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‘AFAR-SAHO AND THE POSITION OF CUSHITIC WITHIN HAMITOSEMITIC/AFROASIATIC

Andrzej Zaborski

When the first data on Saho reached European scholars, the language was immediately hailed as “Semitic” even by such a distinguished “classical” Semitist as Ewald (Zaborski 1987, 85). Ewald’s classification of Saho was soon rejected by Lottner and then by Reinisch who was a great pioneer of Cushitic linguistics. Reinisch classified Saho and ‘Afar as Cushitic but this correct classification had one negative result: for many decades the majority of “classical” Semitists (Zimmern was one of the few exceptions!) ceased to be interested in this close relative of Semitic.

‘Afar and Saho have been somewhat underestimated even in the second half of the 20th century by specialists working on comparative-historical Hamitosemitic/Afroasiatic linguistics although I emphasised (Zaborski 1975) the fact that especially in the verbal system of ‘Afar-Saho several archaic features had been preserved better than in Beja. Nevertheless it was Beja which was considered, *e.g.* by Voigt, to be the most archaic Cushitic language having a status of something like “Akkadian of Cushitic” (Voigt 1996, 112-113; but Beja shows also a number of innovations in the verbal system like the loss of vocalic endings, the use of intensive paradigm in the plural of the Present, the loss of Subjunctive/Jussive, the loss of prefixes in the second and the third persons singular in the Present of triconsonantal and *ultimae y* verbs *etc.*) and this was accepted especially when the fashion of taking Akkadian for absolutely archaic and of classifying Arabic as allegedly full of innovations emerged. Then for at least two decades another hypothesis became fashionable, namely Hetzron’s mistaken classification of Beja as allegedly non-Cushitic originally based on irresponsible rumour spread in 1975 by Andrzejewski and Tubiana neglecting many facts clearly confirming the genetic classification of Beja within Cushitic. I was guilty of having transmitted to Robert Hetzron the original rumour in which I could never believe and I was the first to prove the futility of Hetzron’s approach to Beja (Zaborski 1987 – actually this paper was read at the Leo Reinisch Symposium in October 1982 in Vienna). There is no doubt that Beja belongs to the Cushitic branch and actually is very archaic not only within Cushitic but within Afroasiatic/Hamitosemitic in general but it shows also some innovations (a “mix” of archaisms and innovations is rather normal in most if not all the languages) while ‘Afar and Saho have retained several archaisms which are missing in Beja. This is not very surprising at all since it is quite common that archaisms and relative innovations coexist in languages which are, *per saldo*, very archaic, *e.g.* Akkadian has preserved many archaisms but it represents also several innovations. In this paper I want to emphasise very close genetic connections of ‘Afar and

Saho as, *per saldo*, the most archaic Cushitic languages and to promote the idea that actually Proto-Cushitic dialect cluster might have been closer to Proto-Semitic than Proto-Berber although it has to be emphasised that there must have been contradictory isoglosses linking and separating closely related proto-dialects in the same way as contradictory, “fuzzy” isoglosses make a clear-cut classification of closely related historical languages so difficult. The closer the relationship, the more complicate the net of isoglosses. Today even Indoeuropeanists accept the differentiation of Proto-Indoeuropean into dialects. Although there are languages which allegedly do not have grammatical exceptions, *e.g.* so many Turkic languages, morphological exceptions are typical of Hamitosemitic. Although we should rely upon exceptionless (in relative terms!) sound laws and strict morphological reconstruction, this does not mean that we can reconstruct an exceptionless proto-language. What we reconstruct is limited to some elements of the systems, other elements (obviously first of all those which have left no trace!) remain unreconstructed and an allegedly perfect reconstruction without exceptions is the ideal which we should try to attain but at the same time we should have no illusion that such a reconstruction represents the whole truth; actually every reconstruction tells us only a part of truth! In other words: the comparative method must be as strict as possible but the most rigid method alone is not enough to reconstruct prehistoric reality in all its details. Facts are crucial and we do not know all the facts and the method allows to reconstruct only some of the facts.

