MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX

As an Indo-European language, Armenian presumably had gender originally, but there is no trace of it in the historical record.

Article

DEFINITE

There are three forms of the definite article: -s, -d, -n. These are suffixed to the noun, and are associated with the three persons of the pronominal system. They are found also in the demonstrative series: cf.

> ṭuns ays 'this house (near me)'
> ṭunt ay**d** 'that house (near you)'
> ṭunn ay**n** 'that house (yonder, near third person)' (ṭun 'house')

This postfixed article may also be added to a noun in apposition to a subject pronoun: e.g. *yes ṭers yev vardapeṭs* 'I, lord and master...'.

The numeral *mi* 'one' may be used as an indefinite article following the noun: e.g. *er ayr mi* 'there was a man...' (John 3.1). The plural marker is -*k* with various link vowels; often the stem is subject to elision and umlaut, and there are many irregularities: e.g. *ṭun* 'house', pl. *ṭunk*; *kaɫak* 'town', pl. *kaɫakək*; *hayr* 'father', pl. *hark*; *gin* 'woman', pl. *ganayk*. The definite article is added to the plural marker: *geṭk.n* /get'əkn/ 'the rivers'.

Noun

DECLENSION

There are seven regular declensions depending on the vowel used to form the genitive singular. This vowel may be added to the nominative singular or inserted before the final consonant if this is -*n*, -*ɫ*, or -*r*.

Example of declension: *geṭ* 'river' (external flection):

	Singular		*Plural*
nom., acc.	geṭ	nom.	geṭ**k**
		acc.	geṭs
gen., dat.	geṭ**uy**		geṭ**oc**
abl.	**i** geṭuy		**i** geṭoc
instr.	geṭov		geṭovk

A definite object is marked by *z*- prefixed to the accusative: e.g.

> Hanel č.garen z.dev.n
> 'They cannot expel the demon'
> (*hanel* 'to expel', *garel* 'to be able', *č.* 'not', *dev* 'demon')

Accusative plural in -*s*: examples:

Indefinite: *ḳov.k eš.s voč çnanin* 'cows do not give birth to asses'.

Definite: *ḳoče arr inkn z̧.yerḳoṭasan.s.n.* 'he called the twelve to him' (*ḳočel* 'to call', *arr* 'to(wards)'); *ziard voč paštes z̧.di.s mer* 'why do you not worship our gods?'.

Genitive: possessor may precede or follow possessed: e.g. *Voč sa e hivsann vordi?* 'Is this not the carpenter's son?' (Matthew 13.55); *luys mardḳan* 'the light of men' (John 1.4).

Adjective

As attribute, adjective may precede or follow noun, and may or may not be in concord. The non-attributive adjective is declined as a noun, with plural in -*k*. There are a few irregular formations, e.g. *pokr* 'small', pl. *pokunk*.

Irk havasṭik paṭmin 'They relate things that are certain' (concord marked, adjective follows noun)

yev tnán noca arḳanelis spiṭaḳs 'and they were given white robes' (Revelation 6.11) (concord in acc. pl.)

Snoṭi∅ bank en 'These are vain words' (no concord, adjective precedes noun)

Comparative: there are three ways of making a comparative:

(a) positive + *kan* + acc.: e.g. *čar kan z̧ṭer* 'more evil than the master'
(b) adverb + positive: *aveli čar...*
(c) -*aguyn* added to positive: *čaraguyn...*

Pronoun

PERSONAL PRONOUN
The basic independent forms are:

sing. 1 *yes*, 2 *du*, 3 *na*; pl. 1 *mek*, 2 *duk*, 3 *noka*

These are declined in all cases; e.g. for first person singular:

acc. *zis*, gen. *im*, dat. *inj*, abl. *yinen*, loc. *is*, instr. *inev*

Examples:

yev yecuyc **inj** makur geṭ 'and he shewed me a pure river' (Revelation 22.1)

porjea zis, Ṭer 'examine me, Lord' (Armenian Liturgy)

The possessive forms are:

	Singular	Plural
1	im	mer
2	ko	jer
3	sora, **d**ora, **n**ora	soca, **d**oca, **n**oca

The genitive forms have acquired nominative status, and act as bases for a secondary series of four cases (nominative, accusative, genitive, dative). For example, *im*, which is itself the genitive of *yes* 'I', has a genitive form *imo*, dative *imum*. Cf. Matthew 15.10: *ţesamen z.yeres.s Hor imo* 'they behold the face of my Father'.

