Armenian Textile Terminology

Birgit Anette Olsen
University of Copenhagen

http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/texterm/15
Armenian Textile Terminology

Birgit Anette Olsen, University of Copenhagen

In Textile Terminologies from the Orient to the Mediterranean and Europe, 1000 BC to 1000 AD, ed. Salvatore Gaspa, Cécile Michel, & Marie-Louise Nosch (Lincoln, NE: Zea Books, 2017), pp. 188-201.
doi:10.13014/K2BK19HV

Copyright © 2017 Salvatore Gaspa, Cécile Michel, & Marie-Louise Nosch.
Photographs copyright as noted.
Armenian Textile Terminology

Birgit Anette Olsen

The part of the Armenian vocabulary that is inherited from the Indo-European protolanguage is notoriously limited, variously estimated to include between 450 and 700 stems. Otherwise, the lexicon is dominated by etymologically obscure elements and an impressive amount of Middle Iranian loanwords, reflecting the centuries of Iranian political dominance. In particular the Parthian loans, introduced during the Arsacid dynasty (247 BC-224 AD), have left their mark on the Classical Armenian language, attested from the early 5th century, to a similar extent as Old French on English or Low German on Danish, so that linguists until the late 19th century still considered Armenian an aberrant Iranian dialect rather than an independent branch of the Indo-European family. The other main sources of loanwords, Syriac and Greek, are intimately connected with the introduction of Christianity around 300 and hence mainly restricted to the specific word fields of religion and philosophy.1

Obviously, this state of affairs also affects the textile vocabulary where the impact of Iranian language and culture can hardly be overestimated.2 Thus, it is quite natural that the Iranian superstrate dominates the lexicon pertaining to advanced textile production, clothing, fashion and ornaments, while on the other hand the core of inherited terms refers to basic products and techniques such as fleece and wool, spinning and weaving. The basis of the present lexical study is the classical language, mainly as attested in the oldest text, the Bible translation from around 410.3

The terminology of wool

Any discussion of Indo-European culture in general and the dating and geographical position of the Indo-European homeland in particular must include a reflection on the word for ‘wool’, since the occurrence of wool sheep and the technology of wool production is a significant cultural feature of all the ancient Indo-European civilizations. There can be no doubt that the protolanguage had a feminine noun with the precise meaning wool in the daughter languages and a protoform *h₂ul₂nah₂ which is continued in most branches of the family: Vedic ūrṇā-, Avestan varṇā-, Latin lāna, Welsh gwlan, Gothic wulla, Lithuanian

---

1. According to Solta (1990, 13), 5572 of the words included in Ačaryan’s etymological dictionary (1928-35) are registered as being of unknown origin, 4014 are loanwords, mainly Iranian, and only 713 are considered inherited.
2. Cf. e.g. Hübshmann 1897, 91-259; Bolognesi 1960; Schmitt 1983; Olsen 1999, 857-920.
3. The treatment by Olsen 1999 includes details concerning the inventory and historical analysis of nouns and adjectives.
vilna, Old Church Slavic vḷṇa. Other cognates are the Greek neuter s-stem λῆνος for expected feminine *lēnē where the aberrant gender and inflectional type may have been triggered by the two other words for ‘wool’, εἶρος and πόκος, and Hittite hulana-, also ‘wool’, whose exact protoform, *h₂ul₁-nah₂, or *h₂ul₂-nah₂ may be debated. Irrespective of the details, the very existence of this stem in Hittite at least takes us back to the period before Anatolian, as the first branch, separated from the rest of the Indo-European family. However, one thing is the existence of a common word; another is its precise original meaning and derivational background.

As summed up by Anthony (2007, 59):

“Sheep with long woolly coats are genetic mutants bred for just that trait. If Proto-Indo-European contained words referring unequivocally to woven wool textiles, then those words have to have entered Proto-Indo-European after the date when wool sheep were developed. But if we are to use the wool vocabulary as a dating tool, we need to know both the exact meaning of the reconstructed roots and the date when wool sheep first appeared. As the dating of this mutation is perhaps around 4000-3500 BC., one would then assume that the separation of the Indo-European family took place as late as the 4th millennium”.

This is a fair assumption, but taking on the role of the Devil’s Advocate, one could object that even if every single Indo-European language had a concordant word for ‘wool’, the meaning in the proto-language need not necessarily be ‘wool’ in our sense. Instead, it might e.g. have denoted the rough annual shedding of early domesticated sheep which could not be spun, but only used for the production of felt. In that case the semantic development to ‘wool’ would have taken place at a later stage, independently in the separate branches.

A scenario of this sort is not very likely, but we need exact linguistic evidence to definitely refute the faint possibility. If it can be proved that the meaning of the basic root of the word for ‘wool’, i.e. *h₂ul₁, was ‘pluck, tear out’, the semantics of *h₂ul₁-nah₂ > Latin lāna etc. ‘what is plucked (off)’ only makes sense in connection with the fleece of wool sheep. Incidentally this does seem to be the case, as substantiated by Latin vellō ‘to pluck (hairs, feathers etc.)’ and vellus ‘fleece’. Thus, we can be fairly confident that our Indo-European ancestors, perhaps five or six thousand years ago, did in fact possess domesticated wool sheep, initially plucking rather than shearing their wool to use it for spinning and weaving.

The exact match of lāna etc. happens to be untested in Armenian. What we do have, however, is a precious isolated archaism in the form of the primary men-stem gehmn ‘fleece’ (Olsen 1999, 504; Martirosyan 2010, 204) from which *h₂ul₁-nah₂ constitutes a secondary derivative: where *h₂ul₁-mn > gehmn is the fleece, *h₂ul₁-nah₂ > *h₂ul₁-nah₂ (> lāna etc.) is a substantivized feminine/collective ‘that which pertains to the fleece’, i.e. ‘wool’.

