

## Archaeologia Afroasiatica I<sup>1</sup>

In memoriam H. C. Fleming (1925-2015)

by

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### Introduction

The original homeland and the prehistory of the population speaking the supposed parental language, the hypothetical common ancestor of Proto-Semitic, -Egyptian, -Berber, -Cushitic, -Omotic, and -Chadic, belong to the mysteries of Afro-Asiatic comparative-historical linguistics, which has since the 1960s, for the past half of a century, undergone a serious development both in quantity and quality, yielding considerable results, which may perhaps appear modest in comparison with the high level of, e.g., Proto-Indo-European, one of the best known and elaborated domains of comparative-historical linguistics, but this is perhaps matter of relativity in the light of the lack of any noteworthy progress before the refreshingly new research by J. H. Greenberg and I. M. D'jakonov in the 1950s-1960s. Even the famous „*Essai comparatif ...*” by M. Cohen (1947) still had to record, beside a modest number of the evident elements of the common Afro-Asiatic heritage, mostly rather the lacunae and the uncertainties of the common knowledge on the comparative phonology and the common root stock of the Afro-Asiatic branches outside the better known Semitic and Egyptian. No wonder that, at that time, no scientifically founded theory was and could be proposed on the homeland question etc.

Although comparative-historical Afro-Asiatic until today has no remarkable international infrastructure (forums, journals, departments etc.) comparable with that of Indo-European worldwide, the disappointing situation has, however, substantially changed in the second half of the 20th century thanks to a handful of enthusiastic scholars, mostly linguists, who set frames and solid bases for both the synchronic and especially diachronic study of the lesser-known African branches of our immense macrofamily (or phylum). The 1970s witnessed the first serious attempt made by I. M. D'jakonov (Leningrad, St. Petersburg), one of the founding fathers of modern Afro-Asiatic linguistics, at drawing some basic outlines in the obscurity of Afro-Asiatic prehistory using both archaeological data and the then brandnew results of the Afro-Asiatic lexical reconstruction. Since then, a few further remarkable theories have been proposed. The first issue of my series „Archaeologia Afroasiatica” is, first of all, to sum up what has been achieved so far and to supply all this with my marginal notes in the light of my own research and to formulate those dilemmata that might influence further research. In the subsequent parts of the series I am planning to examine diverse individual details connected with the perspective dilemmata. The term „archaeology” has been chosen for the title for its literal sense, viz. „science of the ancient (matters)” even if the present series is intended to yield a linguo-archaeological analyze from the standpoint of a comparativist.

### Grouping

Fundamentally declining the traditional grouping of our phylum into Semitic vs. „Hamitic” as scientifically ill-founded, J. H. Greenberg (1963) was the first to state that our macrifamily can be classified in 5 equipotential branches or families. Using the glottochronological method refined after Ch. Rabin's presentation at the first Congress of Semito-Hamitic Studies (in London, 1970, cf. Rabin 1975), I. M. Diakonoff (1975, 128-129) was the first to point out that Proto-Cushito-Omotic (and Proto-Chadic?) was the earliest branch that separated from the common Afro-Asiatic parental language in the 8th mill. BC, whereas the branches of the Northern Afro-Asiatic block (where he classified Semitic, Egyptian, and Berber) were desintegrating much later. Diakonoff (followed then by a number of comparative linguists) was also the first to state that the comparably higher degree of linguistic diversity of the Cushitic groups (including Omotic too at that time) testifies to a substantially much older diachronic level of Proto-Cushito-Omotic (8th mill. BC) than that of Proto-Semitic (4th mill. BC). H. C. Fleming (1983, 22), in turn, assumed Omotic and then Semitic to have split off first from the block of Egyptian, Cushitic, and Berbero-Chadic. Another (similarly „upside-down”) scenario was suggested by M. L. Bender (1997), who presumed that Omotic and Chadic were first to separate from the Central block, from which

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<sup>1</sup> It is here that I have to express my gratitude to the Bolyai research fellowship (Hungarian Academy of Sciences, reg. no.: BO / 00360 / 12) facilitating my project on Egyptian linguogenesis, which resulted, a.o., in a number of papers including this one and parts I to VI of my series „Layers of the oldest Egyptian lexicon”, whose part I has just been published in *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* (Warszawa) 68/1 (2015), 85-139.

Egyptian soon distanced itself and then „Macro-Cushitic” was divided into Berber, Semitic, and Cushitic. In the light of his original glottochronological calculations (based on a system modified by S. A. Starostin, Moscow), A. Ju. Militarev (2000) reaffirmed pace D’jakonov (1975, cf. above) that Proto-Cushito-Omotic was first to split off the parental population, only then followed Semitic and Berbero-Chadic. Noteworthy, using different criteria (of paleobotany and -zoology), R. Blench (2006, 148, fig. 4.8 and pp. 152-162) arrived basically at the same position, namely that Omotic (and Ongota?) was separated first and then soon Cushitic-Chadic and what remained = North Afro-Asiatic (Semitic, Egyptian, Berber) was dissolved substantially later. He called this phylum as Erythraic, which he connected with Elamite (!) as the oldest branch to split off. Actually, V. Blažek (1994 MS Delhi) included Elamite for the first, although he only apparently meant areal cohabitation and not a genetic kinship, which was certainly not the case.

Within the immense phylum, however, certain super-branch grouping seems also possible, although not in the manner of the old geographical division into Semitic (basically Asia) vs. Hamitic (all the rest in Africa). To the best of my knowledge, I. M. Diakonoff (1975, 129) was the first to single out, apparently correctly, a Northern Afro-Asiatic (NAA) block represented by Semitic, Egyptian, and Berber, which I am disposed to approve as correct due to a number of shared features such as:

Northern Afro-Asiatic (Semitic, Egyptian, Berber)	Southern Afro-Asiatic (Cushitic, Omotic, Chadic)
high linguistic coherence in phonology and lexicon	high internal diversity in the lexicon and also the phonology
diversification started at a relatively late date	early dissolution from the parental language
high mobility and great dispersion (Semitic north-eastwards, Berber westwards from Siwa to Mauritania)	apparently weak territorial mobility (except for South Cushitic?)
is penetrated by a high degree of apophony	weak apophony, domination of stable root vowels

Egyptian, however, is an exceptional branch displaying a significant number of exclusive lexical isoglosses with Chadic. Moreover, both branches, apparently, never had a prefix conjugation widespread in Semitic, Berber, and Cushitic. This is why, I. M. Diakonoff (1988, 23) later changed his mind surmising „*that the speakers of Egyptian were the first to break away from the basic Proto-Afrasian nucleus not later than the 8th millennium B.C.*” This is, however, not necessary as there is another possible explanation at hand, viz. a secondary Egypto-Chadic areal cohabitation.

