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Verba vana? *A note on Arm. zowr ‘vain’ and zroyc‘ ‘talk’*

ABSTRACT: It is argued that Arm. *zowr* ‘vain’ is the derivational basis of *zroyc* ‘talk’ with a semantic shift from ‘idle talk’ to ‘talk’. *-oyc* ‘ may be a case-form of a decasuative derivative of the underlying nominal *zowr*, i.e., **zroy* → **zroyk*‘, *zroyc*‘.

KEYWORDS: Classical Armenian, Verba dicendi, Decasuative, Word Formation, Historical Semantics

1. The Armenian adjective and adverb *zowr* is glossed in the Venice dictionary (*NBHL*) as ‘ἄδικος injustus δωρεάν gratis’ and ‘κενώς, εἰς κενόν inaniter, in vanum, frustra δωρεάν gratis ἀδίκως, ἀκρίτως injuste, inique’. It is usually taken to be a loanword from Iranian, cf. MP *zwl* ‘false, deceitful’, MParth. *zwr* ‘deceit, falsehood; deceitful, false; vain, in vain’, Av. *zūrah-* n. ‘injustice; deceit’.¹ The noun *zroyc* ‘(-a-) ‘διήγημα, λάλημα, λόγος, ῥῆμα historia, narratio, verbum, sermo’ (*NBHL*) has not found an explanation so far, together with the denominal verb *zrowc* ‘em ‘to tell, report’ it is listed in Olsen (1999: 959) among the words of unknown origin. After a look at the usage of *zowr/i zowr* (2) options regarding the semantic connection with *zroyc*‘ (3) and the origin of the suffix *-oyc*‘ and the derivational relationship between *zowr* and *zroyc*‘ will be discussed (4).

2. The semantic spectrum of *zowr* ranges from ‘idle, vain’ to ‘deceit, lie’ continuing the polysemy of its Iranian ancestor, cf.

* Many thanks to P. Kocharov (Würzburg) for helpful discussions.

1. Cf. Olsen (1999: 881) for further etymological considerations.

‘(in) vain’:

- (1) Eznik §5 *owsti ew linic ‘i noc ‘a zčšmaritn owsanel, ew mez oč ‘i zowr inč ‘zbans caxel*
 ‘Whence also they will come to learn the truth, and that we do not use words
vainly.’ (Blanchard, Young 1998)
- (2) §132 *ew i zowr ē kál káln asel owmek ‘i kals ‘ew oč ‘ár ár :*
 ‘And it is *useless* to say “Hold! Hold!” to any on the threshing-floors, and not
 “Take! Take!”’ (Blanchard, Young 1998)

‘false, lying’:

- (3) §329 *ew et ‘ē mštnjenakic ‘ic ‘ē, orpēs asenn ‘t ‘ē orpēs stower irik ‘oč ‘erbēk ‘*
heřanay yimek ‘ēn ‘noynpēs ew oč ‘ašxarhs erbēk ‘zat yAstowcoy, t ‘ē aynpēs
ic ‘ē, zowr ē aseln ‘t ‘ē ararac elcaneli ē ašxarhs
 ‘Et, à le supposer coéternel — étant donné ce qu’ils disent formellement, que,
 en la façon où l’ombre de quelque chose jamais ne s’éloigne de cette chose, de
 la même façon, lui non plus ce monde-ci, jamais n’(est) séparé de Dieu — à
 supposer qu’il en soit ainsi, c’est *mentir* que de dire que créature périssable est
 ce monde-ci.’ (Mariès, Mercier 1959)²