In the meaning of ‘wool’ we find another inherited term, asr, cf. e.g. Psalms 147.16: dnē z-jiwēn orpēs z-asr “he giveth snow like wool”, or Rev.1.14: ew glux noru ew herk’ ibrev z-asr spitak ew orpēs z-jiwēn “and his head and hair was white like wool and like snow”. Traditionally, asr is considered a contamination between *pókos as in Greek pókos ‘fleece’, Old Norse fær ‘sheep’ on the one hand, and the neuter u-stem *péku > Vedic pāśu, Avestan pasu, Latin pecū, Gothic faihu ‘livestock, cattle’ and Modern English fee on the other. While the meaning ‘fleece’ matches that of pókos (but not that of fær!), the u-stem inflection is more in accordance with Vedic pāśu etc.

The root of at least pókos and its cognates has been identified with that of Greek πέκω ‘(pluck >) comb, card’,8 Lith. pešū ‘pluck’, so that pókos, rarely also neut. s-stem pékos with regular e-grade, would be ‘plucking’ or ‘that which is plucked’, i.e. ‘sheep’s

---

4. For further discussion of the linguistic details, in particular the reconstruction of the basic root, cf. Olsen forthcoming.
5. Cf. also the sumerogram udu-aš ‘sheep’ in Hittite, where the phonetic complement indicates a u-stem.
6. Only attested in the later language, but secured by the adjectives asū and aswewy ‘woollen’.
7. Cf. Olsen 1999, 202 and Martirosyan 2010, 122-124 with references for a discussion of the phonological details (especially the origin of the initial a-).
wool, fleece’, and we would have exactly the same semantic development as in *h₂ulh₂-nah₂-* ‘wool’ from *h₂uelh₂-* ‘pluck’. An etymological identity between the roots of πόκος, πεσῦ ‘pluck’ and *pékʰu ‘livestock’, on the other hand, is not quite certain. While it is traditionally assumed that *pékʰu would have had a hypothetical basic meaning ‘(wool) sheep’ or ‘small cattle’ with a secondary extension to ‘livestock’ in general, this development cannot be philologically verified, so that the connection is sometimes questioned, cf. e.g. Mallory & Adams (1997, 23). Still, the formal similarity and the apparent mutual semantic influence between *pékʰu and (*peke/o- ⇒) *pékos/pokos would seem to suggest an old connection, thus in particular the u-inflection of asr ‘wool’ and the perfect formal identity between the Greek s-stem πόκος ‘fleece’ and Latin pecus, -oris ‘cattle, small cattle’.

Another derivative of the root *pékʰ- possibly survives in the otherwise etymologically unclear ostayn (i-st.) ‘web, textile’ with the compound sardiostayn ‘cobweb’ (cf. sard ‘spider’). At least a protoform *pokʰ-ti-, already posited for Old Swedish fæt, Old English feht ‘fleece’, Old Frisian fecht ‘wool, fleece’, would probably yield Armenian ost by regular sound change.9 As for the end segment -ayn, one may tentatively suggest a compound *pokti-tti- or the like,10 derived from the root *tən- ‘stretch; spin’, cf. e.g. Vedic tanti- ‘cord, line, string’, tāntu- ‘thread, cord, string, line, wire, warp (of a web)’, tāntra- ‘spun, web’, Persian tan- ‘spin, twist’, so that the original meaning would have been something like ‘wool-web’.

Another potentially inherited term is the o-stem burd ‘wool’ with the denominative verb brdēm ‘shear, cut (wool)’, which does not have a generally accepted etymology. However, in his monumental, but not so easily accessible dictionary, Ačaṙyan,11 with reference to Patrubány,12 mentions a possible connection with Sanskrit bardhaka ‘cutting’ and Latin forfex ‘tongs, shears, scissors’. Semantically the suggestion is quite attractive. Like Latin lāna etc. on the one hand, Armenian asr and Greek πόκος on the other, we must assume that the verbal root *bʰer⟨d⟩- ‘gather, harvest’ → ‘pluck (wool)’ derives from a time when wool was plucked rather than shorn, and that the derivatives only later, in the individual branches and following the technological development, were lexicalized with the specific meaning of ‘shearing’.13 The root vocalism of burd which would at first sight appear to point to a lengthened o-grade *bʰərd⟨o⟩- is somewhat surprising; on the other hand, we have two apparent parallels in durgn ‘potter’s wheel’14 and burgn ‘tower’.15 The word burd is quite rare in classical literature beside the more usual asr.16 Another word for ‘fleece (of wool)’ is the Semitic loan gzat, Syriac gezzathā, which is only attested four times in the same passage of the Book of Judges, 6.37-40, as a translation of Greek πόκος.

While Armenian may thus have preserved as many as three inherited words for ‘fleece’ and

8. Also, with secondary semantic transfer, ‘shear’, e.g. Theocr.28.13: πόκος πόξασθα ‘have their wool shorn’.
9. Cf. dustr ‘daughter’ < *dʌɡa fér with loss of the laryngeal *a, regular palatalization *g > *ɡ after u and voicing assimilation *ɡt > *kt > st. The numeral ur ‘eight’ most likely goes back to *optiθ as a substitution for *oktʰ after *sepim (> evrʰ) ’seven’ (cf. Martirosyan 2010, 631).
10. Regular loss of *-i- in unaccented syllable, *-ɡt > -an- and i-epenthesis *-ani > -ayn.
13. Cf. Flemestad & Olsen, this volume, for further details and references.
14. Root *d’erɡ- ’turn’.
15. Root *b’erɡ- ’(be) high’. A lengthened o-grade is rather a morphological monstrosity except in vṛddhi formations, and apart from this peculiarity, the root-final -ə- of both burgn and durgn is at variance with the regular development of the palatal *-ɡ̣- > -j in the clearly inherited burjə ’high’ < *br̥ɡu- and aor. darjəv ‘turned’ < *dərɡ- from the very same roots. On this background it seems possible, as suggested in Olsen 1999, 951, that we are dealing with loans from another Indo-European language with different sound laws where -ur- might represent either a zero grade *-r- or an o-grade *-or-. Now burd might be added to the evidence, and at least it is noteworthy that from a semantic point of view burgn, durgn and burd are all likely candidates for cultural loans/Wanderwörter.
‘wool’, gelmn, asr and perhaps burd, the origin of the common term for ‘flax, linen’, ktaw (o-st.), is unknown, and its rare synonym xcuc in Judg.15.14 seems to have a Caucasian source.\textsuperscript{17} The Wanderwort behez/behez ‘fine linen’,\textsuperscript{18} as also Greek βύασος which is transmitted through Semitic, ultimately goes back to Egyptian,\textsuperscript{19} but the immediate source is unknown;\textsuperscript{20} another pedigree of the same stem is viš ‘fibre of flax’.\textsuperscript{21} Orig (o-st.) ‘sackcloth’ is either transmitted through Syriac xurgā or borrowed directly from Middle Iranian *xwarg-. Finally, 
sweat ‘camel’s hair’ is traditionally compared with Vedic stūkā- ‘knot or tuft of hair or wool’ and stupā- ‘knot, tuft of hair’ though the exact protoform is open for discussion.\textsuperscript{22}

