

1983

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Recommended Citation

Tomback, Richard S. (1983). Random notes on the Hebrew-Arabic lexicons. *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 11: 139-141.

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Richard S. Tomback

RANDOM NOTES ON THE HEBREW-ARABIC LEXICONS

Interest in the Arabic dialects, in particular those of Egypt and Syro-Palestine have been the subject of many comprehensive and exhaustive studies, while the peripheral geographic regions of the Maghrib, Arabia,¹ and the Sudan have been almost totally neglected. The following short study is a modest attempt to make use of the vast untapped resources of the "colloquial" Arabic dialects of the Sudan in their relation to Hebrew and Semitic lexicography and morphology.

The first person independent personal pronoun in Arabic has a number of significant phonetic variants. The form of the independent pronoun of the first person singular in Classical Arabic and in most dialects is 'anā. We must remember that "the second syllable of 'anā is regarded as short by the old poets (∪∪), except in pause, where we find both 'anā (∪-), and 'anāh . . . 'anā is, therefore, an example of *scriptio plena*, to distinguish the pronoun from the particles 'an, 'anna, 'in, 'inna".² Chaim Rabin, in his exhaustive study on the ancient Western Arabic dialects contrasts the forms of 'ana in context and that of 'anā in pause.³ The precise relationship of these forms to each other is not at all clear. Rabin goes on to state that "perhaps these were originally disparate forms. Long final ā is found in Akkadian, Hebrew, Aramaic, Egyptian, short a in Ethiopic. To these must be added 'āna in the Quda'a dialect . . . and in modern Eastern Aramaic".⁴ In the modern Arabic dialects we find a diversity of forms of the first person independent personal pronoun represented by 'āna in Gulf Arabic,⁵ 'anā in Syro-Palestinian⁶ and 'ēna in Dofar.⁷ Interestingly enough, in the Sudanese colloquial dialect we find two forms used in everyday conversation, 'ana and 'anī, as in the following examples: *Hā marra itti lissā 'ik ma šutti l-'ašida? 'anī l-ḡu' kide qaṭa qalbī halāš w' atšhān kamān* "Ho, woman have you not yet finished stirring the 'ašida? hunger is cutting me to the heart, and I am thirsty

¹ Note especially the material gathered by Socrates Spiro, "An Arabic-English Dictionary of the Colloquial Arabic of Egypt, 1980. Also see materials collected by A. Barthélemy, *Dictionnaire-arabe-français, Dialects de Syrie* . . . Paris, 1935 and Anis Fraha, *A Dictionary of Non-Classical Vocables in the Spoken Arabic of Lebanon*, 1946 (in Arabic).

² *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 3rd edition, p. 54, 1967, where W. Wright discusses the orthographic tradition of the first person personal pronoun in early Arabic poetry.

³ Chaim Rabin *Ancient West-Arabian*, 1951, 151.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 151-52.

⁵ Hamdi A. Qafisheh, *A Basic Course in gulf Arabic*, 1977, 461.

⁶ J. Kapliawatzky, *Colloquial Arabic*, 1968, 71.

⁷ For further information and representative textual evidence concerning the Arabic dialect found in Dofar see the extensive material gathered by N. Rhodokanakis in *Südarabische Expedition Band X Der vulgärarabische im Dofar*. I and II, 1911.

as well"⁸ and *lākin 'ana istannet 'aššan 'aḥris lēki bētik* "but I remained in order to look after your house for you".⁹ (Paranetically it should be noted that the colloquial dialect of Dofar records the form *'āni*, reflecting a possible pausal form which corresponds to the regular form *'āni* in the Samaritan dialect of Hebrew¹⁰ and the form *'āni*, in pause, with a full vowel in standard printed Hebrew Old Testaments with Masoretic pointings). As to the quantity of the initial and final vowels in *'ana*, we should bear in mind the existence of considerable quantitative vowel fluctuations and consequently the difficulty in determining with a degree of certainty the Proto-Semitic form of the personal pronoun in question.