The same is seen in compounds like *zr-a-dat* (Agat‘angelos, Bowzandaran Patmowt‘iwnk‘) ‘that judges uselessly; false, untrue; *adv.* falsely, wrongfully’ (Bedrossian), *zr-a-ban* (Movsēs Xorenac‘i 3.68) ‘that speaks uselessly or unjustly; great talker, chatterer, accuser’ (id.), and the Biblical adjective *zr-a-xōs* ‘ματαιολόγος, κενολογῶν’ (Is. 8:19; Tit. 1:10; cf. Olsen 1999: 698). Since ‘lie’ is a type of utterance and *zowr* often co-occurs with *verba dicendi*, one may hypothesize that a verbal derivative of *zowr*, i.e., **zrem*, could mean ‘tell lies, speak vainly’. From this in turn a deverbal noun *zroyc* ‘could be derived meaning ‘lies, idle talk’ originally. However, since comparable forms like *mecar-oy* ‘venerable’ seem to rely on the synchronic root morpheme (contrast the PRS stem *mecare-*, AOR stem *mecare(a)c-*, cf. the discussion in 4), a denominal derivation may also be possible. Hence, there are two questions to be discussed: the shift in meaning from ‘lies, idle talk’ to ‘story, tale, report’ (3) and the derivational relation between *zowr*, the supposed verb **zrem* and/or verbal noun **zowr* and *zroyc* (4).

3. The semantic shift from ‘to talk vainly’ > ‘to talk’ may be illustrated by a number of examples: In Classical Greek λαλέω means ‘to chatter’ etc., sometimes used in direct opposition to λέγω ‘to say something meaningful’ or ‘to speak in public, orate’, cf.

2. Cf. Blanchard, Young 1998: ‘And if it is co-eternal, as they say, just as the shadow of something never deviates from that thing, in the same way too this earth never is divided from God. If such is the case, saying that this earth is a creature and corruptible is a *depravity*’.

- (4) Ar. *Ec.* 1058 ἔπου, μαλακίων, δεῦρ' ἀνύσας καὶ μὴ **λάλει**.
 'Come along, you sissy. This way. Make it snappy, and no *back talk*.'
 (Henderson)³
 'Follow me, my handsome little friend, come along quickly without any more
ado.' (O'Neill 1938)
- (5) Eup. 95 (Plutarch *Alcibiades* 13.2) **λαλεῖν** ἄριστος, ἀδυνατώτατος **λέγειν**
 '[Phaeax is] very good at *chattering*, but totally incapable of *speaking*.'
 'A prince of *talkers*, but in *speaking* most incapable.' (Perrin)

In later authors, λαλῶ has acquired the more general meaning 'to speak', used, e.g., by Aristotle to denote the human faculty of speech, and 'to talk to s.o.' without the connotation of 'idle talk', e.g., in the New Testament:

- (6) Arist. *Pr.* 899a1 **λαλεῖ** γὰρ οὐθὲν τῶν ἄλλων ζώων πλὴν ἀνθρώπου, καὶ οὗτοι δὲ ὀψέ ποτε, καθάπερ εἴρηται.
 'For none of the animals except the human *speaks*, and he does so only after some time, as we have said.' (Mayhew)
- (7) Matth. 12:46 Ἐτι αὐτοῦ **λαλοῦντος** τοῖς ὄχλοις ἰδοὺ ἡ μήτηρ καὶ οἱ ἀδελφοὶ αὐτοῦ εἰστήκεισαν ἔξω ζητοῦντες αὐτῷ **λαλήσαι**.
 'While he was still *speaking* to the crowds, his mother and his brethren appeared. They were standing outside, wishing to *speak* with him.'

From current Standard German one may cite the verb *schwätzen/schwätzen* 'to talk vainly' and its agent noun *Schwätzer* 'prater, gossip'; in contrast to this, in the Palatian and Allemanic dialects of South Western Germany *schwätze* is polysemous meaning both neutral 'to talk, speak' and 'to talk idly', cf. from the *Pfälzisches Wörterbuch* s.v. *schwätzen*:

- (8) 'berichtend reden, sprechen, sich unterhalten', durchaus ohne negative Wertung ('to report, to speak, to converse' without any negative connotation):
Musch härter schwätze, Bub, ich verstenn dich sunscht nit! [IB-Ensh (Glass 113)].
 'You must *speak up*, boy, otherwise I cannot understand you.'
- (9) 'viel, unbedacht, zur unrechten Zeit, sinnlos, dumm reden; plappern, schwätzen, ausplaudern':

3. Unless indicated otherwise, translations of Greek authors are taken from the *Loeb*-series, Bible translations in double quotation marks from the *NCB*.

