

**On Some Armenian Reduplicated Nouns: mamul, mamur, and  
mamur**

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There are several reduplicated nouns in Armenian, including both the Classical language and modern dialects, that share a common phonetic shape of **mamuR-**, where **-R-** stands for any liquid, and more generally **mamuC-**, where **-C-** stands for any consonant; three of these nouns are given in (1):

- (1) a. **mamul** 'press; vice' (Classical)
- b. **mamur** 'sawdust' (modern dialectal)
- c. **mamur** 'moss' (Classical).

There are as well at least two other nouns with the same phonetic shape, as given in (2):

- (2) a. **mamux** 'sloe; wild plum' (Classical)
- b. **mamuk** 'spider' (modern dialectal).

I will concentrate here on the first group, for those words--unlike the ones in (2)--present a relatively clear picture as to their etymology, in terms of related forms within Armenian and/or cognate roots or formations elsewhere in Indo-European, and moreover are more closely connected phonetically, all ending in a liquid. For the purposes of this presentation, having some idea of the etymological starting point is crucial, as is a high degree of phonetic similarity. Still, as we shall see, the words in (2) may prove to be important.

As summarized in (3), **mamul**, for instance, is related within Armenian to the verbs **malem** 'to smash, crumble, chop' and **mimlem** 'to rub', and the noun **mul-** 'mill', and outside Armenian to Old High German **muljan** 'to smash, crumble', and Greek  $\mu\upsilon\lambda\eta$  'mill', all from a Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root  $*mel(H)-$  'crumble, grind'; **mamur**, on the other hand, has no clear cognate derivatives within Armenian but can be taken to derive from a PIE root  $*mer(H)-$  'rub; wear (out); strike', found in Hittite **marra-** 'cut into pieces', Greek  $\mu\alpha\rho\alpha\iota\nu\nu\omega$  'rub out; destroy', and Old Norse **merja** 'strike', to name just a few forms, while **mamur**, too, lacks Armenian-internal cognates, but is clearly related outside Armenian to words for 'moss' in a number of languages, e.g. Old High German **mus** 'moss', Lithuanian **mùsos** 'mildew', and Russian **mox** 'moss', all from  $*m(e)u-s-$ .

This etymological information about these nouns raises several important questions concerning their development, as given in (4):

- (4) a. What is source of reduplication in these nouns? Is it inherited from PIE in any or all of them, or is it an Armenian innovation?
- b. What is the nature of the interrelationships among these words? Did any of them influence one or more of the others?

In a recent article, Gevork Djahukian (1990) makes several statements in passing concerning the nouns in (1) that are relevant to these questions. As indicated in (5), he states, with regard to **mamul**, that "there is no similar reduplicative type among its derivatives in other languages", with regard to **mamur** that it "is formed by the model of **mamul** 'press' and **mamur** 'moss'", and finally, concerning **mamur**, that

"no reduplication is observed among its parallels" elsewhere in Indo-European.

Although no further discussion is given about these nouns, these brief statements allow for a couple of inferences that relate to the questions in (4), namely, as given in (6), that reduplication in these nouns is an Armenian innovation and that ultimately **mamur** was carried along by--we might even say, "drawn into the orbit" of--**mamul** and **mamur**.

Even with such inferences, however, there are still several aspects of the development of these nouns that are left unaccounted for. In particular, as indicated in (7), it is not clear what the basis is for the introduction of reduplication. While it is true that Meillet (1935: 122) took the **-u-** vocalism of **mamul** to be the result of the supposedly expressive nature of this noun, and that Tischler (1990: 192) has suggested that the reduplication in **mamul** may have the same origin, it is fair to ask why this noun would be part of "le vocabulaire familier et expressif"; perhaps expressivity could be invoked for the related reduplicated verb **mlmlem**, but it hardly seems appropriate for the noun. Moreover, one can legitimately question why **mamur** would have been influenced by **mamul** and **mamu**Ωr--no basis for the presumed analogical connection among these nouns is provided.