Here I would also like to emphasise that I have serious reservations concerning the use of innovations as the best basis for a genetic classification of languages. The importance of common morphological innovations was strongly advocated by Hetzron but it has been actually overemphasised. Hetzron’s idea that only common innovations do count for establishing genetic status is too radical. It disregards the fact that archaisms/retentions must have been innovations in relatively older periods of prehistory. In other words, archaisms are original old innovations which have survived, usually in several subbranches of a family. If an innovation occurs only in very few languages, this may mean that probably this is a rather recent innovation and such a late common innovation may work as an important criterion of a genetic classification in later periods when the related languages are already well differentiated which usually makes a genetic classification a relatively easy task for several other reasons. In case of early periods, *viz.* when the differences between related languages are still not big at all, it may be very difficult to decide whether something is an innovation or archaism. *E.g.* many Semitists believe that the Perfect, *viz.* “Suffix Conjugation” is an innovation of West Semitic but this belief is questionable and the Perfect can be at least hypothetically regarded as archaism (*cf.* remnants of the Suffix Conjugation in Berber “mixed” conjugation and the suffix conjugation in Egyptian corresponding to the Semitic Perfect with -k in the second persons and in the first person singular) which was lost in Proto-Akkadian. The question is still open. The principle of common innovations as the main criterion of genetic classification should not be underestimated either but the main fact is that the process of differentiation of dialects within a language family is so complex that it must be repeated again that by definition, in case of very closely related languages and dialects isoglosses (indicating *both* archaisms/retentions and innovations) *must* be fuzzy and so often contradictory.

A look at the independent personal pronouns (which I present here for scholars who are less familiar with Cushitic) immediately shows that ‘Afar and Saho have preserved forms which are older than in Beja (Zaborski 1987 and 1998) and also in Berber and in Egyptian, and which are very close to Semitic:

Sing. 1.	<i>anú</i>	Plur. 1.	<i>nanú</i> (< <i>*naḥnu</i>)
2.	<i>atú</i>	2.	Saho: <i>átin</i> , ‘Afar: <i>ísin</i> (< <i>*atin</i>)
3m.	<i>úsu-k</i>	3.	<i>úsun</i> , <i>óson</i>
3f.	<i>is</i>		

I can quote a “classical” Semitist’s opinion here: “Nimmt man dazu die Pronomina personalia (...) so wird man sich nicht wundern, dass nach den ersten Sahoproben, die nach Europa gekommen waren, es für eine semitische Sprache erklärt wurde” (Müller 1892, 405; cf. Greenberg 1962).

‘Afar and Saho have also preserved internal plurals much better than Beja (Zaborski 1986, 21-53). Although some internal plurals have been borrowed into ‘Afar and Saho from Arabic and, to a smaller extent, from Ethiosemitic, nevertheless there can be no doubt that several types are not due to borrowing but are a heritage from Proto-Hamitosemitic where not only internal -a- plurals existed. The idea that internal plurals were only an innovation of “South Semitic” was totally wrong.

The case system of ‘Afar and Saho is still a riddle and requires special research. Both Beja and ‘Afar-Saho case systems show genitive with -i (but there are also other genitive endings and several constructions; -i occurs also elsewhere, e.g. in nominative, cf. Morin 1977, 361-362, Parker – Hayward 1985, 225-227, Bliese 1981, 162-174, 265-266; Blažek 2007, 96-97, 99) and -a in absolute, but there is nominative -u at least in ‘Afar/Saho independent pronouns (see above) and in pairs like nominative *idaltí* but absolute *idaltú* “old man”.

‘Afar makes verbal nouns with m- (or rather ma- in diachronic terms!) prefix plus -a- ablaut in the stem and -a (in a few words -o < * -a) ending – all such verbal nouns are feminine (the connection between feminine and abstract is well known in Semitic and elsewhere), e.g. *m-abl-á* “seeing”, *m-aabb-á* “hearing”, *m-aDah-o* “saying” (Bliese 1981, 148). There are also other nominalizing suffixes of Hamitosemitic origin like -*iyya* making abstracts, -i for agent etc. (Bliese 1981, 149-151).

