ARMENIA IN IRELAND: INDO-EUROPEAN COGNATES, MEDIEVAL LEGENDS AND PSEUDO-HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS

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0. Introduction
In this article, I will look at a selection of Celtic works in which Armenian comparanda were previously invoked. In the first part, I will pay particular attention to etymological research in which Armenian lexical items were mentioned in connection with Celtic linguistic data. Secondly, I will look at references to Armenia in medieval Irish documents ranging from *Auraicept na nÉces* to the Irish translation of *The Adventures of Sir Marco Polo*, and, finally, glance at the works of Charles Vallancey and his colleagues of the eighteenth century antiquarian movement, who, when looking for the origins of the Irish race, found them in Armenia.

1. Celtic and Armenian: Indo-European linguistic ancestry
Celtic was recognised as a prominent part of the Indo-European linguistic family since the time of Sir William Jones, Johann Kaspar Zeuss (1853) and others. Armenian began to be treated as a

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1 I would like to thank Dr Elena Parina for her comments expressed in relation to the earlier version of the sections 1.1-1.12 of this paper. I would also like to thank Petr Kocharof for his generous advice regarding the validity of some Armenian etymologies proposed. Many kind thanks are due to Prof. Séamus Mac Mathúna for his kind support and constant encouragement. All remaining mistakes and omissions are, however, my sole responsibility.

2 One need not be reminded of Jones’ famous address to the Asiatick Society in Calcutta on 2 February 1786, which laid the foundation of Indo-European Studies as a separate branch of philology: “The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the *Greek*, more copious than the *Latin*, and more exquisitely refined than either… there is a similar reason, though not quite so forcible, for supposing that both the *Gothick* and the *Celtick*, though blended with a very different idiom, had the same origin with the *Sanscrit*” (Müller 1986: 1). Contrariwise, Carl W. F. von Schlegel’s musings *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians* perceived Celtic (together with Armenian) as marginalised, and hence, unimportant, in contrast with Sanskrit, Germanic, Latin and Greek: “The old Indian language, Sanscrit… has the greatest affinity with the
special branch of Indo-European independent of Iranian since the mid-1870s as a result of the work of Heinrich Hübschmann (1875; 1877; 1883) and Antoine Meillet (1911). Meillet, “in his first article in the Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique, devoted to the development of Armenian consonant clusters, supported Hübschmann’s view that Armenian is an independent Indo-European language, different from Iranian” (Sommerfelt 1962: 381).

One of the most remarkable features of Armenian phonology, i.e. a sound-change of the Indo-European p to h in Armenian (cp. Armenian hayr ‘father’, hur ‘fire’ and Greek patēr, pyr ‘id.’) was noted by Rasmus Rask in the Undersögelse om det gamle Nordiske Sprogs Oprindelse essay published in Copenhagen in 1818 (Pedersen 1931: 75) and since has become a cliché in Indo-European linguistics.3

In Celtic Studies, it was Whitley Stokes who brought Armenian on a par with Celtic in his etymological studies of Old Irish texts and lexemes.4 In a preface to his publication of The Lives

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3 This feature itself was noted by Whitley Stokes in ‘Celtic Etymologies’ (1897: 44) and was invoked again in ‘A Supplement to Thesaurus Palaeohibernicus’ (1910: 462) in a note to p. 500, line 13. Comparing Scottish Gaelic with Old Irish, the feature was highlighted by George Henderson in his ‘Supplement to the Outlines of Gaelic Etymology’: “h in anlaut before a vowel seems to come from p. So apparently in Irish haue = παuce and Hēriu cognate with πειρια. This change is regular in Armenian, see Brugmann’s Grundriss, §30; Stokes in Beuzenberger’s Beiträge, 23, 44” (Henderson 1911: B).

4 In the second part of our work, we will be mainly drawing on Stokes’s translations of medieval Irish compositions in which various references to Armenia are contained. For other aspects of Stokes’s work on comparative linguistics see the collection edited by Boyle & Russell (2011), especially the articles relating to Stokes’s work on comparative philology (Maier 2011), continental Celtic (Blom 2011), Sanskrit cognates and cultural concepts (Fomin 2011), and Early Irish lexicography (Moran 2011).
of Irish Saints from the Book of Lismore he included a number of interesting observations in regard to Celto-Armenian linguistic correspondences, for instance, “the Older Irish names for ‘wolf’ are brech = Skr. vṛka, and fael = Arm. gail” (Stokes 1890: xciv).

Another prominent Celticist, Carl Marstrander, in his 1913 publication of the inaugural volume of The Contributions to the Dictionary of the Irish Language series, had included the Armenian cognate of the Irish onronym Dea, attested in Ptolemy, namely Dee. He invoked this example to demonstrate “that in the 2nd century the Irish substitution of -ās by -iās in fem. ā-stems had not yet taken place” (DIL, s.v. 2 dea).

Through time, the stock of linguistic parallels from Armenian became quite substantial in Celtic Studies. For instance, the Lexique étymologique de l’irlandais ancien among other examples includes etymologies of art ‘bear’ and cú ‘hound’, in which Sanskrit, Avestan, Greek, Latin and Armenian cognates are used:

« art, m. “ours”. C’est le vieux nom indo-européen de l’ours: scr. ůksaḥ, av. arṣa, arm. arǰ, gr. ἄρκτος, lat. ursus »
(Vendryes 1959: A-91)

« cú m. th. à nas. “chien”… Il s’agit d’un mot ancien dont les rapprochements ind.-eur. sont bien connus…: irl. cú renvoie à la flexion alternante *kū(y)ōn, gén. *kúnos, cf. scr. švā, š(u)vā, gén. šunas, av. spā, gén. śūnam, armén. šun, gén. šan, gr. κῦνος, gén. κῦνος, lat. canis ».

(Bachellery & Lambert 1987: C-257)

5 The story of the compilation of the DIL is to be found in the ‘Historical note’ to the dictionary written by E.G. Quin in 1975. Unfortunately, this is still the only Armenian linguistic parallel in The Dictionary of the Irish Language. Such parallels belong to the field of etymology which, as a subject, for some reason was not popular with the RIA editorial board of the DIL. We shall look at such parallels below, and at this point let us mention that such etymologies are to be found in Matasović 2009; Vendryes 1956, 1960, 1974; Bachellery & Lambert 1987; Lambert 1998.