Terminology of spinning and weaving

Most of the verbs pertaining to basic textile technology of spinning and weaving are more or less direct continuations of inherited stems though the lexicalized meaning has sometimes undergone changes in the course of time. While the common Indo-European root for ‘weave’, *ubeh-, known from e.g. Greek ὑφαίνω and German weben,\textsuperscript{23} has left no apparent traces, the usual Armenian verb is ankanem. Synchronically this looks like the active counterpart of ankanim, aor. ankaw, ‘fall down, come down, hang down’ from the root *sengw- as in Gothic sigquan ‘sink, go down’, English sink, and the causative sagqjan ‘lower, let down’ which would also be the expected meaning of ankanem. If we are indeed dealing with the same root from a historical point of view, the peculiar semantic development may perhaps be seen in connection with weaving on vertical looms where the warp is held down by the loom-weights, cf. also ankuac ‘weaving, texture’ with the literal meaning ‘what has been made fall, go down’.\textsuperscript{24} A compound with the same stem is found in the designation of the ‘weaver’, ostaynank, lit. ‘who makes the web come down’, i.e. ‘web-weaver’, cf. e.g. 1.Chron.11.23: nižak ibrew z-stori ostaynankac “a spear like a weaver’s beam”, whence also the derivative ostaynakutc iwn ‘weaver’s work’.

A root from the terminology of spinning is Indo-European *(s)penh-,\textsuperscript{25} with or without the “mobile s-” in Gothic spinnan ‘spin’, Lithuanian pinu ‘pluck’, Old Church Slavic pmo ‘stretch’ and, with secondary metaphorical meaning, Greek πένομαι and πονέομαι ‘exert oneself, make an effort’. An Armenian continuation of this verb is allegedly found in henum ‘weave, sew together’ with the variant hanum where the vocalism is assumed to be analogically extended from the original aorist stem.\textsuperscript{26} However, it is remarkable that henum and hanum hardly occur in classical literature, losing ground to niwtcem in the basic meaning of ‘spinning’ from the earliest records, but still sporadically attested in later sources.\textsuperscript{27}

The commonly used verb for ‘spin’ is the denominate niwtcem, derived from the generic term niwt ‘stuff, material’ which is mainly used about textiles, e.g. Ex.39.27: i niwt oy behezoy “of linen material”. Beside its literal meaning ‘spin’, e.g. Matth.6.28 = Luke 12.27: očjanay ew očniwt “they toil not,
neither do they spin”, the verb *niw-tem* is frequently used metaphorically in the sense of ‘spinning a yarn, telling a tall story, scheming’, cf. e.g. Ps.49.19: Be-
ran k'o yaçaxer z-čarutíwvn, ew lezu k'o *niw-er
nengufiwn* “Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy
tongue frameth deceit”, or Prov.3.29: *Mi niw-er
barekami k'um č-ariš “Devise not evil against thy
neighbour”. If the basic root is *sneh(f)- ‘spin’,28 as
continued in e.g. Latin *neō ‘spins’, Old
Irish *niid ‘twists, binds’ and Old High German *näen
’sow’, the underlying noun may be analysed as either
tu-stem *sneh-tu-29 as opposed to the *-ti-
stem of Greek *vīγας ‘spinning’, Old High German
nāt ‘seam’ or a “proterodynamic” *-ti-stem *sneh-t
ōj-, in both cases with u-epenthesis and analogical
o-stem inflection.

Another verb which is usually treated in the same
context is *tēk’em*, traditionally translated ‘twist’ or
the like in historical-comparative literature30 and in-
terpreted as a primary thematic verb from *tēk-* ‘twist,
weave’,31 otherwise attested with an apparent s-extension,
e.g. Latin *tēxō ‘weave, plait’. However, as regist-
istered in the normative dictionaries and affirmed by the
textual evidence,32 the original meaning of the Arme-

nian verb is not ‘twist’, but rather ‘forge’, in particular
‘whet’, metaphorically also ‘educate’, and even the
later meaning ‘incline, tilt, bow, bend’ is quite gen-
neral and not specifically used in contexts where tex-
tiles are involved. This is primarily a technical term

used about the smith rather than the textile worker.33

We now have to consider the meaning of the root(s)
*tēk- and/or *tēk- and its/their potential relation to
textile terminology, including the extended or re-
duplicated forms “*teks-*/teks-” and “*te-tk-” > “tēkb-”.

