

Review of Valerija Ivanova, “The development of Proto-Indo-European *y in Armenian”
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This thesis examines the fate of the Proto-Indo-European palatal glide *y in Classical Armenian, a problem of historical phonology on which there is widespread disagreement on virtually all points, owing (as the author rightly notes) to the paucity of inherited lexical items with a clear morphological prehistory. After a brief introduction, chapters 2-6 treat in turn the development of *y in clusters with a preceding dental or velar stop, in clusters with a preceding labial, cases in which sonorant + *y clusters lead to y-epenthesis, cases in which *y > j in said clusters, word-initial *y-, and loss of *y between vowels. A brief chapter on relative chronology, a conclusion, and bibliography close the thesis.

The thesis shows signs of having been written under time pressure, but nevertheless can be considered a worthy contribution to the relatively sparse literature on the historical phonology of Classical Armenian. Especially significant, if not yet entirely convincing to this reviewer, is the author’s claim in chapter 2 that clusters of dental or velar + *y yielded exactly the same outcomes as the respective dental or velar stop before a front vowel (see in particular the table on pp. 28-29). The author also is to be commended for trying to invoke arguments from the typology of sound change in arguing against claims for a regular development of word-initial *y- > l- in chapter 6, though in the end she does not completely succeed in building a case for *y- > j-. The bibliography includes all the major reference works in English, German, French, Russian, and Armenian.

In sum, the author has in my opinion more than fulfilled the requirements for an M.A. in Comparative Linguistics, and laid solid ground for her further research on this topic, and indeed on Armenian historical grammar in general. There are numerous points which can be expanded and for which further literature search will be necessary, e.g. if the author wishes to prepare part or all for publication, but these do not detract from the overall very positive impression of the thesis.