(‘talk a lot, carelessly, at the wrong time, senselessly, stupidly; babble, gossip, blabber out’)

Dau schwätscht, mer nennt, deer hätt's en de Kopp geräänt [WD-Niedkch].
‘You speak as if it had rained into your head.’⁴

In Latin, the verbs derived from *fabula* ‘story, news, talk’ and the Greek loanword *parabola* ‘simile, story’ have both become verbs meaning ‘to speak’ in a number of Romance languages, i.e., *fabulari/e* ‘to tell stories’ > Span. *hablar*, Port. *falar*, and *parabolare* ‘to tell stories’ > Fr. *parler*, Ital. *parlare*. The former is used in the more general sense already in pre-Classical Latin, e.g.

(10) Plaut. *Am.* 300 *clare aduorsum fabulabor*, <ut> *hic auscultet quae loquar*
‘I’ll speak loudly in his direction so he can hear what I’m saying.’ (de Melo)

(11) Titin. *Tog.* 1.104 *qui Obsce et Volsce fabulantur nam Latine nesciunt*.
‘those who speak Oscan and Volscan, since they do not know Latin.’

A comparable development is usually assumed for NE *to talk*, too, if this derives from *tale* (cf. *OED* s.v. *talk*), cf. East Frisian *talken* ‘to talk, chatter, prattle, speak quietly, whisper’ (cf. ten Doornkaat Koolman 1883: 390).

In all these cases, the base noun is ambiguous as to the reliability of the source of the information conveyed, i.e., it refers to the ‘talk of the town’, ‘hearsay’, ‘fiction’ etc. The semantic generalization from ‘to talk vainly’, ‘to tell tales, convey unwarranted information’ etc. may be subsumed under a more general tendency of semantic bleaching in verbs of speaking deriving from verbs referring to more concrete situations, e.g., OHG *kōsōn* ‘to speak, talk, tell’ (> NHG *kosen* ‘to caress’) from Lat. *causari* ‘to plead, dispute concerning a subject; give a reason for s.th.’ from *causa* ‘reason; matter discussed, lawsuit, etc.’

Armenian *zroyc* ‘seems to fit into this type of polysemy and semantic shift. A case in which its derivative *zrowc* ‘em may be understood to mean ‘to talk vainly’ is the following:

(12) Sir. 11:8 *Zirs or oĉ' gites` mi zrowc'er, ew i mēj banic` mi ankanir:*
LXX: πρὶν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι μὴ ἀποκρίνῃς καὶ ἐν μέσῳ λόγων μὴ παρεμβάλλῃς.
‘Do not talk (vainly) about things you do not know, and do not interrupt others while they are talking.’⁵

4. ‘schwätzen, schw.’, *Pfälzisches Wörterbuch*, digitized version at *Wörterbuchnetz*, Trier Center for Digital Humanities, version 01/23, <<https://www.woerterbuchnetz.de/PfWB?lemid=S06276>>, accessed 16.02.2023.

5. The text is different in the edition of Bagratowni (1878: 44): *Minĉ' ĉ'ew loweal ic'ē, mi tar patasxani. ew and mēj banic` mi ankanir:* ‘Do not answer before you have listened; and do not interrupt others in

At the same time, this could be a “bridging context” for the more general meaning ‘to talk’, since the negation effaces the difference between these two interpretations: since ‘to talk’ in this context can only mean ‘to talk vainly’, it is recommendable not to talk at all.

