

A trilingual Armenian pharmaceutical lexicon

by John A.C. Greppin*

The Armenians, whose written literature begins in 405 AD with the translation of the Bible, were diligent compilers of word lists. With only few exceptions, this occupation began in the Middle Armenian period, following 900 AD. Then the Classical language was becoming distant from the standard speech and dictionaries pertinent to the vocabulary of the earlier texts became of value. Men of compulsive disposition began to collect that vocabulary and arrange those words in alphabetical order. In addition, bi- and trilingual lexicons were formed, as well as lexicons to particular aspects of the Bible. Some of these lexicons were lengthy, taking as many as 150 leaves; others were very short, taking only a single leaf. None of these single lexicons was bound as a separatum; rather, they were bound with many other lexicons and wordlists to form separate volumes. And though I know of no single text that was prepared by two separate hands, with great frequency we find a variety of hands for different texts all bound within the same codex.

There have been various studies surveying Middle Armenian lexicography as a whole, and the best of these is by H.M. Amalyan, who wrote *Lexicographical Monuments of Medieval Armenia*¹. This work, in two volumes, carefully surveys and describes all Armenian manuscripts that categorize material alphabetically. The first volume deals with texts from the fifth through the fifteenth century, and the second volume deals with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Though Armenian books were printed from type by 1511², the tradition of manuscript continued solidly into the eighteenth century.

The greatest of these medieval lexicons was the *Բարգիրք Հայոց* (*Barḡirk' Hayoc'* ['Dictionary of Armenian'])³. It has more than ten thousand entries, arranged alphabetically and though including some common words, it for the most part tends to leave out core vocabulary. Part of the material is of non-standard dialect, as revealed by the glosses. For instance, the common word for 'garden' or 'vineyard' is, in the literary language, *այգի*. (*aygi*), in the *Barḡirk' Hayoc'* it is accurately glossed as *իգի կամ բաղ* (*igi kam bał* ['*igi* or *bał*']), *bał* being Turkish *bağ*, and *igi* (for *aygi*) showing features common to some of the Armenian dialects which bordered on the Azeri speaking area⁴.

Numerous other word lists have never been published or edited. There is a specialized lexicon to the tenth century poet Narekatsi who used obscure words,

frequently hapaxlegomena, lifted from the earliest Classical Armenian texts⁵; and a lexicon to Vardan, the popular Middle Armenian recorder of fables, whose vocabulary was obscure to many. Other dictionaries serve a religious purpose. There is a catechistic text, very brief, that is frequently included within a lexicographical codex, called *Վասն անուանց Հրէշտակաց* (*Vasn anuanc' hreštakac'* ['Concerning the names of the angels'])⁶. And though it is clear that the Hebrew Bible was not consulted when the Armenian Bible was translated⁷, later a list was made of all the Hebrew proper names in the Bible, accompanied by their translation. This text, called *Բառ եբրայեցոց* (*Bar Ebrayec'voc'* ['Vocabulary of the Hebrews'])⁸, lists Biblical Hebrew proper names in alphabetical order, with a gloss: *Adam. erkir kam koys* (*Ադամ: Երկիր կամ կոյս* ['Adam: earth or virgin'])

There are also bi- and trilingual lexicons. The best known and largest is the *Թուրքերեն-Հայերեն բառարան* (*Turk'eren-Hayeren Bararan*, ['Turkish-Armenian lexicon'])⁹, which records vocabulary from Turkish, with an Armenian gloss. This dictionary is particularly valuable since, from its 2100 words, it often gives vocabulary elsewhere unknown, and reconfirms the extent of Arabic and Persian infiltration into 17th-century Turkish¹⁰.

Besides the Armenian-Armenian lexicons, and general lexicons to foreign vocabulary, there are also wordlists to specialized vocabulary. The most common of this species are pharmaceutical lexicons and the most famous of these is the so-called 'Galen Dictionary', the *Բարք Գաղիանոսի*, (*Bar'k' Galianos*)¹¹, a lexicon that cites plant names, used for pharmaceutical purposes, principally from Galen's *Simples*¹². In addition to the five hundred or so Greek pharmaceutical terms¹³, written in Armenian script, there are, quite mysteriously, about fifty Arabic terms of the same sort, also written in Armenian script, and so glossed¹⁴. The bulk of the material in the dictionary is believed to stem from the sixth century, the 'Hellenizing' period of Armenian literature, when a great number of Greek texts were translated almost literally into Armenian¹⁵. The Arabic words, as well as the non-pharmaceutical vocabulary, were added later, a fact determined by variations in spelling and type of vocabulary.