### Prehistory in the proto-lexicon

Applying the glottochronological method for the standard wordlists of Proto-Cushitic and Proto-Semitic, I. M. Diakonoff (1975, 126) calculated the separation thereof for about 7500 BC and the disintegration of the Semitic unity for the middle of the 4th mill. BC (pace Rabin 1975). He (o.c., pp. 126-130) was also the first to evaluate the then brandnew results of A. B. Dolgopolsky (1973) in reconstructing the Cushito-Omotic parental cultural lexicon in comparison with that of Proto-Semitic as described by P. Fronzaroli (1964-1971). Diakonoff could isolate just three Cushito-Semitic isoglosses in the domain of agriculture (among which there is, in fact, just one denoting a cereal,<sup>2</sup> two further verbal roots for „to pound” and „to cut off plant”), and also just a few for further areas such as domesticated ungulates (3 items, 1 isogloss for „milk” and „to slaughter”), „dog” (phonologically uncertain),<sup>3</sup> and handicrafts (1 word for „axe”, 2 isoglosses for „point, edge”, one phonologically unacceptable isogloss for „house”,<sup>4</sup> one for „to cut”, one for „thread”, and one for „to shovel”), where the Semitic lexical stock proved to be incomparably richer than that of Cushito-Omotic, which apparently possessed a late Mesolithic culture. In his conclusion, Diakonoff (1975, 129) regarded the common cultural lexicon shared by both Proto-Cushitic and Proto-Semitic as reflecting „*очевидно, в лучшем случае, ранний, едва ли не докерамический неолит, скорее даже мезолит!*”, whereas the Semitic proto-lexicon, in his view, evidently „*указывает на эпоху неолита скорее чем энеолита*”.

In a second special study devoted to Afro-Asiatic prehistory, I. M. Diakonoff (1981) got to outlining the proto-culture through the lexical evidence in a more daring fashion especially in the field of cereals and domesticated ungulates leading him to a more self-confident position as for the *Urheimat* than in 1975 (cf. the following section of the present paper). Aiming, in fact, at writing the neolithic prehistory of Semites, he rightly remarked (o.c., p. 29) that „*studying Semitic by itself, without comparing notes with the experts in Egyptian, Berber,*

<sup>2</sup> Namely, PCu. \*ḥa(jVn)t- „зерно, злак, сорго” vs. PSem. \*ḥint-at- or \*ḥitt-at- „пшеница, зернышко”.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. PCu. \*kar- „dog” combined with PSem. \*kal-b- „dog”, where, following his master, N. V. Jušmanov, I. M. Diakonoff isolated the suffix \*-b, the supposed marker of the nominal class of wild or dangerous animals.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. PCu. \*mVn- „house” compared with Sem. \*ḥbny „to build”. But the correspondences in the *Anlaut* are irregular.

*Chadic, and especially Cushitic, is to-day often useless, because it limits the view, and does not give the necessary possibility of establishing even the relative dates of the appearance of any given lexical or grammatical phenomenon ...* Consequently, he ended up in having published the first thorough linguo-archaeological analysis on the Proto-Afro-Asiatic world. The only serious drawback of this study is the relatively poor presentation of the lexical material in spite of the comparative linguistic elaboration.

N. Skinner (1984) collected a great heap of data in the manner of the Greenbergian „mass comparison”, mostly from the cultural lexicons of the Southern Afro-Asiatic languages, but, unfortunately, he did not provide us with an analysis applying the comparative method as the Russian linguists did. In the core of his research, he (o.c., pp. 11-35) gathered lists of „antelope words” shared also by certain extra-Afro-Asiatic languages (e.g., Acooli, Tiv, Bagirmi, Kanuri), including synonyms like „gazelle”, „haartebeeste”, „reedbuck”, „waterbuck”, „kudu”. Hastily, still before presenting his data, Skinner (1984, 9) concluded that „this effort at comparison ... seems to suggest that: 1) PAA was spoken in a savannah area north of the equatorial forest, 2) there were early contacts with Benue-Congo”, which, however, cannot convince us for several reasons. First of all, his parallels, which, sometimes, seem to be hardly more than accidental look-alikes, have not been elaborated from the standpoint of the historical phonologies of the individual groups and branches, so one may not yet know with certainty if they indeed a common heritage. Secondly, Skinner quoted most of the „antelope words” from the Southern Afro-Asiatic branches (Cushito-Omotoc and Chadic) plus the non-AA languages, which, even in the best case, may only testify to the localization of the SAA homeland.

In the fourth section of his study, Skinner (1984, 50-62, §4) examined the biradical root varieties (lateral + back consonant) for „meat” and „animal”, where we have, in fact, to do with at least three or four diverse Afro-Asiatic roots. Here too, several NAA comparanda are irrelevant.

A substantially different interpretation of the new data issuing from the rapid development of Soviet-Russian Afro-Asiatic linguistics between the 1960s and 1980s has been proposed by A. Ju. Militarev since the 1980s, who tried to demonstrate the linguistic evidence for a neolithic nature of the underlying proto-culture.

(1) Militarev (1983, 100-103; 1989, 128-131; 1990, 74-80; 2001, 21-42; 2002, 138-149; 2003 MS) reconstructed a number of (apparently common) Afro-Asiatic agricultural terms, including cultivation of land („field”,<sup>5</sup> „hoe, plough” and „to till field”,<sup>6</sup> „to sow”,<sup>7</sup> „to gather harvest, reap”,<sup>8</sup> „forage, fodder, mowing, cutting grass”<sup>9</sup>), terms for crop (corn, cereal, barley),<sup>10</sup> bean,<sup>11</sup> and other edible plants (fig, date).<sup>12</sup> Not all admissible<sup>13</sup>

<sup>5</sup> AA \*čaʔdaw „land difficult to cultivate” and „to cultivate such a land” (1990, 75-76, #i.5: Sem., Eg., WCh.), AA \*čiddaw „measure of length, land” (1990, 76, #i.6: Sem., Eg., Qabyleʔ, Hausa), AA \*g(w)a/in(y/?)- „area, plot of land producing edible plants” (2002, 144, #18: Sem., Brb., Ch.), AA \*(HV)g(w)Vr- „cultivated field, tilling, hoeing” (2002, 144-145, #21: Sem., Brb., Afar, Ch.), AA \*kal(aʔ)- „earth, land” (2002, 145, #23: Ar., NBrb., Ch.), AA \*ladd- ~ \*IVʔVd- „plot of land (of a specific status)” (2002, 146-147, #26: Sem., Eg., Oromo, Jegu), AA \*sVkay „land not cultivated actually, fallow” (2002, 147-148, #B.30: ES, NBrb., Hausa), AA \*saḥʔVy „поле, пашня, луг” (1983, 103, fn. 25: Sem., Eg., Logone).