The Talmudic tractate *Shabbāt* 5-2 records the following statement: *ḵō-šeret 'iššā miftah ḥalūka*¹¹ "The woman fastened the neckhole of her shirt". One searches in vain in the other Semitic languages for any lexical or etymological parallel to the lexeme *ḥalūk* "garment". Classical Arabic possesses what is perhaps two terms demonstrating an etymological relationship to the aforementioned *ḥalūk* but at the same time manifesting considerable semantic distance, *ḥalaḳiyyun* "one who wears old and worn out clothes" and *ḥulḳāniyyun* "a seller of old and worn-out clothes".¹² Notwithstanding this, only in the Sudanese Arabic dialect do we find the term *ḥalakā* "garment, clothes", as in the following example: *w al bibra d-durub ḥalka yešrta l-'ūd*, "and he who follows the game tracks has his clothes torn by thorns".¹³

The Talmudic tractate *Sanhedrin* 37-1 in making reference to a verse in

⁸ For a complete discussion of the personal pronouns in the Sudanese dialect of Arabic see S. Hillelson, *Sudan Arabic Texts with Translation and Glossary*, xviii, 1935. The author points out that in the Western Arabic dialects of the Sudan the characteristic form for the first person personal pronoun is *'anī* (as in Hebrew).

⁹ *ibid.* 90, paragraph 64 for additional examples of the use of *'ani* in Sudanese Arabic. Also, see 6, paragraph 11 for examples of *ana*.

¹⁰ See Ze'ev Ben-Hayyim *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic amongst the Samaritans* (in modern Hebrew) vol. iv, *The Words of the Pentateuch*, 28, for a complete citation of the first person personal pronoun in the Pentateuch according to the Samaritan tradition. Likewise, we should make note of the forms *'ānāia* and *āna* both found in the Algerian dialect of Arabic, in addition to the standard form, *'anā*. Cf. Jacques Grand Henry, *Le Parler Arabe De Cherchell* (Algérie) 1972, 129.

The Mishnaic Hebrew *'anū* 'we' (invariably with *ḵāmās* in printed manuscripts) seems to reflect the same relationship of *'anā* to *'āna* inasmuch as the *kethibh* of Jer. xlii, 6 reads *'anū*, which may be the vulgar plural of *'anī*.

Beyond the scope of this paper, but certainly worthy of mention is the presence in the Yemenite dialect of Arabic of two forms for the first person singular personal pronoun, *'ana*, masculine and *'ani*, feminine. For further details and provisional discussion see Werner Diem, *Skizzen Jemenitischer Dialekte*, 1973.

¹¹ See *Talmud Babli* standard Vilna editions, reprinted many times.

¹² For a complete discussion of the root *ḥlk* in Classical Arabic see E. Lane *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. I, 102-4.

¹³ Hillelson, *op. cit.*, 84-85, paragraph 60.

the Song of Songs records the following statement: *Hattōrā he'ida 'ālenū sūgā baššošanīm še'afilū kesūgā baššošanīm l'ō yifrešū bāhen perāšōt* "the Torah has warned us (as) a fence of lilies that even in a fence of lilies they will make no breach" (they will not trespass the law however slightly guarded).¹⁴ Sudanese colloquial Arabic possesses the lexeme *sōg* "inner wall of a native hut" as in the following example: *wakit 'āyan le qarib šhufta lēk aḡ-ḡurban merašrašāt fi s-sōg*, "as I looked close I saw the leather grain sacks arranged along the wall".¹⁵ The Sudanese Arabic *sōg* perhaps demonstrating a semantic development of the Late-Hebrew, *sūgā* = fence, enclosure.¹⁶

I have attempted to show that these vocables found in the Arabic dialect of the Sudan are not what the Arab lexicographers would call *muwallad* that is, words derived from pure classical Arabic roots according to the rules of the language, but represent survivals from an earlier substratum of Semitic, perhaps taken over as culture loan words from Jewish Aramaic and/or Neo-Hebrew.

¹⁴ See *Talmud Babli* standard Vilna editions, reprinted many times.

¹⁵ On the Etymologically related terms in Late Hebrew and Jewish-Aramaic *seyāg*, *seyāgā* "fence, hedge" *sūg* "basket" and *sūgā* "enclosure" see M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Jerushalmi and the Midrashic Literature*, 1950, 960-61, 978. Hillelson, op. cit. 38-39, paragraph 24.

¹⁶ On the problem of Late Hebrew and Jewish Aramaic terms in Arabic Dialects (of syro-Palestine and Lebanon) see most recently E. Y. Kutscher, *Archive of the New Dictionary of Rabbinic Literature*, vol. 1 1972. 27-28 and E. Y. Kutscher, *Words and their History*, 1961, 14.