6 Matasović (2009: 42-3) does not include an Arm. cognate in his discussion of P Celt *arto-.
In addition, with the emergence of the laryngeal theory, Armenian comparanda has become a helpful tool in demonstrating various phonological and morphological changes characteristic of Indo-European and Proto-Celtic. For instance, in his overview of Old Irish K. McConé (1994: 71) invoked Armenian (along with Anatolian and Greek) evidence in order to demonstrate that the laryngeal in initial position was lost before a consonant in Celtic:

*Cailleadh laraingeach tosaigh roimh chonsan sa Cheiltis, mar a tharla i bhformhór na dteangacha Ind-Eorpacha seachas an Anatóilis, an Ghréigis agus an Airméinis (*h > a-).*

The initial laryngeal was lost in front of a consonant in Celtic, as happened in the majority of the Indo-European languages other than Anatolian, Greek and Armenian (*h > a*).

In a number of works, Karl-Horst Schmidt (1980; 1985, 1999, 2010) compared various Celtic and Armenian features within the scope of Indo-European linguistics and discovered various points of their intersection. These include the relative pronoun *yos* as well as “the desiderative formation, marked by reduplication as well as by a thematically inflected s-suffix, which in roots ending in a resonant is preceded by a laryngeal” (Schmidt 1996: 23), “the prepositional construction in the Insular Celtic languages … caused by the loss of the participle, a development which is paralleled in Classical Armenian” (*id.*, 2010: 482) and the future formation in *-sye/-syo.7

In what follows, I will try to survey the stock of linguistic parallels found between Celtic and Armenian vocabularies, which will primarily come from the domain of Indo-European word-formation and etymology.8

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7 For further details, see K. H. Schmidt’s contribution to this volume which is a revised version of his 2007 publication.
8 The list of parallels surveyed below is not intended to be an exhaustive one. For further and fuller detail, see Falileyev and Kocharov’s contribution to this volume, esp. part 3, ‘Lexical isoglosses’. I have primarily based my findings on Clackson 2007, Mallory & Adams 2008 (hereinafter MA), Matasović 2009 (hereinafter EDPC) and Martirosyan 2010 (hereinafter EDA) whose research incorporated earlier relevant works in the field, esp. Makaev 1974, as well as others.
1.1. Swadesh-Starostin 100 word list
This survey will begin with an evaluation of Celto-Armenian cognates in a famous 100 culture-free list of terms that are believed to be a core vocabulary constant across various IE linguistic traditions. This list was compiled by Morris Swadesh (1960), reviewed by Johann Tischler (1973), and modified by Sergey Starostin in 2006 in a series of seminars convened in Moscow.9

We will use the list as produced by Mallory and Adams (MA 97-9). This list is used in glottochronology and despite the criticisms expressed in relation to the method and the postulates it rests upon, I will look at superficial correspondences provided by the list in order to establish true cognate terms between Celtic – mainly Old Irish (OIr.) as well as occasionally Middle Irish (MIr.), Old (OW), Middle (MW) and Modern Welsh (NW) – and Classical Armenian (Arm.) which can help us in identifying the level of linguistic commonality that once existed between the two linguistic traditions.

The 100 word list can be broadly divided into the following sections: pronouns (items 1-10 of the list), numerals (11-12), adjectives of size (13-15), nouns connected with humans and animals, including various parts of the body (16-52), verbs of human activity (53-70), cosmological objects and weather conditions (70-75, 91), natural objects (76-85), colours (86-90), adjectives of description of state (92-99) and a noun of naming (100).

Statistical analysis of the Mallory-Adams list shows that Celtic shares only 39% of all its vocabulary compared with Armenian as well as, for instance, with Tocharian (39%), in comparison with Italic (59%), Indic (57%), Iranian (56%) and Germanic (49%). It is only Albanian (27%) and Anatolian (31%) that both have fewer cognates with Celtic than Armenian. So, what are these cognates?

Firstly, these are personal, demonstrative and interrogative pronouns: ‘I’ (PIE *h₁eǵ, Arm. es; PIE *h₁me, OIr. mé, MA 416), ‘you’ (sg.) (PIE *túh₁, OIr. tū, Arm. du, MA 416), ‘we’ (PIE *wéi₁, OIr. nī, Arm. mek₁, MA 416), ‘you’ (pl.) (PIE *uṣwē₁, OIr. sī, Arm.

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9 Cit. from Parina 2009: 139; for the most up-to-date discussion of the Swadesh wordlist, its modifications and developments, see Kassian, Starostin, Dybo & Chernov 2010.
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i-jez, MA 417), ‘this’ (PIE *so/tód, OIr. –so/-d, Arm. ay-d, MA 417-8), and ‘who’ (PIE *kʰwós, OIr. nech ‘someone’ (< *ne-kʰwos), Arm. ov (< *kʰwos/kʰom), MA 419), and, secondly, a numeral ‘two’ (PIE *dwēh₃, OIr. dāu, Arm. erku, MA 310), as well as an adjective of size ‘big; large’ (PIE *megha-, OIr. maige, Arm. mec, MA 319).

Also, animate nouns, such as ‘woman’ (PIE *gʰwénh₃, OIr. ben, gen. mna, Arm. kin, gen. knoʒ, MA 204-5) and ‘man’ (PIE *h₁nēr, OIr. nert ‘force’ (cf. NW. nêr ‘hero’), Arm. ayr, MA 204), as well as ‘bird’ (PIE *h₁ewei, NW. ḥwyad ‘duck’, Arm. haw, MA 143) and ‘dog’ (PIE *k(u)wōn, OIr. cū, Arm. ūn, MA 138), together with noun-attributes of ‘birds’ and ‘dogs’ – ‘feather/wing’ (PIE *pet(e)rn/n, OIr. ēn ‘bird’, Arm. t’rǐč’im ‘fly’, MA 181) and ‘bone’ (PIE *h₂óst, OIr. esna ‘ribs’, Arm. oskr, MA 187 = EDPC 44, *astn(i)y)o).

There are plenty of cognates in the two vocabulary lists dealing with various parts of the human body: ‘ear’ (PIE *h₁óus-, OIr. ó, Arm. unkn, MA 175), ‘eye’ (PIE *h₃okʷ, OIr. enech ‘face’, Arm. akn, MA 175), ‘tooth’ (PIE *h₁dōnt-, OIr. déi, Arm. atamn, MA 175), ‘tongue’ (PIE *dghuha-, OIr. tengae, Arm. lezu, MA 175), ‘foot’ (PIE *pēd-, OIr. īs ‘below, under’, Arm. ōtn, EDPC 131, *fēssu-), ‘knee’ (PIE *gōnu, OIr. ġlűn, Arm. cunr, MA 183), ‘breasts’ (PIE *psténos, OIr. sine ‘teats’, Arm. stain, MA 181), ‘heart’ (PIE *kērd, OIr. crıde, Arm. sirt, MA 187 = EDPC 220, *kridyo-).