Pokorny34 registers the homonymous roots *tēk- “zeu-
gen, gebären” and *tek- “weben, flechten”, while
LIV35 reconstructs the former with a root-final velar
*tēk-, the latter with a palatal *tēk-. Now, if the
Armenian verb *tēk’em* is excluded for semantic reasons,
there is no specific reason to reconstruct a velar rather
than a palatal.36 Thus it is sufficient to posit a single
root *tēk- ‘make, produce’, perhaps continued in its
simple form in Greek *tzoxov ‘child’ with the re-
duplicated present *tīkto ‘beget, produce’.37 An apparent
s-extension is found in Hittite *takkešzi, 3.pl. takšanzi
’fit together, unite’),38 Latin *tēxō ‘weave, plait; join,
fix together, build’ and Middle High German *dehse
’break flax’, and finally an old reduplicated stem *te-
tk- > *tēkb- is traditionally seen in Vedic *tāṣṭi ‘builds,
builds, fashions, makes’, Avestan *tāšt ‘made’, Old Church
Slavic *tesati, Lithuanian *tašyti ‘hew’. This stem also

appears to be the base of the noun continued in Vedic *tākṣan-. Greek *tīktoν ‘carpenter’ (Mycenaean *te-ko-
ko-n*) and Avestan *tašan- ‘creator’, famously featur-
ing in the poetic language of Indo-Iranian and Greek
where ‘carpenter of words’ is used as a kenning for
the poet.39 However, the precise formal distinction
between *teks- and *tēk- is somewhat unclear, and

28. LIV 571-572.
31. LIV 1c.
32. E.g. 1 Sam.13.20; Is.44.12.
33. Ačaṙyan II, 178: *kėnelov kokel, šinel, srel* “by hammering to smoothe, fashion, whet”; Nor baṙgirk: I, 810: “*Χαλαζόν, Fabrico,
tundo, cudo. ḏęγo, acuo, ew [and] παδεβον, erudio”. Ciąckiak (I, 578) agrees on the primary meanings ‘aguzzarie, affilare, arro-
tare, appunture’, ‘esercitare, istruire, informare’, including the metaphorical use of *rekel lezu* ‘Rinforzar le parole; rinvigorire il
discoorso’, and finally adding ‘piegare, torcere, flettere’ [fold, twist, bend] which is the meaning that survives into the modern lan-
guage. The suggestion of an etymological connection between *tēk’em* and Lat. *texō* etc. seems to go back to Meillet (1894, 289)
who, in accordance with the earliest documentation, translates “‘fabricuer et en particulier ‘aiguiser’”.
34. IEW 1057-1058.
35. LIV 618-619.
36. The Ossetic verb *taxon*, mentioned in IEW with the translation ‘weben’, rather means ‘equip, dress up’ and thus does not belong
here (Cheung 2007, 374).
It is even possible that Greek τέκτων is rebuilt from *tekšan on the model of the agent noun *tekš-tor- = Latin textor ‘weaver’. 40 At any rate there seems to be a lexical connection between simply ‘fitting together’, as in the Hittite verb, and the two more specialized craftsman’s terms ‘building’ or ‘doing carpentry’ on the other hand, ‘weaving’ on the other. Presumably, the connecting link is the use of wattling in the construction of houses. 41

This brings us to the curious formal identity of the roots of Armenian hiws ‘plait (of hair)’, hiwsel ‘to plait’ and hiwsn (pl. hiwsunk < *-ones) ‘carpenter’ where it is tempting, but formally problematic to venture an equation with tākṣan- and tектων. The equation was already assumed by Ačaṙyan, 42 and later elaborated by Winter 43 who, apart from dealing with the doubtful internal cluster, had to postulate a dialectal development *t- > h- rather than the regular t-. Klingenschmitt’s alternative derivation from a reduplicated *pi-pk- from the root *pek- ‘pluck; comb’ 44 is phonologically impeccable, but morphologically ad hoc. Moreover, the semantic development is far from obvious, as is also the case of the alternative derivation from *peyk. Perhaps the most promising suggestion is Martirosyan’s tentative comparison with Lithuanian siukti ‘turn’, Old Russian sskati ‘twist, twine’, Russian sukati ‘twist, spin’ 45 which is at least semantically satisfactory for hiws, hiwsel, while the stem formation of hiwsn may have been influenced by the pre-Armenian match of tākṣan-, tектων. 46

The inherited textile vocabulary includes not only the word for the ‘web’ as such, but apparently also the more specialized terms for ‘warp’ and ‘woof’. The word for the ‘warp’ is either arēǰ, lit. ‘that which goes down’ 47 or azbn, while the ‘woof’ is tεčan, cf. e.g. Levit.13.52: Ḩr ayreṣcē z-jorjn etē arēǰ icē etē tεčan y-asvēc kam i κtawec “And he shall burn that garment, whether the warp (στήμωνa) or woof (κρόκης), in woollen or in linen”. 48

In Armenian historical linguistics it is all too often the case that a proposed etymology depends on a sound law that is founded on one or two stray examples, as is also the case of azbn. Two nouns in Classical Armenian end in -zbn, skizbn ‘beginning’ and azbn ‘warp, chain in weaving’ (cf. Olsen 1999, 369-370). While an indigenous suffix -mnl/-man is well attested, we have no comparative evidence whatsoever for a similar suffix with *-b-. (> -b-) instead of *-m- . Consequently, skizbn and azbn either belong to some undefined substratum in which case we can stop worrying about them from an Indo-European comparative point of view, or they are inherited after all if -bn for -mn is due to some sophisticated conditioned sound law. Already in the early 19th century, Holger Pedersen 49 suggested a regular development -zmn- to -zbn- to account for these words, and since both of the basic roots stand a good chance of being inherited, it does seem sensible to look for a historical explanation for the suffixal elements as well.

