in Armenian, giving a critical overview of the studies. Particularly relevant in this field of research seems to be the individuation of general criteria in order to assign a loanword to the historically right origin in a cultural area in which the above mentioned languages interacted for many centuries. The difference between the phonological systems of the source-languages and those of the borrowing languages produce some recurring phenomena of phonological adaptation. On the basis of the different strategies of phonological adaptation it is possible to elaborate some reliable criteria to trace back the loanwords to the different source languages. In this perspective the paper discusses the diagnostic value of the stop consonants in word initial-position in some Armenian words, whose origin from Greek, Syriac, Parthian or Middle Persian is considered controversial.