

## VOCABULARY OF WATER IN CHADIC

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The aim of the paper is to show that words meaning 'water' in almost all Chadic languages go back to one and the same Common Chadic root and to present Chadic glosses for 'rain', 'river', 'boat' and 'fish' with parallels in Semitic and Egyptian.

## 1. 'WATER'

1.1. Only a few Chadic languages still preserve reflexes of the Common Afrasian (CA)<sup>1</sup> \*ma'/\*may-/\*maw- 'water' (WCh: Guruntum *maa*, Geji *maa*; CCh: Fali Mucela (Kr) *ma'i*, Gude (Kr) *ma'in*). CCh Logone *muu* 'dew' and Fali Kiriya (Kr) *məwa* 'river' obviously go back to the same root attested in all the branches of Afrasian (Semitic: Akkadian *muu*, Ugaritic *my*, Hebrew *mayim* (pl.), Arabic *maa*, 'amwaah- (pl.), Sabaic 'mwh (pl.), Ge'ez *maay*, Harari *mii*, *miiy* 'water'; Egyptian *my*, *mw* 'water'; Cushitic: Iraqw *ma'ay*, Asa *ma'a*, Dahalo *ma'a* 'water', Bedaue *mu* 'liquid'; Common Berber *a-ma-n* (pl.) 'water').

1.2. In a large number of Chadic languages the word for 'water' goes back to \*am/m/a (WCh: Montol *ham*, Sura *am*, Gerka *xam*, Bolewa 'amma, Maha *amma*, Ngamo *ham*, Tangale *am*, Fyer 'aam (coll.), Bokkos *ham*, Kulere 'aam; CCh: Boka (Kr) *ama*, Hwona (Kr) *am*, Logone *am*, Kuseri *am*, Gulfey *am*, Buduma *amay*, Mbara 'am; ECh: Dangla *ammi*, Jegu 'am, Bidiya 'amay (coll.), Migama 'ammi (pl.), Mubi *aame*. The same root has a *ka*-prefix in Kera-Nancere groups (Kwang *kaam*, Kabalay *kaamə*, Lele *kama* <- \*ka-'ama). Our hypothesis is that Chadic \*am/m/a reflects old Common Afrasian pl. of the above-mentioned CA \*ma'/\*may-/\*maw- 'water' (note, that the former is plural in several Chadic languages). Chadic \*am/m/a, as well as Arabic 'amwaah- and

<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations

|       |                 |
|-------|-----------------|
| CA    | Common Afrasian |
| CCh   | Central Chadic  |
| ECh   | East Chadic     |
| WCh   | West Chadic     |
| Kr    | Kraft           |
| coll. | collective      |
| pl.   | plural          |

Sabaic *'mwh*, reflects one and the same *'apraas* (or *'aCCaaC*) model of 'broken plural'. In Semitic languages "for monoradical and biradical nouns extra consonants are obligatorily supplied in plural formations" (RATCLIFFE), in our case *-h* is added in Arabic and Sabaic. In Chadic an assimilation *\*'amwaa* → *'amma* is quite probable. There is one more example of the plural pattern in Chadic: Bokkos *re* 'man', pl. *'arya*. In Southern Semitic the *'apraas*-model, according to P. Corriente, is the most ancient type of broken plural.

1.3. CCh *\*'yVm-* 'water' (Gabin *yeme*, Cibak *yimi*, Margi *'imi*, Fali Kiriya *yamu*, Higi Nkafa *yemi*, Higi Kamale *yemwi*, Fali Jilbu *yimu*, Daba *yim* (Kr), Mofu *yam*, Giziga *'iyam, yam*, Balda *yam*, Musgu *yem, iym*), as well as Higi Ghye *nyeme*, Gudu *nya(m)* (Kr), ECh Somray *niimi* 'water' all go back to *\*niyam*. The first element is probably preserved in CCh Masa (Kr) *nii, nina* 'water' and has a good parallel in Egyptian *n.t* (Pyramid) 'water'. The second one-*\*yam*-is related to or borrowed from Semitic *\*yam* 'sea' (Ugaritic *ym*, Hebrew *yym*, Arabic *yam*). Note, that Egyptian *ym* is a Semitic loan. Original *\*niyam-* → *\*nyim* → *yim* accounts for *-e/-i-* in almost all CCh languages. The semantical shift must be 'water-of-sea' → 'water'.