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUN/ADJECTIVE

Three-degree series (*see* **Article**, above): sing. *ays, ayd, ayn*; pl. *aysk, aydk, aynk*. These are fully declined in all cases.

The demonstrative pronouns/adjectives *sa, da, na* (with three-person deixis) make a plural with infixed *-k-* marker: *soka, doka, noka*.

The *-s, -d, -n* markers reappear in the directional accusative articles *aysr, aydr, andr*, which follow the accusative case. Cf. *arḳanen z. Yovnani i çov* **andr** 'they threw Jonas into the sea', where the neutral article *-n* is replaced by the accusative directional article *andr*.

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN

zi 'who? what?'; *vov* 'who?'; *inč* 'what?'

The sign ◠ is placed over the focused word in an interrogative sentence: e.g.

Zȋnč čar arar
'What evil hath he done?' (Matthew 27.23)

Aržȃn e mez Ḳayser harḳs ţal te voč
'Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Caesar, or no?' (Luke 20.22)

RELATIVE PRONOUN

Sing. *vor*, pl. *vork*. Use of plural form with singular antecedent is optional. e.g.

Zȋnč en ban.k.n, **zor** duk.d asek 'What words are these that you say?'

Čarik.n, **vor** gorçin ḳamaçink en yev voč bnaḳank 'The evils which are committed are intentional, not natural.'

Verb

The infinitive ending is *-al/-el/-ul*. *-el* verbs are further sub-divided into those which retain the *-e* as characteristic vowel, and those that change it to *-i*. There are thus four basic conjugations.

The modal and tense structure is built on two aspectual bases:

the imperfective (present) = the infinitive minus *-l*;
the perfective (aorist) = the root, often extended by *-Vc*.

From the imperfective base are formed the present, the imperfect, the first future tense, and the prohibitive mood. The imperfect is often used as a subjunctive (there is no optative in Classical Armenian). The perfective aspect provides the aorist, the second future, the imperative, and the hortative. (The original distinction between 'first' and 'second' future seems to have been aspectual: 'first' is based on the present root, hence imperfective; 'second' on the aorist root, hence perfective.)

PRESENT TENSE
The endings for all verbs are *-m*, *-s*, *-y*; pl. *-mk*, *-yk*, *-n*: e.g. *lavanam, lavanas, lavanay* 'I wash, you wash, he washes'.

Passive forms are made from active present-tense verbs by change of characteristic vowel to *-i*: e.g. *sirem ayl voč sirim* 'I love but am not loved'.

FIRST FUTURE
The endings are *-ycem*, *-yces*, *-yce*, etc. The first future form conveys a future, subjunctive, or conditional sense:

tołucuys z.gorç.s ko?
'will you leave your affairs?'

črag luys ṭa amenacun vor i ṭan.nisen
'the lamp gives light to all those who are (*qui soient*) in the house'

Voč ḳare kałak takčel, vor i veray lerin ḳayce
'A city that (of such a kind) is set on a hill cannot be hid' (Matthew 5.14)

PROHIBITIVE
Negative particle *mi* + singular form in *-r*, pl. in *-ayk*. This form is used in place of the missing negative imperative: e.g.

Ṭer, **mi** hamarir toca z.ays meł.s
'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge' (Acts 7.59)

AORIST

Two sets of endings: active and passive. The two forms are not available for all verbs. For example, in the *-el* series, while all verbs have the active forms, only four verbs have the passive. 'Passive' here includes middle voice: e.g. *zarmacay* 'I was surprised'.

The active endings are: sing. *-i, -er, -Ø*; pl. *-ak, -ek, -in*. Passive endings: sing. *-ay, ->ar, -av*; pl. *-ak, -ayk, -an*. Example: *Vor inč greci, greci* 'what I have written, I have written' (John 19.22).