Let us have a look at the basic verbal paradigms of Saho (cf. Vergari-Banti 2003 and 2005) verb “to know”:

Past

Sing	Plur.
1. <i>ee-Deg-e</i>	1. <i>nee-Deg-e tee-Deg-in</i>
2. <i>tee-Deg-e</i>	2. <i>tee-Deg-in</i>
3m. <i>yee-Deg-e</i>	3. <i>yee-Deg-in</i>
3f. <i>tee-Deg-e</i>	

Present

aa-Dig-e taa-Dig-e yaa-Dig-e taa-Dig-e naa-Dig-e taa-Dig-in yaa-Dig-in

Subjunctive/Jussive

aa-Dag-o taa-Dag-o yaa-Dag-o taa-Dag-o naa-Dag-o taa-Dag-oona yaa-Dag-oona

In ‘Afar and in Saho there are different vowels in the prefixes of Subjunctive/Jussive, Old Present (“Imperfect”) and Old Perfect (“Perfect”), viz. there is regular y-A- or y-AA- in the Subjunctive and the Old Present and there is “non -A-”, viz. y-U-, y-I-, y-E-, y-00- or y-EE- in the Old Perfect. Originally the variants y-00- occurred e.g. with roots with initial w- (*primae waw*, cf. Testen 1994) and the variants with y-EE- occurred before y- (*primae y*), but (Rucart 2006, 141-142, 145) long vowel in the prefix may be also due to the loss of a guttural e.g. *yoo-bb-e* “to hear”, cf. Oromo *hub* “to hear”, *yoo-me* “to become bad, to deteriorate”, cf. Somali *‘un* (< *‘um) “to be bad” and *yee-men-e* “to believe” < Arabic *‘āmana* “to believe”. Cf. Saho *yoo-‘ob-e*, *yaa-‘ub-e*, *yaa-‘abo-o* “to drink”, *yoo-‘og-e*, *yaa-‘cug-e*, *yaa-‘ag-o* “to bury”, *yoo-‘or-e*, *yaa-‘ur-e*, *yaa-‘ar-o* “to hide”.

In the greatly reduced, actually remnant prefix conjugation of Somali there are only traces of different prefix vowels, e.g. Somali *ya-al* “he stays” and *yi-il* “he stayed”, subjunctive/optative *ya-all-o*, *ya-qaan* “he knows” and *yi-qiin* “he knew” but *yi-maad-daa* “he comes” and *yi-mi* “he came” and Subjunctive *yi-maad-o* but *yi-D-aa* “he says” and *yi-Di* “he said” (cf. Saho *ye-DHe* “he said”

Imperfect *ya-DH-e*, Subjunctive *ya-DH-o*); *cf.* vowel assimilation also in the Isaq dialect: *ti-hiin* “you (plural!) are”, while Benadir dialect has a parallel variant *ta-hiin* and for *yi-hiin* “they are” there is a parallel variant *ya-hiin* in Benadir Somali (Zaborski 1975, 53).