Finally, let us note many correspondences in the sphere of verbs of perception and various human activities: ‘drink’ (PIE *peh₃(i), OIr. ibid, Arm. ēmpem, MA 256), ‘lick’ (PIE *leig̊h, OIr. ligid, Arm. lizem, MA 256), ‘eat’ (PIE *h₁éd, OIr. iθid ‘he eats’, Arm. utem ‘I eat’, MA 254), ‘suck’ (PIE *dheh₁, OIr. denid, Arm. diem, MA 256), ‘hear’ (PIE *klu-e̯-, OIr. ro cluinethar, Arm. lsem, MA 335), as well as ‘what is heard, fame’ (PIE *klutós, OIr. cloth ‘heard’, clu ‘good rumour, fame’, Arm. lu ‘known’, MA 335).

Note that both Arm. and OIr. preserved those pronouns that distinguished an alien aspect (PIE *h₁élyos ‘other’: OIr. aile, Arm. ayl, MA 318), as well as marked the idea of completeness, wholeness (PIE *ol-jo, OIr. uile ‘whole’, Arm. olj ‘whole, sound’, EDA 57).

According to Mallory and Adams, the OIr. lexeme is derived from the stem speno ‘woman’s breast, nipple’ which “appears to be a metathesised and simplified Western version of PIE *psténos” (MA 182).

Other cognates are to be found among the terms used to denote natural objects: ‘moon’ (PIE *méh₁nōt, OIr. mī ‘month’, Arm. amis ‘month’, MA 128-9), ‘star’ (PIE *h₂stēr, OIr. ser, Arm. astl, MA 129), ‘water’ (PIE *wódr, OIr. uisce, Arm. get ‘river’, MA 125), and to ‘name’ humans (PIE *h₁nómn, OIr. ainm, Arm. anum, MA 358 = EDPC 38, *anman).12

However, beyond the proto-forms indicated on the list given above, one can find further parallels in different areas of PIE vocabulary than was originally supposed, that point out to a closer relationship between the two languages.

1.2. Kinship terms

Correspondences between Old Irish and Armenian in the area of family and kinship lexicon can be extended without any difficulty. These include such appellations as ‘father’ (PIE *ph₂tēr, OIr. athir, Arm. hayr, MA 210), ‘mother’ (PIE *méh₂tēr-, OIr. māthair, Arm. mayr, MA 213), ‘brother’ (PIE *bh₂réh₂ter-, OIr. bráthair, Arm. elbayr, MA 214), ‘sister’ (PIE *swésōr-, OIr. siur, Arm. k’oyr, MA 256), ‘daughter’ (PIE *dhuḡ(h₂)tēr, Gaul. duxīr, Arm. dustr, MA 213), ‘grandfather; maternal uncle’ (PIE *h₂ewh₂o-, OIr. aue > ua ‘grandchild’, Arm. haw ‘grandfather; ancestor’, EDA 82, *an), ‘mother-in-law’ (PIE *swekᵊru-h₂, MW chwegr, Arm. skesur, MA 215 = EDPC 362, *swekrū-).13

The verbs applicable to this category include ‘to ask’ (someone in marriage) (PIE *perkʰ, OIr. arcu ‘I beseech’, Arm. harsn ‘bride’, MA 358), and ‘to bear’ with a specific meaning ‘to bear a child’ (PIE *bʰer-, OIr. beirid, Arm. berem, MA 404) as well

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12 The correspondence between OIr. ainm and Arm. anum (sic!) (MA 358) < *PIE h₁nóm ‘name’, was hotly debated by Matasović. Deriving OIr. ainm and Arm. anum from PIE *h₁nomm, he discards “the evidence of Gr. enyma as too uncertain for positing the initial *h₁-; however, unlike the Leiden school, I do not believe the evidence warrants *h₁nomm” (EDPC 38, *anman).

13 For PCelt duxīr ‘daughter’, Matasović (EDPC 109) links OIr. Der- with Arm. dustr. He also proposes to link OIr. aue, ua ‘grandson’, derived from Proto-Celtic stem *awyo ‘descendant, grandchild’ with Arm. haw ‘uncle’ (EDPC 50).
as the terms for ‘birth pangs’ (?PIE *ped-, OIr. idu, Arm. erkn, EDPC 127, *fedon-) and ‘family, household’ (PIE *ǵénh₁jes, OIr. genas ‘procreation, conception’, Arm. cin ‘birth’, MA 205). Martirosyan (EDA 590) proposed a comparison of Arm. suk ‘sterile, childless’ with OIr. suth ‘birth, fruit’ and Sanskrit sūte ‘give birth, beget’, etc. deriving these lexemes from PIE ṇ-suH-k-.

1.3. Numbers
As far as numbers are concerned, the list of correspondences is still impressive. We get cognate forms not only in the sequence of basic numbers from 3 to 10 – ‘three’ (PIE *tréyes, OIr. trí, Arm. erek’, MA 311), ‘four’ (PIE *kʷetwóres, OIr. cethair, Arm. č’or’, MA 311 = EDPC 179), ‘five’ (PIE *pénkʷe, OIr. coic, Arm. hing, MA 312), ‘six’ (PIE *(s)wekš, OIr. sé, Arm. vec’, MA 313), ‘seven’ (PIE *septní, OIr. secht, Arm. ewt’n, MA 314), ‘eight’ (PIE *h₁oktōh₃(u), OIr. ocht, Arm. ut’, MA 314), ‘nine’ (PIE *h₁néwḥ₁m, OIr. nóí, Arm. inn, MA 314), and ‘ten’ (PIE *dékm, OIr. deich, Arm. tasn, MA 315), but the list of parallel formations continues further (primarily on the basis of the PIE root ǵomt(h₃)): ‘twenty’ (PIE *wīkmṭih₁, OIr. fiche, Arm. k’san, MA 316), ‘thirty’ (PIE *trī-ǵomt(h₃), OIr. triocho, Arm. eresun, MA 316), ‘fifty’ (PIE *pénkʷe- ǵomt(h₃), OIr. coica, Arm. yisun, MA 316), and ‘sixty’ (PIE *(k)s(w)ekš - ǵomt(h₃), OIr. sesca, Arm. vat’sun, MA 316).