An unedited trilingual pharmaceutical dictionary, which is the principal subject of this paper, exists in

fourteen manuscript examples held in the Yerevan Matenadaran, and other copies known (but which I have not seen) in the Armenian monastic holdings in Jerusalem, Venice and Vienna. The average size of those manuscripts known to me is 15 × 10 cm; they are written on paper, and bound in leather, frequently with a blind decoration. Some pages are blank, resulting from the fact that the bound volume is an amalgum of various hands, and not written consecutively. This particular word list begins, in each of the fourteen manuscripts that I have seen, with the statement *Թարգմանութիւն զեղոց, զոր ընտրեալ են իմաստունքն և կարգեալ յայլ լեվուաց ի մերս*. 'Translation [of names] of plants, which wise men have chosen and arranged, from other languages into our own.' Following this there are approximately two hundred entries, Arabic or Greek words written in Armenian script, followed immediately by the Armenian gloss. Thus the entries, following the title, appear as blocks of two or three words, the first being the foreign word, the next its Armenian gloss *աբՀուլ գրԹնի: աղխար վաղամերուկ: աղատղրախտ ջանտարի: աթրունջան ծաղի դեղ: etc.*

Prepared in a coherent form the entries would appear as follows:

1. *աբՀուլ* (*abhul* = Ar. *أبهل* [abhul] 'sabin, *Juniperus sabina* L.') *գրԹնի պտուղ* (*c'rt'ni'ptul* 'fruit of the sabin').

2. *աղխար* (*ad خار* = Ar. *اذخار* [idhkhir] 'scenanth, *Andropogon Schoenanthus* L.') *վաղամերուկ* (*valameruk* 'id.').

3. *աղատղրախտ* (*azatdraxt* = Ar. *ازادراخت* [azādirakht] 'type of lilac, *Melia Azadiracht* L.') *ջանտարի* (*jantari* 'Oriental plane tree, *Platanus orientalis* L.' [= *ճանտարի* {*čantari*?}]).

4. *աթրունջան* (*at'runjan* = Ar. *ترنجان* [turunjān] 'lemon-balm, *Melissa officinalis* L.') *ճաղի դեղ* (*jagi del* 'chick plant?').

5. *ալուղուլ* (*alohol* = Ar. *الكحول* [al-kuḥūl] 'alcohol') *գիոյ պտուղ* (*gioy ptul* 'fruit of the juniper, *Juniperus communis* L.').

6. *ալարտեմիսիա* (*alartemisia* = Gk. *ἀρτεμισία* 'wormwood') *սպիտակ կնդրուկ* (*spitak kndruk* 'white frankincense, *Boswellia carterii* Birdw.').

From this sample it appears that the glossary is largely Arabic, and even term six, *ἀρτεμισία*, appears arabized as *al-artemisia*. And in addition to those terms cited above, there are numerous that are sufficiently corrupted in orthography to make identification difficult. Such entries as those below evade complete identification.

1. *օրիս* (*ōrisē* '??') *երկնագոյն շուշանի տակ* (*erknagoyn šušani tak*) 'root of the lily, dark blue in color (gen. *Lilium*)'.

2. *բասատ* (*basat* '??') *մաջունի տակ* (*majuni tak* 'root of the *majōyn*').

A continuing problem with every lexical manuscript is that their foreign vocabulary, written in Armenian script, has suffered horribly. In the Galen Dictionary,

large segments evade a sure translation; either the initial Greek word, or, less frequently, the Armenian word is unclear. In certain instances neither word can be recognized. The same difficulty is apparent in this trilingual pharmaceutical lexicon. And though we can sensibly reconstruct one poorly copied word on the strength of a recognizable other member, there is no hope when both words are badly distorted. But this pharmaceutical lexicon will benefit us, none the less by providing precise glosses for technical words hitherto known inexactly, and when fully edited by giving us further insights into the influence of Arab medicine on late medieval Armenian culture.

Notes

* Program in Linguistics, Cleveland State University, Cleveland Ohio 44115 USA

¹ *Միջնադարան Հայաստանի բարանագրական հուշարձաններ* (*Mijnadaran hayastani bararanagrakan hušarjanner*, Yerevan. Haykakan SSH GA Hratarakč'ut'yun. 1966, 1971.

² The most thorough work on early Armenian printed books, written in a Western language, is by Raymond H. Kévorkian, *Catalogue des 'incunables' arméniens (1511/1695) ou chronique de l'imprimerie arménienne*. Geneva. Patrick Cramer Éditeur. 1986.

³ H.M. Amalyan (ed.) Yerevan. Haykakan SSH GA Hratarakč'ut'yun. 1975. This Middle Armenian dictionary runs, in its printed version, almost 350 pages, and in manuscript, approximately 140 leaves. There are thirteen copies of the manuscript in the Matenadaran, all copied in the seventeenth century.