Noteworthy is also the complex phrase *zroyc’ arnem* in Zecharia 11:12 which may reflect an earlier meaning of *zroyc’* ‘state of being invalid, nil’: the phrase seems to mean something like ‘to make s.th. be *zowr*, nullify’:

- (13) Zecharia 11:12 *Ew asac’ i c’ nosa. T’ ē barwok’ t’ owi yač’ s’ jer’ towk’ zvarjs im. apa t’ ē oč’ zroyc’ ararēk’*: *Ew kšrec’ in zvarjs im eresown arcat’ i*:
 ‘I said to them, “If it seems right to you, give me my wages; if not, then *forget about it*.” Then they weighed out my wages, thirty pieces of silver.’
 (LXX: ἀπείπασθε; Hebrew Bible: יָלַן *h^ad’ālū* from לָן ‘cease’)⁶

In other instances, *zroyc’* refers to reports about events located far away in space or time, e.g., on the pasture (14) or the battlefield (15). Hence, a *zroyc’* cannot be verified immediately when it is given and involves a degree of uncertainty, whence the meaning ‘fame, rumour, news’ (16):

- (14) Gen. 37:14 *Asē c’ na Israyēl. Ert’ tes et’ ē o’ l’ j’ ic’ en elbark’ n k’ o ew xašink’ , ew ber inj zroyc’*:
 LXX: εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ Ἰσραηλ· Πορευθεὶς ἰδὲ εἰ ὑγαίνουσιν οἱ ἀδελφοί σου καὶ τὰ πρόβατα, καὶ ἀνάγγειλόν μοι
 ‘He said, “Go to see how things are going for your brothers and the animals, then return and *tell me*.”’
- (15) 2 Samuel 1:4 *Ew asē c’ na Dawit’ . Zi’ nč’ zroyc’ ē, patmea inj: Ew asē. P’ axeaw žolowowrdn i paterazmēn, ew ankan bazowmk’ i žolowrdenēn ew me’an.*
 LXX: καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Δαυὶδ· Τίς ὁ λόγος οὗτος; ἀπάγγειλόν μοι. καὶ εἶπεν ὅτι Ἔφυγεν ὁ λαὸς ἐκ τοῦ πολέμου, καὶ πεπτώκασι πολλοὶ ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἀπέθανον.
 ‘David then inquired: “What *has happened* there? Tell me!” The man answered: “The soldiers fled from the battle, but many of them fell and died.”’

- (16) Luke 7:17 *Ew el zroyc’ s’ ays and amenayn hreastan vasn nora*
 καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ὁ λόγος οὗτος ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ περὶ αὐτοῦ
 ‘The *news* of what he had done spread throughout Judea.’

the midst of their discourse.’; cf. the Latin Vulgate: *priusquam audias ne respondeas verbum et in medio sermonum ne adicias loqui*.

6. Along the line of argument proposed by Kocharov (2024) the causatives in *-owc’ anem* may derive from such phrases with nouns in *-oyc’* and the predicate *arnem* ‘to make’, be it via ellipsis of the predicate and reanalysis of *-oyc’* as inflected verb, or via conversion of the complex phrase into a simple predicate, i.e., *-oyc’ arnem* ‘to make x’ → *-owc’ anem* ‘to x’, cf. pairs like *zanc’ arnem* : *zanc’ anem* ‘to pass’.

Zroyc ‘ may refer to stories about events of the (mythical) past:

- (17)MX 1.6 *Ew aysok ‘ik zroyc ‘k ‘ sowt ew kam t ‘ē ardarew leal ‘ mez č ‘ē inč ‘ p ‘oyt ‘:*
 ‘Si de tels *récits* son faux ou correspondent à des faits réels, nous ne nous en soucions guère.’ (Mahé, Mahé 1993)

In Movsēs Xorenac ‘i’s view, such unwritten stories of the past – cf. again the Latin *fabulae* – can (and need to be) supported by written evidence:

- (18)1.10 *Ays ardarac ‘owc ‘anē zangir hin asac ‘eal zroyc ‘s ... Ardarac ‘owc ‘anē ew ays zasac ‘eal zroyc ‘s angir:*
 ‘Cela aussi justifie les *récits* non écrits (d’autrefois) dont nous avons parlé. ... Cela aussi justifie les *récits* non écrits.’ (cf. 1.6, ex. 17).