<sup>6</sup> AA \*√by/wr ~ \*√ʔbr „to cultivate, hoe”, \*bay/wr- „land (designed) for cultivation” (2002, 143, #16: Sem., Eg., Ch.), AA \*√g(w)ny/w/? „to cultivate, till field, crop” (2002, 144, #19: Sem., Eg., Ch.), AA \*ḥa/ull- ~ \*ḥVw/yal- „hoe, farming” (2002, 145, #22: Sem., Eg.ʔ, NBrb., ECu., NOm., Ch.), AA \*(ʔa)-kʷal- or \*(ʔa)-kawal- „kind of hoe, hammer/axe-like tool, a pickaxe” (2002, 145-146, #24: Sem., Eg.ʔ, Cu., NOm., Ch.), AA \*kawr „(to) hoe, cultivate” (1990, 75, #i.4: Sem., Eg.ʔ, SCu., CCh.), AA \*marr „hoe”, \*mirra „to hoe, farm” (1990, 74, #i.1: Sem., Eg., HECu., Ch.), AA \*sVkaʔaʔy „to loosen soil and sow a field (with cereals)” (1983, 101, #4) = \*sikkaʔw „to till land, hoe” (1990, 77, #i.8: Sem., Eg., Brb., WCh.).

<sup>7</sup> SAA \*sukay „to sow” (1990, 77, #i.10: Eg., NOm., Ch.), AA \*ʔVry/?/c- „seed, sowing, sown field” and \*√ʔry/?/c „to sow cultivate” (2002, 148, #31: Sem., false Eg. match, ECu., NOm.), NAA \*√ʔrrw/y/? ~ \*√wʔr „to scatter, spread (seed), winnow” (2002, 148-149, #32: Sem., Brb., Eg.ʔ).

<sup>8</sup> AA \*√ʔry/w ~ \*√ʔyr ~ \*√ʔtr ~ \*√rʔ/w „to gather, reap, cultivate” (2002, 142-143, #15: Sem., Cu., Ch.), AA \*čima-r „reaping, harvest, fruition” (1990, 76, #i.7: Sem., Brb., Oromo, Ch.), AA \*mi-ḥaru „reaping, picking up (corn)” (1990, 74-75, #i.3: Sem., Eg.ʔ, Brb., WCh.), AA \*nigal „sickle” and „to reap” (1990, 74, #i.2: Sem., Ch.), AA \*gʷar- or \*gu/ar- „to collect, harvest” (2002, 144, #20: Gurage, Brb., ECu., WCh.).

<sup>9</sup> AA \*k(w)alaʔ/w- „forage, fodder, pasture, mowing, cutting grass” (2002, 145, #23: Sem., SBrb., Cu., WCh.).

<sup>10</sup> (Sʔ)AA \*ʔary/w- „corn, edible plants” (2002, 138, #A.1: Sem.ʔ, false Eg. match, false Brb. parallels, Cu., NOm., Ch.), AA \*baru „cereal, (cultivated) grain crops” (1990, 79-80, #ii.6: Sem., Eg., Brb., SCu., Kefoid, Tumakʔ), AA \*buray „flour, groats” (1990, 80, #ii.7: Eg., Brb., Cu., Ch.), (Nʔ)AA \*čarVy „barley” (1990, 79, #ii.4: Sem., Eg., ECu.ʔ, Ch.ʔ), AA \*ḥintu „cereals, (cultivated) grain crops” (1990, 77-78, #ii.1: Sem., Eg.ʔ, Somali, Hausa), AA \*kabib „corn (wheat?)” (1990, 78, #ii.2: Sem., Brb., ECu., WCh.), AA \*lay/w- ~ \*ʔVI(l)- ~ \*w/yVlal- „kind of corn (millet?)” (2002, 141, #A.11: Akk., Brb., Cu., Om., Ch.), AA \*sVnnVy/?- „seed, corn, standing crops” (2002, 142, #A.12: Sem., Eg.ʔ, ECu., Hamer, Ch.), AA \*šucay „ear of (barley) corn, grain” (1990, 78, #ii.3) = \*čVcaw- (2002, 139, #A.5: Sem., Eg.ʔ, Brb., ECu., Mbara), AA \*šV(m)bar- „kind of corn, chickpea” (2002, 142, #A.13: Sem., SBrb.ʔ, Cu., Ch.).

(2) A rich lexical inventory of dwelling (Militarev 1990, 80-84): „settlement”,<sup>14</sup> „wall”,<sup>15</sup> „fenced camp”,<sup>16</sup> „tent”,<sup>17</sup> „hut, house”,<sup>18</sup> and „door”.<sup>19</sup> There was also a verbal root for „to build”.<sup>20</sup>

(3) Additionally, A. Ju. Militarev (2002, 20-54) tried to outline the common lexical heritage reflecting elementary institutions of the old Afro-Asiatic society through the Semitic reflexes, e.g., „man, people”,<sup>21</sup> „community, territorial tribe”,<sup>22</sup> „to gather”.<sup>23</sup>

(4) Militarev (2010, 102-106) managed to demonstrate a rich spectrum of apparently common Afro-Asiatic (i.e., attested in both NAA and SAA) terminology for ritual music,<sup>24</sup> Militarev (2010, 103) „... наличие этих слов ... в жизни мезолитического и раннеолитического общества не является неожиданным”. One may add here the most recently reconstructed SAA (Egypto-Chadic) \*√my ~ \*√my „funerary dance” [GT]<sup>25</sup> (for more details, cf. EDE III 203).

Paradoxically, A. Ju. Militarev, made an attempt at drawing comprehensive outlines of the Proto-Afro-Asiatic material culture deduced from the proto-lexicon reconstructible at that time in one of his first papers from the 1980s on this subject in co-authorship with V. A. Šnirel'man (1984, 35-49). Here, Militarev surveyed a wide range of the Afro-Asiatic proto-lexicon in the following domains, which he tried to systematically identify with the archaeological reality of the Natufian culture of the eastern Levantine area:

- Terms of dwelling, construction as well as its materials (attested as clay) and its ways (digging pits, pounding earth by trampling, smearing with clay, some sticky substance, round forms etc.).
- Great variety of pottery terms and vessel names from various materials (including calabash).
- An equally wide range of parental words for „plaiting”, „basket” and „mat”.
- Rich terminology for „cutting” with „flint knives”, also for „arrow”, „dart”.
- Not insignificant number of names for „cereals”, „grain” and foods prepared thereof.
- A whole set of terms for the cultivation of field (detailed above).
- Among the ungulates, several terms for antelope sorts, equids (both „donkey” and „horse”), goat, sheep, bull, lion, jackal and dog are reconstructed by Militarev as well as those for „elephant”, „camel”, „ostrich”. For the

<sup>11</sup> AA \*dang<sup>w</sup>i-r „bean” (1990, 79, #ii.5: Sem., Brb., Cu., Ch.).

<sup>12</sup> AA \*baw/yar- ~ \*ʔi/a-bar- „fig-tree” (2002, 139, #A.4: Sem., Brb.<sup>?</sup>, Cu., Ch.), AA \*binaw-r „date” (1984, 41), AA \*tiʔ- „fig” (Akk., Janjero), hence \*tiʔ(i)n- „fig-tree” (2002, 142, #A.14: Sem., false Brb. match „date”, Ch.).

