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T. M. Johnstone, *Ḥarsūsi Lexicon and English-Ḥarsūsi Word-List*. London: Oxford University Press, 1977. 211 pp.  
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The Ḥarsūsi language is so important to Semitists and so close to extinction, and our knowledge of it so meager and so imperfect, that a new lexicon of that language cannot fail to be an important contribution to the field of Semitics. Every one of us in this field owes the author a debt of gratitude for undertaking this task.

The *Ḥarsūsi lexicon* (henceforth HL) begins with a combined preface-and-acknowledgements (v-vi) followed by an introduction (ix-xxvi). Distributed between these two sections is much valuable new information about the Ḥarāsīs (the final *s* in this form is NOT the English plural morpheme!) and their language. The sociolinguistic tidbits are fresh and interesting. The author makes good use of his knowledge of Omani Arabic in describing the intimate relationships between that language and Ḥarsūsi in the daily life of this bilingual tribe.

Also included in the introduction are phonological notes which supply a wealth of phonetic, morphophonemic, phonotactic, and historical information about the vowels and selected consonants of Ḥarsūsi and the other MSA languages. These notes, as well as certain other features of this work, remind one inevitably of its illustrious predecessor, Leslau's *Lexique Soqoṭri*.

It is interesting to compare Johnstone's phonological data with those of earlier writers. Johnstone writes (p. xiii) that “*śl* occurs quite frequently as a variant of *š*” in Ḥarsūsi and Socotri (henceforth H and S), whereas “this is quite rare in Mehri and Šḥeri” (henceforth M and Š). Carter (1847: 343), on the other hand, gives the impression that this phenomenon is quite common in Mehri:

ش has a very peculiar sound in the Mahra dialect; it is formed by placing the tip of the tongue against the anterior part of the palate, and allowing the air to pass out of the mouth on one side or the other of it, in the manner of a lisp, following it with the sound of the letter *l* as in شيوط “fire” pronounced *shleeote*.

It is, of course, possible that Carter's generalization is based on only one example, but it is equally possible that we are dealing here with diachronic change or dialectal variation (the southwestern dialect of *bilād Mahra* recorded by Carter vs. the northeastern dialect of Dhofar recorded by Johnstone).



The phenomenon discussed above is similar to one in Hein's Mehri texts pointed out by Bittner (1910:81): "Für die Artikulation des *š* bezeichnend ist es, dass Hein statt *š* etlichemale *lš* schreibt . . ." This variant of *š* (*lš* rather than *šl*) is reported by Johnstone for Welsh but not for Modern South Arabian (henceforth MSA).

Before leaving this point, I might remark that Johnstone's presentation of it is puzzling. He begins by stating that "the lateral fricative *š* is unlike the Welsh *ll* in that in essence it has no *l*-glide. The Welsh *ll* in other words could be transcribed *šl* or *lš* in terms of the *Ḥ* consonant system." But then he does an about-face, stating that "it is a fact, however, that in *Ḥ* (and in Socotri) *šl* occurs quite frequently as a variant of *š* . . ." Is this merely a roundabout way of saying that Welsh *ll* always has an *l*-glide while *Ḥ* and *S* have it only "quite frequently"? If so, Johnstone's perception of Welsh *ll* clashes quite sharply with that of Rositzke (1939:8).

A more important difference between Johnstone and his predecessors concerns palatalization in *š*. Fresnel (1838:538, 544, 545), Bittner (1916:19-20 and 1917 s.v.) and Thomas (1937 s.v.) usually transcribe the palatalized alternants of the velar stops as affricates, while Johnstone transcribes them as fricatives,<sup>1</sup> as shown in the following chart:

	Fresnel <sup>2</sup>	Bittner	Thomas	Johnstone
'scorpion'	<i>ttchīn</i> , <i>tssīn</i>	---	<i>iči'in</i> (M <i>qubāin</i> )	<i>š'īn</i> ( <i>ḤM kebāyn</i> )
'to drink' (Sem <i>šky</i> )	<i>schoutssi</i>	---	<i>shidzī</i>	<i>šúši</i>
'coast, beach' (Eth <i>hāyk</i> )	---	<i>hayč</i>	<i>haičh</i> , <i>hutz</i> (M <i>haiḵ</i> )	<i>hayš</i> (M <i>hayḵ</i> )
'town' (Sem <i>karyat-</i> )	---	<i>čirēt</i>	<i>izīret</i>	<i>š'irēt</i> <sup>3</sup>
'you two'	<i>-tsī</i>	---	---	<i>-ši</i> ( <i>ḤMS -ki</i> )
'(riding) camels' (Sem <i>rkb</i> )	---	<i>arčōb</i> , <i>erčōb</i>	<i>urtsop</i>	<i>ršōb</i> <sup>3</sup> (M <i>riḵōb</i> ) <sup>3</sup>
'young she-camels' (Sem <i>bakrat-</i> )	---	<i>bečōrten</i>	---	---
'to skin'	---	<i>dhaš</i>	---	<i>dhaš</i> ( <i>ḤM deḥāḵ</i> )

<sup>1</sup> In a letter received shortly before completion of this review, Johnstone assures me that they are indeed fricatives. As for Johnstone (1975b), where the palatalized allophone of *k* is given as *ʃ*' (= *ʃ̣*), Johnstone writes that he has always been a little uneasy about the *š* dialect dealt with in that note, because it was the second language of a Mehri speaker (of the Eastern dialect).

<sup>2</sup> From the discussion on pp. 538, 544, and 545 (cf. pp. 543-4), it is clear that the sounds which which Fresnel (1938) writes *ttch*, *tss*, *ts*, *dz*, and *dj* are all PALATAL affricates. I presume that the signs *š*, *ž*, and *ṣ̌* (used by Johnstone in his letter to me) also indicate palatal articulation.

<sup>3</sup> From Johnstone (1975a:7-8) rather than *ḤL*.



'two men'	<i>ghodzī</i>	<i>guǵ-i</i> [ǵ=j]	---	<i>yuži, γɔži</i> <sup>3</sup> (M <i>γawgi</i> ) <sup>3</sup>
'vein, sinew, root' (Sem <i>gīd-</i> )	---	<i>ǵiód</i>	---	<i>žid</i>
'female slave'	---	<i>ǵirít</i>	<i>ījirit</i> (M <i>hagirīt</i> )	<i>žirét</i> (HM <i>hāgerēt</i> )
'eyebrows'	<i>hhidjol</i>	---	---	(M <i>heǵéwwel</i> )

In view of the well-known tendency of palatalization and affrication to be followed by assibilation, the most likely explanation for this difference between Johnstone and his predecessors would seem to be historical change.

It is worth noting that there are two cases in which a majority of the older sources agree with Johnstone in giving a sibilant rather than an affricate as the palatalized reflex of *k*:

'liver' (Sem <i>kābid-</i> )	---	<i>šibdīt</i>	<i>šubdait</i>	<i>šubdét</i>
'you(r) (f.s.)' (Sem <i>-ki</i> )	-( <i>é</i> ) <i>ch</i> [ <i>ch=ç</i> ]	-š	---	-š

Now it so happens that these lexical items also contain a sibilant in H & M (where evidence of palatalization is rare) and in S. It seems possible, therefore, that there are two layers of palatalization in Š: a proto-MSA layer represented by *šubdét* and *-š*, which reached the sibilant stage long ago, and a distinctively Š layer, which, for most lexical items, reached the sibilant stage only recently, in the last 50 years.

Whether or not this hypothesis is correct, one thing is clear: the form *-š* 'your (f.s.)' is a very old one. In fact, it is mentioned already by Mas'ūdī (1861:333) in the tenth century:

wa-'ahlu š-Šiḥr 'unās min Quḍā'ah ibn Mālik ibn Ḥimyar wa-ǵayrihim mina l-'arab wa-yud'ā man sakana hādā l-balad mina l-'arabi l-Mahrah . . .  
wa-luǵatuhum bi-xilāf luǵati l-'arab wa-ḍālika 'annahum yaj'alūna š-šin badalan mina l-kāf wa-miṭla ḍālika qawluhum hel leš fīmā qult(i?) lī wa-qult leš 'en tej'al (masc.!)<sup>4</sup> l-leḍī ma'ī fī l-leḍī ma'eš . . .


