

The Etymological Dictionary of Egyptian*

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The book under review is the second volume of a comprehensive etymological dictionary of Egyptian. The project was initiated in 1999 by Gábor Takács, one of the leading figures in the present-day comparative lexicography of Afroasiatic (Hamito-Semitic). As well known to the users of EDE I, the second volume of this dictionary is actually the first one: the whole book of 1999 was an extensive introduction to the etymological method applied to Egyptian and Afroasiatic. It is only now that a systematic list of Egyptian words with their possible Afroasiatic parallels starts to be published.

The volume under review deals with three labial phonemes of Egyptian and includes a larger section containing words beginning with *b*- (pp. 1-372) and smaller sections with words beginning with *p*- (pp. 373-548) and *f*- (pp. 549-616). The etymological part is preceded by a short introduction and closed by a list of “additional literature” which includes only the titles which were not quoted in the introductory volume. These twenty pages represent an impressive continuation of the basic bibliography compiled for EDE I (more than seventy pages) but it is a pity that an integral bibliographic list was not compiled for the present volume. This actually means that EDE I has to be available whenever any further volume of the dictionary is consulted which is, according to my own experience, rather unpractical on many occasions.

As a student of comparative Semitics, I do not feel able to pronounce a competent judgement about the level of Egyptological and Afroasiatic discussion as reflected in EDE II. I have good reasons to suppose, however, that they must broadly correspond to the author’s understanding of Semitological problems which play an important (though by far not a crucial) role in his etymological treatment of Egyptian words. In this respect, I can only congratulate Takács for an outstanding work. Moreover, in my opinion the quality of the diachronic analysis of Semitic words in EDE II by far surpasses the standard adopted by the traditional Semitological scholarship. Semitic cognates to the Egyptian lexicon are adduced with an unusual degree of completeness and precision. All significant phonological and semantic deviations are commented upon in an appropriate way. Most Semitic words are provided with one or more lexicographic reference(s) which usually allow to easily locate the necessary term in the respective sources.

One has to admit that for some Semitic languages a more comprehensive use of lexicographic tools would be desirable. Thus, Ugaritic words are often quoted after Aistleitner’s vocabulary, a pioneering work for its time but almost completely obsolete today and successfully replaced by DLU (one of whose

* Review article of G. Takács, *Etymological Dictionary of Egyptian. Vol. Two. b-, p-, f-*, Leiden-Boston-Köln 2001, Brill, 16 x 24,5, pp. 639.

obvious merits is a meticulous analysis of alternative opinions by other scholars, early and recent, of course including Aistleitner). Akkadian data are mostly quoted from AHw. whose letter B was compiled substantially earlier than that of CAD where many terms are treated in a different, sometimes a clearly preferable way (consulting the important additions and corrections proposed by von Soden at the end of the last volume of his dictionary would also be quite helpful). In any case, a systematic comparative approach to the two dictionaries would make the presentation of the Akkadian data much more solid and reliable. In dealing with Classical Arabic, the author often relies on DRS, but one should remember that early issues of this important work are substantially less comprehensive and accurate than the more recent ones. There is no doubt that a wider use of such standard dictionaries as Lane, Fr. or BK would be of great profit for future volumes of EDE.

Critical remarks on particular Semitic cognates are adduced below. These are few and almost none of them is decisive for the main etymological problem discussed by Takács in this or that concrete case. Needless to say, these corrections in no way affect my admiration towards this monumental work. I can only express my best wishes and gratitude to its author and hope that a continuation of this audacious enterprise will follow soon.

p. 39. Arb. *šr* ‘féconder un palmier’ can hardly be regarded as isolated contra Takács and DRS 5. In fact, this verb is likely derived from Arb. *šbrat-* ‘pénis, verge’ (Blachère 7), in its turn related to a number of Sem. terms denoting male genitals (see SED I No. 2; for a detailed study of the semantic relationship between pollination and copulation in Semitic see Kogan-Militarev 2000). Note also that Eg. *b^owt* was compared to this Sem. root in SED I No. 2, together with a number of other Afroasiatic parallels (partly relying on HSED No. 339).