<sup>13</sup> Thus, e.g., his AA \*cVkk „sak<sup>w</sup>, row, line”, hence

<sup>14</sup> AA \*bir-(ani) „Fortified building, settlement” (Sem., Ch.), AA \*k<sup>w</sup>ari „settlement, collection of houses” (Sem., Brb. < Punic, Ch.<sup>?</sup>), the latter uncertain.

<sup>15</sup> AA \*cab-ar „wall, fence” (Sem., Eg., Afar, false Hausa match).

<sup>16</sup> AA \*h<sup>w</sup>ičar „fenced camp, stationary settlement” (Sem., ECu.<sup>?</sup>, false Ch. parallels), which is rather unlikely.

<sup>17</sup> AA \*hinaw „tent, setting up a tent” (Sem., Eg., Brb., Ch.<sup>?</sup>), AA \*q<sup>w</sup>aym „tent, hut” (Sem., Eg., Brb., WCh.).

<sup>18</sup> AA \*bayut „hut, house” (Sem., Brb., Ron), AA \*gawri „house, collection of houses” (ES, Cu., Ch.), AA \*qaniw „kind of (auxiliary) premises” (MSA, false Eg. match, SBrb., Nbauchi).

<sup>19</sup> AA \*ʔa-bila „door” (Sem. < Sum. or *vice versa*, SBrb.<sup>?</sup>, Cu., Sbauchi), AA \*tuṣay „to shut, reinforce the door” (Sem., Eg., SBrb., Dahalo, Ch.).

<sup>20</sup> AA \*binay „to build a superstructure” (Sem., false Eg. comparanda, Brb. < Ar.<sup>?</sup>, Ch.).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. AA \*c<sup>i</sup>(n)daw- „люди, община, сообщество (равных по статусу или возрасту?)” (Sem., Brb., Cu., Om., Ch.).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. his AA \*gaw(V)u- „община, племя, группа людей (проживающих вместе, на общей территории)”, AA \*cačVr- „группа, сообщество людей (одной возрастной категории)” (Sem., Eg., WCh.).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. his AA \*√lmm „to gather, be together” (Sem., Eg.<sup>?</sup>, Cu., Ch.), AA \*√(?)dm „присоединяться, собираться вместе” (Sem., Eg., Cu., WCh.).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. AA \*√zm „to sing, play music” (Sem., Eg., Agaw, Ma'a), \*ca(n/m)b-ir- „reed flute” (Sem., Eg., Cu., Mocha, Hausa), \*sVy/wVr- „singing and dancing” (Sem., Yamma, Ch.), \*rayw- and \*raʔ- „singing and dancing” (Sem., Eg., SCu., Ch.), \*sV(n)bal- „kind of ritual (wedding?) dance” (Sem., Cu., Hausa), \*(ʔV)bVl- „(mourning?) dance” (Sem., Eg., Cu., Ch.), \*zab-(Vr)- „(funeral) performance including dancing, singing and recitation” (Sem., Eg., Ch.), \*kVs(kVs)- „kind of dance” (ES, Eg., NOm.).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Eg. mw.w „Art Leute, die beim Leichenbegängnis tanzen” (MK, Wb II 53, 14; WD II 60 & III 51) = „class of ritual dancers” (FD 106) = „Muu-Tänzer (im alten butischen Ritual)” (GHWb 330) ||| ECh. \*√my (?) "Totentanz" [GT]: Kera máayáwná „Totentanz und -gesang der Männer” [Ebert 1976, 79] | Mokilko mááyé „cérémonie commémorative en l'honneur d'un ancien (environ tous les sept ans)” [Jng. 1990, 135], WDangla móymò „danse guerrière pour la mort” [Fédry 1971, 136]. Probably etymologically related to AA \*√my ~ \*√my "to bury" [GT]: ECu.: Dullay \*māy- "begraben" [GT] (Dullay: AMS 1980, 173, 213, 232) ||| Ch. \*√mw(?) "to bury" [GT]: CCh.: Lame móʔ(ó) „1. enterrer, 2. planter, mettre en terre” [Scn. 1982, 320], Zime-Dari mōʔ „1. enterrer, 2. semer” [Cooper 1984, 17], Mesme màʔà "planted (e.g. tomatoes)" [Jng. 1978, 17] = (?) [mū] "l'enterrement" [Ksk. 1990, 92] ||| ECh.: Somray mwə "enterrer" [Brt.-Jng. 1990, 115] = mù „enterrer” [Jng. 1993 MS, 45] | Sarwa mō & Gadang mō: "enterrer" [Jng.-lbr. 1993 MS, 5, #90].

latter three cases, however, the common AA word can be reconstructed only with reservations, I am afraid,<sup>26</sup> even in spite of V. Blažek's (1994, 196-204) ambitious attempt at collecting Afro-Asiatic terms for „elephant”, „hippopotamus”, and „rhinoceros”, among which, in fact, most items are merely SAA (Cushito-Chadic) words, since out of the 28 entries of his, hardly any are attested in both NAA and SAA. His score is actually reconstructing only three common Afro-Asiatic terms for „elephant”,<sup>27</sup> while „hippopotamus” and „rhinoceros” are not at all reconstructible for the common parental language from the data accumulated by Blažek in the fashion of the Greenbergian „mass comparison”.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, one can hardly agree with Blažek's (1994, 205) hasty conclusion that „*hippopotamus probably lived on the territory of the AA homeland*” and that „*the oldest name of 'elephant' in AA is \*ʒi[k<sup>w</sup>]an/r*”, which is not at all a common word being only attested in Cushito-Omoti.

- The inventory of the ornithological terms was relatively modest: beside „duck”, „dove”, „partridge”, „quail”, „swallow”, „some bird of prey (hawk)”, there were, in his view, three terms for „hen, chick”.
- A couple of words for „trap”, „net”, „bonds, fetters, shackles” used in hunting.
- Importantly, Militarev managed to set up no common Afro-Asiatic terms for „fish” except for the scarcely attested AA \*kVr „fish” (Soqotri, ECu., WCh.) admitting the fact that „*имеется лишь несколько ... в разных африкайских языках разрозненных названий для различных, часто неидентифицированных, пород рыб и ов, связанных со сбми ловли рыбы, но они могут быть и ареальными терминами*”.
- The natural environment of the Proto-Afro-Asiatic homeland was characterized by such basic terms as PAA \*tVl „hill, mountain”, \*fari<sup>c</sup> „peak of mountain”, \*tar „slight slope of hill”, \*m/na-g<sup>w</sup>Vd „(sandy) hill plateau”, \*sVp „valley, wadi, river bed”, \*gVd „valley of parching river, natural reservoir, where water may accumulate”, \*dVb-n „sandy plateau, hilly desert”, \*dVb-r/l „hilly plain, steppe”, \*barH<sup>w</sup> „sand, desert”, \*sVp/f „sand, clay”, \*çi<sup>c</sup> „sand”, \*yam „water”, \*qanVy „swamp, reed”, \*čab „reed (flute)”, \*səp „reed used for plaiting”, a whole series of words for „rain”, also „cloud”. Contrary to AA \*yam denoting, in my view, „water” as a geographical entity, AA \*ma<sup>?</sup> signified „water (as material)” [GT] (cf. EDE III 195-198), which is attested in 5 branches, i.e., almost the entire phylum (except for Agaw, HECu. and ECh.). Interestingly, the whole Omotic branch is only one in the phylum to use an entirely different root for „water”<sup>29</sup>. Noteworthy, basic PAA terms for „tree”, „forest”, „grass” are not reconstructible.