41. Mallory & Adams 1997, 139.
42. Ačaṙyan III, 201.
43. Winter 1962, 262 and 1983.
44. Klingenschmitt 1982, 133-134 and 217.
45. Martirosyan 2010, 410-412. Root *seyk-; *-k- regularly palatalized after *-u-.
46. A lengthened grade *-ēu- which regularly yields -iəw- would be morphologically peculiar, so the value of the comparison depends on the expected outcome of the diphthong *-eu-. Usually *-eu- and *-oy- are assumed to merge with the end result -oy-, but as argued by de Lamberterie (1982, 81-82), there are no incontestable examples of *-eu- > *-oy-, so it is possible that *-eu- > -iəw- is regular. Besides hiws (hiwsel, hiwsn) de Lamberterie points to hiwçam, aor. hiwç ‘pine away’; Goth. siuks ‘ill’ < *seyk- < *segg- (cf. also IEW 915). Another potential example would be tεwi (o-st.) ‘number’ < *tēyhos (cf. Ved. tavās- ‘strong’, Av. tāuah ‘power, strength’ ) where we could avoid an inconvenient case of vṛddhi. As for the apparent exceptions kjoyr ‘sister’ < *k’euxr < *ṣesōr and the suffix -oyr (i-st.) = Greek. -ezις < *-eh ətis-, the hiatus between -ε- and -u- may have remained until the development *-eγ- > -iəw- (followed by the later merger of *-eu- and *-oy-) was completed.
47. Cf. Greek στήμωνa ‘that which stands up’.
Between $azbn$ and Greek ἀσύμα ‘warp’ (usually διάσμα) there exists a both very precise and very specific semantic correspondence, which can hardly be accidental. Thus Judg.16.13: ἕρε ανκέες z-ewt-$tank$ $gik$ $mlv$ $im$ $y$ and $azbin$ translates Greek Εἶναι ὄροφής τὰς ἐπὶ αὐτὰς τῆς κυρότης μου μετὰ τοῦ διάσματος ‘If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web’. The corresponding Greek verb ἄττομαι < *a-t-jo-es 'set the warp in the loom', i.e. 'start the web', has been convincingly connected with Hittite $hatt$- 'pierce, prick' by van Beek (apud Beekes 2010, 167). From a formal point of view the Greek form is an exact match of the Hittite $i$-present $ha$-$az$-$zi$-$zi$, to be read /htevs/ < *h.i-je-ti, but the semantic specialization pertaining to textile terminology must have taken place at a time after the separation of the Anatolian branch from the Indo-European family, i.e. not earlier than “Core Indo-European” and perhaps as late as the predecessor of the Greek-Armenian-(Albanian-Phrygian) subbranch.

Tcezan ‘woof’ has no generally accepted etymology. A connection with the root “(s)teg$^{1}$- ‘stechen’”, as in Old Icelandic $sting$ ‘sting, stitch, stab’, Old Church Slavic $o$-$stegn$ōti ‘tie, knot, chain’, Russian $stegat$ ‘quilt’$^{152}$ has been rejected because the Slavic forms would point to a velar *-$g^h$-, while Armenian -$z$- must represent the lention product of an intervocalic palatal *-$g^h$-. However, the semantic correspondence is remarkable, cf. also Shetland $sting$ ‘sew, stitch together’, Danish $sting$ ‘a stitch’, and the formal problem would be solved by a Slavic borrowing from Germanic.

Even the word for the beam of a loom, $stori$, may be based on an inherited lexeme, *$storrh$jo-, from the same root as Middle High German $starr$ ‘stiff’ and in particular Old High German $storro$ ‘wooden block’. Textile terms based on inherited roots further include $k$u$^l$ “thread”, reconstructed by Jáhukyan as *$kālo$- and compared with Latin $colus$ ‘distaff’. The reconstruction may be adjusted to *$k^z$olh, $ρ$- from *$k^z$elh, $τ$- ‘turn’ as a $vṛddhi$ derivative ‘pertaining to the spindle’ (?), but there may be other possibilities such as a zero-grade formation *$k^h$|$l$,$ρ$- with rounding of the sonant after labiovelars. The semantically related $aslan$ ‘thread, ribbon’ is internally derived from $aselh$ ‘needle’, based on the root *$h^2ak$- ‘(be) sharp’ and belonging to the same subset as $aleln$ ‘bow’ and $etelh$ ‘blade’. The derivational details are not quite clear, but at least we seem to be dealing with a close cognate of Old High German $ahil$ ‘awn’, Middle English $eile$ ‘awn, prickle’. $^{56}$

**Terminology of garments**

The inventory of inherited words for garments is quite scarce. The generic term $z$-$gest$- ($u$-st.) ‘garment, clothing’ is a compositional $tu$-stem, including the prefix $z$- which, at least functionally, corresponds to Ved. $abh$-$< *h^2m$-$b$i-$< *h$-$m$-$b$- and the tu-stem *$gest$- $gestu$- as opposed to the Latin $ti$-stem $vestis$. A similar formation is $z$-$ard$ ‘ornament, finery’, also an original tu-stem *$h$-$ar$-$tu$- or *$h^2$-$g$-$tu$-, however, the cognates, Vedic $rtu$- ‘the right time; rule, order’, Hes. ἄρτις σιναζίς, Latin $artus$ ‘limb’ are not associated

49. Cf. Klingenschmitt (1982, 224) for a discussion of $skizbn$ and the related verb $sksanim$ ‘begin’. The origin of the crucial cluster is not exactly identical in the two cases: (*-$lmm$?) $*$-$smn$ > *-$zmn$ in $skizbn$, *-$mmn$ > *-$smn$ > *-$zmn$ in $azbn$.
51. Cf. Kloekhorst 2008, 331. The verb is also included in Lycian *xttai*/*xtta*ti ‘wounds’ (LIV 274 with references).
53. Ačaṙyan IV, 278. Cf. also Martirosyan 2010, 300 for a thorough discussion of the enigmatic il, ilik ‘distaff, spindle’.
56. The Germanic protoform is usually reconstructed as *$ahila$-/*$agila$-, but instead we might be dealing with an instrument noun *$h^2akel$- of the type Old Norse $lyk$il ‘key’ < *$luk$-$ila$-$z$ < *$etlo$- ‘instrument for closing’ according to Rasmussen’s analysis (1999, 651-651). The exact phonetic basis of the Armenian derivative is somewhat uncertain.
58. The u-stem inflection may well be an archaisms since $tu$- rather than ti-stems in Vedic are habitually found after prefixes, cf. Wackernagel-Debrunner 1954, 651.
with clothing.  

More specific terms include avjik ‘collar’, presumably a derivative of a stem *(h)jang* or *(h)rg-*, related to Greek αὐξήν, Aeolic άψην ‘neck’, and perhaps *prefix rough mantle* (also ‘curtain’) which has been connected with Greek πέλας, Lat. *pellis* ‘skin’ and the semantic close match of Old Persian *pelkis* ‘mantle’, allegedly from the same root as Gothic *fihan* ‘envelop’ → ‘bury, conceal’.  