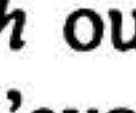
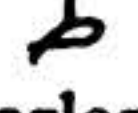
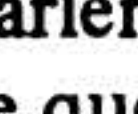
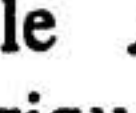
[And the folk of Shiḥr<sup>5</sup> are people descended from Quḍā'ah son of Mālik son of Ḥimyar and other Arabs. And those Arabs who inhabit this country are called Mahrah . . . and their language is different from the language of the Arabs in that they put š in exchange for *k* and say, for example, 'Do you have (*leš* for *lek*) control over the matter you discussed with me?' and 'I told you (*leš* for *lek*) to put that which is with me with that which is with you (*ma'eš* for *ma'ek*)' . . .]

<sup>4</sup> This form, if original, indicates that Mas'ūdī mistakenly believed *-š* to be a MASCULINE pronoun.

<sup>5</sup> The country of Shiḥr referred to in this passage is not the home of the Šḥeri (or, at least, not their present-day home in the mountains of Dhofar) but rather an area of Ḥaḍramut (cf. Mas'ūdī 1865:12,14). It is the place called *Scier* by Marco Polo and *Shi-ho* by Chau Ju-Kua.



Finally, we might compare Johnstone's description of the MSA emphatics with the descriptions of his predecessors. Most of the latter were not aware that these consonants are glottalic, but Fresnel certainly was. He reports (1838:545) that the Š emphatics

exigent un certain gonflement des amygdales, et sont, pour ainsi dire, CRACHÉES par une émission violente et subite de l'air comprimé dans le larynx. Le *ssad*  peut être représenté (conventionnellement) par *ss*, le  par *ttch* ou *tss*, le  par *tt*, le  par *tth* et le  par *ck*; mais, à moins d'avoir ouï parler l'amharique (*amara* ou éthiopien moderne, on ne peut deviner ce que j'entends ici par *tt* ou *ck*.

This report has been ignored by all twentieth-century scholars with the exception of Yushmanov (1930:383-4). Johnstone deserves credit for his independent confirmation of Fresnel's discovery and for pointing out that the MSA emphatics all have voiced "pre-glottalized" allophones alongside the voiceless ejective ones.

Unfortunately, "pre-glottalized" is an ambiguous term. It properly refers to a sound produced during its initial phase with a CLOSED and STATIONARY glottis, but I have also seen it used as a synonym of "implosive", i.e. a sound in which voicing is produced, according to Catford (1977:74-7), by the upward leak of air through an OPEN, downward-MOVING glottis. No doubt the two types are difficult to distinguish and phonologically related (Greenberg 1970:124-5); nevertheless, more exact information (in some future publication) would be of great value.

Of particular interest is the fact that, according to Johnstone, the basic allophone of *š/z* and *ṭ/d* is voiceless, as is *k*, whereas the basic allophone of *ḍ/ṭ* is voiced. It is striking that, despite the many differences between the emphatics of MSA and those of classical Arabic, the basic allophones of the MSA emphatics are identical to their Arabic counterparts (*š*, *ṭ*, *q*, and *ḍ*) with regard to voicing.

We come now to the lexicon itself (pp. 1-181). This is a fine piece of work which combines most of the advantages of its predecessors. Like *Lexique Soqotri* it gives cognates from other MSA languages (so that proto-forms can be reconstructed) and Omani Arabic (so that borrowings can be eliminated), and it has an index in which the glosses became lemmas (pp. 153-81). Like Thomas' quadrilingual word-lists (the only other source for H), it records the perceptions of only one ear (so that precise comparison is possible), it gives semantic equivalents which are not cognates (so that comparative onomasiological studies can be undertaken), and it includes all but one of the five MSA languages. Finally, it surpasses both of the above in accuracy and completeness.

The importance of H for comparative Semitic lexicography will be obvious to anyone who opens it. It contains, by my count, at least 290 conservative cognates of Hebrew lexical items. It is true that most of these cognates do not add much to what has long been known from Arabic (a language, which is equally archaic from a phonological, if not phonetic, point of view), but more than a few of them do, either because the Arabic cognate in question has changed its meaning or because it has totally disappeared. I have found twenty such cognates in H, of which only nine are discussed by Leslau (1958). The following notes deal with some



of those twenty and a number of other MSA lexical items from HL and earlier works which should be of interest to Semitic lexicographers:

- 1) H̄M 'ād < \*'ād 'still, yet, again' = Hebrew 'oḏ, Ethiopic 'adi 'still, yet, again'.
- 2) H̄ fēn, M fenw-, Š fīn- 'before, in front of' = Hebrew lifne, Ugaritic lpn 'before, in front of'.
- 3) H̄M egtemōl 'to be generous, treat well' = Hebrew gāmal, Aramaic gmal, Akkadian ḡamālu 'mete out (good/bad)'. MSA shows an intermediate stage of the semantic change which resulted in Arabic ḡamula 'be beautiful'.
- 4) H̄M ḡōreb, Š ḡarb, S 'areb < \*ḡareb 'base of neck, part of camel's neck in front of the hump' = Akkadian arūbu 'a part of the neck', Hebrew 'oref 'back of neck' = Arabic 'urf 'mane (of horse)'. The two halves of this equation are not necessarily mutually exclusive, since ḡ/' fluctuation in the vicinity of r is common in South Semitic (Steiner 1977:135).
- 5) H̄M šīt, Š šet, S šeh 'backside, posterior' (e.g. yezháyfem le-štōtihem 'they shuffled along on their backsides') = Hebrew šet (e.g. 'aḏ šəθoθehem 'until their buttocks', II Sam. 10:4), Arabic ist 'backside, buttocks'.
- 6) H̄ zōfa', M zōfeḡ, S zofḡ 'cattle dung' = Hebrew šāfi 'e bāḡār 'cattle dung', Ethiopic dāfə 'excrement (human or animal)'.  
7) H̄M kenemōt, Š šīnit < \*knmt, S kanum 'louse' = Hebrew kinnām, Aramaic k/kalm-, kml, Arabic qaml, ESA kmlt, Ethiopic kʷəmal, Akkadian kalmatu 'lice/louse'. The MSA languages are the only ones which have a cognate whose consonants correspond normally with those of the Hebrew form.
- 8) H̄ neṭōk, M neṭk 'to bite' = Hebrew nāšax, Ugaritic nṭk, Aramaic nxe/aθ, Akkadian našaku, Ethiopic nāsākā 'to bite'.
- 9) H̄ mešxáwt, M xōt < \*hxōt < \*šxōt, Š šxot (Bittner 1917: eñšhót), S šhoh < \*šxoh 'armpit' = Mishnaic Hebrew šehi, Aramaic šihyā, šhāθā 'armpit'. The occurrence of x in the MSA forms strengthens the connection of the Hebrew and Aramaic forms with Akkadian šahātu 'side', but precludes any connection between them and the root šhy 'bend' if the latter is related at all to Hebrew yištaḥāwe, Ugaritic yštḥwy 'bow down'. Perhaps they are related (distantly) to Hebrew šu/iḥā, šahaθ 'pit', Mari Akkadian (< Amorite) saxatum 'pitfall' (Pardee 1978:93fn), Akkadian ḥaštu 'pit', and Arabic sāxa 'sink (in mud)'.  
10) H̄M ḥelīt, Š ḥalēt 'rust' = Hebrew ḥel'ā 'rust'. Leslau (1958) has only one MSA cognate: S ḥal'eh 'dirt'.
- 11) H̄ yōda, M wēda, Š éda', S eda' 'to know' = Hebrew yāḏa', Ugaritic yd', Aramaic yḏa', Akkadian e/idū, wadū, ESA yd', etc. 'to know'. It is not clear whether to reconstruct w or y as the initial consonant of the Proto-Semitic root. Leslau (1958) has the M form but not the H̄ form, thus giving the impression that MSA supports Akkadian wadū against ESA yd', Ethiopic 'āyda'ā, and Arabic 'ayda'a.
- 12) H̄M 'āfōr, Š 'áfōr 'cloud; dust wind'. Could this be a blend of Hebrew 'ārif, Ugaritic 'rpt, Akkadian urpu 'cloud(s)' and Hebrew 'āfār, Ugaritic 'pr, Akkadian ep(e)ru 'dust'?
- 13) H̄ fām, M fēm, Š fa'm 'foot, leg' = Hebrew pa'am, Phoenician p'm 'foot; time', Akkadian pēm/nu 'thigh'. Gordon's theory (1965:466) that the Hebrew-Phoenician form is a blend of p'm 'time' and p'n 'foot' (the forms attested in Ugaritic) is weakened somewhat by the final m in the MSA forms listed above.