Short aorist passive forms may take an augment *ye-*: e.g. *ṭes = yeṭes* 'he saw'; *giṭ = yegiṭ* 'he found'.

SECOND FUTURE

This has both future and subjunctive sense. The endings are: *-ic, -ces, -ce*; pl. *-cuk, jik, -cen. -e → -i* for passive. Example: *Mi xrrovescin sirṭk jer* 'Let not your hearts be troubled' (John 14.1).

PARTICIPLES

The participle in *-eal* may be used as a noun, and is then declined as, for example, *gorčk arrakeloc* 'the Acts of the Apostles' (*arrakeal* 'the one who is sent'). A perfect tense is made with this participle and the auxiliary *yem* 'I am'. The forms of *yem* are: sing. *yem, yes, e*; pl. *yemk, yik, yin*: e.g. *ṭeseal yem* 'I have seen'; *ṭeseal ei* 'I had seen'. Here, the logical subject can be in the genitive case with the auxiliary in third person singular: e.g. *i bazum paṭerazmuns mṭeal e im* 'and of me there has been a going into many wars' = 'I have been in many wars'.

Future participle: *-oc* is added to the infinitive: e.g. *Krisṭos yayṭneloc e* 'Christ will reveal himself.'

IMPERATIVE

Made from aorist root, is found in second person only, and is always positive: e.g. from *havaṭal* 'to believe': *havaṭa!*, pl. *havaṭacek!*

HORTATIVE

Aorist root + *-jir* (sing.), *-jik* (pl.).

NEGATION

The general verbal negator is *voč* (→ *č-* preceding verb): e.g. *voč yertayk = čertayk* 'you do not go'. The prohibitive takes the negating particle *mi*.

CAUSATIVE

Aorist root + *-ucanel* (restricted use): e.g. from *čanačel* 'to know', *čanucanel* 'to cause to know'.

Prepositions

There are six basic prepositions: *arr, z-, ənd, i(y), əsṭ, c-*. Each of these can be used with more than one case, and each varies accordingly in meaning. Thus, *arr* with the accusative means 'at, towards'; with the dative/ablative, 'because of'; with the instrumental 'beside, at the time of'. Examples:

Mi yerḳnčir arrnul **arr kez** z.Mariam gin ko
'Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife' (Matthew 1.20)

ənd with dative:
yes **ənd jez** em . . . minčev i ḳaṭaraç ašxarhi
'and I am with you even unto the end of the world' (Matthew 28.20)

arr, ənd, əsṭ, i are written separately; *z-* and *c-* are prefixed to the noun, as is *y-*, the form taken by *i* before an initial vowel: cf. *ase i hogi iur* 'he says in his soul' (*iur* is the genitive of *inkn* 'he himself': *suus*); but *y. (y)eresun avr* 'in 30 days'.

As noted above, *z-* also marks the accusative case: *ḳoče z.kez arr inkn* 'he calls you to him(self)'.

Word formation

Armenian is rich in compound and derived words. A very frequent model is X-*a*-Y, where X is usually a noun or adjective, and Y is a noun, adjective, or verb: e.g. *arçat.a.ser* 'silver-loving' = 'miser'; *meç.a.ṭun* '(having) a big house' = 'rich'. The link element may be assimilated after -*i* stem-final: e.g. *gin.e.ber* 'wine producing' (from *gini* 'wine').

Derivation is by prefix: e.g. the privative prefixes *an-, ap-, ṭž-*, etc.: *ṭžgoh* 'dissatisfied'; *anmardi* 'inhuman'; *apyeraxṭ* 'ungrateful'; and by suffix, of which there are many: e.g.

-*anoc*, -*aran*: making nouns of place, e.g. *çalḳanoc* 'flower garden';
-*ak*, -*iḳ*: diminutives, e.g. *navaḳ* 'small boat';
-*avor*: bearer of . . ., e.g. *daṭavor* 'judge';
ič, -*ord*: agent, e.g. *orsord* 'hunter';
pes: formant for adverbs;
-*utyun*: makes abstract nouns, e.g. *canḳutyun* 'desire'.

Word order

Very free.