The root final *-k/-g- (*-g- > Arm. -k-) may be dealt with as an indication of “laryngeal hardening” which would point to an original root noun *(pelh-)s, whence the Gothic denominative verb.  

Another indigenous term for a garment may be *ter* ‘thin veil (for covering the head)’ if Ačariyan’s derivation from the root *der-* ‘skin’ is correct.  

In that case we would be dealing with a narrowing of an older meaning ‘hide, covering’ and have an exact match in Greek δέρρης ‘hide, skin’, but also ‘screen (used in a siege)’ < *dersi-*.  

A ‘cover’ or ‘garment’ may also be described as a verarku, lit. ‘thrown over’, a loan translation from Greek περιβολαίον.  

Finally, a few words for ornaments are based on inherited roots: the a-stem gind- ‘earring’ from the root *yend*- ‘twist, turn, weave’ as in Gothic windan etc., and matani ‘ring’, internally derived from matn ‘finger’ with cognates in Old Welsh maut, Middle Breton meut ‘thumb’.  

Otherwise, the general picture is dominated by Iranian loanwords, thus the generic terms patmowčan ‘garment’, Pahlavi *ptmwen*, and *handernj ‘clothes*, clothing’ from an Iranian protoform *han-dard-*, cf. Pahlavi drc ‘seam’. The underlying Iranian root *darz-*, also reflected in Middle Parthian *drz- ‘tie on, load (pack-animals)’, is probably Indo-European *dĕr-g- ‘turn’ with a semantic development to ‘twist, spin’ as also in Albanian *dërth ‘turn; spin’. The inherited Armenian verb *daṙnam, aor. *darjay > *dĕrg-*> has preserved the original meaning ‘turn’, but one may consider if the otherwise etymologically unclear *jorj (o-st.) ‘garment, coat, cloth, veil’, pl. ‘clothes’ could not be an inherited bóros-derivative *dĕrgbos with distant assimilation *dorj > *jorj, i.e. [dordr] > [dordr]. If so, the joint evidence of Iranian, Armenian and Albanian would point to an extension of meaning ‘turn’ – ‘spin’ as common heritage.  

The number of nouns of Iranian origin for specific garments and other specialized textiles is quite impressive, thus:  

- *šapik ‘shirt*, cf. Middle Parthian špyk ‘undershirt’, originally ‘nightshirt’, a substantivized derivative of the word for ‘night’, Avestan *xšap-, Vedic kšáp-.  
- *t’aškinak ‘handkerchief, sudarium’, corresponding to Pahlavi tšnak ‘undershirt’, from an Iranian protoform *tšnakainaka- or the like, cf. Avestan *tarsi- ‘dry’ with t- > t- as in e.g. tag ‘crown’ < Iranian *tāg-.  
- *vtavak ‘shift, shirt, robe’, used about the ephod or priestly robe, possibly a derivative of the stem continued in Pahlavi wytʾb- [witāβ] ‘shine’ in which case the original meaning would be a shining or simply white garment.  
- *lenjak ‘towel’ via an intermediary Iranian source ultimately from Latin *linteum ‘anything made of
linen, towel etc.’.  

- vižakk ‘covering’, used in the Exodus about the Ark of the Covenant, has been compared with Khotanese pvīyx ‘cover’ < *pati-vaiz by Bailey.

- gawti ‘girdle, belt’, perhaps < Iranian *gaβtia- from *gaβtia- ‘hold’, cf. also paregawt below.


- zankapan ‘stocking’ or the like, cf. Pahlavi zng ‘ankle, shank’ + the Iranian stem -pāna- ‘protecting, protector’. A similar formation is the semi-calque sinapank ‘greaves’ whose first member is the inherited srownk ‘shank’ (cf. Latin crūs etc.), similar to Gothic Avestan rānapānō “qui protège la jambe, la jambière”.

- grapan ‘seam at the neck’ (lit. ‘neck-protector’), cf. Modern Persian girīban ‘neck-guard, gorget’, a formation parallel to zankapan. For the initial member of the compound, cf. Pahlavi glyw ‘neck, throat’, Avestan grīuuā-.

- vartik ‘breeches’ with the compound andravar- tik, presumably from a stem *vartia- based on the root var- ‘cover’; this Iranian loan is matched by Arabic andarvart, andarvardiyya.

- kawšik ‘shoe’, corresponding to Pahlavi kpš, kpšk ‘id.’.

- k’urj ‘sack, garment of sackcloth’, a Wanderwort borrowed from Iranian into Armenian as well as Arabic kurz.

On the other hand, the Greek contributions to the old Armenian textile vocabulary are relatively modest: lōdik ‘cloak’ from Greek λώδιξ, λωδίκιον; k’lamid ‘robe, cloak’ from χλαμύς, -ύδος; and p’rilon ‘cloak’ from φελόνης, φαιλόνης. Not only Greek itself, but also the Hebrew elements in the Septuaginta has left sporadic traces in the Armenian Bible, e.g. badēn ‘linen garment’, a rendering of the Hebrew loanword in Greek βαδδίν, apparently with secondary influence from the suffix -ēn characteristic of adjectives of material. Similarly, the Syriac element is restricted to a few words: amłan ‘gown’, xlay ‘coat’, and possibly xanjarowr ‘swaddling band’, pl. ‘swaddling clothes’. The etymological background of k’awl or k’ol ‘veil’, and bac’kon ‘cloak’, translating Greek ἱμάτιον, is unclear.