In what follows, therefore, I shall attempt to answer the questions in (4) and to address the additional issues raised in (7). In so doing, therefore, I shall be providing some clarification to the historical development of these three Armenian nouns.

My point of departure for an alternative answer to these questions is the comparison given in (8), first suggested apparently by Solta

(1960: 101), in which Armenian **mamul** 'press; vice' is related to the Hittite reduplicated noun **memal** 'grits, meal'. Hittite **memal**, it is generally agreed (see Tischler 1990), is related within Hittite to the verb **mall(a)-** 'grind, mill', from PIE \*melH-, and thus derives from the same root as **mamul** and its related verbs **malem** and **mlmlem**.

Solta noted that **mamul** and **memal** were comparable on a purely formal basis ("**mamul** 'Presse', dem rein äusserlich das heth. **memal** ähnelt"), presumably--though he did not say so explicitly--because of the difference in meaning ('press/vice' versus 'meal/grits'), a difference which reflects a difference in the function of the noun relative to the base root. In particular, as indicated in (9), Armenian **mamul** represents an instrument noun derived from \*melH-, in that a vice or press is something through which smashing or grinding can be accomplished, whereas Hittite **memal** represents a result noun from the same root, grits and meal being something that results from grinding or smashing.

A consideration of the function of these nouns--and the other Armenian nouns in **mamuC**---proves to be the key, I would argue, to understanding their development and their interrelationships. Thus, as indicated in (9), in addition to the classification of **mamul** as having an instrument function and **memal** as having a result function of **memal**, **mamur** 'sawdust' can be taken to be a result noun from its root, for sawdust is something that results from rubbing/cutting--and note the meaning of Hittite cognate verb **marra-** 'cut into pieces. **mamur**'moss', on the other hand, has no clear deverbal function inasmuch as there is no clear verbal root from which it is derived.

Therefore, as noted in (10), Hittite **memal** matches Armenian **mamul** in their base root and in their form, both being reduplicated, but not in their function. On the other hand, Hittite **memal** matches Armenian **mamur** in form and in function but not in their base root.

What makes this network of matches among these forms especially interesting is the fact that there are other nouns in Hittite for instruments that show reduplication as well as some for results that also show reduplication. For example, as shown in (11), these nouns include **GISsesarul** 'sieve' (with a derived denominal verb **sesarie-** 'to sift'), and **GIShah(ha)r(a)-** 'rake' (with a derived denominal verb **hahharie-** 'to rake'). While neither word presents a clear etymology, one might conjecture that **GISsesarul** derives from PIE *\*srew-* 'flow' (an enlarged form of *\*ser-* 'flow'), with a 'sieve' representing the instrument through which a certain type of flowing, e.g. of grain, is accomplished; similarly, it is likely (so Tischler (1983: 122) that **GIShah(ha)r(a)-** derives ultimately from the root *\*H<sub>2</sub>erH<sub>3</sub>-* found in Greek *aroww* 'to plow', Latin *aro:* 'plow', Armenian *arawr* 'plough', etc., and quite possibly Hitt. **harra-** 'break, bruise, grind' and/or Hitt. **hars-** 'rip open, till (soil)', (etc.), with a 'rake' representing an instrument through which a type of working/breaking the ground is accomplished (and compare also the derived denominal verb **hahharie-** 'to rake').

Moreover, it is significant in this consideration of the role of reduplication in the formation of instrument nouns that the best example of a deverbal reduplicated noun that is directly reconstructible for Proto-Indo-European has the function of an instrument noun; this noun, as given in (12), is *\*k<sup>w</sup>e-k<sup>w</sup>l-o-* 'wheel', and is indicated by the equation of Sanskrit **cakra-**, Greek *kuvklo*", and Old English **hweo(wo)l**.