In his presentation on the Third World Archaeological Congress (held at New Delhi, in December 1994), using the same way of the mapping material world extracted from the reconstructed proto-lexicon, V. Orel (co-author of the much criticized „Hamito-Semitic Etymological Dictionary” = HSED, published a year later in Leiden), arrived approximately at the same results as Militarev did:

(1) „*Hamito-Semites lived in a swamped valley of a big river*” (o.c., pp. 1-2), demonstrated by Orel with the abundant PAA terminology for „river”, which O. V. Stolbova (the other co-author of the HSED) corroborated a few years later (1997, 81-84) with a rich Semito/Egypto-Chadic lexical stock for „water”, „rain”, „river”. Orel also assumed that „*the Hamito-Semitic vocabulary seems to reflect acquaintance with swampy river-beds and also with corresponding wild plants*” (o.c., p. 2: PAA terms like „lotus”, „reed, rush”, „marsh plant”), while the common Afro-Asiatic parental language, according to his results, possessed also the names for „*a number of birds characteristic of rivers, especially of rivers with swamped banks*” (o.c., p. 2: „crane”, „duck”, „pelican” etc.).

(2) „*Several Hamito-Semitic terms are connected with navigation ... used on rivers and lakes*” (o.c., p. 2-3), most of which, however, are no more than exclusively Egypto-Chadic isoglosses (for which cf. also Stolbova 1997, 84, §4), which may eventually turn out to be areal words issuing from a secondary cohabitation of both

<sup>26</sup> Thus, Militarev's (o.c., p. 43) AA \*ʔalw-Vb „elephant” is based on common Berber and some sporadic Chadic data, his AA \*ʔalk<sup>(w)</sup>-am „camel” is phonologically dubious (\*ʔ- and \*-k-), albeit the Berber „camel” words (which were source also for the Chadic ones) issuing from \*ʔlym may be ultimately connected with Sem. \*ʔgml. As for his AA \*naH-Vm/l „ostrich”, such a word probably never existed as the underlying *comparanda* (viz. Sem. \*ʔn<sup>c</sup>m, Eg. nj.w, Brb. \*ʔnhl) are unrelated. The Berber word, by the way, has been most recently convincingly explained from an earlier \*\*ʔnbl and equated by V. Blažek (2001, 626) with some reflexes of LECu. \*nabal- „ostrich” [GT]: Arbore nebel [Hyw. 1984, 387], Elmolo ñápal [Heine 1980, 208], cf. also Rendille nabál [Schlee 1978, 142, #802] = nabál [Oomen 1981, 70; PG 1999, 230] ||| SOM.: Hamer lābāli „ostrich” [Flm. 1990 MS, 1], which, may eventually point to a new common AA root for „ostrich”.

<sup>27</sup> (1) Sem. \*pīl- „elephant” vs. CCh.: Mafa-Mada \*mbal- „elephant”; (2) Brb. \*a-ali(b)w vs. WCh.: Tangale lābātā and ECh.: Mokilko ʔēlbí, both latter „elephant” [Jng.]; (3) Eg. 3b.w vs. ECu. \*ʔarb- and CCh.: PKotoko \*ʔarbu/i, all „elephant”.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. perhaps just (4) Eg. db „hippopotamus” vs. SCu. \*dof- „rhinoceros” (albeit its \*-f- is irregular); (5) Brb. \*a-gumār „horse” vs. Cu. \*gumār- „hippopotamus”.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. POM. \*hāç- (-ts'-) „water” [Bnd. 2003, 305], presumably akin to Sem.: Ar. ʔḥṣ? I „1. se remplir de qqch., et étancher sa soif à force de sucer ou de humer qqch., 2. boire ou manger avec avidité et avoir le ventre rempli” [BK I 437].

branches. Later, O. V. Stolbova (2005, 29-30, §i) managed to demonstrate at least three ship names present in both SAA and NAA.<sup>30</sup>

(3) Although Orel reconstructed „several terms” (in fact, just three Egypto/Semito-Chadic isoglosses) that „reflect Hamito-Semitic fishing practices”, he also had to state that „unfortunately, numerous ichtyonyms of Hamito-Semitic (not less than a dozen) do not allow any considerable semantic exactitude and , thus, only show the existence of big water basins within the original territory of Hamito-Semites.” Orel presented here (o.c., p. 3), however, only 5 fish names, which, are by far not common Afro-Asiatic.<sup>31</sup> Noteworthy, the same is the case with O. V. Stolbova (1997, 84-85, §5), who managed to present just two reliable Egypto-Chadic isoglosses for „fish”. Later, however, Stolbova (2005, 30, §ii) convincingly identified one common Afro-Asiatic term for „fishing”,<sup>32</sup> but her attempt at reconstructing two Afro-Asiatic terms for „fishing hook” (o.c., p. 31, §iii) is highly dubious due to the sporadic attestation and the phonologically all too problematic comparison. Stolbova (2005, 31-39, §§iv-viii) also demonstrated a considerable number of Proto-Afro-Asiatic words (usually Semito-Egypto-Chadic isoglosses) in the rich hunting terminology („snare, net”, „to set a trap”, „bow”, „arrow”, „to shoot”, „to hunt”). L. Kogan and A. Ju. Militarev (2001 MS) made further steps towards the Afro-Asiatic faunistic lexicon reconstructing two roots for felines,<sup>33</sup> wide range of kinds of fishes (whose common AA nature is, however, doubtful),<sup>34</sup> two insect names,<sup>35</sup> and two roots for „snake”.<sup>36</sup>

(4) „Hamito-Semites were at the initial stage of domesticating cattle. While there is no serious evidence for the domestication of equids in Hamito-Semitic, there is an abundance of terms referring to the cattle, sheep and goats, presumably, on their way towards domestication” (o.c., p. 3). Orel managed to set up a really impressive number of PAA terms for „bull” and „buffalo” (7 items), whereas he isolated proto-forms (sometimes more than one or two) also for „cow”, „calf”, „goat”, „lamb”, „ram”, „sheep”, „flock”, „herd”, and „cattle” (o.c., pp. 3-4).