1.4. Chadic *\*'amb-* 'water' (WCh Pa'a *ambi*, Siri *ibi*, Mburku *abi*, Kariya *aabi*, Jimbin *imbi*; CCh Njanye (Kr) *mbi'i*, Lame *mbi*; ECh Sokoro *mbo*) may in our opinion go back to the same Common Chadic *\*ma-* 'water' with a prefixed determinative *\*'ab-* originating from a word for 'thing' (Hausa *abu*, Pa'a *avu*, Mburku *vuu*, Tsagu *vey*). Note, that in Warji languages *\*-b-* yields *-v-*, but *\*-mb-* either preserves, or gives *-b-*. The same determinative is attested in Warji languages in the word for 'thorn': Warji *vəkəy*, Diri *avikiya*, Pa'a *vagwe*, Miya *aveki*, Jimbin *avagiya*, Tsagu *baagiye*. Compare Hausa *kaya* 'thorn'. In Mafa the same determinative looks like *va-* (going back to *\*'VbV*, while the initial *\*-b-* yields *b-*) and is incorporated into the root. That is why initial *va-* in Mafa nouns usually corresponds to zero in other languages, for example Mafa *voyokw* 'locust'-Tera (dial.) *yog-di*, Zexwana *mi-yako* (Kr); Mafa *vatak* 'thorn'-Glavda *taka*, Gava *təka*; Mafa *varadza* 'scorpion'-Glavda *'ardza*, Mandara *rrdza* (Kr).

The *\*'abm-* → *\*'amb-* metathesis is caused by the fact that in Chadic only sonorant+obstruent consonant clausters are permitted (i.e. *mb, nd, ng, nk*, but not *bm, dn, gn, kn*). So, if V is lost in a *-CVN-* sequence, *-CN-* gives *-NC-*. Compare the following data from South Bauchi languages: Guruntum *bimasi*, Tala *mbasi*, Polci *basli*, Zeem *mbazli* 'chest' with a *\*bm-* → *mb-* metathesis. Also a *\*-kn-* → *-nk-* change is typical to different Chadic languages. For example: Kariya *jəkən*-Jimbin *jingaya* 'to change'; Ngizim *jigəna*-Geruma *jangu-mu* 'chin' (the original consonantal order is preserved also in Arabic

*dhaqar-* 'beard'); Warj *sukən*, Pa'a *səkin* 'to swallow'—Geji *singe* (Kr) 'to swallow', Hausa *sunka* 'to put into the mouth more than is correct'.

The last *-i* in *ambi*, *abi*, etc. may originate from a contraction (\*ab-mayi → 'ab-miyi → 'ab-mi → 'ambi, compare Semitic Harare *miy*, *mii* 'water'). So the \*'ab-may origin for Chadic '*ambi* seems quite probable.

## 2. 'RAIN'

2.1. Egyptian *b"r* (Pyramid) 'Gewässer am Himmel' is certainly related to CCh Gidar *buuna* 'rain' and ECh Migama *bun* 'rain', Dangla *bun*, Mubi *bun* 'sky', Jegu *bon*, Bidiya *bun* 'sky, God'. CCh Lame *bun-or* 'rain' may be derived from the same root.

2.2. A Proto-Chadic word for 'rain' is probably \*fuwan (WCh: Angas *fwan*, Sura *fwan*, Ankwe *fuaa*, Kir *fwan*, Zaar *vwan*, etc.; CCh: Gude (Kr) *vəna*, Giziga *van*, *vun*, Daba *van*, Musgum *fan*, ECh: Kera *pepen*). It can not be excluded that \*fuwan is related to \*bun (\*fu-bun → fu-vun → (f)vun → fwun → fwan). The first element of the composita then has the same origin as WCh Gera *fiu* 'to pour' and Fyer *fu*, Bokkos *ta-fu* 'rainy season'. Viewing that \*bun- is rather 'sky' than 'rain', \*fu-bun (→ fwan) should be interpreted as 'pouring down from sky' → 'rain'. Kera *pepen* seems to result from regressive assimilation of -b- (\*fV-bVn → pVbVn → pVpVn). Up to now there is no explanation for WCh Gerka *fyen* 'rain'.

2.3. Hausa *ruwaa* 'water, rain' and Zime *ru* 'rain' are related to Arabic *riway-* 'abundant water' and Hebrew *rc* 'moistening'.

2.4. WCh Siri *hwii* 'to rain' and ECh Sibine '*wa* 'to rain' may be compared with Egyptian #*w.t* (Pyramid) 'rain' and #*wy* 'to rain'.

## 3. 'RIVER'

A lot of Chadic words have parallels in Egyptian and Semitic, but no Common Chadic root as such can be reconstructed.

3.1. \*bVI- 'river, rivulet' (WCh: Zul *bullai* 'river', CCh: Buduma *ful* 'river', Gulfei *belle*, Logone *fəli* 'rivulet'; ECh: Somray *beIIaIi* 'short rivulet'). An Egyptian cognate is *wbn* 'spring, source (in the oasis)', also *bnbn* 'to flow'.