As is natural, the Iranian military domination also affects the terminology of military outfit as seen from the following examples:

- pateank ‘armour’ from Iranian *patayāna-, *patiyāna- or the like, containing the stem of the verb patem ‘surround, enclose’ (cf. e.g. also arcat’apat ‘covered with silver’) which probably reflects an Iranian version of the root
*pethr- ‘spread out embrace’.  
- varapakan (military) cloak’, lit. ‘breast-protector’, cf. Avestan varah- ‘breast’ and -pan- as in zankpan ‘stocking’, srinapank ‘greaves’. The original source of zrahk ‘armour’ with the reflex -h- of Iranian -d-, cf. Avestan zrāda- ‘armour’, is apparently neither Middle Parthian nor Middle Persian from which we expect -r- and -y- respectively, but rather a third branch of Middle Iranian, though the word may have been transmitted through one of the two main dialects.
- kštapak ‘armlet for the right arm’ with the literal meaning ‘side guardian’, cf. kowšt (side) ‘belly’, Pahlavi kwst ‘side, direction’ (but Modern Persian kust ‘belly’) and the same final element as in varapak.
- saławart ‘helmet’ from a formation similar to Avestan sārauāra- ‘helmet’, lit. ‘head-concealer’ though the stem formation of the final member in the Armenian version is not an a-stem, as in Iranian, but either an extended root noun (Indo-European *-yr-t-) or a -ti-stem (*-yr-ti-).

Taṙatok (soldier’s) cloak: etymologically obscure, cf. Martirosyan 2010, 602 with references.

Similarly, the vocabulary of ornaments, jewelry and royal attire is heavily influenced by Middle Iranian:
- a prominent example is tāg ‘crown’, cf. Manichaean Middle Persian t'g [tāg] ‘arch’ and the Modern Persian palatalized version tāj ‘crown’. Bolognesi derived Arm. t'ag and Persian tāj independently from the same root as Greek στέφος <*(s)tegʰ- on account of the initial t- which he considered incompatible with an Iranian loan. However, there are other examples of such a development, e.g. t'akoyk ‘vessel, goblet’ vs. Middle Persian tkwk ‘drinking vessel’, and moreover, Benveniste’s ingenious derivation of tāgəwhi ‘queen’ from *tāga-bryyā- ‘crown-bearer’ (f) strongly suggests an Iranian origin of both compositional members. The relation between tāg/ tāj and στέφος may still be maintained: tāj from a “tomós”-type *təgʰ-ös and tāj a hybrid formation between tāg with Brugmannian lengthening and a competing s-stem *tegʰ-es-, like στέφος, with e-grade and palatalization.
- for the compound mehewand ‘necklace’, whose final member -awand clearly reflects Iranian *-banda- ‘band’, Bailey suggested a first member *mj̅ru-, whence Avestan marəzu- ‘neck’ or ‘vertebra’; this was later improved by Gippert to *miθriyə banda- which would explain the connecting -e-. However, the phonetic development *-rd- > -h- has no recognized parallels, so as an alternative explanation Olsen has suggested a protoform *miθriya- banda- from a stem related to (Iranian →) Greek μίτρη ‘headband’ etc.
- čelanak ‘sort of head ornament’, probably ‘hair pin’, is a diminutive of the Middle Iranian word

84. LIV 478-479; cf. further Avestan pašana- ‘wide, broad’. From the same root we also have patan ‘bandage’, diapatik ‘embalmer’, a compound with the probably inherited dī ‘dead body’, and patand in the phrase arñowl i patand ‘take hostage’ (lit. ‘into enclosure’). In view of the missing sound shift, the verb cannot be indigenous in Armenian.
85. Bolognesi 1960, 42; Schmitt 1983, 84 and 90.
88. Benveniste 1945 [1946], 74.
89. Cf. also the Tocharian A loanword pəsäk (Isebaert 1980, 158 and 200).
90. Cf. Middle Parthian bnd, Avestan banda-.
92. Gippert 1993, 140.
for ‘dagger’, Pahlavi cply’n’.94

- sundus, translating Gk. τρίχαπτον ‘fine veil of hair’ in Ezek.16.10, cf. Modern Persian sundus ‘species panni serici tenuis’.


- čamuk ‘decoration, ornament’, apparently also of Iranian origin though the details are unclear, cf. Ačaṙyan III, 180.

- prōlošuk ‘hair-clasp’ looks like a derivative of the etymologically unclear prōloš ‘moray’, the clasp perhaps compared with the jaws of the fish.

The ultimate origin of maneak ‘necklace’, Greek μανιάκης, is also likely to be Iranian, while the background of k‘ayr ‘necklace’ is unknown.

Textile techniques, dyes and decorations

As we have seen, the words pertaining to basic textile production such as spinning and weaving mainly have an indigenous background, but when it comes to more advanced techniques and the production of luxuries, the Iranian influence has left its unmistakable mark. An interesting example is the agent noun nkarakert ‘embroider’.95 While the first member of this compound is clearly nkar ‘picture; variegated’,96 the final stem differs semantically from other formations in -(a)kert < *kṛta- ‘made’ with the expected passive meaning of the participle. This is what we find in the semi-calques jεrakert ‘hand-made’, p’aytakert ‘made of wood’ or the complete loanword ašakert ‘disciple’, Manichaean Middle Persian hš gyrd ‘disciple, pupil’, according to Benveniste’s brilliant analysis a South West Iranian loan whose first member corresponds to Old Persian hašiya- (Avestan haišiia-) ‘true’, so that the original meaning would be ‘qui est rendu autentique, accompli’.97 The discrepancy of verbal voice in nkarakert is not readily explained, and for this reason it seems worth considering if we could not be dealing with a different root. An obvious candidate is Indo-Iranian *kart- ‘spin; stretch a tread’. Incidentally such a root is attested in RV út kṛṇatti, and from Iranian probably Chwarczmann knc-y- ‘twist’.98 In that case a nkarakert would simply be a ‘picture-weaver’ or ‘picture-embroiderer’ and thus be etymologically distinct from Pahlavi ng’rgr (-kar) which would be a ‘picture-maker’, i.e. a painter. From the same semantic field and with the same first member we also find nkarakerp ‘variegated, embroidered’ where the final member is kerp ‘form’, cf. Manichaean Middle Persian qyrb ‘form, shape’ < Indo-European *-k‘t-p-, etymologically related to Latin corpus etc.