1.4. Fauna
Cognate terms for animals and birds, wild and domestic, as well as insects and reptiles, are attested in abundance. Beside cognate terms for ‘dog’, ‘wolf’ and ‘bear’ already noted above, let us point out the following corresponding names ascribed to various animal species. The list of such names among the domestic animals, includes ‘whelp, young dog’ (PIE *(s)ken- ‘new’, OIr. cana, canu, Arm. skund, EDPC 187, *kanawon-), ‘sheep’ (PIE *h₂ōwī-, OIr. oí, Arm. hōviw ‘shepherd’, MA 140 = EDPC 301, *ōwī-), ‘horse’ (PIE *h₁ekwos, OIr. ech, Arm. ēš, MA 139 = EDPC 114, *ekʷo-), ‘cow’ (PIE *gʷōus, OIr. bó, Arm. kov, MA 140 = EDPC 71, *bow-), ‘buck, he-goat’ (PIE *bhugos, OIr. boc ‘buck’, Arm. buc ‘lamb’, MA 141 = EDPC 83, *bukko-), a general term used for ‘a young of

14 As regards the basic number ‘two’, see 1.1 above, p. 86.
an animal, kid’ (PIE *men- ‘small’, MIr. menn, Arm. manr ‘small’, EDPC 266, *menno-), also ‘rooster’ (PIE *klh₁-, OIr. cailech, Arm. ak’alal, EDA 159).

Shared vocabulary in the appellation of wild animals and birds extends to ‘hind-elk’ (PIE *h₁elh₂nih₂, OIr. elit, Arm. eln ‘deer’, MA 139 = EDPC 115, *elan(t)i, ‘lynx’ (PIE *h₁uk, OIr. lug, Arm. lusunuk’, MA 142), ‘fox’ (PIE *h₂lop-, MW llwyrm, Arm. aluēs, MA 138 = EDPC 243, *loferno-), ‘heron’ (PIE ger-, NW. garan, Arm. k’unk, MA 144) and cognate verbs meaning ‘bird cry’ (the “raucous-sounding” PIE *kau(k), NW. cuan ‘nightfowl’, Arm. k’uk ‘sighing’, MA 364; PIE *g̺ar, OIr. do-gair, Arm. cicari ‘swallow’, cicariuuk ‘nightingale’, MA 354). Etymologically transparent are onomatopoeic ‘cuckoo’ (PIE *kukū, OIr. cúach, Arm. k(u)ku, MA 144) and ‘eagle’ (PIE *h₃or-, OIr. irar, Arm. urur, MA 144).

A category that comprises various insects and pests includes such cognates as ‘louse’ (PIE *(o)nid, OIr. sned ‘nit’, Arm. anic, MA 150-1) and ‘tick, beetle’ (PIE *diĝh, OIr. dega ‘stag beetle’, Arm. tiz, MA 151).

Cognates in the world of reptiles are restricted by ‘snake’ (PIE *h₃éngw’his, OIr. esc-ung ‘water snake’, Arm. awj, MA 148).

1.5. Vegetation

Turning to the cognate lexemes in the domain of the flora, let me point the reader to ‘alder’ (PIE *werno eh₂, OIr. fern, Arm. geran, MA 158 = EDPC 414, *werno-), ‘elm’ (PIE *pteleyeh₂/-pteleweh₂-, Mlr. teile ‘linden’, Arm. t’eli ‘elm’, MA 159), ‘blackberry’ (PIE *morom-, NW. merwydd ‘mulberry’, Arm. mor ‘blackberry’, MA 160), ‘sprout’ (PIE *dhal-, NW. dail ‘leaf’, Arm. dalar ‘green’, MA 161),15 ‘resin, pitch’ (PIE *g’ih₂wo-, OIr. bí, Arm. kiv, kvoy ‘tree pitch’, MA 161 = EDPC 67, *bīwV-).

Martirosyan also compares Arm. keč’i ‘birch’ and OIr. beithe ‘box-tree’ < *betuyā, MW. bedw ‘birches’ < *betu < *betu that “may derive from QIE *gwet(u)-jiēh₂-… The Armenian form is close to the Celtic both formally and semantically. Compare also kiw ‘tree

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15 Matasović points at the correspondence between MW deillyau ‘emanate, proceed, originate’, and Greek thάλλο ‘blossom’ and Arm. dalar ‘green’, linking the latter with Mlr. duilne (EDPC 102, *dol-V-). “Some linguists reconstruct the PIE root as d’h₁l-, but I do not believe that the evidence warrants that reconstruction. Celtic generalised the zero-grade of the root in *(d)al-n- (< *(d)l-n-eh₂), but the o-grade is probably attested in *dolisko- ‘seaweed’ and *dol-V- ‘leaf’” (EDPC 88, *(d)al-n-).
pitch, mastic, chewing-gum’ which too (1) comes from an old *u-stem; (2) belongs to the same semantic sphere; (3) is closely related to Celtic and Slavic” (EDA 359).

Matasović indicates Arm. hac’i ‘ash-tree’ among the cognates of the OIr. uinnius ‘id.’ (EDPC 301, *osno-).

1.6. Human body and senses
Celtic and Armenian also share a significant number of nouns that describe the human appearance as well as various parts and organs of human body, including verbs connected with (presence/absence of) various human vital functions:16 ‘form, appearance’ (PIE *prep-‘appear’, OIr. richt, Arm. erewim ‘be evident, appear’, MA 327 = EDPC 141, *frīxtu-), ‘nose’ (PIE *sregʰ-‘snore’, OIr. srón ‘nose’, Arm. ēngun-k’ ‘id.’, EDPC 352, *srognā-), ‘chin’ (PIE *smēkʰru-, OIr. smēch, Arm. mawru-k’ ‘beard’, EDPC 347, *smeko-), ‘jaw’ (PIE *gēnu-> OIr. gin ‘mouth’, PIE *gondh₂ₜh-o-s > Arm. cnawt ‘chin’, MA 176), ‘elbow, forearm’ (PIE *h₃elVn, OIr. uilen ‘corner, elbow’, EDPC 297, *ólīnā, and closely related PIE *h₃elek > Arm. olok ‘shin, leg’, MA 182), ‘spleen’ (PIE *sploīgh₂-ēn, OIr. selg, Arm. p’aycaln, MA 187 = EDPC 141, *sfelgā-), ‘testicles’ (PIE h₄orgʰis, MIr. urge, Arm. orjik’, MA 184 = EDPC 300, *orgyā), ‘entrails’ (PIE *h₁e₁h₁tr- > OIr. inathar, MA 187, cp. PIE h₁e₁t(e)rom > OIr. anderk, MA 186), ‘side’ (PIE teigʷ, OIr. tób, Arm. t’ekn ‘shoulder’, MA 182 = EDPC 387, *toybo-), ‘sneeze’ (PIE pster, OIr. sréod, Arm. p’rngam, MA 196 = EDPC 149, *fstr-ew-), ‘sleep’ (PIE swópno-, OIr. síun, Arm. k’un, Matasović 2009: 351, *sowno-), ‘die’ (PIE mer-, OIr. marbaid ‘kills’, Arm. merānim ‘I die’;17 cf. also PIE gʷeh₂-, OIr. baid, Arm. kam ‘stand’, EDPC 52, *ba-yo-), ‘death’ (PIE dheu-, OIr. díth, Arm. di ‘corpse’, MA 199), ‘mortal being = human’ (PIE mòrtos, OIr. mart ‘violent death’, Arm. mard ‘a human’).