14) H̄M *šēf* 'trace, track; footprint; foot', Š *šéf* 'track, trace', S *šab*, S (Qádub) *šaf* 'foot' = Akkadian *šēpu* 'foot'. Von Soden (1959) s.v. *šēpu* gives the West-Semitic equivalents of *šēpu* as 'riḡl usw', overlooking the Akkadian-Socotri correspondence noted already, according to Leslau (1938:424), by Halévy in REVUE SÉMITIQUE, July 1905. H̄L confirms Halevy's insight by showing that the other MSA languages and one dialect of S have an *f* < \**p* rather than a *b* in this word. Indeed, even in "standard" S, the dual form of this word (*šáfi*, *ša'fi*) has an *f* (Leslau 1938:424). It is now clear that this *f* did not develop from *b* via a conditioned sound change, as Leslau (1938:424) believed, but rather came from \**p* via the well-known unconditional South Semitic sound change.

15) H̄M *debēr*, Š *ēdbir*, S *ēdbehir* < \**ēdbehir* 'hornet, bee' = Hebrew *dšvorā* 'bee', Aramaic *zabbur(i)ā*, *debbor(t)ā*, etc., 'bee, wasp', Arabic *zunbūr*, *dabbūr* 'hornet'. The MSA evidence makes a confusing situation even worse. Eilers' suggestion (1971:585, 598) that Arabic *zunbūr* is a borrowing of Iranian \**zanba* 'bar < *zamb* "Kampf" would clear things up a bit, if only it were plausible.

16) Š *reš* 'to crawl (ants)', M *rišš* 'to crawl (spider)' (Jahn 1902), *amriš* 'to crawl' (Thomas 1937) = Hebrew *rāmas* 'to crawl, creep'. The deletion of *m* is usual in Š but not in M.

17) H̄MS *hamt*, S *hant* < \**hant* 'lower belly, pubes' = Hebrew *homeš* 'a vital spot or organ in the body', Ethiopic *hamš* 'uterus', Tigre *hams* 'pubes, abdomen', Akkadian *em/nsu* 'hypogastric region'. This correspondence is noted by Johnstone himself in H̄L. Prior to the publication of H̄L, the S form was thought to be connected with Tigre *hanot* 'foetus' (Leslau 1938). Conversely, the Hebrew, Akkadian, and Ethiopic forms listed above were thought to contain an etymological \**š*, in view of Syriac *humšā*. Johnstone's note prompted Degen (1978) to take a closer look at that Syriac form. An examination of the internal Syriac evidence showed that *humšā* is a borrowing from Hebrew.

18) Š *fizhait* 'forehead' (Thomas 1937). This form shows that Hebrew *mešah* 'forehead' is etymologically related to Jewish Aramaic (> Mishnaic Hebrew) *paddahtā* 'forehead' (and Ethiopic *fəšəm* 'forehead'?), and that Jewish Aramaic *mišhā* 'forehead', for which only one source is given by Jastrow (1950 s.v.), is a Hebraism. The correspondence between Hebrew *š* and Aramaic *d* is attested elsewhere (Hebrew *peša* 'wound' = Aramaic *pišā*, 'wound') and is easily explained as coming from one of two normal correspondences: Hebrew *z* = Aramaic *d* or Hebrew *š* = Aramaic *ṭ*. The former correspondence leads us to MSA *ḏ*, the latter to MSA *ḏ*. Both of these are normally written *dh* by Thomas, but the latter appears at least once (s.v. *noon*) as *z*. I hope that Johnstone will be able to give a definitive answer to this question in some future publication.

19) Š *le* 'cow' (Thomas 1937) = Akkadian *lū* 'bull', *littu*, *lītu* 'cow', Arabic *la'ātu* 'wild cow', Hebrew *Le'ā* 'Leah' (sister of *Rāhel* 'Rachel; ewe'). Schuh (1979:256) mistakenly connects Southern Cushitic \**ʕee-* 'cow' and Chadic \**ʕa* 'cow' with Akkadian *šū*, *šu'u* 'sheep', Arabic *šāh* 'sheep, ewe', Hebrew *še* and Ugaritic *š* 'sheep, goat' instead of the above words for 'cow'.

20) a) singular H̄MS *ber*, Š *ber* 'son' = Aramaic *bar* < *bir* 'son', but plural H̄M *he-būn*, Š *in* 'sons' = Aramaic *bnin* 'sons'.

b) singular H̄M *bert*, S *ebret-* 'daughter' = Aramaic *braθ* 'daughter', but plural H̄ *he-bōnten*, M *he-bānten*, Š *ōnte* 'daughters' = Aramaic *bnān*, *bnāθā* 'daughters'.

c) cardinal H̄M *terō*, Š *tro*, S *tra* 'two' = Aramaic *tren* 'two' but ordinal H̄ *tēni*, M *tōni* 'second' = Aramaic *tinyān* 'second' (although these ordinal forms are not entirely comparable).



