

Gk. μαλλός 'fleece, lock of wool'

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Gk. *μαλλός* is a word without a clearly charted history; it seems confined to the Hellenic realm, and further correspondences within the Indo-European family are hard to come by. Frisk (*GEW*) makes a desultory reference to a suggestion by Fick (1872. 176) where Lith. *mīlas* 'rough home-made (woolen) clothe' is mentioned. Chantaine (*DELG*) is similarly dour, and chooses to dismiss Pokorny's suggestion (*IEW* 721) which is based on Fick¹).

Gk. *μαλλός* itself is not a very common word, though it does appear briefly in, among others, Hesiod, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and in Hesychius (*μάλλυκες* : *τρίχες*) as well. Its derivatives are few (*μαλλωτός*, *μαλλωτάριον*, *μάλλωσις*, *πηγεσίμαλλος*) and though they all clearly reinforce a meaning of 'wooly', they have quite narrow distributions. All of the Greek words, including *μαλλός* (< **mal-yos*), seem to be derived from the root **mal-*, from which developed the concept of both 'sheep' and 'wool', a development that is repeated elsewhere²).

It seems quite possible that an Armenian cognate can be suggested: Arm. *mal* 'male sheep, ram', which conforms agreeably to the phonetic and semantic requirements. The Armenian word is unusual in literature, and the only early location that can be immediately

¹) Fraenkel (*LEW*) reports some early etymological suggestions for Lith. *mīlas*, without supporting the accord (additionally with Lett. *mīls* and Pruss. *mīlan* 'garment') to an Indo-European base. Admittedly the Baltic etymology has serious difficulties, as noted in Hamp 1970a. 10. However, Hamp later (1975–76. 69–70) suggested that Welsh *blew* 'hair' stems from an IE **mles-wo-* which is in turn related to Gk. *μαλλός*. But for Hamp to make this etymology firm, it was necessary for him to argue for an idiosyncratic development of **-sw-* in Celtic, a development that one would not hurry to accept. Hamp's accord of Welsh *blew* with Gk. *μαλλός* is no stronger than the accord of Lith. *mīlas* etc. with Gk. *μαλλός*.

²) The shift from 'sheep' to 'wool', or for that matter, from 'wool' to 'sheep' is not unusual, and has abundant parallels. Compare Lat. *pecus* 'a single head of cattle, especially the sheep' (note Italian *pecora* 'sheep'), NPer. *pašm* 'wool'. The reverse is seen in Lat. *lana* 'wool', NIrish *lon* 'wether'. Dismissing the oft interconnected *GEW*, *DELG*, and *IEW*, we find no Armenianist has ever supported the comparison between Arm. *mal* and Gk. *μηλον* 'a small head of cattle; sheep, goat', IE **meEL-*. Certainly **meEL-* would not give Arm. *mal*, and it is doubtful (in spite of Hamp 1970) that IE **meEL-* would pass to Arm. *mal*; Arm. **mel* would be expected.

cited is in the *Grammatical Commentary* of Grigor Magistros (11th century)³). There the word appears in the following context⁴): "But for quadrupeds, we can be sure that our (language) has much more diversity (for the names) of male, female and neuter animals than Greek⁵). This is evidenced anywhere one looks: *arñ* ('he-lamb'), *xoy* ('ram'), *gonč'ak* ('ram'), *vidon* (= *vit* 'male antlered animal')⁶), *duar* (= *tawar* 'any of the large male horned animals such as a bull or a ram'), *mal* ('ram'). These males, which all appear in flocks, are precisely named; and there are others like them."

³) That Grigor Magistros knew well his Greek is clear from his historical contacts with Byzantium; it is also known that he was considerably familiar with the Greek version of Dionysius Thrax. In addition, his *Epistolary* suggests that he was preparing an Armenian translation of Plato. However, it is impossible that Arm. *mal* would be a Greek loan word. In the first place, Magistros would never knowingly have used a Greek loan word to demonstrate the superiority of Armenian over Greek; further, Greek *lambda* almost always appears in Armenian loans as a velar *l* (Greppin 1980).