16 Including the sphere of intellectual activity and speech, attested in both languages in the verb ‘find (out)’ (PIE weyd-, OIr. ro-finnadar lit.’I have found out’, Arm. gitem ‘know’) and the noun ‘voice, word’ (PIE wokʷ ‘voice’, MW gwaethl ‘debate’, Arm. gočem ‘I call’) (EDPC 422, *wi-ₙ-d-ₜ-o-; 429, *wox-tlo-‘dispute’).

17 As P. Kocharov informs me (p.c.), the Arm. verb “present stem formation is not entirely clear (a back formation from root aorist *mers- > Aor. merĺ > Pres. merĺ -anim or a renovated nasal present *merĺ-nH-m > *merĺ-anam → meraniam).”
1.7. Sphere of settled life

Early Irish and Armenian linguistic traditions share a number of cognates in terms of their communal and settled way of life and everyday activities. These are ‘inheritance’ (PIE *h₁orbʰ-o-, OIr. orb ‘heir’, Arm. orb ‘orphan’, EDPC 299, *orbo-),18 ‘home’ (PIE *dṓm, OIr. dam, Arm. tun, MA 206), ‘fire’ (PIE *h₂eḥ₂-ter, OIr. aith ‘furnace’, W. odyn ‘id.’, Arm. ayrem ‘I burn’, EDA 63 = MA 67), ‘door’ (PIE *dhwṓr, OIr. dorus, Arm. dur-k, MA 224), ‘stay, remain’ (PIE *men, OIr. aîmne ‘duty’, Arm. nnam ‘stay, expect’, MA 219 = EDPC 38, *an-men-V-), ‘earth, ground’ (PIE *telh₂-m- ‘surface’, OIr. tālam, Arm. t’al ‘district’, EDPC 366, *talamon-), ‘field’ (PIE *h₂eṛh₂wṛ, OIr. arbor ‘seed’, Arm. haravunk ‘field’, MA 163 = EDA 394), ‘plow’ (PIE *h₂eṛh₃trom, Mlr. arathar, Arm. arawr, EDA 128), ‘grind’ (the cereal) (PIE *mélh₂, OIr. meilid, Arm. mlem, MA 168 = EDPC 255, *mal-o-), ‘quern’ (PIE *gʷeṛh₃-w-on-, OIr. brán, bró, Arm. erkan, MA 243 = EDPC 75, *brawon-), ‘raw, uncooked’ (PIE *h₂omós, OIr. om, Arm. hum, MA 260 = EDPC 299, *omo), ‘salt’ (PIE *seh₃(e)l-, OIr. salann, Arm. al, MA 261), ‘meat’ (PIE *mēl₃m, OIr. métas ‘fat, fat meat’, Arm. mis, MA 261), ‘wool’ (PIE *h₂ulh₁-no/eh₂-), OIr. olann, MW gwlan, Arm. gelmn, EDA 204) as well as ‘honey’ (PIE *meli-t-, OIr. mil, Arm. mehr, EDA 462 = EDPC 263, *meli).19

1.8. Travel, trade and craft

Besides all forms of activities that describe the settled way of life, Celtic and Armenian also share a number of word formations that belong to the field of mobility, travel, trade and economics in general: ‘boat’ (PIE *neḥ₂-w-, OIr. nau, Arm. naw, EDA 500 = EDPC 285, *nāwā-), ‘silver ~ money’ (PIE *h₂reg-ṭ-tom, OIr. argat, Arm. arcat’, MA 242 = EDPC 41, *arganto-), ‘yoke’ (PIE *yugóm, MI cuing, OW. iou, Arm. luc, MA 248 = EDPC 437, *yugo-), ‘passage’ (PIE *sentos < *sent- ‘go’, OIr. sét, Arm. ţnt’ac, MA 250), ‘footprint, track, path’ (PIE *pedom, Mlr. inad ‘position, place’ (< *eni-pedo), Arm. het ‘footprint, track’, MA 250 = EDPC 116, *eni-

18 Mallory & Adams derive OIr. orb ‘heir, inheritance’, and Arm. orb ‘orphan’ from PIE *h₁orbʰ-os ‘orphan’ (MA 208).
19 Despite a correspondence between OIr. fín and Arm. gini < PIE wōinom ‘wine’, this pair cannot be invoked as the Irish lexeme is a direct borrowing from Lat. viñum.
fedo-), ‘pass/spend the night’ (PIE *h₂wes, OIr. foaid, Arm. goy ‘is’, MA 219 = EDPC 428, *wos-ø; cf. also PIE *h₁eoi-g, OIr. øegi ‘guest’, Arm. ėj ‘to stay overnight’, EDA 277), ‘take, grasp’ (PIE *dergh, OIr. dremm ‘troop, band’, Arm. trc’a ‘bundle of brushwood’, MA 272) vs. ‘give’ (PIE deh₃, OIr. dánaid, Arm. tam < PIE *dh₃-ye/o-), ‘gift’ (PIE déh₃r/m, OIr. dán, Arm. tur, EDPC 90, *dānu) and ‘measure’ (PIE med, OIr. midithir ‘judges’, Arm. mit ‘thought, reason’, MA 318). One can also probably refer to craftwork, poetry and related terms in this regard:

It is tempting to compare Arm. k’erday/k’erdoj ‘scribe’ with Welsh cerdd ‘craft; poetry, poem’,²⁰ OIr. cerd ‘craft; poetry’, ‘craftsman, artisan, gold- and silversmith; poet’ from QIE. *kerdā-, cf. Gr. κέρδος n. ‘gain, profit, desire to gain, cunning, wiles’ (EDA 662).

### 1.9. War and battle


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²⁰ Note that Arm. erg ‘poem; song’ (which “is regarded as an inheritance from the IE poetic language”, EDA 259) is related to OIr. erc ‘sky’ (both derived from PIE h₁erkw-o). However, Makaev (1974: 56-57) points out that an OIr. lexeme may belong to the PIE name of the Thunder God (*perk*-).