⁴ Both the dialects of Agulis (spoken in Soviet Azerbaijan north of Tabriz) and the dialect of New Julfa (Nor Julfa, spoken in Isfahan) show this same reduction of diphthongs. The New Julfa dialect, though now far from the Azeri speaking area, was once spoken in contemporary Julfa, on the border of Soviet Nakhijevan and Persian Azerbaijan. The Armenian population there was forcibly moved to Isfahan by Shah Abbas I, in 1604.

⁵ An example would be the loan word *bosor*, a term resurrected by Narekatsi from translated Christian literature, for certainly the word was not part even of the early Classical Armenian literary language and its appearance in Armenian biblical texts is simply a freak. But it is a fine example of vocabulary for which specialized lexicons served.

⁶ A sample entry would be: 'Question: in what order are the names of the Archangels spoken? Answer: The first is Gabriel who is the image of God... The ninth is Phanuel who is the revelation of God.'

⁷ Frédéric Macler ('Les traducteurs arméniens ont-ils connu et utilisé l'hébreu,' *Handes Amsoreay* 1927/11-12, 609-616) was able to demonstrate that there is no evidence that the Armenians, in their translation of the Bible, used Hebrew texts. This study has survived every test. It is well known, though, that the Armenians had a control of Syriac, and of Syriac scriptures, for numerous were translated into Armenian. Additionally, the Syriac Church greatly influenced the Armenians until they were able to translate the

Bible into their own language, and thus achieve independence.

⁸ *Signs of the Judgement, Onomastica Sacra and The Generations from Adam.* Michael E. Stone (ed.). University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 3. Chico, California. Scholars Press. 1981.

⁹ Babken L. Chukaszyan (ed.). Yerevan. Haykakan SSH GA Hratarakč'ut'yun. 1986. The author of the lexicon is known, Eġia Mušelyan Karneċ'i.

¹⁰ A typical entry would be թախսիրմա. դարմա... խաթիրմա, մի լիւն (t'axsirma, talma... xat'irma, mi line). The two initial words would be glossed as 'anxious,' with reference to Per. مائة خطر (khatir-mānda), formed on Ar. خاطر (khātir 'mind') and Per. مانده (mānda 'remaining').

¹¹ John A.C. Greppin (ed.). Anatolian and Caucasian Studies 7. *Bark' Galianos: The Greek-Armenian Dictionary to Galen.* Delmar, New York. Caravan Books, 1985.

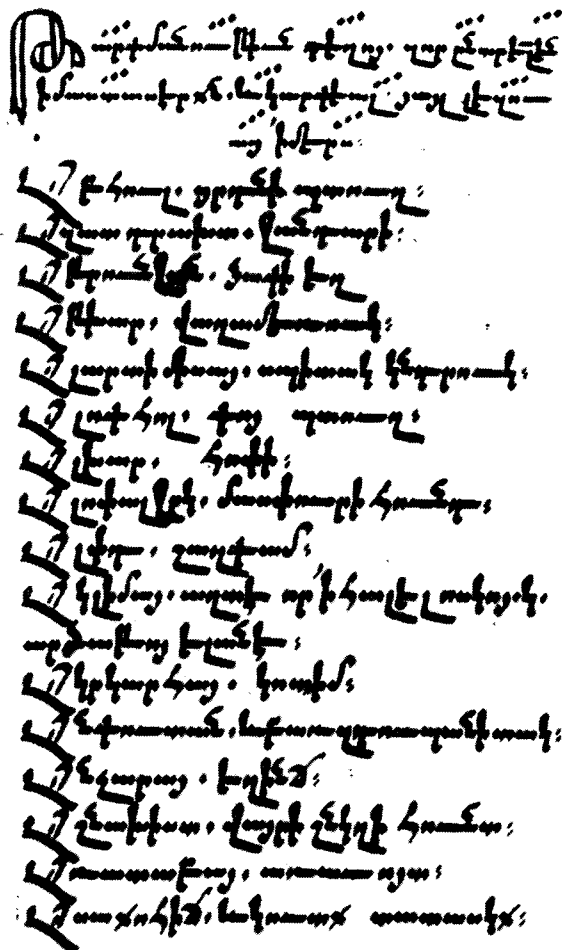
¹² *De simplicium medicamentorum temperamentibus ac*

facultatibus. C.G. Kühn, *Claudii Galeni Opera Omnia* XI. 379-892, XII. 1-377. Leipzig. 1821. Reprint. Georg Olms. Hildesheim. 1964.