As is well known, all three variants, *viz.* y-A-, y-U- and y-I- are known in Semitic and all of them are spread in different dialects of Arabic (including the “Classical Arabic” dialect!), so that there are parallel forms of the Imperfect like *yA-ktub*, *yI-ktib* and *yU-ktub*. It is very important that in Akkadian there was t-A- in the second persons but i- (< *’i-) and n-I- in the first persons. In Semitic, Cushitic and Berber there must have been also secondary vowel assimilations but in general it is highly probable that there was not only “Umlaut” but also “Ablaut” (*viz.* morphologically conditioned vowel change) both in the stems and in the prefixes. Voigt (1996, 124) tried to reconstruct ‘Afar Present *ya-duur-e* from **ya-daar-a* < ***yV-daar-ya* and the Past *yu-duur-e* from **yu-duur-i* < ***yV-duur-yi* taking for granted that the vowel of the prefixes had assimilated to the stem ablaut but according to him the oldest “reconstructed” (?) vowel of the prefix is unknown (he posits only -V-)! There is also no convincing explanation for his hypothesis about stem ablaut -aa- changing to -uu-. The variant y-U- occurs in Classical Arabic and in Akkadian in the multiplicative/intensive/causative (*qātala* was and has remained multiplicative/intensive/causative variant of *qattala*, *cf.* Zaborski 2005a and 2007b, *pace* Macelaru 2007, 371) class and in the causative S/H/’ class and in Classical Arabic there is y-U- also in the Passive Imperfect, *e.g.* *y-U-qtal-u* and in the prefixes of the quadriconsonantal verbs (many of these “long” verbs are due to reduplication connected with the notion “multiplicative/intensive”). *Y-I-qtal-u* is usually also reconstructed mainly (?) for stative and passive verbs. It is probable that the historical prefixes were originally auxiliary verbs (Zaborski 2005c; *cf.* Hetzron 1973/1974 and Testen 1994; *pace* Macelaru 2007, 372-373) with stems reduced to single vowels (this is the hypothesis “Cushitic suffixes” proposed by Reinisch and later taken over by Praetorius) and that in the Past tense -u- and -i- (in ‘Afar-Saho suffix conjugation the suffixed auxiliary has -e in the Past, but this probably goes back to *-i, see Zaborski 1975) were two different verbs of “to live, to be, to become; to remain, to stay” type. This would explain the use of *yu-* and *yi-* in the Old Past of ‘Afar and Saho, *viz.* in originally periphrastic constructions of the same type that is common *e.g.* in Perfect tenses in Romance languages with intransitive verbs or in English Past Continuous, not to mention residual “he is gone”. The present with *ya/yaa-* could be a kind of Present Continuous.

As I argued elsewhere (*e.g.* Zaborski 2005a), originally tense, mood and aspect in Proto-Hamitosemitic was indicated not only by the ending of the “Prefix Conjugation” but also by ablaut in the stem and in the original auxiliary which was at first free-standing, then preposed and eventually prefixed in Semitic and in Berber but which was prefixed to some verbs but suffixed to others in Cushitic. In ‘Afar and in Saho some verbs of the “Prefix Conjugation” have -a- ablaut in the Subjunctive stem which is absent in the Present (“Imperfect”), *e.g.* Saho Past *yee-’et-e*, Present *yaa-’it-e*, Subjunctive *yaa-’at-o* “to step on, to tread”, *yee-de-’e*, *yaa-di-’e*, *yaa-da-’o* “to be pregnant”, *yee-fe-’e*, *yaa-fi-’e*, *yaa-fa-’o* “to give water”, *yee-Deg-e*, *yaa-Dig-e*, *yaa-Dag-o* “to know”, *yoo-gor-e*, *yaa-gur-e*, *yaa-gar-o* “to hit” and this is an important archaism. It reinforces the hypothesis that ‘Afar-Saho Subjunctive goes back to Old Present with -a- ablaut in the stem. Stem ablaut in Old Semitic prefix conjugations does not change (although there are stem ablaut variants!) except in Modern South Arabian (which is not “Modern” but quite archaic in spite of the conventional name; *cf.* Zaborski 2007c) and this stem ablaut identical for Past/Jussive, Imperfect, Subjunctive and Energic in the majority of Semitic languages is an innovation! In ‘Afar-Saho there are also numerous verbs which have the same -a- in the stem in both Present and Subjunctive (Rucart 2006, 127-128).

The vocalic endings of the prefix Conjugation in ‘Afar and Saho are also an important archaism. As is well known, these vocalic endings disappeared very early in Semitic and have been well preserved mainly in Classical Arabic, Ugaritic and partially in Old Akkadian. In ‘Afar -u (Saho -o) is the ending of Subjunctive/Conjunctive which is used also as Jussive/Cohortative.