²¹ Matasović (2009: 60) prefers an earlier form of the Old Irish verb, do-beig (< PCelt bego), comparing it to an aorist form of its Armenian cognate ebek ‘broke’ to highlight the existing relationship between the two verbs.
1.10. Seasons and time

The two language groups preserved cognate terms only for three seasons, namely ‘spring’ (PIE *wérs-, OIr. errach, Arm. garun, MA 302), ‘summer’ (PIE *sem-, OIr. sam, Arm. am ‘year’, MA 302 = EDPC 321, *samo-), and ‘winter’ (PIE āheim-, OIr. gaim, Arm. jiwn ‘snow’, MA 302 = EDPC 170, *gyemo- < PIE *hymo-) which hints at the existence of the originally tripartite division of the ‘year’ (PIE wet, OIr. feis, Arm. heru ‘last year’ < *per-wet, MA 302) among the Indo-Europeans. Also common to both languages are the nouns denoting the division of time into ‘day’ (PIE dye(u), OIr. día, Arm. tiw, MA 301) and ‘evening’ (PIE wesk-er-, OIr. fescor, Arm. gišer, MA 303 = EDPC 416, *wesko-), and the adjectives ‘old’ (PIE sénos, OIr. sen, MW hen, Arm. hin, MA 303 = EDPC 330, *seno-) and ‘new’ (PIE newos, OIr. niūae, Arm. nor, MA 303 = EDPC 293, *nowyo) as well as ‘slow’ (PIE duh2-, OIr. doće, Arm. tev ‘duration’, EDPC 110, *dwoyo-) which all denote various temporal categories.

1.11. Descriptive adjectives

A few words suffice to describe parallels existing among the pairs of adjectives describing various states of being: ‘warm’ (PIE *gwhrensós > OIr. grís ‘heat, fire’; PIE *gher > Arm. jerm, MA 344) and ‘cold’ (PIE *hēug-, OIr. uacht, Arm. oyc, MA 348), ‘bright’ (PIE *leukós > OIr. lóch, PIE *lóuk(es) > Arm. lys ‘light’, MA 328-9; cf. also PIE *b’eh2- ‘shine’, OIr. bán ‘white’, “perhaps Arm. banam ‘open’”, EDPC 55, *bâno-) and ‘dark’ (PIE *tem(ə)-, MIr. temen, Arm. Tənmis n. loc., EDA 676), ‘dry’ (PIE *ters, Arm. t’aramim ‘wilt, fade’, MA 346, also Arm. t’arâm ‘withered’, cognate with OIr. tírim ‘id.’) and ‘wet’ (PIE *nébhos ‘cloud, mist, sky’, OIr. nem ‘heaven’, MA 129, cognate with Arm. amp ‘wet’; cf. also PIE...

1.12. Emotional, productive and telic verbs

Cognate verbal formations between Celtic and Armenian abound. Among verbs expressing emotions are ‘complain’ (PIE *leh₂a, OIr. liïd, Arm. lam ‘I weep’, MA 362-3) and ‘lament’ (PIE *gém, Mod. Ir. geamh ‘prattle’, Arm. cmrim ‘grieve’, MA 363). Note also expressions of grief, of contentment, happiness and desire, among them the onomatopoeic formation s’alas (PIE *wai, OIr. fae, Arm. vay, MA 359) and ‘laugh’ (PIE *kha, OIr. cais, Arm. xaxank, MA 359) as well as the lexemes denoting ‘satisfaction’ (PIE *seh₂tis-, OIr. saith ‘satisfaction’, Arm. hač ‘contended’ (< *seh₂(i)-), MA 342) and ‘wish’ (PIE *wel(h)a, MW. gwell ‘better’, Arm. geł ‘beauty’, MA 341). Verbs, expressing some form of productive activity, include ‘work (with clay), build’ (PIE *dheiĝh, OIr. con-utainc ‘builds’, Arm. dizanem ‘I heap up’, MA 371), ‘cut off, apart’ (PIE *(s)ker, OIr. scaraid ‘separates, divides’, Arm. k’ert’em ‘skin’, MA 373), ‘split, chip’ (PIE *(s)kel, Mlr. scoiltid ‘chips’, Arm. skalim ‘split, be splintered’, MA 374), ‘press, squeeze together’ (PIE gem, Mlr. gemel ‘fetters’, Arm. ēmlem ‘press together’, MA 384), ‘grind’ (PIE melh₂, OIr. meilid, Arm. malem, MA 168 = EDPC 255, *mal-o-, *mel-o-).

Telic verbs include ‘approach’ (PIE pelh₂-, OIr. ad-ella, Arm. elanem ‘I exit’, EDPC 125, *fal-na-), ‘attain’ (PIE h₁enék-, OIr. ro-icc ‘reaches’, Arm. hasanem ‘I arrive’, MA 396), ‘go’ (PIE h₁el-, MW. el ‘may go’, Arm. el ‘climbed, came out’, MA 397), ‘run’ (PIE dhregh-), nominalised in OIr. droch ‘wheel’, Arm. durgn ‘wheel’ MA 400 = EDPC 105, *droko-), ‘leave (behind)’ (PIE leikʷ-, OIr. léicid, EDPC 240, *li-n-kʷ-o-, and Arm. ik’anem, MA 401), ‘drive’ (PIE h₂eļg, OIr. ad-aig, Arm. acem, MA 406 = EDPC 27, *ag-o-).

Pahlavi nam(b) ‘wet’ that is further compared to Lat. nimbus from reduplicated *ne-nb²- or infixed *ne-nb²- stem of the same root as in *neb²-os².

27 Note also Matasović (EDPC 48) who proposes to link MW ewyllys ‘will, appetite’ and Arm. avivn ‘lust’ for Proto-Celtic stem *awislo- ‘wish, desire’ which he derives from PIE h₂ewH- ‘wish’.
It is probably true to say that the Celto-Armenian shared vocabulary points to the existence of a proto-phase in the development of the two language groups when they belonged to a unity not yet divided into Western, Central and Eastern Indo-European groups. Looking back at the compiled list, one cannot help thinking that it provides quite a comfortable vocabulary for a speaker of this proto-language.

Such domains of human life as kinship and family (including the concept of ‘home’), seasons and time, war and peace, battle and labour, body and senses are covered by these Celto-Armenian isoglosses. It is too early to make any far-reaching conclusions, but such cognates can cast some light on the problem of calendrical formation and the introduction of the fourth season, on the character of IE immediate family, on farming and agricultural practices, as well as on economics and craftsmanship. Proto-Celts and Proto-Armenians at this period of their IE unity were already able to express their emotions quite well and to count to at least 60! Furthermore, they were able to plan and judge their actions, and contrast various natural phenomena (warm vs. cold, dry vs. wet, dark vs. light etc.) if necessary.