(5) „Hamito-Semites practiced primitive agriculture on hills or plateaux”, since „the Hamito-Semitic vocabulary contains some names of (semi)domesticated plants” (o.c., p. 4) such as „barley”, „*Pennisetum typhoidaeum*”, „wheat”. The case of Sem. \*ḥi/unt- „barley, grain” vs. HECu. \*hi/a(n)t- „grass”, in his view, „may indicate the stage of development previous to domestication treating cereals as grass” (o.c., p. 5). Orel found also „quite a strong evidence showing that Hamito-Semites produced flour and/or flour-based food” (e.g., „bread”, „cornmeal”). In his observation, „the terminology of land cultivation ... is completely missing in Cushitic branches and not very well known in Egyptian and Berber”, while what is attested speaks for „a culture in which a field is a result of clearing and is situated on a hill or a plateau” (o.c., p. 5: terms for „fertile soil”, „field, farm”, „furrow”, „harvest, reap”, „hoe”, „sow”, „till with a hoe”).

(6) „Hamito-Semites lived in straw and mud huts organized in fenced mud compounds”, beside which Orel also localized traces of words for „tent”, „primitive fortification”, „ware- or storehouse”, „door, gate”, „wall” or „enclosure, territory encircled with a fence” in the Afro-Asiatic proto-language (o.c., pp. 6-7).

The methods applied in the HSED, however, evoked a (deservedly) severe criticism on the behalf of a wide community of both comparative linguists and philologists (cf. esp. Diakonoff and Kogan 1996; Weninger 1996; Takács 1997; Tourneux 1997), and many his proto-forms have not stood the test of time and scholarship, which is why the hypothetic proto-lexicon, used by Orel for his conclusions as to „reconstructing the homeland of Proto-Afroasiatic”, has unfortunately only limited evidence value.

#### Areal contacts

(1) A. Ju. Militarev (1984, 58-61; 1985 MS; 1992 MS; 1995, 113-127; 1996, 19-24) was the first to observe a whole series of parallels between the Sumerian and Afro-Asiatic cultural vocabulary, where the Akkadian and

<sup>30</sup> AA \*ḥ[a]lum- „raft, boat” (CCh., Akk.), AA \*bVr- „kind of boat” (ECh., Eg.), AA \*wam- „raft, boat” (Kotoko, Akk., Eg.<sup>?</sup>), (S<sup>?</sup>)AA \*IVm- „kind of boat” (CCh., Eg.<sup>?</sup>).

<sup>31</sup> NAA \*lišum- (Eg., Brb.), SAA \*kulum- (WCh., ECu.), Eg.-Ch. \*gos-, SAA \*ʿaž- (Cu., ECh., false Eg.), (S<sup>?</sup>)AA \*qar- (ECu., NOM., WCh. + Eg.).

<sup>32</sup> Namely, AA \*√ḡčč ~ \*√ḡčw/y „to fish” (attested in Chadic, Yemsa of North Omotic, and Akkadian).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. AA \*hVm „large feline” (Sem., Bed., the Eg. parallel is certainly false, while the NOM. ones are only comparable if an improbable metathesis is to be admitted) and AA \*(ʔa)žar- „wild cat” (Sem., SBrb., ECu.<sup>?</sup>, WRift, Kafa, Bachama).

<sup>34</sup> Among these, only two items seems to be reliably attested in both NAA and SAA: \*kawVr- (Sem., Dullay, SOM., unacceptable Eg. parallel) and \*ʿVw/yVd- (MSA, Nbauchi, Eg.<sup>?</sup>), whereas two further ones represents merely Semito-Egyptian isoglosses: \*IVb(Vb)- (MSA, Eg.), \*bVg- (MSA, Eg.), and the 5th fish root, \*SVSVn- was based by Militarev on Soqotri and a false Egyptian match.

<sup>35</sup> Presented in the handout in three distinct items, viz. AA \*pa/il(V)y- „stinging insect”, mostly „louse, flea” (Sem., Eg., Cu., Kafa, Musgu), AA \*pVrγuč- „kind of hopping insect” (Sem., Brb., Daba), and AA \*γVpčVr- ~ \*paryač- „kind of flying insect” (Sem., Eg.), but the latter two items represent, in fact, the very same root.

<sup>36</sup> AA \*ʔačal- „big dangerous snake” (Sem., unacceptable Eg. match, Brb., Cu.) and SAA \*mVs- „kind of snake” (Somali and WCh., false Eg. and MSA parallels).

even Semitic counterpart is missing, and so a late (3rd mill. BC) borrowing may be excluded. Militarev suggests an (East) Cushitic-like substratum, whence Sumerian may have borrowed. It may only work, of course, if one postulates the separation of Proto-Cushitic from the Afro-Asiatic home in the Near East.

(2) Similarly, along with a number of Semitic vs. North Caucasian matches, A. Ju. Militarev and S. A. Startostin (1984, 34-43, cf. also Militarev 1996, 17-19), and later also V. Orel (1994, 37-46), pointed out several North Caucasian lexical parallels shared with such Afro-Asiatic items, where the attestation is only available in the „African” branches, which again speaks for a Near Eastern presence of Common Afro-Asiatic.

(3) V. Blažek (1992, 150-165) listed 115 etymological entries shared by both Proto-Afro-Asiatic and Proto-Dravidian in a wide range of semantic domains such as A. body parts, B. human society, C. fauna, D. flora, E. inanimate natural objects, F. culture. His conclusion was that „in addition to the most basic lexical elements, such as body parts and natural objects, ... common cultural terms ... may reflect similar ecological conditions among the different communities (e.g. flora and fauna) as well as the cultural levels of the communities as determined by the neolithic revolution (e.g. house, village/city, hoe/plough, to sow, to milk, honey, bow, arrow, etc.” (o.c., p. 151-152). These ties were, again, only possible in the Near Eastern area.

(4) In his presentation at the 3rd World Archaeological Congress (New Delhi, Dec. 1994), V. Blažek (1994 MS Elam) demonstrated lexical correspondences of non-Semitic Afro-Asiatic and Elamite (including ad hoc matches from Dravidian and Sumerian) in almost all fields of the lexicon: 1. body parts and space orientation, 2. human society, 3. natural phenomena, 4. dwelling, agriculture, tools, weapons, transport, 5. fauna. Moreover, he claimed to have collected much more: „the common basic lexicon represented by body parts and natural phenomena terms ... can be complemented by pronouns (and even numerals and grammatical words). The cognates from these semantic fields represent very strong evidence for a closer genetic relationship”. This daring hypothesis cannot be commented here as it lies and brings us far beyond the scope of our investigation: „the ancestors of Dravidians, Elamites and Afroasians were at one time – yet before a (sic, GT) coming of Sumerians – in Mesopotamia neighbors and yet earlier relatives”. I am much more convinced of a second, more recent layer of this common stock, where his conclusion was: „The relatively rich common lexicon connected with dwelling and the developed social terminology indicate the beginning of urban civilization” (o.c., p. 11).

(5) G. Takács (1998, 146-157), evaluating older observations and presenting new results, pointed out traces of a non-Semitic Afro-Asiatic substrate in the Proto-Indo-European cultural lexicon (esp. in the fauna, apiculture, agriculture etc.), which suggests a presence of the former in the neolithic Near East.