pp. 54-5. Ugr. *bšir* ‘junger Stier’ quoted after Aist. 46 does not exist according to more recent lexicographic studies since *bširm* in the relevant passages (KTU 1.119:13, 1.39:8) is now analysed as *b-šir-m* (*šir* ‘tipo de sacrificio’ according to DLU 47). One has to admit, therefore, that Akk. *būru* ‘calf’ (as well as *bīru* ‘bull (for breeding); young cattle (up to three years, regardless of sex)’ CAD B 266, AHw. 130) is most probably related to PS **bV^hVr-* and cannot be compared to Eg. *b^hwy*. Note, on the other hand, that semantically comparable forms without either *š* or *šr* are attested in Yemenite Arabic (*bārah* ‘cow’, Piamenta 44) and Tgr. (*bara* ‘ox’, LH 274). Cf. further Amh. *bare* ‘ox, bull’ (K 874), Har. *bāra* ‘ox, bull’ (LH 44) and a number of Gurage forms in LGur. 150.

pp. 79 and 315. Akkadian *bāštu* and *būštu* should be carefully kept apart. Only the latter term is reliably attested with the meaning ‘Scham’ (AHw. 143), ‘embarrassment, distress’ (CAD B 351) and is obviously derived from *bāšu* ‘to be ashamed’ (AHw. 112, CAD B 5; note the *u*-vocalism identical to that of Hbr. *būšā*, *bōšāt* id., KB 117, 165). The meaning ‘shame, pudenda’ proposed for *bāštu* in AHw. 112 cannot be regarded as reliable (corrected to ‘Würde, Anlass zum Stolz’ by von Soden himself in AHw. 1547, cf. CDA 40). This widely used noun is translated as ‘dignity, good looks, pride’ in CAD B 142 and does not seem to be connected with any attested verbal root in Akkadian (a reference to *bašišu* ‘to be ashamed’ in CAD looks strange). Outside Akkadian, Arb. *baš-* ‘bravoure, courage militaire, audace; force, vigueur’ (BK 1 79) seems to be a good match both phonetically and semantically.

p. 135. Syr. *beryātā* ‘via’ (Brock. 88) is almost certainly borrowed from Akk. *birītu* ‘in-between terrain, alley (between houses), balk (between fields and gardens)’ (CAD B 252), in its turn clearly derived from *biri*, *birīt* ‘between’. See Kaufman 1974 44, with references to similar terms in other Aramaic languages.

p. 142. Akk. *bilbillu* ‘kind of insect’ compared to Eg. *hbjj.w* most probably does not exist (corrected to *nenegallu* in CAD N2 165). Note, on the other hand, Amh. *bilbilla* ‘winged ant’ (K 865).

p. 185. For Arb. *banān-* and likely related forms with *h* see SED I No. 34.

p. 186. There is hardly any need to suppose that verbs with the consonantal root *bwš* attested in many Semitic languages should go back to three independent PS roots allegedly meaning ‘to enter’, ‘to come’ and ‘to return’. The three meanings are synchronically attested for Hbr. *bwš* (KB 113; Biblical Hebrew simply does not distinguish between ‘to come’ and ‘to enter’) whereas other Sem. roots are known to possess a similar semantic scope (e.g. **šw/y*). Moreover, if the author’s approach is strictly followed, why not to suppose that one more independent root is represented by Babylonian *bāš* with its basic meaning ‘to go along, to pass over’ (CAD B 178)?

p. 202. The attestation of Akk. *bīnu* is not limited to lexical lists, it is found in all kinds of texts from the earliest periods on (see CAD B 239ff.).

p. 219. For a recent treatment of several unrelated words traditionally united under *bāmā* in Hebrew lexicography see Kogan-Tischenko 2002. If the authors’ approach to this complicated problem is correct, PS **bām-(a)t-* ‘high point’ proposed by Takács is baseless from both phonological and semantic point of view. A few minor observations connected with this interesting root are also in order:

- Syr. *bīmā* ‘lieu élevé etc.’ is most likely borrowed from Greek *bēma* id. (‘raised place, tribune’; according to LS 314, a semantic derivation from ‘step, pace’). The same is correct about Hbr. pB. *bīmā* as recognised already in Krauss 1899 II 150-1;

- Syr. ‘dorsum manus etc.’ is *pantā*, not *pandā* (Brock. 578 and, *contra* Takács, SED I No. 190);

- Hrs. *būmeh* (pl. *béwem*) ‘entrenchment’ (JH 21) is certainly an Arabism (note the feminine marker *-eh* and the form of the broken plural) whose source must be Omani Arabic *būmah/buwam* (v. GD 424). This word seems to be isolated in dialectal Arabic and is not present in the classical language so that its origin is quite obscure. On the other hand, this comparison, while quite plausible phonologically, is somewhat risky semantically since *būmah* does not seem to denote any kind of elevated structure.

p. 224. Correct the Akk. expression to *abī bānū(ša*.

p. 299. Ugr. *štr* ‘bedecken’ is not recorded in DLU whereas Akk. (OA) *šitru* is defined as ‘a textile’ in CAD Š3 134 which does not imply any special connection with the meaning ‘to cover’. It is clear therefore that the PS root with this meaning is reconstructible only with **s* which is clearly unfavorable for its comparison with Eg. *št*?

p. 321. Note that *s* in the Sem. forms for ‘unripe date’ does not regularly correspond to *š* in Eg. *bš*° (as explicitly stated by the author of EDE on p. 323 of the present volume). On the Sem. terms see Kogan 2002 189 (in connection with HSED No. 295).

ibid. Note that Gaf. *buššara* ‘fat’ has been compared to PS **bašar-* in Faber 1984 211 (tentatively accepted in SED I No. 39). The semantic development ‘meat’ > ‘fat’ does not seem unlikely but note that *bāsārā* ‘meat’ is also attested in Gafat. This would imply a rather unusual phonetic and semantic split of PS **bašar-* in this language.

p. 359. *ḏ* is hardly an adequate transcription for the Sem. reflex of PAA **ḏ*.

p. 380. The existence of Ugr. *pršd* ‘fliehen’ is not supported by modern lexicographic tools (moreover, an obscure reference to H. Holma looks strange in connection with Ugaritic).

p. 408. Sem. **pVḥd-* is a mistake since the last radical in the PS form is obviously *ḏ*, not *d* (see SED I No. 211).

p. 413. If PS **b/pVrḥt-* ‘flea’ is indeed to be explained as a result of word-combination, cf., for the second element, PS **Vt(V)t-* ‘moth’, with a shift **t* > *p* not uncommon in the neighbourhood of *r*.

p. 414. Syr. *pāḥalātā* ‘testiculi’ can hardly be considered a convincing parallel to Akk. *pelū* ‘egg’. As pointed out in SED I No. 210, the Syr. term is not isolated in Semitic but has a number of cognates with the meaning ‘male organ’ which would make any connection with *pelū* rather unlikely: the common meaning shift is ‘egg’ > ‘testicle’ but hardly vice versa whereas a direct transition from ‘egg’ to ‘penis’ in

Mnd. and MSA (where the meaning ‘testicle’ is unknown) does not look plausible. On the other hand, the correct Akk. parallel may be *paḥallu* ‘inner thigh’ (admittedly, with another semantic difficulty).

p. 419. Note that ESA s_3 (= \acute{s} in the ‘traditional’ notation, Takács’s \acute{s}) does not regularly correspond to \acute{s} in Hbr. and Arm. (in both languages s is expected). On the other hand, the translation ‘Ausgänge, Ausflüsse’ for *fls_{3t}* is not supported by modern dictionaries (‘part of a building’ according to SD 44, ‘tops of columns, on which the beams of a roof rest’ according to Biella 405).

p. 422. Tgr. *gābil(ät)* ‘foreign tribe’ is obviously borrowed from an Arabic dialect with $k > g$ and is of no relevance for the semantic discussion.