2. Armenia in medieval and early modern Irish writing
It is safe to say that Armenia became incorporated into the mindset of the medieval Irish literati from quite an early age. In the composition Sex Aetatis Mundi, contained in the late eleventh century ‘Book of the Dun Cow’ (Lebor na hUidre) manuscript, Armenians are listed at the end of the list of the progeny of Shem, son of Noah. Having mentioned the lands and inhabitants of Persia, Assyria, Syria and India, the compiler speaks of the sons of Saram, son of Shem and grandson of Noah:

\[
\text{Clanna Saram meic Sem meic Noi .i. Us. is uad atár Traconitidi }\gamma\text{ is les ro cuntaiged in Damaisc. etir Pasilisitina }\gamma\text{ Coelensiria atá a ferand side. Ul. is úad atát Armianai. Gether is úad atat Arcannai. Mes. is úad atat Meones. de sil Samar (sic!) meic Sem meic Noah dóib sein ule }\gamma\text{ is i nAsia atat (Bergin & Best 1929: 4).}
\]
The progeny of Saram son of Shem son of Noah, i.e. Us. It is from him that are Traconitidians and it is his [people] built Damascus. His other lands are between Palestine and Little Syria. Ul. Armenians are from him. Arcanians are from Gether. Meonians are from Mes. They are all from the progeny of Samar son of Shem son of Noah and they are in Asia.

The late eleventh century Book of Leinster contains a poem ‘Rofessa i curp domuin dúir’ written by Mac Cosse, the learned man of Ros Ailithir (Mlr. fer legind Ruis Ailithir) in which the Lord’s division of the world into three parts (Europe, Asia and Africa) is presented (Mlr. tri ranna ra delig Dia, Euraip Affraic is Asia, Best & O’Brien 1957: 524). The poem then goes on to describe Asia first. A similar passage is also found in the second part of the Rawlinson B 502 manuscript written in the mid-twelfth century, in the composition Miniugud na Croeb Coibnesta, a description of the wanderings of the descendants of Éremón up to the time of Eochaid Mugmedón’s sons, in which the itinerary of the Gaels is conveyed as follows:

\[ Ni \text{ haisc atát tair na fir} | \text{Eufrait is Tigir} | ... | \text{is tuatha Mesopotámia} | \text{Siria fri Eufrait aníar} \]
\[ Co \text{mothor Mara Torrián} | o \text{Égipt fethit a fóit} \]
\[ \text{fothúaid cosin Capadóic} | \text{Fri Magena atuaid a thréin} \]
\[ fri \text{Capadóic fri hArmein} \]
(Best & O’Brien 1957: 526 = Rawlinson B 502, fo. 78 a 1-4)

There is no reproach before the men | Euphrates and Tigris | … | and the tribes of Mesopotamia | Syria towards Euphrates in the west | to the wilderness of the Tyrrenhe (Mediterranean) Sea | from Egypt direct their course | northwards to Cappadocia | to Magena from the north its strength | to Cappadocia and to Armenia.\(^{28}\)

We will come back to the origin of the Gaels and their treatment in the works of the eighteenth century antiquarians later. As far as the works of the medieval Irish scribes and their treatment of the

\(^{28}\) See further an article by John Carey in this volume on the insular medieval lore regarding the origins of the Irish.
Armenians in a more detailed way is concerned, let us turn to Eg. 1782 MS.

Its folio 56 a 2 contains a poem devoted to characteristics of various nations, including the Jews, the Greeks, the Saxons, the Spaniards, the French, the Scots, etc. The majority of the peoples listed, however, are taken from the stock of the European nations, and there are only three, including the Armenians, that are of Middle Eastern provenance:

Cumtach na n-Iudaide n-ard ocus a format fírgarg.
mét na n-Arménech cin feall. is sonairti na Serrchenn...
Mormenna Cruithnech cin ail. cruth etrad in Gaóidelaib.
genus na n-Gérmanach n-glan, mochin, a Chríst,
dan cumtach.

The architecture of the Jews and their truly fierce envy.  
The large size of the Armenians without deceit,  
And the strength of the Saracens…  
The high spirit of the Picts without blemish,  
Beauty of shape and lust in Gaels.  
The chastity of pure Germans, welcome, o Christ,  
From whom is protection.

(Meyer 1897: 112-3)

According to the Irish medieval linguistic tradition, Armenian (amongst the other seventy-two select languages) played its part in the compilation of the Irish tongue:

Cest, caidhead na a n-anmandh na da cenel sechmogat o rofaghlaimeat na hilberlaæ? Ni ansa. Beithin, Seithi, Scuit, Germain… Maguich, Armoin, Amuis, Goircce, Galaid…

Query, what are the names of the 72 races from which the many languages were learnt? Not hard. Bithinians, Scythians, Scots, Germans… Magogians, Armenians, Amuis, Gaig, Galatians…

(Calder 1917: 16-7).

All these references do not really say much, apart from the fact that the medieval Irish believed that Armenians were of large size, inhabited some distant territories of faraway Asia and lived
between such tribes as the fictional Magogians and no less fictional Traconitidians. 29

More elaborate descriptions of Armenia entered the discourse of medieval Irish writing only with the translation of The Book of Ser Marco Polo into Irish from the Latin version of Francesco Pipino (written down c. 1255) which survived in the fifteenth century manuscript The Book of Lismore. The description of Lesser Armenia (in historical terms, the kingdom of Cilicia) opens The Book, which then goes on to describe Armenia proper, including its major landmark – the mount Ararat, synecdochically called by the source “mount Armenia” (Mlr. sliab Armenia):


§3. In the first place, the Lesser Armenia, it is under tribute to Magnus. A country with abundance of towns, and unknowable treasures for trade and traffic. Glaisia (Ayas), which stands on the sea, is its chief city. A province therein is Tursie (Turkey): this is a mountainous country, and they (the inhabitants) worship Mahomet. Excellent horses they have and plenty of silk.

§4. Now the Greater Armenia, this is an extensive country. It is under the yoke of Magnus. They (the inhabitants) have the abundance of towns and treasures. Two noble cities it has, Agiron (Erzrum) and Baririm are their names; and in that country is the Mount of Armenia. Thereon the Ark rested after escaping from the Deluge.