It is striking that MSA and Aramaic, against all of the other Semitic languages,<sup>6</sup> have an *r* in the words for 'son', 'daughter', and 'two',<sup>7</sup> and when the alternation with *n* is taken into account, the similarity becomes astounding. No wonder Christian (1944) was convinced that MSA and Aramaic are closely related! Scholars who reject this view, and that includes just about everyone, must project this alternation back into Proto-(West-)Semitic.

It is worth noting that the two morphemes involved here have something else in common: their Arabic forms, *ibn(at)un* and *iṭn(at)āni*, have a base consisting of two consonants WITH NO VOWEL IN BETWEEN. A similar form must be reconstructed as the ancestor of the much-discussed Hebrew *štayim* 'two (f.)'. The latter can hardly be the reflex of *\*tintaym* since vowels in closed syllables are immune to deletion in Hebrew. It is more reasonable to posit an original *\*tṛtaym* or *\*iṭṛtaym*, with a syllabic *ṛ*, which yielded *\*(i)štayim* and then *(i)štayim*. If so, it is conceivable that *r* alternated with *n* in Proto-(West-)Semitic in positions where a syllabic consonant was called for, e.g. *tṛtaym* ~ *tṛtaym*, *bṛtum* ~ *bṛtum*, but not where *n* was non-syllabic, e.g. *banātum* 'daughters'. But this is just a guess, and not a very convincing one, at that.

21) Ḥ *'arkáyb de-fām* 'Achilles' tendon' = Arabic *'urqūb* 'Achilles' tendon, hamstring, hock', Syriac *'arkubba*<sup>8</sup> 'Achilles' tendon, ham (popliteal space)', Mishnaic Hebrew *'arḳov* 'hock', and, according to (Wajnberg 1935:57), Tigre *tārḳub* 'hock'. The literal meaning of the Ḥ expression is 'mouse of the leg'.

This figure of speech reminds one inevitably of Old French *soriz* which means both 'mouse' and 'calf of the leg' and of the many other Indo-European words which mean both 'mouse' and 'muscle': Greek *μῦς*, Latin *musculus*, Old Norse, Old High German, and Old English *mūs*, Dutch *muis*. Indeed the Syriac cognate of Ḥ *'arkáyb*, M *'ārḳáyb*, S *'arkéb* 'mouse' is *'ukbrā*, whose feminine form means both 'female mouse' and 'muscle', although this may be a loan-translation from Greek.<sup>9</sup>

Did the connection between 'mouse' and 'Achilles' tendon' exist already in Proto-Semitic or is this an MSA innovation? To answer this question, we must examine the cognates of *'arkáyb* in the other Semitic languages, e.g. Akkadian *akbaru* 'jerboa?', *arrabu* 'dormouse?', 'jerboa?' (both from OB), Syriac *'ukbrā* 'mouse, jerboa', Hebrew *'axbār* 'mouse, jerboa', Arabic *'akābir* 'mice, jerboas', Tigre *'ekrib* 'badger'. These forms do not lend a great deal of support to the notion that the Proto-Semitic word for 'mouse' agreed with the MSA word in having an

<sup>6</sup> Akkadian *māru* 'son' is generally connected with Aramaic *māre* 'lord', Arabic *imra'un* 'man', etc. instead of Aramaic *bar*, Arabic *ibnun*, etc., and for the purposes of the present discussion, I have assumed that this is correct. However, in light of the semantic connections between *\*mr'* and *\*br'* and between *\*br'* and *\*bny*, it is entirely possible that Akkadian *māru* has TWO sets of cognates.

<sup>7</sup> Other instances of Aramaic *r* corresponding to Hebrew *n* are found in Onkelos and Jonathan: *bḥr* = *bḥn* 'to examine' (Gen. 42:15-6, Jer. 9:6, 17:10, 20:12), *ṭmr* = *ṭmn* 'to hide' (Gen. 35:4, Ex. 2:12, Josh. 2:6, 7:21-2, Jer. 13:4-6, etc.), *rš* = *nš* 'to abandon' (Ex. 23:11, Ju. 6:13, I Sam. 4:2, 17:28, etc.), *ršy* = *nšy* 'to lend' (Ex. 22:24, Deut. 15:2, 24:10-11, II K. 4:1, Jer. 15:10, etc.).