ibid. As pointed out in my review of EDE I (ad p. 350), T. Schneider’s treatment of the Sem. root for ‘folk, tribe’ suffers from grave errors, some of which penetrated unnoticed into the etymological discussion in EDE. Thus, the Arb. term for ‘clan, family’ is *faḥid-* and not *faḍid-* whereas the meaning ‘Herde’ for Ugr. *pḥd* is far from certain (‘cordero añojo’ according to DLU 348, see further Dietrich-Loretz 1991 101).

p. 430. Correct Hbr. *šibā ‘bu ‘ōt* to *šiba ‘bū ‘ōt*.

p. 461. There is no reason to attribute the meaning ‘body hair’ to PS **par* ‘, not attested in any of the languages where this root is reflected (v. SED I No. 218).

p. 475. Akk. *apāru* ‘to provide with a headdress, to put a covering on so’s head; to be covered, coated’ OB on (CAD A2 166, AHW. 57) is most probably to be equated with Arb. *ḥr* ‘couvrir, recouvrir quelque chose; cacher, serrer quelque chose, p.ex., un objet dans un sac’ (BK 2 482), Ugr. *pḥrt* ‘prenda de vestir’ (DLU 158), Mhr. *pḥūr* ‘to hide’ (JM 135), Jib. *pḥūr* ‘to hide’ (JJ 84), Hrs. *pḥōr* ‘to pardon’ (JH 44). Accordingly, Hbr. *šipēr* is to be regarded as either borrowed from Akk. *apāru* or unrelated to it.

p. 551. It must be stressed that the presentation in Moscati 1964 113 on which Takács’s criticism of W. F. Albright’s comparison of Akk. *šu* and Eg. *š* is based is utterly wrong. The relative pronoun *šu* and related forms can by no means “be recongized as being formally connected with the personal/demonstrative pronoun of the third person”. As clearly stated in Gelb 1961 135, in Old Akkadian “the determinative-relative pronoun differs both in form and writing from the demonstrative-personal pronoun”. Gelb’s conclusion is confirmed by dozens of examples from various types of Sargonic texts where the relative pronouns are regularly written with signs from the ŠV-series whereas the personal and deictic pronouns consistently use SV-series (with a puzzling distribution of *su* and *su₄*). On the other hand, Akk. *ša* is clearly related to Hbr. *šā* and Pho. *š* whereas the personal pronouns have *h-* as the first consonant in both languages.

p. 569. Akk. *bīn* ‘give!’ is known from late periods only and has little chances to continue an old Afroasiatic root. For an attempt to analyze this form as a peculiar mixture of Aramaic *hib* and Akk. *inna* (< *idnam*) – both meaning ‘give!’ – see now GAG 195 (where the importance of the variant *ibinnam-ma* is rightly stressed).

p. 574. Connection between Hbr. (of course not Arm.!) *tōlē ‘ā* ‘worm’ and *mātalā ‘ōt* ‘jawbones’ (hardly ‘teeth’) is far from evident (for a tentative etymology of the anatomic term –also attested as *maltā ‘ōt*– see SED I No. 177). Moreover, only the meaning shift ‘worm’ > ‘to bite’ is conceivable in the present case (Hbr. *tōlē ‘ā* belongs to the most safely reconstructible PS animal names) whereas quite the reverse is necessary if the derivation of Eg. *fnt* ‘worm’ from Proto-Afroasiatic **fnk* ‘to bite, eat’ has to be supported.

p. 599. It is difficult to believe that Hbr. *špōd* can be borrowed from Egyptian. Similar terms are known in the Syro-Mesopotamian area from the earliest periods and surely represent a deeply rooted tradition: cf. Ugr. *špd* ‘especie de vestidura’ (DLU 43), Akk. (OA) *epattu* ‘a costly garment’ (CAD E 183) and especially Ebl. IB-TUM /*špdum*/ (see Conti 1990 145). Important remarks on these terms may be found in Durand 1990 661-2.

p. 612. Hausa *fìdàá* ‘the money which a woman whose marriage has been annulled has to repay to her ex-husband’ is obviously borrowed from Arb. *fidā* ‘rançon’ (BK 2 557) and has no value for comparative purposes (contra Diakonoff who equated it as cognate with PS **fdy* ‘to ransom’).