(Stokes 1896: 246-9)

29 See the contribution by Sergey Ivanov below for an overview of the Irish sources in which Armenia and the Armenians have strong associations with the Magogians within the medieval Irish cosmography and aetiology.
Looking at these instances, it is important to note that Armenia was treated on the par with India – as a far away and rich land situated in the Orient, full of treasures and densely populated. As appropriate comparanda, let us look at the following piece from the *The Buke of John Maundeville* translated into Irish in 1475 by Fingin O’Mahony, describing India:

\[
\text{Tíagur asan tír sin annsa n-India móir atá arna roinn a tri,}
\]
\[
\text{7 is adhbhal tes an tíre sin, 7 an Índia bec atá can}
\]
\[
\text{imforcráidh tesa na fúachta, 7 ind Ínnia is sía uainn díb atá}
\]
\[
\text{sí rofhuar, 7 atá do mét a seca 7 a h-oigre co n-déin cristal}
\]
\[
\text{da h-uiscí 7 co fásann diamont co lór inntí, 7 atá do}
\]
\[
\text{ládirecht an diamoint fhásus inntí nach fuil ar doman ní}
\]
\[
\text{úrchóidighes dó acht fuil bocain.}
\]

§137. From that land men go into the Greater India, which is divided into three parts, and mighty is the heat of that land. And the Lesser India is without excess of heat or cold; but the India that is farthest from us is exceeding cold, and such is the greatness of its frost and its ice that it makes crystal of its water and that the diamond grows abundantly in it. Such is the strength of the diamond that grows therein that nothing on earth can hurt it save a he-goat’s blood.

(Stokes 1899: 240-1)

However, there was one feature that identified Armenia in a unique way in the eyes of the Irish: that is the Noah’s ark resting on the top of Ararat, the most important Armenian mountain. One can also find a reference to Ararat (called there by its real name) and to the Noah’s ark (visible on the mountain’s peak in good weather) in the *Buke*:

\[
\text{An t-sligé ó Troposonda co cathair Artirón do múiretur 7}
\]
\[
\text{d'airgetur Tuircínigh, 7 úaithe sin co cnoc Araráa da n-}
\]
\[
\text{gairitt Idhail Dánó, mura fuil airc Náei, 7 do cídh daeine a}
\]
\[
\text{soinind maith ar an cnoc sin hí…Ocus assin trit an Aramén}
\]
\[
\text{móir 7 co cathair Casátus mur a tarladur na tri rig dáchéle}
\]
\[
\text{ac dul leisna h-aisedha dochum Meic Dé.}
\]
§132. The road from Trebizond is to the city of Arturon, which the Turks destroyed and ravaged. And from that to Mount Ararat, which the Jews call Dano, where there is the ark of Noah, and in fine weather men see it on that hill…

§134. And thence (one goes) through Great Armenia, and to the city Casatus, where the three kings met together, when they went with presents to the Son of God.30

(Stokes 1899: 238-9)

The description of the country itself and its religion is contained further in the Buke following the description of the kingdom of Persia:

Atá ríghdacht na h-Armene láimh ré sin ina rabadur cethra ríghdachta uair écin; 7 is mór saidbhir an tír sí, 7 atá sí siar ó ríghdacht na Pers ar fad co Turcia, 7 a letheatt ó Alaxandria co ríghdacht Med, 7 is imdha cathracha áille ’sa ríghdacht, 7 is i Tauarisi cathuir is mó ainm indi... Doba cristaidi in trath sin Tursie 7 Suria 7 Tartairia 7 Iudeia 7 Palastini 7 Arabia 7 Harmapé 7 Persaidh 7 Medhaigh 7 Airmein 7 in Eighipt uile.

§228. Hard by is the kingdom of Armenia, wherein were once upon a time four kingdoms. Great and rich is this country, and it stretches westward from the kingdom of Persia along to Turkey, and its breadth is from Alexandria to the kingdom of Media. There are many beautiful cities in this kingdom, but Tauarisi (Tabriz) is the city most of name therein…

§268. At that time Turkey was Christian, and Syria, and Tartary, and Judaea, and Palestine, and Arabia, and Harmape, and Persia, and Media, and Armenia, and the whole of Egypt.

(Stokes 1899: 278-81, 298-9)

30 The Buke of Maundeville continues on “And thence to the Land of the Women”. On the linkages existing between the so-called “Land of Women” (in this context, of the Amazons) and Armenia in Irish compositions, see the article by S. Ivanov in this volume.
3. Whence came the Irish: from Celto-Scythia or Phoenicia?
Finally, I would like to deal with the writings of the eighteenth century Irish antiquarians who, similarly to the twelfth century The Book of Leinster genealogists, tried to uncover the origin of the Irish race. It was the general Charles Vallancey, who, in his 1786 preface to a composition entitled A Vindication of the Ancient History of Ireland, attempted to propose an early dynamic tribe of nomadic people, the Scytho-Celts (which he also called as the Celto-Scythians, the Scytho-Iberian nation in Asia, etc.), whom he divided into two major groups – “the Nomade or Northern Scythian, and the civilized or Southern [Magogian] Scythian of Armenia” (Vallancey 1786: 11, cit. from Lennon 2004: 93):

[T]he body of [Southern] Mogogian [sic] Scythians … were a polished people before they left Asia; the first astronomers, navigators, and traders, after the flood… That, from their first settlement in Armenia, they soon passed down the Euphrates to the Persian Gulph, round the Indian Ocean, to the Red Sea, up the coast of the Mediterranean almost to Tyre. The Greeks knew them by the names of the Phoenicians of the Red Sea, by Icthyophagi and Troglodytae: in Scripture they are called Am Siim or Ship people, and Naphuth Dori or Maritime folk.

(Vallancey 1786: 13-4, cit. from Lennon 2004: 93)

In the nineteenth century, Canon Ulick Bourke wrote a history primer entitled Pre-Christian Ireland, which was published in 1887. It opens with a questionnaire on the “Certainty of Early Keltic Settlements in Eire”:

Q.1. Where did the earliest races who first reached Ireland come from? A. From the east, from the high table-lands reaching from Mount Ararat in Armenia, by the Caspian Sea, south and east.

(cit. from Lennon 2004: 131)

Let me conclude by saying that whether the inhabitants of Ireland originally travelled from Armenia or not, it did occupy a very special place in their heart. My last example of a reference to this country contained in the store of Irish writing comes from a poem ‘Cáit Bhéilbhinn’ by an eighteenth century Irish poet Peadar Ó Doirnín (al. Peter O’Dornin) (1704-1769), who invoked
an intriguingly rare metaphor when speaking of his beloved and his feelings:

*Táinte Éireann dá bhfaighinn féin is a bhfuil insa Spáinn,
Agus bláth péarlaí na hÂrménia go huile in mo láimh,
Ba dá fhearr liom mo ghrá séinmh a bheith eadra mé is lár…*

If I got the treasures of Ireland and the ones which are in Spain,
And the prime of the pearls of Armenia all in all in my hand
I would still prefer my tender love to be between me and the ground…

(Ó Buachalla 1969: 43).

And if the pearls of Armenia, together with all the treasures of Spain and of Ireland, are taken to be as important as the love of the poet (lasting until he is dead), how more important can they be?

**Abbreviations:**


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