Words for precious materials borrowed from Iranian may be exemplified by dipak ‘brocade’, Pahlavi dyp’g’, and zaṙnawowxt ‘silken’, originally ‘interwoven with gold’, i.e. *zarna-vufta-, cf. Sogdian yznwfc with the same final participle, ‘woven’, as čačanawowxt ‘variegated, multi-coloured’. However, one designation for a luxury article, the word for scarlet, ordan, is indigenous, derived from ordn ‘worm’,99 and thus semantically comparable with Old Church Slavic črьmьnъ ‘red’ which is related to črьvъ ‘worm’.100 This is hardly surprising, considering the fact that Armenia is the homeland of the Armenian or Ararat cochineal, a scale insect of which a precious crimson dye has been produced from ancient times. It is thus not unthinkable that for once the Iranian word which is the source of the European words for crimson

95. Olsen 265-266.
98. Cf. EWAia I, 316. Thus *kert- (LIV 356), besides *spen(h) - and *sneh (j) -, would be another inherited root with the meaning ‘spin’. Eichner (1974, 98; cf. also Kloekhorst 2008, 459-460) has adduced a possible cognate in the Hititite noun karza-karzan- ‘spool’ or ‘bobbin’.
99. While ordn has no recognized etymology, a remodelling or contamination between the protoforms of Latin vermen and Sanskrit kṛmi- ‘worm’ is hardly out of the question, cf. Olsen 1999, 127.
100. This belongs with the widespread word family also represented by Sanskrit kṛmi- ‘worm; spider; shield-louse’, Lithuanian kirmis ‘worm’ etc. French cromoisin, English crimson, Dutch karmozijn etc. derive from Medieval Latin carmesīnus, a derivative of a borrowing from Arabic girmiz whose ultimate source is Persian girmiz.
(cf. note 100) is a calque from Armenian.

Another red dye is scarlet, Armenian janjxar, produced from the insect Kermes vermilio, mainly feeding on a species of oak trees, quercus coccifera, in the Mediterranean region. The only early Armenian attestation is from Isaiah 1.18 where we have a parallel of the red scarlet and crimson as opposed to the white snow and wool: Ew erē ic'en melk jer ibrew z-janjxar, ibrew z-jiwn spitak araric, ey etē ic'en ibrew z-ordan karmir, ibrew z-asr sowl araric. “Though your sins be as scarlet (Greek ‘ὡς φοινικά’), they shall be white as snow; though they be like red crimson, they shall be as pure wool”. According to Ačaṙyan, we are dealing with a Semitic loanword, cf. Syriac zxoridba ‘coccum, red worm’. Apparently the stem janjir- (janjir armel ‘tire, annoy’) has played a supplementary folk-etymological role, cf. the alternative spelling janraxar and the later meaning of janjxarit, ’dark, dull red’.

The semantically related cirani ‘purple; of purple, purple coloured’, most likely has an Iranian origin. Obviously the stem is connected with ciran ‘apricot’, and with a basic meaning ‘golden’ we may compare with the family of Avestan zarang-, Sogdian zyrn, Vedic híranya- ‘gold’, i.e. Indo-European *gḫr(e)n- via a dialectal Iranian protoform *dārān- under the assumption that the loan precedes the stage of mediae > tenues of the Armenian soundshift. Such very early loans are rare, but apparently not quite exceptional, cf. the notable example of partēz ‘garden’ with *-d→-t (Avestan pairi-daēza-), and probably also arcat ‘silver’ from IE *(h)₂(r)g[to- (Avestan ṣvaṣa-, Latin argenteum), again from a dialectal Iranian protoform with affricate from original palatal, i.e. *ar-θa-→arcat-.104

In connection with the discussion of garments and materials it may be worthwhile to have a brief look at the colour terms, though of course these are also used in other contexts. For the essential concept of ‘colour’ the Armenian noun goyn (o-st.) is of Iranian origin, cf. Avestan gauna-, Pahlavi gwn’. The stem is also widely attested in composition, and in the reduplicated gwnnak gwnnak in Jud.15.15: psaks gwnnaks gwnnaks, probably ‘multicoloured wreaths’. A more specialized term is erang ‘colour, dye’, cf. Pahlavi lŋ, Sanskrit rāṅga-, while ‘dye’ or ‘coloured, embroidered material’ is expressed by the loanword narawt which has been compared with Khotanese nar- by Bailey. Likewise, most of the specific colour terms have an Iranian background, thus:

- pisak ‘spotted, speckled’, a derivative of *pāisa-, Avestan paēša- ‘ornament’.
- spitak ‘white’ with the North West Iranian development of *kṣ-→sp-, cf. Pahlavi spytik, Sanskrit śveta-.
- seaw ‘black’, cf. Middle Parthian sy’w, Avestan sīaŋga-.
- kapoyt ‘dark blue’ and kapowtak ‘bluish’ where the original meaning would have been ‘dove-coloured’, cf. Pahlavi kpwt ‘grey-blue; pigeon’, Old Persian kapautaka-, probably ‘blue’, Vedic kapōta- ‘pigeon’.

The historical background of kanač ‘green’ is
gorš ‘grey’ is unknown, and of the basic colour terms only delin ‘yellow’ has a plausible Indo-European etymology.

This selection of textile terms from Classical Armenian testifies to a rich and varied vocabulary, historically shared between a foundation of inherited lexical material and an influx of cultural loans from the politically and culturally dominant Iranians. Our sources do not permit us to go beyond the stage of the reconstructed Indo-European protolanguage, but we do know for certain that the area now inhabited by Armenians has a long tradition of advanced textile technology. In a cave in Vayocc Jor in the southern part of Armenia, archaeologists have excavated a beautifully sown moccasin, “the world’s oldest shoe”, dated to about 3500 BC. What language its wearer spoke and what words he or she would have used to describe it, its material, colour and fabrication, we shall never know.

Abbreviations

Nor Baṙgirkc = Nor Baṙgirk’ haykazean lezowi I-II. Venice. Reprint Erevan 1979-81.

Bibliography

110. Apparently a derivative of the same root as del ‘herb’ (cf. also delj ‘peach’, deljan ‘blond’, datukn ‘jaundice’) which would match Latin helus > holus ‘herb’ < *hélhos except for the initial *-, regularly yielding j-, i.e. [d]-. Perhaps the stem was contami-nated with the semantically related dalar ‘fresh and green’ = Greek ἥλεχος.