The possibility of an Iranian loan must also be dismissed. Though Per. *māl* 'riches' (note the parallel Lat. *pecus* : *pecunia*) has the right phonetic shape, and though the *l* of later Iranian loan words at times appears in Armenian as *l* (rather than *l̥*), the semantic accord is not tight enough. All medieval Persian words coming into Armenian seem to be reflected without a significant semantic shift. And, that 'wealth' was the value in the early medieval Persian period can be seen from the following passage from the *Shah Nameh* (12th C.), C 6 236: *paragande šud māl ubargašt hal* 'he will scatter wealth and return love'. Per. *māl* could not be 'sheep'.

⁴) Adontz 1915. 239.16–21 (reprinted 1970 with Adontz's Russian commentary translated into French): Isk č'ork'otaneanc'd stugabar imac'eal emk' t'e (*sic*) meroys bałdatut'iwn ew nšanakut'iwn arakanac' ew igakanac' ew č'ezok'ac' (*sic*) yognagoyn ē k'an zyunac'n, zor ew yayt araric' est iwra k'anč'iwr əndunelut'ean: arñ, xoy, gonč'ak, vidon, duar, mal, aysok'ik arakank' i veray hawtic' asac'ealk' en nšanakut'eamb ew aylk' ayspisk', . . .

⁵) Magistros also drew extensive parallels with Arabic; for a discussion of which see Djahukian 1978. 277–279.

⁶) Malkhaseantz (1944–45), followed by Aghayan (1976), defines this unusual word as a 'gazelle', which is indeed possible. H. B. Webster, curator of mammals at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, has informed me that there are two species in the proper area, the Mountain Gazelle (*Gazella gazella*) and the Goitered Gazelle (*Gazelle subgutturos*). Additionally, the Persian Fallow Deer (*Dama dama*), now possibly extinct, was probably abundant until the desiccation of Anatolia following its deforestation, a process that continued up to the end of the first millennium AD.

In addition to the gazelle, Aghayan (*ibid*) also suggests that the *vidon* (*vit*) might have been a species of wild goat. This too is quite possible since the wild goat (*Capra aegagrus*) is considerably different than the well known domestic species, being much more dramatic in appearance.

However, the matter of the definition of Arm. *mal* is somewhat problematic, for in various creditable lexicons it is glossed as a 'wether, castrated sheep', and would thus be related to Arm. *malem* 'to crush, castrate', *malumn* 'castration', *maleal* 'castrated', a word of clear Indo-European provenance, cognate with Lat. *molo* 'crush, grind', Lith. *málti*, etc. If the present gloss of 'wether' is correct, then *mal* would not be semantically related to Gk. *μαλλός*. However, the textual evidence makes it quite clear that *mal* could not at first have been a wether. Instead, Arm. *mal*, because of its homophonic proximity to *malem* 'castrate', arrived at its current status through the force of folk etymology. However, the original unimpaired maleness of *mal* is made quite clear in the passage of Grigor Magistros where the three genders of animals are discussed: *arakan* ('male', under which falls *mal*), *igakan* ('female') and *č'ezok'* ('neuter'). Magistros takes a considerable interest in the gender labeling of animals, and his discussion continues for a few more pages following the quote given above. After he listed the male animals, he makes a list of some specifically female animals (1915. 241) such as *mak'i* 'ewe', *ayc* 'she-goat', and *t'alasmel* 'ewe'. In the next paragraph he listed those he considered 'neuter', and they include immature species such as the *k'urak* 'foal' and a large variety of gelded horses such as the *xešak* and *boč'oy*. It seems apparent that *mal* is part of the *arakan* division only, and that this division is entirely separate from *igakan* and *č'ezok'*. If *mal* were to be a 'wether' it would have appeared under the rubric *č'ezok'*, which it does not.

Because of Magistros' clear gender classifications, we can be sure that our current gloss of 'wether' is historically inaccurate, and reflects the ravages of folk etymology. Adjarian (1926) also seems to have been suspicious of the word, for in his discussion of the Armenian stem *mal-* 'crush', he does not include the animal *mal*. The implication is that Adjarian read Magistros closely, and realized that the standard gloss had to be incorrect; *mal* was unrelated to *malem* 'crush'⁷).