(6) These ideas have been corroborated by a milestone paper, entitled „The diffusion of agricultural terms from Mesopotamia”, by V. Blažek and C. Boisson (1992), who have demonstrated a common, expressly neolithic, terminology to be present in Dravidian, Sumerian, Kartvelian, Indo-European, and Afro-Asiatic (irrespective of whether there is an attestation in Semitic). They managed to isolate etymological entries such as (1) sickle and plough, (2) „hoe” vs. „plough”, (3) „plough” vs. „part of a (drill)-plough” vs. „axe”, (4) „mortar” vs. „millstone”, (5) „to plough”, (6) „to grind”, (7) „a heap”, „to heap up grain”, „to sweep the threshing-floor in order to gather grain”, (8) „to sow”. The co-authors refrained from hasty conclusions in the discussion section (o.c., pp. 27-31) for the sake of further analyses leaving even the question of itineraries open the „three-lobe” theory of C. Renfrew: „one may well suppose that Iran was a center for the dispersal of various techniques and words .... Another centre would be the Levant, and a third one Anatolia .... In the case of Wanderwörter, the ultimate origin is not easy to ascertain in the present state of knowledge, and there is no reason why it might not differ from word to word (which is why, in a sense, the very title of this paper is to be viewed as tentative)”.

### Afro-Asiatic homeland

Approaching the question through a lexical comparison of Proto-Cushito-Omotiic (Dolgopolskij 1973) and Proto-Semitic (Fronzaroli 1964-1971), I. M. D’jakonov (1975, 127) ingeniously surmised the substantial cultural difference between the mesolithic (or, even in the best case, early pre-pottery neolithic) Proto-Cushitic niveau (8th mill. BC) vs. the evidently more developed neolithic Proto-Semitic milieu (4th mill. BC, prior to its desintegration after 3500 BC). He carefully avoided forcing a hasty conclusion about the first location of Proto-Afro-Asiatic especially on the basis of the otherwise (at that time) all too scanty archaeological data about mesolithic-neolithic Sahara, Sudan and Ethiopia. D’jakonov (1975, 128-130) was merely pondering if Proto-Semitic has anything to do with early neolithic Fayum A in the Nile Valley (4440 BC ± 180 yrs. BC), where the epipaleolithic-mesolithic Helwan culture (with traces of ground grain of wild cereals) reflects Natufian influence, whereas the Upper Egyptian and Nubian part, considered by D’jakonov as the lesser developed strip of the Nile Valley, where the mesolithic around the 2nd cataract dates back to 7500 BC, might have had something in common with Proto-Cushitic. If neolithic Proto-Semitic moved from the African homeland to Asia through the Delta around the 5th mill. BC the latest, it must have left the traces of its highly developed agriculture through its itinerary or we are to reckon with that this high culture was formed in Asia already after the Proto-Semitic immigration. The first version seemed to D’jakonov, nevertheless, preferable as, subsequently to their immigration, a swift desintegration of the Semitic subbranches would have to be supposed, which, in the latter

version can hardly agree with the naturally longer formation of the high neolithic society in Asia. We are facing problems in both cases. If, in turn, the homeland was primarily in Asia, so D'jakonov, then all the rest of the parental phylum, i.e., the massive block, whence all the other five branches issued later, must have migrated into Africa by no means later than the Natufian period (i.e., 10th-8th mill. BC). That is, one would have to assume Proto-Semitic as a neolithic unity for about four further millennia after the separation of Proto-Cushomotic in the 8th mill. BC until the Semitic unity ceased around 3500 BC. D'jakonov rightly objected that „трудно представить себе условия, в которых могла бы сохраниться столь длительная стабильность племени”. He proposed a partly modified scenario: the Afro-Asiatic parental phylum diversified still in its Asian homeland into two greater blocks, whence the one (South Afro-Asiatic = Cushito-Omotoc and Chadic), splitting off from the rest (presumably still a unity in the 8th mill. BC), moved into Africa first, and the other one (North Afro-Asiatic) began only later to fall into Semitic, Egyptian, and Berber, whence the latter two also migrated to Africa, only substantially later. What remained on the Asian side of the Near East, was Proto-Semitic plus, according to the hypothesis of A. B. Dolgopolskij (cited by D'jakonov), another certain Afro-Asiatic branch, now extinct but deductible as the substratum of Arabic, labelled by them as „Proto-Arabian Para-Semitic”. As for the North Afro-Asiatic unity, D'jakonov was eventually concluding that „исторически такое единство могло существовать как в Передней Азии, так и на территории Северной Африки, но мне представляется более вероятным второе. Исключается существование афразийского е д и н с т в а одновременно по обе стороны Красного моря.”

In his subsequently published ingenious linguo-archaeological analysis of the Proto-Afro-Asiatic culture (mainly of cereals and ungulates), I. M. Diakonoff (1981) arrived at a number of daring and far-fetching conclusions:

- The dissolution of Common Afro-Asiatic „certainly antedated the VIIth and perhaps began as early as the IXth millennium B.C.” with the separation of the mesolithic Proto-Cushomotic community (o.c., p. 28).
- Proto-Afro-Asiatic people knew „most probably ... the different subspecies of the wild einkorn, *Tr. Boeoticum*, which means that its area must in the Mesolithic period have stretched into Northern Africa”, which he (o.c., p. 44) connected with sickles and hand-querns (known in the Proto-Afro-Asiatic lexicon) found in Ballana and Tushka of Lower Nubia (dated by the radio-carbon method between the 14th and the 10th mill. BC), cf. the archaeological data published by F. Wendorf and others.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, he also supposed connection with the fact that „food-collecting, and especially of wild grain, went on in the Upper Nile valley as early as ca. 12000 B.C., actually in the Late Paleolithic or the earliest Mesolithic period, i.e., much earlier than anywhere else in Asia” (o.c., p. 45). Date-palm, known to Proto-Afro-Asiatic, „had its origin in Africa, most probably in the now totally arid Sahara ... where speakers of B(erber) may have lived since a period before the rupture with S(emitic)” (o.c., p. 49).
- The civilization stages reflected by the diverse layers of the Saharan rock-paintings may be classified (pace H. Lhote and his team, who first described them) according to stylistic periods: (1) stage of „the hunters and the wild buffalo” or the „roundheads” (7th-5th mill. BC according to radio-carbon dating, Saharan sub-pluvial period), supposed to be represented by a negroid population,<sup>38</sup> (2) „stage of cow-herds” (5th to early 3rd mill. BC) with great number of (often apparently domesticated) bulls and cows identified by Lhote as *Bos taurus africanus*, a longhorned race near to the *Bos primigenius* and *Bos taurus brachycerus* known from Ancient Egypt (the former race is also known among the Chadic and Fulani speaking peoples). Probably the europeoid race was dominant in the mixed population of this stage, which ceased without continuous tradition, without connection to the subsequent period, being divided through a ca. one millennium gap from the (3) „stage of the charioteers” (2nd mill. BC). Diakonoff (1981, 54-55) was seeking the centre of dispersion of Proto-Afro-Asiatic (North Afro-Asiatic, more precisely) to the south of the Libyan desert and to the south-east of Ahaggar and Tassili n-Ažžer (the north-western part of the modern Republic of Sudan), whose 2nd stage population as depicted in the rock-paintings there he was apparently, albeit merely indirectly, suggesting as having to do with the Mediterranean sub-race of the europeoid race, with which Berbers, both ancient and modern Egyptians, and many speakers of Semitic are identical. Diakonoff (1981, 55) presumed to have in Sem. (or NAA?) \*√?dm „red”, the source of Hebrew ʔādām „man”, the lexical evidence for it, as certain North Afro-Asiatic reflexes of it (in Semitic and Egyptian) were used as designations for „red skin”. Noteworthy, A. Ju. Militarev (1988, 197, #3.2.1.3; 1991, 139; 1991, 151; 1994, 248), following T. Sarnelli (1957, 132-4), rendered the Proto-Berber ethnonym \*a-maziγ "Berber man", pl. \*i-maziγ-ən "Berber people" as having originated from an older \*maših, which, in the light of its late Egyptian reflex, viz. mšwš (group-writing, originally \*mšwḥ via assimilation?) "Name eines libyschen Stammes" (XIX., Wb II 157, 3), might be derived as an m- prefix form of PBrb. \*√zwy > \*i-zway "to be red",