- (19)2.74 *Ew ast asem zroyc ‘ zsk ‘anč ‘eli ceroyñ or asē, et ‘ē ...*
 ‘Je vais dire ici une *histoire* racontée par le prodigieux vieillard. Il disait: ...’⁷

Hence, *zrowc ‘em* also means ‘to tell tales, fables’:

- (20)MX 1.6 *Patmec ‘ic ‘ jez, asē . ew zroyc ‘s angirs yawandowt ‘enē i mez haseal, zors ew bazowmk ‘ i geljkac ‘ zrowc ‘en minč ‘ew c ‘ayžm:*
 ‘Je vais vous raconter des *récits* non écrits, qui nous sont parvenus par tradition et que bien des villageois *racontent* encore aujourd’hui.’ (Mahé, Mahé 1993)

Zroyc ‘ may thus be understood as ‘talk not backed up by further evidence, unverified report’, similar to the Lat. *fabula* and *parabola*. This makes a connection with *zowr* ‘vain, idle’ possible.

4. The origin of the nouns in *-oyc* ‘ is unclear. Kocharov (2024) argues for a relationship between such formations and the causative suffix PRS *-owc ‘anem*, AOR 3SG *-oyc* ‘ which he takes to be the nominal form in *-oyc* ‘ co-occurring with a form of *arñem* ‘to do, make’ (cf. *zroyc ‘ arñem* in 2) in a periphrastic causative construction in which by ellipsis of the predicate the nominal form in *-oyc* ‘ was reinterpreted as the inflected verb. There is, in fact, a strong correlation between causative verbs and forms in *-oyc* ‘ functioning as their, probably back-formed, verbal nouns, e.g.,

7. Cf. Mahé, Mahé (1993: 374): «Probablement le catholicos saint Sahak le Parthe, dont Moïse se dit l’élève et dont la famille aurait conservé des traditions orales concernant la naissance de leur grand ancêtre, saint Grigor l’Illuminateur».

- (21) *hatowc'anem* 'to (make) return, pay' : *varj-a-hatoyc'* 'remunerating, μισθαποδότης'
kec'owc'anem 'to vivify, save' : *amen-a-kec'oyc'* 'all-saving' etc.

However, beside *zroyc'* there are some more nouns which for formal and/or semantic reasons are better not interpreted as derived from a corresponding causative verb and which are therefore likely to reflect an independent derivational process. These forms appear to be based on the aorist stem or the synchronic root morpheme, cf.

- (22) *ankanem* 'to weave' (AOR 3SG *ank*) → *hangoyc'* 'knot' (Bowz. 5.38 *hangoyc'k'*)⁸

NB There is no causative **ankowc'anem*.

ya'rnem (AOR *yar-i-*, 3SG *yareaw*) 'to rise' → *vala-yaroyc'* 'getting up early' (1 Ki 29:10), not 'making s.b. rise early'.

hangč'im 'to rest' (AOR *hang-i-*, 3SG *hangeaw*) → *hangoyc'* 'station' (MX 2.46)⁹

While there is a causative *hangowc'anem* 'to make rest', *hangoyc'* is probably simply 'place where one rests' rather than 'place that makes s.o. rest'.

If this derivational model obtained also in the case of *zroyc'*, one might postulate a chain from *zowr* 'idle, vain' via a denominal verb **zrem* 'to talk vainly' to *zroyc'* '(vain) talk'. However, as noted, the productive pattern for nouns in *-oyc'* appears to be the one based on the corresponding aorist stem, from which the causatives are derived, too, cf. also cases like *keam* 'to live' : AOR 1SG *kec'i* : CAUS *kec'owc'anem* 'to save' : *amen-a-kec'oyc'* 'all-saving', hence one might rather expect a pair like AOR **zrec'-* : **zrec'oyc'*. Alternatively, *zroyc'* might be taken to derive from a verbal noun **zowr* 'idle, vain talk', formally identical to the adjective *zowr*. In this case, the derivational chain would be adj. *zowr* → **zrem* → verbal noun **zowr* → *zroyc'*. The formal ambiguity of *zowr* would fit into the productive pattern of the synchronically