<sup>8</sup> The only evidence I have for a geminated *b* in this word is its Mishnaic Hebrew cognate which appears in Codex Kaufmann as *'arḳubb-* with pronominal suffix and *'arḳov* without.

<sup>9</sup> The earliest attestation of *'ukbrā* 'muscle' recorded by Payne Smith (1901) is in the Syriac translation of a work by Galen.



EMPHATIC *k* PRECEDED by *r*. Thus, it may well be that the MSA form of this word is due to contamination. However, in view of the fact that the MSA languages are in some respects more archaic than the ancient Semitic languages, it is just possible that they have preserved the original state of affairs more faithfully here as well. In any event, it is worth considering the ramifications of this possibility.

The above-mentioned correspondences are part of a much larger picture shown in Table 1. The following reconstruction is one of a number of possible theories capable of explaining the correspondences given there.

If the word \**rkb* originally meant 'mouse', we may posit the following series of semantic changes in Proto-Semitic:

- 1) metaphor: 'mouse' (> 'muscle?') > 'mouse; muscle?; Achilles' tendon, hamstring'
- 2) metaphor: 'to hamstring' > 'to hamstring; to trick?'
- 3) metonymy: 'hamstring' > 'hamstring; hock; ham' (all adjacent to each other)
- 4) metonymy: 'Achilles' tendon' > 'Achilles' tendon; heel' (adjacent to each other)
- 5) widening: 'Achilles' tendon, hamstring' > 'tendon' > 'any cord or cord-like duct of the body', e.g. 'tendon, nerve, vein, artery'
- 6) metaphor: 'cord-like duct of the body' > 'cord-like duct of the body; root' (both branch and both convey vital liquids)

We may posit further that, subsequently, three "trilateralized" forms of \**rkb* were created—\**kb* (liquid second radical deleted), \**rk* (last radical deleted), \**kr* (last two radicals of \**rkb* metathesized)—and that some of the new meanings came to be associated with them. Thus, the meaning 'heel' came to be associated with \**kb*, the meaning 'cord (-like duct) of the body' came to be associated with \**rk*, and the meaning 'to hamstring' seems to have become associated with \**kr*, while the meanings 'Achilles' tendon; hock; ham' generally remained with \**rkb*. However, the formal differentiation of these meanings was not absolute, which is why we still find variation in Semitic words for 'heel' (Arabic *aqib*, Syriac *ekbā*, Hebrew *ākev*, Akkadian *ekbu*, but Tigre *tarkub*), 'root' (H *ark*, Arabic *irq*, but Syriac *ekkarā*, Hebrew *akar* 'uproot'), 'tendon, sinew' (H *ark*, Tigre *äräk*, Hebrew *orek?*,<sup>10</sup> Jewish Aramaic and Syriac *eraktā* 'strap',<sup>11</sup> but Arabic *aqab*, Ugaritic *kb*), 'to hamstring' (Arabic *aqara*, Hebrew *ikker*, but also Arabic *arqaba*), and possibly 'to trick, practice deception' (Arabic *arqaba* but Hebrew *akav*). Indeed, it is this variation (seen in large measure already by Wajnberg (1935:57), which proves that \**rkb*, \**kb*, \**rk*, and \**kr* are etymologically related.

<sup>10</sup> In Job 30:17 the plural of this word occurs in parallelism with *ašāmim* 'bones'. Its Greek rendering there is *νεῦρα* 'sinews, nerves'.

<sup>11</sup> It is clear that this Syriac word belongs here, because its semantic relationship with Tigre *äräk* is exactly the same as the semantic relationship between Greek *ἰμός* 'strap, thong' and its English cognate *sinew*. Thus, the possibility (considered in Steiner (1977:157)) that the Aramaic words for 'sandal-strap' contain an etymological \**q* is to be rejected.







The above reconstruction is more broadly-based and, I think, more plausible than the older view that the hamstring was conceived of as the “root-sinew” of the body (Brown, Driver and Briggs [1907] s.v. ‘*kr*’). It should also be noted that the latter view is incompatible with the notion that the meaning ‘hamstring’ developed from the meaning ‘mouse’.