The -u ending is used with the Imperfect in Classical Arabic but in Akkadian it has survived in non-pausal forms, viz. in the so-called “Subordinative” forms, viz. Present *iparras-u*, Old Imperfect (misnamed “Subjunctive”) *iprus-u* and in the New Perfect *i-ptars-u*. As I have explained elsewhere (Zaborski 2005a), Akkadian *iprus-u* goes back to original Imperfect which has been shifted to oath sentences (!) and to subordinate clauses (an important Akkadian innovation!) where the vocalic ending has been preserved thanks to its position *not* before a pause. The rival hypothesis explaining West Semitic Imperfect as going back to a Subordinate that has allegedly expanded into main clauses is simply wrong! In the same way ‘Afar-Saho Subjunctive which is also used as Jussive/Cohortative with -u/o goes back to original “Old” Imperfect shifted to dependent clauses. When I met prof. Jungraithmayr in October 2003 in Budapest in connection with G. Takács’ “habilitation”, I had a conversation with him in which I indicated striking parallels between East Cushitic and Chadic Subjunctives with -u/o and I expressed my opinion that Old Cushitic Imperfect had been shifted to Subjunctive adding my rejection of the Assyriologist interpretation of *iprus-u* as alleged origin of West Semitic *yaqtul-u* Imperfect. My opinion was the same as presented in this paper. In 2005 prof. Jungraithmayr (cf. also Jungraithmayr 2007, 119-20) published a paper in which he mentions only Saho suffix conjugation (viz. with the suffixed auxiliary!) forms *faak-e* (Perfect), *faak-a* (Imperfect), *faak-u* (Subjunctive) of “to open” and he repeats the common Assyriological theory according to which Akkadian subordinative *iprus-u* allegedly resulted in West Semitic Imperfect *yaqtul-u* in spite of the fact that the origin of Akkadian Subordinative *iprus-u* from original Imperfect through its shift to subordinate clauses was correctly explained already by Kuryłowicz (1972, 54) although Kuryłowicz did not mention non-pausal position as the main factor which had contributed to the survival of -u. The situation in some archaic Chadic languages presented by prof. Jungraithmayr is not clear since, apart from the use of -u in Subjunctive in some (numerous but not all!) verbs in the archaic East Chadic languages, “In some Bole-Tangale languages, other than Tangale, -u marks the indicative aorist/narrative as well as subjunctive, e.g. the Bole perfect in -u corresponds to the Tangale subjunctive in -u! The same applies to Kupto, another Bole-Tangale language. This oscillating behaviour of the marker -u in western Chadic may remind us of the situation in Semitic” (Jungraithmayr 2007, 20). It is, however, almost certain that Chadic, first of all East Chadic Subjunctive/Hortative -u/o is a cognate of the Semitic -u of the Indicative and of Proto-Cushitic Imperfect Indicative *-u shifted to Subjunctive/Jussive -u (later > -o; there is -u in South ‘Afar but -o in Northern ‘Afar and in Saho, see Morin 1994, 259-260 and 263-264) in historical East Cushitic especially since many verbs in East Cushitic make their Imperfect with -a and their Perfect with -e just like in Chadic although in East Chadic there are exceptions which might be due either to vowel assimilation and/or semantic classes. The occurrence of the -e, -a, -u verbal endings in both Cushitic and Chadic seems to be a very important isogloss but more research must be done before we can be sure of a special genetic relationship of Proto-Chadic and Proto-Cushitic.

On the other hand, I do not think that South Tuareg -u of the second person singular of the imperative has anything to do with Subjunctive since it is absent in plural (*pace* Jungraithmayr 2005, 77 and 2007, 20).

In ‘Afar there is also a form called “Requestive” (Parker, Hayward 1985, 261) or “Consultative” (Bliese 1981, 146, Morin 1994) with final -ó, e.g. *a-km-ó?* “shall I eat?”, *na-km-ó?* “shall we eat?”, *na-duur-ó* “may we return?”. This -ó goes back to Subjunctive -u most probably due to the raising-falling interrogative intonation as suggested by Bliese although I do not agree with his explanation of *abl-oó* “shall I see?” as going back to **ubl-áa-oó* (Bliese 1981, 147). Cf. Saho *a-Dág-o!* “let me know!”, *yá-Dh-o!* “let him say it!”, *ná-bl-o!* “let’s see it!” (Welmers 1952, 248).

The ending -a survives in ‘Afar/Saho in the Negative Imperfect. This makes the connection with the Semitic subjunctive -a quite probable since negative paradigms have a strong modal function, e.g. ‘Afar *má a-duur-á* “I do not return” means first of all “I do not intend to, I do not want to return, I will

not return” and it is most important that *má a-duur-á* combines all these meanings and is listed once as “Negative Imperfect” and then again, rather incorrectly as “Negative Anticipatory” (but glossed “I will not return” so that this would be rather a Future tense!) by Parker and Hayward (1985, 259 and 260; cf. Hayward 1980, 130 for a different explanation of this -a).