<sup>37</sup> Wendorf, F.; Rushdi, S.; Schild, R.: Egyptian Prehistory. Some New Concepts. = Science 169 (1970), 3951.

<sup>38</sup> For which cf. the supposedly negroid population of the early Middle Saharan neolithic cultures from ca. 7300 BC on the territory of present-day North-Eastern Niger (Tagalagal, Amekni and Adrar Bous 10).



i.e., *\*\*a-ma-zwiγ* „red-skin person”.<sup>39</sup> In the theory of Diakonoff (1981, 55-56), „*the speakers of S(emitic) must have lived to the east or north-east of the speakers of B(erber), and must therefore have been affected by aridity before the latter ... already during the first epoch of aridization (XIVth to VIIth millennia B.C., i.e., even before Lhote's stage I in Tassili)*”. At the end of this first arid period, „*in the VIIth-Vith millennia B.C. the dune-formation was in Libya at its maximum*”, which „*may have been the cause of the migration of the speakers of S(emitic) across the Nile and further on to the East, into Palestine and Syria*”.

- Proto-Semitic „*must have crossed the Nile at a very early date*” (in the 7th mill. BC?), but since between 8000-6000 BC the Nile valley was „*constantly and uncontrollably flooded*” and „*uninhabitable along the river*”, „*while the Delta probably consisted of big shallow lakes and lagoons with low marshy islands covered with thickets of papyrus etc.*”, the Semitic branch „*might, e.g., have moved from the territory of the modern Republic of the Sudan and the oases north of it along the Nile valley ahead of the speakers of E(gyptian), and crossed the river at any convenient place up the country ... and afterwards migrated to Asia through the hilly and still not entirely desert country via Suez*” (o.c., p. 44, also fn. 55). Since the home of domesticated barley was in the mountains of Anatolia and Zagros (as early as the 8th mill. BC), Proto-Semitic people, not knowing barley (until its late neolithic contacts with Sumerian), „*could not have been aborigines of S.W.Asia, but arrived from Africa*”, where „*there was still no domesticated barley ... at the time when the speakers of S(emitic) left*” (o.c., p. 47).

- „*The Egyptian cereals were certainly of Asiatic origin*”, since the main African genocentre for cereals in Ethiopia was a secondary one. „*A species of Aegilops, as well as barley and emmer in a state of transition from wild forms to a domesticated one, did reach Beidha south of the Dead Sea in the early VIIth millennium B.C., and in all probability must have reach Egypt*”, where „*emmer and barley were already sown in ... the Fayyum, Merimde, el-Omari, and the Badarian cultural periods (Vth-early Ivth millennium B.C.), and they were apparently of the same origin as the species in contemporary South-Western Asia*”.

A. Ju. Militarev and V. A. Shnirel'man (1984, 39) proposed a radically different, albeit not entirely new (cf. Dolgopol'skij's idea published by D'jakonov, above), theory on the identification of the reconstructed Proto-Afro-Asiatic lexical stock with the archaeological data from the neolithic Natufian culture (Cauvin 1978; Henry 1981; Valla 1975). Unfortunately, Militarev only used the asterisked Proto-Afro-Asiatic forms without quoting any of the underlying real lexical data, therefore checking back his proto-forms is difficult in many cases. A couple of great controversies surround his theory.

- E.g., metal names are almost absent from the common Afro-Asiatic lexical stock except for AA \*bir attested with diverse senses („bronze”, „metal”, „iron”, rarely „silver”), whereas metals are not attested in the Natufian cultures before its appearance in the 7th mill. BC in the Near East.

- The speakers of the parental language, in their view (o.c., pp. 41-42), apparently used word for „fig” and „date”, which together in their wild form are only attested in the old Mediterranean, the oldest traces of wild fig are known from the pre-Natufian (Kebaranian) layers of Nakhal Oren and the early neolithic Tell Aswad and Jericho.

- But, as Militarev and Shnirel'man also confessed, remnants of date from this period have not been found in the eastern Mediterranean, which is paralleled by the dubious attestation of a common Afro-Asiatic term for date, since Militarev's \*binaw-r can only be pointed out in Semitic, Egyptian and Berber, i.e., in North Afro-Asiatic only.

- The surprising, albeit evident lack of common Afro-Asiatic terms for „fish” made even Militarev and Shnirel'man (1984, 48) admit here a serious controversy between the linguistic vs. archaeological evidence as fishing played an important role in the Natufian household.

R. M. Blench (2006, 150), in turn, appears to be a combattant defender of the old Saharan homeland hypothesis, albeit on the basis of different (paleo-botanical and -zoological) arguments. He swept away Militarev's idea with one swift stroke, not bothering about declining it in the very details, however: „*The correlation with the Natufian culture of the Near East ... fails the primary test of explaining the geography and internal diversity of African Afroasiatic*”. He joined the researchers, who „*concluded long ago that its most likely homeland was ... in southwest Ethiopia, the present location of its most fragmented branch, Omotic, and the 'center of gravity' of Cushitic. ... there is no hint that Omotic speakers have ever been located elsewhere than their present homeland*”. In Blench's (2006, 150-151) hypothesis, these people were „*probably heavily dependent on the wild enset plant, as well as being honey hunters since honey reconstructs well in Proto-North Omotic. ... Omotic languages remain associated with populations that were hunters-gatherers until recently ... the initial split between Cushitic and Omotic was between incipient pastoralists and groups retaining a hunters-gatherer lifestyle*.”

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<sup>39</sup> This etymology, however, certainly excludes any comparison with Eg. mšwš, which would only be plausible if Brb. \*-z- < AA \*-š-. But this is apparently not the case, since Brb. \*√zwγ „to be red” is cognate with NOm. \*zok- "red" [Bnd.] as pointed out by G. Takács (2000, 268-9).