Abbreviations of languages, dialects and linguistic periods

Akk. - Akkadian, Amh. - Amharic, Arb. - Arabic, Arm. - Aramaic, Ebl. - Eblaite, Eg. - Egyptian, ESA - Epigraphic South Arabian, Gaf. - Gafat, Har. - Harari, Hbr. (pB.) - Hebrew (post-Biblical), Hrs. - Harsusi, Jib. - Jibbali, Mhr. - Mehri, Mnd. - Mandaic, MSA - Modern South Arabian, OA - Old Assyrian, OB - Old Babylonian, PAA - Proto-Afro-Asiatic, Pho. - Phoenician, PS - Proto-Semitic, Sem. - Semitic, Syr. - Syriac, Tgr. - Tigre, Ugr. - Ugaritic.

Abbreviations of grammars and lexicographic tools

AHw.	W. von Soden, <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> , Wiesbaden 1965-1981.
Aist.	J. Aistleitner, <i>Wörterbuch der ugaritischen Sprache</i> , Leipzig 1963.
Biella	J.C. Biella, <i>Dictionary of Old South Arabic. Sabaean Dialect</i> . Chico, 1982.
BK	A. de Biberstein-Kazimirski, <i>Dictionnaire arabe-français</i> . Vol. 1 – 2, Paris, 1860.
Blachère	R. Blachère, M. Chouémi, C. Denizeau, <i>Dictionnaire arabe-français-anglais</i> , Paris 1964-.
Brock.	C. Brockelmann, <i>Lexicon Syriacum</i> , Halle 1928.
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute</i> , Chicago 1956-.
CDA	J. Black, A. George and N. Postgate, <i>Concise Dictionary of Akkadian</i> , Wiesbaden 2000.
DLU	G. Del Olmo Lete, J. Sanmartín, <i>Diccionario de la lengua ugarítica</i> , Barcelona 1996-2000.
DRS	D. Cohen, <i>Dictionnaire des racines sémitiques ou attestées dans les langues sémitiques</i> . La Haye, 1970-.
Fr.	G.W. Freytag, <i>Lexicon arabico-latinum</i> , Halle 1833.
GAG	W. von Soden, <i>Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik</i> , Rome 1995.
GD	C. Landberg, <i>Glossaire Dañinois</i> , Leiden 1920-42.
HSED	V.E. Orel and O.V. Stolbova, <i>Hamito-Semitic Etymological Dictionary. Materials for a Reconstruction</i> , Leiden-New York-Köln, 1995.
JH	T.M. Johnstone, <i>Harsūsi Lexicon</i> , Oxford 1977.
JJ	T.M. Johnstone. <i>Jibbāli Lexicon</i> , Oxford 1981.
JM	T.M. Johnstone, <i>Mehri Lexicon</i> , London 1987.
K	T.L. Kane, <i>Amharic-English Dictionary</i> , Wiesbaden 1990.
KB	L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , Leiden-New York-Köln 1994-2001 (Revised by W. Baumgartner and J.J. Stamm).
Lane	E.W. Lane, <i>Arabic-English Lexicon</i> , London 1867.
LGur.	W. Leslau, <i>Etymological Dictionary of Gurage (Ethiopic)</i> . Vol. III, Wiesbaden 1979.
LH	E. Littmann und M. Höfner, <i>Wörterbuch der Tigre-Sprache. Tigre-deutsch-englisch</i> , Wiesbaden 1956.
LS	H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> , Oxford 1968.
Piamenta	M. Piamenta, <i>Dictionary of Post-Classical Yemeni Arabic</i> , Leiden-New York-Köbenhavn-Köln, 1990.
SD	A.F.L. Beeston, M.A. Ghul, W.W. Müller, J. Ryckmans, <i>Sabaic Dictionary (English-French-Arabic)</i> , Louvain-la-Neuve 1982.
SED I	A. Militarev, L. Kogan, <i>Semitic Etymological Dictionary</i> . Vol. One. <i>Anatomy of Man and Animals</i> , Münster, 2000.

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