8. With secondary *h-* in contrast e.g. to *ankowac** 'weaving' (cf. Olsen 1999: 544), which could go back to the prefix *y-* 'in(to)' (**yangoyc'*), and with voicing in the cluster *-nk-* as in *c'ank/c'ang* 'fence, wall', adv. 'forever', *t'ank/t'ang* 'precious, dear', etc. The etymology of *ankanem* is unclear, one might consider a connection with Gk. ἄρτομαι, διάζομαι 'to (start to) weave': from a root **h₂eng^(w)-* a present **h₂gg^(w)-je/o-* might have resulted in Gk. **anzde/o-* with loss of the nasal as e.g. in σύ-ζυξ < */sun-zduks/, or in **azde/o-* if one assumes that Rix' Law does not operate before nasals (cf. Nikolaev 2005, Nikolaev 2007), a root aorist **h₂eng^(w)-t* etc. in Arm. *ank-* to which a secondary nasal present was built. However, this would require the assumption that ἄρτομαι is an analogical form following other verbs showing the variation of *-zd-* and *-tt-* such as ἀρμόττω/ἀρμόζω 'to fit together' and πλάττω/πλάσσω : Tarent. πλάζω 'to form' (usually, the opposite direction has been assumed), and ἄρτομαι might also be connected with Hitt. *hatt-* 'to pierce', PIE **h₂et-*, prs. **h₂(e)t-je/o-* > ἄττε/o-, cf. Beekes (2010: 167), Ziegler (2014).

9. *Hangč'im* may go back to **sm-k^hih₁-ske/o-*, from PIE **k^hieh₁-* '(come to) rest', cf. Lat. *quiēscō*, LIV² 393.

bidirectional derivation of verbs and verbal nouns/adjectives such as *sowrb* ‘clean, holy’ → *srbem* ‘to cleanse’, but *gorc* ‘work’ ↔ *gorcem* ‘to work’,¹⁰ and surely secondary *owmp* ‘drink (n.)’ derived from *ampem* ‘to drink’.¹¹ The verbal noun **zowr* may be attested in the prepositional phrase *i zowr* ‘in vain’ seen above.

It is hypothesized further that the forms in *-oyc* ‘may be compared with the derivation seen in *amōt’oyk* ‘pudenda, things to be ashamed of’ (1 Cor 12:23 τὰ ἄσχήμωνα). This noun is usually interpreted as a hypostasis of a final dative of *amōt* ‘(-o-) ‘shame’, cf. Olsen (1999: 512): «*Amōt’oyk* [is best explained from] a hypostatical use of the synchronic dat. sg. in the function of a final dative ‘something to be ashamed of’», cf. the similar interpretation implicit in the glossing of the *NBHL*: ‘τὰ τῆς ἄσχημοσύνης, *quae sunt pudoris*’. Further instances of this type can be seen at least in the following two cases: (a) *mecaroy* ‘venerable’ (Bible 3x) from a virtual noun **mecar* ‘(-o-) ‘worship, praise’ beside *mecarem* ‘to praise, venerate’:¹²

- (23) Ex. 11:3 *ayrn Movsēs mecaroy elew yoyž araji Egiptac’woc’n ew araji p’arawoni*
 ὁ ἄνθρωπος Μωϋσῆς μέγας ἐγενήθη σφόδρα ἐναντίον τῶν Αἰγυπτίων καὶ ἐναντίον Φαραῶ
 ‘Moses, too, was a man who was *highly regarded* in the land of Egypt, both by Pharaoh and by the people.’ < ‘he became one (considered worthy) of/for veneration > venerable ...’

- (24) Ps. 138:17 *Inj yoyž mecaroy elen barekamk’ k’o, Astowac.*
 ἔμοι δὲ λίαν ἐτιμήθησαν οἱ φίλοι σου, ὁ θεός
 ‘How *precious* to me are your beloved ones, O God!’

