

Canaanite and Aramaic Linguistic Remains in the Names of the Tools and Objects in the Palestinian Vernacular

Issam K. H. Halayqa, Birzeit

The current Palestinian vernacular contains an abundance of foreign words. Among them are names of tools and objects which we consider strange, as most of them apparently have no cognates in Arabic. Because the area was subjected to many different peoples and cultures through history, one could suppose that these tool and object names might have ancient origins and partially or totally refer to ancient Semitic linguistic strata, mostly Canaanite and Aramaic, and non-Semitic languages like Egyptian, Greek, Latin, Persian and Turkish. A scientific study of the lexical and phonological elements in these lexemes will allow us to assert their origins, and accordingly we will be able to demonstrate a linguistic and cultural continuity of Canaanite and Aramaic and other languages influences in the current Palestinian colloquial.

This study comes as a trial investigation to find out to which linguistic strata these names of tools and objects refer. Thus, we will point out what is Canaanite or what is Aramaic on one hand and what is non-Semitic in these names on the other hand. It will be a solid base to conduct a future research project concerning building a corpus for tool and object names in the area with the following goals:

1. To trace the linguistic elements of ancient Semitic and non-Semitic languages. The Semitic under investigation are:

Canaanite (the Canaanite linguistic subdivisions, such as Old Canaanite [Amarna letters], Phoenician, Punic, Epigraphic and Biblical Hebrew), Ugaritic,

Aramaic with its subdivisions (Old Aramaic, Official Aramaic, dialects of Deir 'Alla and Sam'al, Nabataean, Palmeryien and Syriac),

Akkadian (Babylonian and Assyrian),

Classical Arabic,

the non-Semitic languages under investigation are: Egyptian, Greek, Latin,

Persian and Turkish; in this paper I will only deal with Semitic linguistic elements.

2. To identify the connection between the lexicon and grammar of ancient Semitic languages and the current spoken colloquial of the tool and object names throughout the area. Establishing this will demonstrate the preserva-

tion of much cultural continuity of old linguistic features.

3. To document the material in order to preserve it. In the light of the technical progress of modern globalization, these tools have been become out of actual use and completely abandoned mostly after the death of the old generation who preserved it within their collective memory.
4. An ethnographical study can be carried out regarding the material, shape and the function of each tool as well as an archaeological study which would trace the existence, usage and continuation of such tools from antiquities until the present.

In my opinion and according to the available data, the number of the names of tools and objects used in the area is to be estimated by 800–850 names and these are distributed in many fields:

- Cultivation activities such as plowing, sowing, harvest, threshing, winnowing, transporting, storing, division, distribution or marketing.
- Farming activities such as planting, harvest, pressing, storing, plant production and manufacturing.
- Hand made objects and craftsman (weavers, carpenter, potters, ironsmiths, coppersmiths, glass makers, shoe makers, animal harness makers etc.)
- Transportation and storage
- Tools that belong to commercial processes
- Measure and weight units
- Currency units
- Pastoral activities such as animal breeding, milking, milk production, animal production, storing etc.

To fulfill the aforementioned points we propose that the work on the project will pass through the following phases.

1 Gathering the material

- Specifying the geographical framework of the study area starting from villages where few contact with globalization and modernization can be seen.
- Gathering the data through systematic field surveys and interviews with the old people in the study area, the data will be recorded orally as pronounced. This step was already taken to enhance good coverage of the lexemes. Through fieldwork carried out by students of archaeology at Birzeit University in the summer of 2008 the samples for this study have randomly been gathered from 4 villages located in what we currently refer to as the West Bank.

ʿal-Yāmūn village near Jenin town which is located in the north of the West Bank where supposedly more Aramaic influence can be found;
 Niʿlīn village in the Ramallah district in the middle of the West Bank;
 ʿal-ʿašer village in Bethlehem district in the south of West Bank where

supposedly more Canaanite influence can be observed;
 ʿal-Šuyūḥ village in Hebron district in the south of the West Bank.

- Surveying all former studies like the study conducted by G. Dalman *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina* and the works of other scholars of Semitic languages and ethnography regarding the lexicography, reading, interpretation and function of every given tool's name.
- Classifying the collected data according to aforementioned activities and the fields in which they are used.

2 Analysis of the material

All tool names gathered from the field will be subjected to linguistic study aiming at:

- Pointing out the phonological features and grammatical elements found in these names;
- Pointing out lexical issues, comparing all obtained lexemes with their correspondences in other Semitic and non-Semitic languages when available. The comparison will include all the lexemes of the tools and objects with the Semitic lexemes found in the available corpora and in the authoritative literature concerning Semitic lexicography. The lexical study of the names of these tools and their counterparts in Semitic languages is one of the very reliable criteria in determining the origin and the meaning of these words. It will enable us to determine whether the word is of Canaanite, Aramaic or other Semitic origins.
- Appointing the linguistic origin of the lexemes and how they were adopted by the current vernacular. We will further discover how the meanings of the lexemes were derived and developed, and place all of them in a table showing each language with the lexemes it contains.
- The comparison of the names of the tools with their counterparts from other Canaanite languages. This comparison can supply a significant tool to determining the meanings of the words. Cognate words from other Canaanite and Aramaic languages will be surveyed to determine the meaning of the word, pointing out its meaning on the basis of morphological and phonological equivalent roots or words in another Canaanite language which will then briefly be followed by comments
- The examination and listing of each lexeme studied under an etymology which displays the radicals from which it is derived. Both the vernacular lexemes studied and their Semitic cognates will be lexically arranged, firstly under their radicals and secondly according to their meanings, followed its derivatives, e. g. *qpp* v. "to gather", *quffa* sub. "Basket" is found under *qpp* radicals. A *great deal* of care will be taken in identifying the etymology and choosing the correct meaning of the intended radicals in other languages based on the linguistic and phonological rules of Semitic languages

- The transliteration of the lexical entries in cursive italic followed by phonological comments and grammatical definition.

After the tool names had been surveyed, compared with its cognates in Semitic and non-Semitic languages, treated and placed in this work, its Semitic (Canaanite or Aramaic) correspondence will be carefully extracted from the dictionaries and lexica of the Semitic languages, studied and cited. When searching out the cognates of any tool lexeme, priority is always given to its correspondences in the Canaanite and Aramaic languages. When no suitable cognate in Canaanite and Aramaic is found, the cognate in Arabic and other Semitic languages will be searched. The process of tracing the etymology of the lexemes and the extraction of the Semitic cognates from the dictionaries and lexica is based again on the rules of morphology and phonology of the Semitic languages.

Criteria taken to appoint out the origin of the lexemes

Linguistic criteria

- Phonology like pronunciation, changing of sibilants and emphatics and so;
- morphology, like nominal patterns especially the Aramaic participle *pa'ūl*;
- lexicon, the identical meaning of the intended lexemes in both colloquial and the other compared languages.

Geographical criteria, this means the geographic locus in which the name of the tool is used, for example if it is the north (north of Jerusalem) to a large extent displays more Aramaic influences as indicated by words, but the south (south of Jerusalem) mostly shows more Canaanite influences. This result confirms the geographic distribution of the Canaanite and Aramaic languages in ancient times.

Chronological criteria, based on the first appearance of the intended lexeme according to the recorded languages in lexica and dictionaries of the above-mentioned languages.

Geographic and political contexts reflected by the names of the tools and objects

The interference of the languages of the study area with mixed communities through history might be reflected in the tool names. The area has experienced a case of multilingualism where many Semitic and non-Semitic languages and cultures had been used in small geographic loci. Many linguistic influences adopted by the locals including divergent culture of writing and speaking whose background must have also left its impact on a lingual level of the names of the tools and objects. We will also explore how much the different topographic appearance of the studied area helped in creating different political entities, where several independent states arose. These geographic and political factors and obstacles reflected themselves on the linguistic level contributing to the introduction of differences even among the Semitic languages and produced isoglosses and linguistic boundaries.

The influence of the social and economic contacts, the political relationships between the ancient kingdoms, commercial routes, the religious affiliations and other ways of interaction will be studied to show how this communication influenced the linguistic features of the names of the tools and objects. All these factors created an image of differentiation and interrelation on the linguistic level; creating sometimes what can be called a dialect island, where many linguistic changes happened but did not spread outward. On the other hand, in other areas it is possible that some linguistic changes originated in a place and slowly spread out or were transferred to other places, or one might find out many loaned words. Through surveying the historical textual evidence, archaeological remains, and anthropological sources like interviews these features will be traced and studied throughout the area of the study.

Preliminary results

118 names of tools and objects have been chosen for this tentative study and showed that:

1. Some of these names were borrowed in colloquial and employed to serve for the same meaning and without any kind of phonological modifications as can be seen in the five following examples.