It is derived from the root \*k<sup>w</sup>el- 'turn', and it represents an instrument function, with a wheel being something by which turning is accomplished.

Important also in this discussion of reduplication in nouns is the fact that Hittite has some reduplicated result nouns other than **memal**, showing that reduplication such nouns is a more widespread phenomenon. These include, as illustrated in (13), **lila-** 'reconciliation', derived from the root of **la-** 'loosen', and thus with **lila-** as that which results from a loosening (of blame) (and compare also the denominal verb **lilai-** 'to propitiate'), and **lulu-** 'welfare, prosperity', perhaps derived from the root that shows up in Latin **luere** 'release from debt; atone for', with well-being as something that results from debtlessness and atonement (and compare also **luluwai-** 'to further; to thrive').

These nouns suggest that reduplication was available for result nouns, at least as a Hittite-internal formation. Perhaps even more telling, though, is the fact that there are several reduplicated nouns in a number of Indo-European languages that denote different types of grains. As noted in (14), these include Sanskrit **kiknasa-** 'particles of ground corn', most likely from a PIE root \*knes- 'scratch', an enlargement of \*ken-, as found in Greek **knev<sup>w</sup>ro** 'nettle'), and possibly **cikkasa-** 'barley meal', though its base root is uncertain; Greek **paipavlh** 'finest meal', with reduplicative variant **paspavlh**, and nonreduplicated form **pavlh**, all related within Greek to (and apparently derived from) **pavllw / paipavllw** 'quiver, shake', from a PIE root \*pel(H)- 'pour, flow, fill'; and Latin **furfur** 'bran', from a PIE root \*gher- 'rub' found in Lithuanian **gùrti** 'crumble', and in the initial part of English **grind**). It thus appears that reduplication can be reconstructed as part of the word-formation

process which gave rise to at least a restricted class of result nouns, i.e. those having to do with grains.

These facts when taken together lead to several conclusions, which are listed in (15). First, the evidence suggests that PIE had reduplication in at least some instrument nouns, witness **cakra-**, etc. Second, it can be concluded that PIE had reduplication in at least some result nouns, based on the rather striking convergence in the subclass of nouns for various types of grain or grain-related items. Third, as stated above, Hittite **memal** and Armenian **mamur** show result-noun formation, while Armenian **mamul** shows instrument-noun formation.

These conclusions allow for a further one, namely that reduplication can be taken to be an inherited feature in Armenian both of **mamur**, as an result noun, and of **mamul**, as an instrument noun, and thus need not be an Armenian innovation with these two nouns, as was suggested in Djahukian's account.

As far as the relation between Armenian **mamul** and Hittite **memal** is concerned, these two can be considered to form a word equation despite the difference in their function. Given availability of reduplication in both types of noun formation, i.e. both result and instrument nouns, it is possible, though admittedly not strictly provable, that both had same function originally and thus that either **memal** or **mamul** underwent a shift of meaning from one function to the other, attracted by the general class of such nouns; since there is a subgroup of reduplicated grain-words, it may well be, under such a scenario, that it is Hittite **memal** that shows the innovative shift to a grain-related result meaning.

It is useful as an aside at this point to recall the observation made by Mkrtychyan 1976 and discussed further by Greppin 1982 that there are several lexical matches to be found between Armenian and Hittite involving reduplication, both in nouns and in verbs. Among the more revealing examples of such parallels are the forms in (16):

(16) An Aside--A sampling of Hittite-Armenian parallels in reduplication (cf. Mkrtychyan 1976, Greppin 1982):

- a. Hitt. **katkatinu-** 'sprinkle' / Arm. **kat'kat'el** 'spray, sprinkle'
- b. Hitt. **galgalinai-** 'make a musical sound' / Arm. **gelgelank'** 'a trill'
- c. Hitt. **kurkurai-** 'maim, mutilate' / Arm. **k'rk'rem** 'destroy'
- d. Hitt. **kuskus-** 'pound, bruise' / Arm. **koskocem** 'destroy'.