The Past (“Perfect”) and the Positive Old Present (“Imperfect”) have the same final -e. This final -e in the Past may be due to the analogy with -e of the Past of the Suffix Conjugation where original -i might have been lowered to -e before the pause (but cf. Hayward 1980, 128). Voigt (1996, 124) hypothetically reconstructed Past -e and Negative Present -a as going back to auxiliary *yi- and *ya- but this would mean that the auxiliary had been added twice, viz. as a prefix and a suffix! Such mixed conjugations are known in Cushitic but certainly they are late innovations. Therefore I cannot accept Voigt’s hypothesis. It is possible that originally the Past could have had a zero ending just like Semitic Past in Akkadian Past *i-prus*, Arabic *yV-qtul*, Hebrew ***wa la-yiqtol > *wa l-yiqtol > wa-yyiqtol* etc.; we should expect a zero ending indeed but this -e (or -i) in the Past of the prefix conjugation might be explained as an innovation of Cushitic (through analogy with East Cushitic “suffix conjugation”) or it may suggest that the zero ending of the Semitic Old Past might have been a relative innovation due to a loss of a vocalic ending which took place in Proto-Semitic?

The -e ending of the Positive Old Present is a riddle. Actually the -a/-aa- ablaut in the prefix is the main morpheme of the Present (New Imperfect) accompanied by stem internal -a- in some verbs so that the vocalic ending has been redundant probably since a long time. It might be due to a reduction of final *-a > -e where -a could have been reintroduced by analogy to the -a ending of the suffix conjugation. This would mean that actually only the Subjunctive (original Imperfect!) -u and Negative Imperfect (originally Subjunctive!) -a go back to Proto-Hamitosemitic while -e is secondary. Nevertheless even in such a case these are very important archaisms of ‘Afar/Saho!

As I have explained elsewhere (Zaborski 2004), Semitic Energic with -an (which in Akkadian survived mainly with verbs of motion, see also Zaborski 2005a) has a cognate in Cushitic and first of all in ‘Afar/Saho which uses it e.g. in “Purposive”, e.g. *a-duur-én keh* (-én < *-an) “that I return”, “Imperfect Probable” *a-duur-ém takkeh* (-én > -ém before dental t-; *takkeh* means “perhaps”) “I may return”, “Perfect Probable” *yu-duur-ém takkeh* “he may/might have returned”. Cf. also iterative *yubruk-ám yubruk-e* “he rolled over and over” (Parker, Hayward 1985, 251). It is not clear whether final -em in Saho *te-meet-em uble* “I saw you coming” called “substantivizing morpheme m” by Welmers (1952, 247; cf. Parker, Hayward 1985, 287-288, Bliese 1981, 97-98 and 198) belongs here. It should be emphasised that Energic forms occur also with “weak”, viz. suffix conjugated verbs, e.g. *fak-n-án keh* “that we open”, *fak-n-ám takkeh* “we may open”, *fak-n-ém takke* “we may/might have opened”, *mi ‘i-t-óm takkeh* “you may be good” etc. (Parker, Hayward 1985, 266-268).

It is also not clear whether -ay which occurs in another ‘Afar Jussive (e.g. *a-duur-ay* “let me return!”); note that Hayward 1979 has -oy which occurs both in Saho and in ‘Afar, see Bliese 1981, 141-142, Zaborski 1975, 33!) goes back to *-an. Actually this “Jussive” is used also in dependent clauses, e.g. for “permit” with “to say” as in *geDDoon-ay sin eDHe* “I told/permitted you to go” (Bliese 1981, 143, 43-44), it has also “Inceptive” usage so that *aduur-ay* means also “since/from the time that I returned” (Parker, Hayward 1985, 2800), it appears also in temporal “when”, “immediately”, “since”, “after” clauses (Bliese 1981, 71 and 143). Cf. also “Polite Imperative Benefactive” with -iy, e.g. *ott-okom-íy!* “eat, please!” *ott-oogur-r-í!* “hit, if you want!” (Bliese 1981, 136) which may be connected although it is not certain. In any case this -ay is a cognate of Beja -áy which is used in Negative Optative called also “Bound Negative” with “weak” (elsewhere conjugated with suffixes!) verbs which in this paradigm are still conjugated with prefixes so that this is an important archaism. It is not clear at all whether final -y of -ay is simply a conjunctive postposition, e.g. in *akúm-ay a ‘úb* “eat and drink” (both singular and plural!), *géD-ay iDdiḥ-ay yadúur-ay (iDDiḥ)* “let him go and come back!”, *má kmin-ay má a ‘ubin* “don’t eat and don’t drink!” (Parker, Hayward 1985, 292).