3.2. \*gur- 'lake' (WCh: Kirfi *guruxo*, Gera *gurku* 'lake', Angas *kur* 'pool'; CCh: Bacama (Kr) *gurey*, Fali Mucela (Kr) *guru* 'lake', Gude (Kr) *gəra*, Fali Jilbu (Kr) *gəli* 'river') – Egyptian *wgr* (late) 'Gewässer'.

3.3. \*arVw/y- 'river' (WCh: Geruma *ara*, Galambu *rwa*; CCh: Musgu *eree*, Mbara *ree*) – Egyptian *ir.t* (late) 'water'.

3.4. WCh: Hausa *wuriya* 'rushing stream', Miya *wər* 'lake' – Egyptian *wrw* (Pyramid) 'pond'.

3.5. CCh \*kuf-: Ga'anda *kufa*, Hwona *kufa-ra* 'river', Gabin *kufa*, Cibak *kufa* 'lake' (Kr) – Akkadian *kuppu* 'water spring'.

3.6. ECh Kera *sula* 'sea' – Egyptian *sn* (Pyramid) 'sea'.

3.7. WCh Pero *turo* 'river' and ECh Migama *tarro* 'water-flood' are related to Egyptian *itrw* (old) 'river, Nile'.

3.8. The main Egyptian word for the Nile *h<sup>u</sup>py* (Pyramid) also has a cognate in Chadic – WCh Pa'a *h'yiifi* 'lake, pond, stagnant river'.

#### 4. 'SHIP, BOAT'

CCh: Logone *g'oam*, Musgum *h'olum*, Mbara *holam* 'boat' are definitely related to Akkadian *Hallimu* 'raft'. Egyptian *Hmn.ty* (Old Kingdom) 'ship' may also be a metathetic variant of the same Afrasian root.

There are also two isolated Chadic words probably having parallels in Egyptian, namely CCh Zime *lum* 'boat' – Egyptian (OK) *imw* 'kind of ship' and WCh Ankwe *shik* 'boat' – Egyptian *sk.ty* 'kind of ship'.

#### 5. 'FISH'

5.1. A Common West and Central Chadic word for fish is \*kirop- (WCh: Hausa *kiifi*, Montol *shiep*, Gerka *kirrup*, Ankwe *sharrp*, Bolewa *kerup*, Karekare *charafu*, Dera *shiruwo*, Ngamo *kerfo*, Gerka *kerufa*, Siri *kārfi*, Polci *chirp*, Kulere *kirif*, etc.; CCh Margi *kulfa*, Cibak *kwulfa*, Kilba *kalfi*, Higi Putu *kulupu*, Higi Ghye *kulubi*, Fali Kiriya *kurupu*, Glavda *kilfa*, Daba *kilif*, Mandara *kulfe*, Mafa *klef*, Lame *kirvi*, Banana *kuluva* (Kr), etc. A possible cognate may be Egyptian *p'qr* 'fish'.

5.2. CCh \*xurif- 'fish' (Tera (dial.) *hirivi*, Gudu *hirfu*, Mwulyen *hurifi*, Gude *xurfin*, Njanye *wurfi*, etc., Musgu *h'elif* (Kr) is not related to 5.1 \*kirop-. (Baca *h-* and Musgu *h'-* never go back to Proto-Chadic \*k- and it is likely that we may reconstruct different labials at the end). Note also Cushitic Warazi *hare* and Gawwata *xaare* 'fish'.

5.3. WCh Bokkos *gushe*, Sha *gwashe*, Zeem *gishi*, Sayanci *gwushi* 'fish' may correspond to Egyptian *js* 'fish' (with a palatalization of initial g-).

5.4. CCh: Musgu *tum* 'fish', Mbara *tum* 'to fish' have a good parallel in Egyptian *tm.t* 'kind of fish'.

5.5. A WCh word \*wah'- 'to fish': Tangale *oi, oyi* 'to fish, to catch', Sha *ma-mu-wah'-a-gwashe* 'fisherman' corresponds to Egyptian *wh'''* (OK) 'fisherman', *wh'''* (new) 'to fish'.

The data given in part 1 prove in our opinion that we may reconstruct a single Proto-Chadic word for 'water', namely \*ma'-, a reflex of a Common Afrasian \*ma'-/\*may-/\*maw-. Different Chadic languages preserve its singular (1.1), plural (1.2) or prefixed (1.4) form. The case of Chadic \*amma, reflecting probably an ancient Afrasian broken plural is of special interest and needs further investigation.

Numerous Egyptian parallels to Chadic data (as compared with that of Semitic) account for closer affinity of these two branches within the Afrasian family.

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