¹³ There also are, bafflingly, names of birds and animals that have nothing to do with pharmaceutical vocabulary; how they came to be added to the lexicon is wholly a mystery. For a discussion see John A. C. Greppin. 'The Armenians and the Greek Geoponica.' *Byzantion* 57/1, 1987. 46-55.

¹⁴ The Arabic words were apparently added later, for their orthography, compared with the earliest Greek entries, has not been particularly corrupted, implying fewer copyings.

¹⁵ Here one thinks of the translations of Philo the Hebrew, and the various Armenian renditions of Plato and Aristotle. The force of Greek was so strong in these translations that even Greek prepositions came over whole into the Armenian texts.



Armenian trilingual pharmaceutical dictionary. MS Yerevan, Matenaderan Nr. 534, f. 264a

Հարաբերակ, խաղաղութեամբ,
 Հիշարժայ, անանուխ,
 Հիտարարկան, միտարի ասեւն ծաղ
 կի անրեւի:
 Հիլոսրասկ, կակաւայ:
 Հինգիկասաւան, հինգիկարկած անրեւ:
 Հորփ, հալոսրիկ հոանր,
 Հնգիկասաւան, նոսարասկ:
 Հարան ֆիլ, զահոսրան,
 Հափնապիս, անդամանր չար,
 անպրիժն, անրեւաս:
 անհակնիթակարաս, ձերեդի փոշի:
 Հարվ, ան անրաս:
 անդրական, փոսոյ հասիկ,
 անիարայ, փոշիբաս:
 անդիլիզ, եղիլի:
 անիս, պակոյ ձող:
 անիլոյնիայիս, ապարակ անր:
 անուկարմիլ, փոշի անարասկ:
 Հիլիկայն, պրեանր, ալանիկ ասկ:

Հարփեան, փոշի միտարի:
 Հանխոյայ, աղիակի խափրիդ:
 Հարչը, նարմաշի:
 Հիլոսր, չարաս:
 Հիլիլ, բափն:
 Հանիկայ, անրի ասկ:
 Հահիարայ, անիլոս անանանչայ
 թափասոր:
 Հանթանիլ, կանիփաս:
 Հանն ան, փոշի նոան անր:
 Հիլանչաս, հարիասի:
 Հիլիլ, չափայն:
 Հորոս, բիլոսիար, իկարիարին:
 Հորոս, ձիլիլոսիլ:
 Հափարայ, անիլիլոս արի անպար:
 անրփարակիտ անիլի:
 Աիլակ, փոսոս:
 Արիլիլայիլ, անուկանիլ:
 Հարս, անհանաղ ձողիլ խոտի:
 Հանիլիլ, երկան անիլիլ:

Armenian trilingual pharmaceutical dictionary. MS Yerevan, Matenaderan Nr. 534, ff. 266b-267a

Հաղալակ, անանիլ:
 Հափրան, անան ձողիլ:
 Հաղալիլ, փոշի պոսոս:
 Հիլիլ, անրիկ:
 Հափասաս, մախարի չանոսոս:
 Հափահաս, հոսիկանիլ:
 Հափարփիլ, անիլիլ փրան,
 Հափարասիլ, կակիլի:
 Հարիս, կոսթանիլիլ ասկ:
 Հիլիլայիլ, փոշիլիլոս:
 Հիլիլիլ, փոշիլիլ անանիլիլ:
 Հիլիլ հասիլ, փոշիլիլ կոսթանիլ:
 Հիլիլիլ, անանիլիլ հոանր,
 Հանիլիլ, ձիլիլ ձողիլ:
 Հարան, ալիլիլ անրաս:
 Հալ, բաղիլիլ ասկ:
 Հարիլայ, փոշիլիլիլ, ձիլիլայ:
 Հաղալար փոշ, կակիլ:
 փարասակիլ, փոշի չարաս փհոանր,
 փարանրանիլ, ձափասիլ:

փարփիլ, իլիլ ձողիլ անպարիլիլ:
 փարփիլ, չափրան:
 փոսիլիլ հաղալիլ փարան, որոս կակիլ:
 փոսիլիլ, ալիլիլ փոսիլիլ հոանիլ:
 փոսիլ, իլիլիլ կոսթան:
 փոսիլիլ, խոսրասկ ձողիլիլ:
 փոսիլայ, իլիլիլ անան անր լիլ:
 փոսիլիլ, ձողիլ պոսոս:
 փոսիլիլ անանիլիլ անանիլ կաղալիլ:
 փոսիլ, ձողիլ անր:
 փոսիլիլ, իլիլիլ փոսիլ հոանր:
 փոսիլիլ, անանիլիլ:
 փոսիլիլ, ձողիլ:
 փոսիլիլ, ձողիլ ձողիլ:
 փոսիլիլ, ձողիլ ձողիլ:

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