It is remarkable that 'Afar/Saho Energic is used also in dependent clauses, e.g. Saho *a-ruf-em gur-a* "I want to rest" and in temporal clauses, e.g. *te-meet-em ubl-e* "I saw you coming" (both Saho examples from Welmers 1952, 248).

What about the derivation of multiplicative/intensive/causative verbs? In Beja "intensive" verbs (of the *qātil* type in case of triconsonantal roots, e.g. *a-daabil* "I collected several times") have long *-ē-* in the prefix of the Present and this seems to have a good cognate in 'Afar and Saho verbs which have long *-aa-* in the prefixes of the Imperfect corresponding either to long *-ee-* (cf. long *-ii-* in the prefixes of the Old Past in Beja, e.g. *i-ktīm* "he arrived" but *ii-ktīm* "(if) he had arrived") or to *-oo-* in the Past.

There are a few triconsonantal verbs with long *-aa-* after the first consonant but the majority of them (or all of them?) are Arabic loan-words! But the long vowel occurs also in Saho *ye-geez-e*, *ya-geeze*, *ya-gaaz-o* "to transfer oneself, to move", *ye-geelebe*, *ya-geeleb-e*, *ya-gaalab-o* "to ride". Long vowels after the first root consonant occur also in derived classes, e.g. 'Afar causative *ye-y-keehen-e/ye-s-keehene* "to cause to like by means of magic", *yi-n'ibe* "to be angry", *ye-m-nee'eb-e* "to be hated", *ye-y-nee'eb-e* "to cause to hate" (cf. Rucart 2006, 129), Saho Past *yo-goofof-e*, Present *ya-goofof-e*, Subjunctive *ya-gaafaf-o* "to gather, to pick up".

'Afar and Saho make intensive forms mainly reduplicating (wholly or partially) the stem. Nevertheless gemination of the second consonant of triconsonantal verbs occurs not only in loans from Arabic but also in some genuine 'Afar and Saho verbs, e.g. 'Afar *yu-murru'-e* "to finish", *yi-binnid-e* "to close, to shut, to cover", *yi-ikkin-e* "to try, to attempt" (see Rucart 2006, 296-297 for a list of 36 verbs); Saho *yi-m-mirrih-e* "to be guided", *yi-sh-iDDig-e* "to inform, to make know", *yi-tkil-e* "to plant" and passive *yi-m-tikkil-e*, *yi-klit'-e* "to wrong, to make a mistake" and passive *yi-n-killit'-e*, *yi-s-k'it'e* "to press, to crush" and passive *yi-m-t-s-ik'it'-e*. Gemination occurs very frequently in derived verbs, e.g. 'Afar *yi-n-fiddig-im-e* "to be unloaded", *yi-nkihhin-e* "to be loved", *ye-tt-efe'-eeni* "they watered" (Bliese 1981, 134); Saho "to write" (obviously an Arabic loan!): *yu-ktub-e*, *ya-ktub-e*, *ya-ktab-o*, Imperative *u-ktub*; passive *yu-n-kuttub-e*, *ya-n-kuttub-e*, *ya-n-kattab-o*, *u-n-kuttub*; causative *yu-s-kuttub-e*, *ya-s-kuttub-e*, *ya-s-kattab-o*, *u-s-kuttub*; middle *yu-tt-u-kuttub-e* (< **yu-st-u-kuttub-e*?), *ya-tt-u-kuttub-e*, *ya-tt-a-kattab-o*, *u-tt-u-kuttub*. Whereas SD (causative plus geminated/double second consonant) forms are known in other Hamitosemitic languages (Zaborski 2006), other "combined" forms are very rare or unknown elsewhere, e.g. in Akkadian there is a rare form *nagarrurum* derived from *garaarum* "to turn or roll over" and in Ge'ez there are some n- forms derived from reduplicated roots.