Before leaving this problem, I would like to call attention to an intriguing possibility, namely, that there might be a connection between \*‘*rkb* mouse?, hamstring, . . .’ and \*‘*krb* ‘scorpion’’. It is tempting to see the latter as a metathesized derivative of the former, even if Tigre ‘*arḳāb*’ and Mandaic *arḳba*, both meaning ‘scorpion’, are late innovations. It may be significant that Arabic ‘*aqrab*’ ‘scorpion’ also means ‘strap, esp. of a sandal’. The latter is precisely the meaning of Syriac ‘*eraḳtā*’ (cf. Onkelos’ ‘*arḳaθ*’ - and the Genesis Apocryphon’s ‘*rḳ*’), which, as we have already seen,<sup>12</sup> can hardly be separated from Ḥ ‘*arḳ*’, Tigre ‘*ärāk*’, etc.

This example, together with the ones that preceded it, should be sufficient to show the importance of MSA in general and ḤL in particular. Weighed against that importance, the blemishes of ḤL, to which we now turn, seem almost trivial.

Let me dispose of the misprints first. Only a small number caught my eye: *säláyt* for *ṣäláyt* (p. xv, l. 19), *šefféy* for *šeffey* (p. 126, l. 9), *ḥāgeret* for *ḥāgerēt* (p. 57, l. 32, cf. p. 1, l. 37 and p. 54, l. 22).

An annoying feature of ḤL which struck me soon after I opened it can be blamed in part on its editors. The “pre-lexical” material of the book is disorganized and repetitious. The pressure of Arabic on Ḥ is discussed both on p. v and on p. x. The inclusion in ḤL of comparative material from other MSA languages is noted both on p. v and on p. xi. The phonology of Arabic loan-words in Ḥ is discussed partly on p. xiii and partly on p. xxvi. This problem may be due in part to the peculiar division of this material into a hybrid “preface-and-acknowledgements” and an “introduction”.

Probably the most serious defect of ḤL is its method of analyzing the roots of Ḥ lexical items. The lengthy introduction of the book says virtually nothing about that crucial subject, and I for one am totally baffled. If the roots of ḤL are meant to be synchronic Ḥ roots, why do they contain ‘, ’, and final *w* in cases where the full words contain no traces of these consonants? And if they are meant to be proto-MSA or proto-Semitic roots, why do they contain *h* in cases where other MSA languages (usually Š) have preserved the original š, and even in cases where Ḥ itself has preserved it in part, e.g. *mešmē* ‘ear’ alongside *hōma* ‘to hear’? We may illustrate this problem using the word *ḥēriḥ*, *ḥerīḥ* ‘head’. Despite the fact that this form (like its MSA cognates) has neither a ‘ nor a consistently long vowel, ḤL derives it from a medial ‘ root, reconstructed with the help of comparative Semitics. In dealing with the last radical, however, ḤL ignores both comparative Semitics and internal MSA evidence (Š *reš*), and winds up with the hybrid root *r’h*.

In addition, there are certain analyses which are difficult to understand and no matter what stage of the language is being described. Why, for instance, should *bāred* ‘gunpowder’ be

<sup>12</sup> See the preceding footnote.



considered quinqueliteral and *wāyer* 'wire' be considered quadrilateral, when *'ālem* 'knowledge', *'āmer* 'age, life', *gāber* (pl. *gewābber!*) 'she-camel about to bring forth', *hālem* 'dream', *ṣāker* (pl. *ṣekéwwer!*) 'falcon', *tāfel* 'baby, child', *yā'ed* (pl. *yewā'ed!*) 'an item of camel gear', and others on this pattern are considered trilateral by HL? And why should *melehāw* 'side of the jaw' be derived from *mlh* rather than *lhw/y*—the root of its S cognate according to Leslau (1938:244). And finally, what stage of the language is HL describing when it gives the root of *arēm* 'to trick a camel into accepting her own young, or a substitute, or a tulchan' as *rm*? If modern H, the root should end in *m*. If proto-MSA, the root should be *rm*' (cf. S *erū*'). If proto-Semitic (assuming that this word goes back that far), the root should be *rmw/y* (cf. Hebrew *rāmiyyā* 'deceit'). Until Johnstone explains how he arrived at his roots, this otherwise grateful reader of HL will be forced to ignore them.

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