- (25) Prov. 6:8 *c’ankali ē amenec’own ew mecaroy*
 ποθεινὴ δὲ ἐστὶν πᾶσιν καὶ ἐπίδοξος
 ‘She [sc. the bee] is desired and *respected* by all.’

10. Both a derivation from an iterative **uorg-eje/o-* and from a CoC-o-noun have been suggested. Cf. Olsen (1999: 440): *gorc* is «a reshaping of **uergom* after the verb **uorgeje- > gorcem*», p. 13: «the radical o-grade of *gorc* must be considered secondary, preferably a formation of the once productive **b^hōros-* type».

11. Further instances of back-formed nouns built to verbs with a “weak” aorist seem to be, e.g., *govem*, *-ec’i* ‘to praise’ borrowed from Iranian (cf. OP *gaubatai* ‘declares’, MP *gō(w)-, guftan* ‘to speak’) : *gov* ‘praise’ (6th c.+), cf. Martirosyan (2010: 226); *baxem*, *-ec’i* ‘to knock’ : *bax* (Socrates, 7th c.), cf. Martirosyan (2010: 164); *ačem*, *-ec’i* ‘to grow’: *ač* Ganjaran (dating unknown), Geoponica (12th c.), Mxit’ar Gosh (12th c.), etc.

12. Maybe a compound ‘make great’ similar to Lat. *magnifico*, **mec-ar-* with the root of *arñem* ‘to make’ as second member, although one would rather expect *mec-arar-*, cf. other compounds such as *xalat-arar* ‘peacemaker’, *kendan-arar* ‘making alive’, *barerar* < **bari-arar* ‘doing good’, etc., cf. Olsen (1999: 341–342); or based on a stem in *-r-* **megh₂-r-* (on the possible relation with Gk. *μεγαίρω* cf. sceptically Clackson 1994: 149–150).

(b) The suffix *-acoy*, secondarily inflecting as an *i*-stem, GEN *-acowi* (cf. Olsen 1999: 239–240), reflects final datives of action nouns in *-ac*:

- (26) *kop* 'acoy 'cut, sculptured' < *'for cutting' (Bible 10x)
k'racoy 'hammered, forged' (Bible 8x)
*k'eracoy** 'polished' (1x Lev. 14:42)
jowlacoy 'molten; molten image' (Bible 31x; cf. e.g. 2 Chron. 34:3
jowlacoyic 'n '(he cleansed Judah and Jerusalem from) the molten images',
 LXX: 'ἀπὸ τῶν χυλευτῶν')

More generally, derivation based on case forms of nouns, which as an intermediate step may have developed into adverbs, is not infrequent in Armenian, cf. further *ir* 'thing': INSTR > ADV *iraw* 'indeed': (y)*iraw-i* 'truly, justly', *iraw-ac* 'i 'just, right(eous)' (Olsen 1999: 345, 351), *iraw-ownk* 'right, justice' (Olsen 1999: 614) and *erek* 'evening' > *erekoy* (-i-) 'id.', probably originally a temporal genitive, or a *yo*-adjective built to the *s*-stem like Av. *raočah-* 'light': adj. *raočahii-* (cf. Olsen 1999: 512): adj. *erekoyi* and *erekoyin*.

If we can assume an early GEN/DAT/ABL PL in *-c*', the forms in *-oy-c*' could be hypostasized forms based on the dative of the verbal noun in *-oy* 'for x-ing' → NOM *-oy-k*' 'things for x-ing', GEN/DAT/ABL *-oy-c*' 'of/for the things for x-ing'. One might expect such nouns to inflect as *i*-stems like those in *-acoy*, i.e., NOM *-oy-k'*: OBL **-oy-ic*', not **-oyc*'. However, the ending *-c*' was still present in the classical language in a number of forms which may have served as analogical models, although they are not productive inflexional patterns, but isolated, synchronically irregular words. These are four kinship-terms and the word for 'day'. In all of them, the stem of the NOM and the GEN/DAT/ABL PL are identical:

<i>hayr</i> 'father'	<i>har-k</i> '	<i>har-c</i> '
<i>mayr</i> 'mother'	<i>mar-k</i> '	<i>mar-c</i> '
<i>elbayr</i> 'mother'	<i>elbar-k</i> '	<i>elbar-c</i> '
<i>now</i> 'daughter-in-law'	<i>nowan-k</i> ' (/nowk')	<i>nowan-c</i> ' (/nowac')
<i>awr</i> 'day'	<i>awowr-k</i> '	<i>awowr-c</i> '
-oy	-oy-k'	x = -oy-c'

If such forms in *-oyc*' are originally oblique case forms of hypostatic nouns in *-oy-k*', they may have been reinterpreted as suffix formations in contexts where the GEN/DAT/ABL could be understood as a NOM form, e.g. in partitive function (27–29) or as an object genitive (30):

- (27) 1 Kings 29:10 *ew valayaroyc' linic 'ik' i čanaparh ew lowsasc 'i jez ew gnasjik'*:
 LXX: καὶ ὀρθρίσατε ἐν τῇ ὀδῷ, καὶ φορτίσατω ὑμῖν, καὶ πορεύθητε
 'Start early in the morning, and leave as soon as you have light.' < *'Be of those who rise early in the morning/Belong to those who ...'

- (28) 1 Thess. 4:9 *dowk' ink'nin isk astowacowsoyc'k' ēk' ar i zmimeans sireloy:*
 αὐτοὶ γὰρ ὑμεῖς θεοδίδακτοὶ ἐστε εἰς τὸ ἀγαπᾶν ἀλλήλους
 'You yourselves have been *taught* by God to love one another.' < *'you belong
 to those who have been taught ...'
- (29) Bowz. 5.28 *Ew zays alawt's matowc'anēr ērēc'n yaraĵ k'an zmatowc'aneln
 pataragin, ew yet aysorik matoyc' katareac' zpataragamatoyc'n zamenayn:*
 'The priest offered this prayer before the offering of the sacrifice, and after this
 he completed the offering of the entire *sacrifice of the liturgy*.' (Garsoian 1989:
 209) < *'all of the things fit for sacrifice'
- (30) Agat'. §16 *k'aroz gteal ardarowsoyc'*
 'He was found to be/became a preacher *teaching justice*.' <
 *'a preacher of the things belonging to the teaching of justice'

An analogous explanation has been given for the “gerundive” in *-oc'* which may go back to the GEN PL of the substantivized infinitive, meaning roughly ‘of those for *x-ing*’ originally, e.g.

- (31) Lev 14:17 *i veray blt'aki aĵoy ownkan aynorik or srbeloc'n ic'ē*
 LXX: ἐπὶ τὸν λοβὸν τοῦ ὠτὸς τοῦ καθαριζομένου τοῦ δεξιῶ
 '(The priest shall put the rest of the oil) onto the tip of the right ear of the one
 who is being / to be cleansed.'

may go back to a construction meaning ‘...of the one who belongs to those to be cleansed’. This seems to explain why forms in *-oc'* do not show further inflexion and are used predicatively throughout, cf. Olsen (1999: 396 fn. 408). The explanation proffered here for the forms in *-oyc'* requires the further assumption that, as in *amōt'oyk'*, nouns with oblique case marking can be hypostasized and in turn be inflected.

5 Summary: Various examples of a semantic shift from ‘idle, vain talk’ to ‘talk’ make a derivation of Arm. *zroyc'* ‘tale, talk, report’ from the adjective/adverb *zowr* ‘idle, vain, deceitful’ via an intermediate verb **zrem* and its verbal noun **zowr* a possible explanation. The origin of the suffix *-oyc'* is uncertain, but cases of hypostasis such as *amōt'oy-k'* may allow the hypothesis of a similar basis for the forms in *-oyc'* as original oblique cases. If **zrem* meant ‘*fabulor*, tell tales, give a report’, the hypostasized final dative of the corresponding verbal noun could have meant ‘things for/worth telling, *fabulanda*’, whence *zroyc'* *‘of/belonging to/for the *fabulanda*’ whence ‘tale, report’.

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