It is remarkable that there are also some suffix conjugated verbs with gemination of the second consonant in derived classes (Rucart 2006, 151-152), e.g. *darag-e* "to water down milk" and passive *darrag-im-e* (so Rucart *ibid.*) but Parker, Hayward 1985, 81 list only *darg-im-e*!

Some interference with Ethiosemitic and Arabic cannot be excluded but it is also probable that original gemination of the second root consonant has survived in 'Afar/Saho (cf. Rucart 2006, 156) in the derived classes and perhaps even in some "basic" verbal forms. This means that 'Afar and Saho may have retained traces of both variants of multiplicative/intensive form, viz. *qattala* and *qātala*.

It should be emphasised that archaisms in the verbal system of 'Afar and Saho have survived quite well in spite of the fact that due to contact within the Eritrean/North Ethiopian language subarea (a part of the larger North East African or Macro-Ethiopian language area) 'Afar and Saho have a big number of secondary categories, viz. later innovations which are typically periphrastic. The number of new periphrastic "tenses" with different auxiliaries in 'Afar, depending on the particular dialect, is over thirty (!) including negative paradigms (see Parker-Hayward 1985, 259-263; Gragg 2001, 608 has counted all the paradigms listed by Parker and Hayward arriving at the number of fifty but he missed some facts, e.g. some negative paradigms do not differ from their positive counterparts and there is simply a negative particle). On several occasions I disagreed with Dick Hayward who attributed the big number of "strong" or prefix conjugated verbs in 'Afar to contact with Semitic (for the first

mention see Hayward 1978). Of course the contact with Arabic and with Tigrinya and Tigre must have played some role in the retention of “strong” verbs, *viz.* the verbs with internal inflexion. But it could not be decisive since other Cushitic (except Beja) languages contacting with Ethiosemitic and with Arabic have lost either most (*e.g.* Somali) or all the “strong” verbs. Moreover neighbourhood does not automatically mean strong language interference; massive bilingualism and code switching is necessary and these have been absent until quite recently. The big number of periphrastic constructions (the number is balanced by relatively clear and “logic” structure and semantics) and at the same time the considerable number and high frequency of the use of very archaic categories (“tenses”) show the strength of archaisms which have survived rather in spite of contact (*e.g.* prefix and stem ablaut and the vocalic endings *have* survived in spite of the fact that they had been lost in the neighbouring Semitic languages and, on the other hand, verbs borrowed from Arabic are conjugated according to ‘Afar-Saho grammatical rules!) than thanks to contact and interference.

When I presented the genealogical tree of Hamitosemitic abandoning the idea of parallel branches or “sister families” Zaborski (1994, 235), I considered Berber as the closest relative of Semitic following Otto Rössler. I classified Cushitic as the closest relative of Semito-Berber on the evidence of the prefix conjugation working in all these three subbranches. Now I think (but see already Zaborski 2005b and 2007) that Rössler has not only overestimated the archaism of Akkadian and underestimated the archaism of Classical Arabic (which has retained, *e.g.* very good and numerous traces of the cognates of Akkadian Present *iparras-u* and New Perfect *iptars-u*) but also has underestimated the archaism of ‘Afar and Saho. We need better reconstructions of Berber verbal structures but provisionally I can take for granted that Proto-Cushitic verbal categories as surviving in ‘Afar/Saho *and* in Beja show that Proto-Cushitic dialects were closer to Proto-Semitic dialect cluster than Proto-Berber in which *e.g.* the independent pronouns show important innovations. It is possible that in the Proto-Hamitosemitic dialect chain or dialect continuum Proto-Akkadian and Proto-Beja could be especially close to Berber but this is another question.

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