The parallel of *μαλλός* and *mal* has further significance, for it is another of those instances where Greek and Armenian share unique isoglosses, without further Indo-European parallels. The examples of Gk. *ἡμαρ* Arm. *awr* 'day', Gk. *πρωκτός* Arm. *erastank'* 'buttocks', Gk. *κίων* Arm. *siun* 'pillar', Gk. *λάρος* Arm. *lor* 'gull' (Greppin 1978.

⁷) The word is further ignored by Tumanjan (1978) in her immensely thorough study of Armenian nouns of Indo-European origin.

82) are among the many that Solta listed (1960. 409, 416, 430, 421). And sometimes the range is expanded; for Arm. *անայրիկ* 'dream', we have cognates of Gk. *ὄναρ* and Alb. *ëndërr* (Tosk), *andërr* (Geg) 'id.', again words whose narrow distribution implies that the origin might have been 'Balkan' or, in an extended sense 'Aegean'⁸). G. B. Djahukian has recently written on the proximity of Greek and Armenian. In his study (1980) of the parallels between the Greek and Armenian lexicons he notes (from his data) a total of 812 correspondences, a number that exceeds those he assigns to Sanskrit and Armenian by 149 items; for his classification of 'most important (lexical) isoglosses' he lists 56 with Greek against 39 for Sanskrit. Overall, the correspondences of Armenian with Greek on the lexical, grammatical and phonetic level are striking in number, and usually exceed those which can be found between Armenian and any other language. These statistics are particularly important, for they show in a rather clear fashion that, at an early date, proto-Greek and proto-Armenian must have had a certain degree of rather intimate contact⁹).

A further correspondence can be made with Linear B *ma-ri-ne-u*. In *Nestor* 6.2 (Feb. 1979). 1338–39, L. R. Palmer briefly suggested that the newly discovered Mycenaean god name *ma-ri-ne-u* (Spyropoulos 1975. 98, 102; Godart 1978. 23, 31) might be normalized as *Mallineus* 'god of woolens', and be viewed as a precursor of Gk. *μαλλός* 'fleece'. Duly acknowledging the hazards of presenting etymologies for proper names, Palmer shores up his argument carefully, noting that the contexts seem quite clearly to involve wool and the manufacture of woolen products. His suggestion seems appropriate and we can include Linear B *ma-ri-ne-u* with Arm. *mal*, Gk. *μαλλός*.

More discussion of *ma-ri-ne-u* has followed; in *Nestor* 6.9 (Dec. 1979). 1408, Billigmeier suggested that *ma-ri-ne-u* was connected to a Linear B ideogram for wool. The sign (145 LANA) appears to be a ligature of MA+RO or MA+RE, and Billigmeier's suggestion seems at first blush to have some appeal. However, as

⁸) Van Windekens (1963) has suggested a Uralic origin for this isogloss, noting among others, Finn. *uni* 'sleep'.

⁹) Djahukian's argument is not unique, though it is the most thorough approach to date. The thought that Armenian might be removed from the satem group was advanced by Pedersen (1909. 336ff.) who acknowledged special rapport with Greek. This idea has surfaced from time to time since then, most recently in Greppin 1978a.

Billigmeier says, this idea had been noted before, and rejected flatly by Bennett (1972. 56–60) who pointed out that in no known instance does the ideogram 145 LANA replace, in the same or similar text, the word formed from its constituent parts (MA + Rv), and that elsewhere LANA functions like an ordinary ideogram rather than a syllabic monogram. Yet Packard has noted another coincidence (1974. 60), pointing out that Linear A Lc 46 (MA + RU) “brings to bear the Linear B ligature for wool”. This, Billigmeier reasons, might be sufficient cause to reopen the case for 145 LANA being a semantic monogram MA + Rv which is related to Gk. *μαλλός* and then, since the Greek word is non-Indo-European, a part of an expanded Aegean substratum which would include Linear A Lc 46.

This is indeed scholarship that hangs on by its fingernails. However, the appearance of the Armenian parallel *mal*, a word from a language which has a curious rapport with proto-Greek, lends further support to the Aegean basis for this word, and might bring further sustenance to the notion that some Linear A concepts are continued directly into Linear B.

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