Mkrtychyan has suggested that they constitute a shared areal (that is, possibly substratal) innovation "in the area common to both languages". While the question of prehistoric connections between Armenian and Hittite, or, more generally, Armenian and various languages of ancient Anatolia, is an enormous one that I cannot begin to cover here, perhaps now **mamul** and **memal** should be added to the list of parallels, especially if the hypothesis of a semantic shift with **memal** is accepted. This is clearly an area that requires a considerable amount of further research, but the view of reduplication in both Hittite and Armenian that I am proposing here certainly seems relevant to any future discussion of these intriguing parallels.

The one remaining question is that given in (17), namely how to motivate the appearance of reduplication in **mamur**, a noun which, to judge from the Balto-Slavic and Germanic cognates, no reduplication is expected. The answer, I suggest, lies in a phenomenon I refer to in (18)

as phonic attraction, i.e. phonetically-based analogy, often, but not always, involving rhyming words. Some examples from English are given in (19), in each case involving a variant pronunciation of one word in the direction of another word already present in the language which bears a phonic relation only to the word in question. For example, **memento** is pronounced by many speakers as [momEnto] instead of [mEmEnto], and the only basis for this innovative pronunciation appears to be the semantically and morphologically unrelated nouns **moment** and/or **momentum**. Similarly, **academia** is pronounced by many speakers as [ækədeymiə] instead of [ækədiymiə], and the basis for the innovative pronunciation is harder perhaps to figure out--it may be an overlay of a "Romance" pronunciation (**alla italiano**), though it is not clear why this word would be picked out for such a marker of Romance flavor, or it may be based on the near-rhyme with **macadamia**, despite the semantic and morphological distance. Finally, to choose a recent example, I have heard the first part of the last name of the United Nations Secretary General, **Javier (Perez de Cuellar)**, pronounced as [haviar] (instead of the correct Spanish [haviEr]), and I suspect that it may be based on **caviar** and on the perception of the name as foreign and thus needing a foreign-like pronunciation.

A particularly instructive case of phonic attraction involving a clustering and reshaping of words sharing only a phonetic connection among them comes from the realm of child language. As shown in (19), at the age of 3, my younger son made a generalization over three adult speech words that were phonically related in that all contained the syllable [-læs-]. Based on the first such word he learned, **molasses**, which he pronounced as [moæsls] (with what for him was the regular

suppression of syllable-initial [l]), he extended the initial [mo-] to the next two words he learned containing this syllable, pronouncing adult **elastic** as [moæstIk], and adult **lasso** as [moæsu].

I conjecture, therefore, that Armenian inherited reduplication in **mamul** and in **mamur** (which, though only attested as a modern dialectal word can nonetheless be taken to be an "old" word, only accidentally missing from the Classical Armenian lexicon and preserved only dialectally now) but not in the word for 'moss', which would at one time have been \***mur**. The phonic generalization of containing the syllable **-muR-**, where **R** stands for any liquid, or perhaps more generally **-muC-**, where **C** stands for any consonant, attracted \***mur** into the "orbit" of **mamul** and **mamur**, leading ultimately to the attested **mamur**.

This claim of phonic attraction in the development of **mamur** is admittedly hard to prove, but I feel that the phenomenon of phonic attraction in general is a real one, as the examples from English show. It may be that the additional Armenian words having the shape **mamuC-** shown in (2) and repeated in (20), namely Classical **mamux** 'sloe; wild plum' and modern dialectal **mamuk** 'spider' could test the claim of phonic attraction in the cluster of **mamul**, **mamur**, and **mamur**, but only if a suitable etymology can be found for each of these words deriving them from a nonreduplicated source and only if the appropriate generalization ranged over **-muR-** words and not **-muC-** words. This aspect, therefore, awaits further investigation.

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