Ver	Place	Description/Meaning	N-Semitic Counterparts	Root	Origin
<i>bātyā</i>	all	Rectangular wooden box for collective eating, or kneading	MH h. <i>buṭtā</i> 'a kind of goblet' (ANH 52), JBA <i>bāṭitā</i> 'a type of container' < Ar <i>bāṭyā</i> ' (DJBA 196–197), Sy <i>bāwṭātā</i> 'bowl, wine vessel', <i>bāṭitā</i> 'wine jar' (SD 41)	<i>bty</i> ?	MH h. <i>buṭtā</i> , JBA <i>bāṭitā</i> Sy <i>bāwṭātā</i> , <i>bāṭitā</i>
<i>yāṣūl</i>	Sārīs, Šuyūḥ	Wooden piece serves as joint inside the plough	Pun <i>yṣlh</i> 'joint/shoulder joint?' (DNWSI 465–666), MH h. <i>yāṣūl</i> 'drawbar (of plough)' (ANH 186), Sy <i>yāṣila</i> 'joint, the elbow' (SD 195)	<i>yṣl</i>	Pun <i>yṣlh</i> , BH <i>yāṣūl</i>
<i>kūz</i>	all	vessel, jar with narrow neck	JBA <i>kūzā</i> 'pitcher, liquid measure', <i>kūz'tā</i> 'a small pitcher used for wine' (DJBA 557), JPA <i>kwz</i> , <i>kwzh</i> 'type of jar', <i>kzny</i> 'small jug' (DJPA 253, 255), Sy <i>kūz</i> , <i>kuzā</i> 'a narrow necked vessel' (SD 207)	<i>kwz</i> ?	JBA <i>kūzā</i> , Sy <i>kūz</i> , <i>kuzā</i>
<i>kūr</i>	Šuyūḥ, Sārīs	blast furnace for smelting copper/iron, fire blower	BH, MH h. <i>kūr</i> 'little smelting furnace' (HAL 466), Sy <i>kūrā</i> 'furnace' (SD 211)	<i>kwr</i>	BH <i>kūr</i>
<i>sefēl</i> / <i>safulā</i>	'al-Yāmūn	A small oval jar with narrow neck	Ug <i>spl</i> 'bowl made of bronze' (KWU 111), BH <i>sepael</i> 'bowl for milk/	<i>spl</i>	Ug <i>spl</i> , BH <i>sepael</i> , MH h.

Ver	Place	Description/Meaning	N-Semitic Counterparts	Root	Origin
			water' (HAL 764), MH h. <i>sepael</i> 'bowl' (ANH 297), JPA <i>spl</i> 'bowl' (DJPA 386)		<i>sepael</i> , JPA <i>spl</i>

2. But other names on the other hand have been borrowed and phonologically modified to indicate an exact or a close or a derived meaning, e. g.:

Ver	Place	Description/Meaning	N-Semitic counterparts	Root	Origin
<i>banūrā</i>	Sārīs	Lamp made of pottery	BH, MH <i>m^enūrāh</i> 'lamp-stand, light' (HAL 600), JBA <i>menrātā</i> 'lamp' (DJBA 688), JPA <i>m^enārāh</i> 'lamp-stand, candelabrum' (DJPA 319)	<i>nwr</i>	BH <i>m^enūrāh</i>
<i>ḥābiyā</i>	all	Clay box for storing seeds	MH a. <i>ḥābitā</i> 'jar for stokes' (135), JBA <i>ḥābitā</i> 'jug' < Akk <i>ḥābū</i> 'a small earthen jar for storage' CAD Z 20 (DJBA 426), Sy <i>ḥābitā</i> 'wine-cask, butt' (SD 123)	<i>ḥ/ḥb'</i>	JBA, Sy <i>ḥābitā</i>
<i>ḡūnā</i>	Sārīs, Ni'īn, Ṣuyūḥ	pottery bowl	Sy <i>ḡūn</i> , <i>ḡūnā</i> 'a great brazen vessel for washing' (SD 65)	<i>gwn</i>	Sy <i>ḡūnā</i>
<i>zanbīlā</i>	all	Small sack for storing wheat or rice	JBA <i>zabbīlā</i> 'basket' (Akk <i>zabbīlu</i> , <i>zabbīlu</i> 'basket' CAD Z 6), < Ar <i>zabīl</i> , <i>zanbīl</i> (DJBA 397), Sy <i>zabīl</i> , <i>zanbīlā</i> 'a basket, frail of figs' (SD 109, 118)	<i>zbl</i>	JBA <i>zabbīlā</i> , Sy <i>zabīl</i>
<i>maḡūr / miḡwar</i>	Ṣuyūḥ, 'al- Ḥaḍer	A large crater in earth	BH <i>māgor</i> , <i>m^eḡūrāh</i> 'grain pit, storage room' (HAL 544), MH h. <i>m^eḡūrāh</i> 'water container' (ANH 223)	<i>gwr</i>	BH <i>māgor</i>

3. Out of the 118 tool and object names that were chosen for study and randomly gathered, we found that about 61 names can be originated to come from Canaanite and Aramaic, this sum makes up the following percentage.

Percentage

Ver	Can	Aram	Can or Aram	N-Semitic	Other languages (Ar, Eg, Gr, Lat, Per, Tur)
118	22	30	9	61	57
100%	18.6	25.4	7.6	51.6	48.4

The names of the tools and objects also showed a considerable percentage of Arabic and non-Semitic like Egyptian, Greek, Latin, Persian and Turkish origins as briefly indicated in the aforementioned chart, these will be explored in another article.

Abbreviations

a.	Aramaic		Aramaic
Aram	Aramaic	Lat	Latin
Ar	Arabic	MH	Middle Hebrew
Akk	Akkadian	N-Semitic	Northwest Semitic
BH	Biblical Hebrew	Per	Persian
Can	Canaanite	Pun	Punic
Eg	Egyptian	sub	substantive
Gr	Greek	Tur	Turkish
h.	Hebrew	Ug	Ugaritic
JBA	Jewish Babylonian Aramaic	v.	verb
JPA	Jewish Palestinian	Ver	Vernacular

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