

COMMON HAMITO-SEMITIC AND BASQUE WITH EXAMPLES FOR A PROTO-PHONEME /+B/

Hans G. MUKAROVSKY

This paper does not contain much new material. In fact I had included most of it in former articles, but I attempt here to present certain aspects more systematically.

The underlying assumption is that Basque is genetically related with the Hamito-Semitic linguistic family. This family which is also termed Afro-Asiatic and Erythraic, is believed to include at present six branches: Berber, Egyptian and the Semitic Languages, spread over Northern Africa and the Near East; then the Cushitic Languages in North Eastern Africa, a part of which were recently given independent status as a group of their own, and are called the Omotic Languages. Finally there are the Chadic Languages spread in the Sahel region to the West and the East of Lake Chad.

Assuming a genetic relationship of Basque with this linguistic stock is not new, and tackling this problem seems to be, by the way, an old preoccupation of Austrian scholars. Hugo Schuchardt proposed it, with the approval of Leo Reinisch who founded the study of the Cushitic Languages, and described many of them for the first time. Ernst Zyhlarz, another Austrian, later criticized Schuchardt, and I do not contradict his statement that «Basque is no Hamitic, and no African language at all.» I mention further Dominik J. Wölfel, well-known for his research of the extinct language of the Canary Islands who resumed Schuchardt's perspective. Werner Vycichl collaborated with Professor Antonio Tovar in his lexicostatistical study of Basque. They all were students in the Institute of Egyptology and African Languages at Vienna I come from myself.

Assuming genetic relationship between Basque and the Hamito-Semitic family does not, however, mean that Basque must be affiliated to it. Neither it is a part of one of its branches, nor does it form a new branch of its own. Rather it is related to Hamito-Semitic as a whole, and this does not exclude that it may be related to other linguistic units as well, provided the latter are

also related to Hamito-Semitic - this conclusion is logically imposed as we accept the premise. This leads us to assume the existence of an older common linguistic family of so far unknown extent, but there is no prerequisite concerning the different levels of affiliation in each single case.

Progress in comparative studies of Hamito-Semitic was, unfortunately, and still is rather slow. Marcel Cohen's «Essai comparatif sur le vocabulaire et la phonétique du chamito-sémitique» dates only from 1947, and there still exists no other comprehensive study but I. M. Diakonoff's «Semitic-Hamitic Languages» published in 1965. More impetus recently focused on the study of some of the subfamilies. Considerable progress was achieved in the field of Chadic which has been set up first as «Chado-Hamitic» by the Austrian scholar Johannes Lukas, in 1935, as a new branch of Hamito-Semitic, notwithstanding the reluctance of some Semitists to accept the fact. Up to now more than 130 Chadic languages have become known, and there exists an ever-increasing documentation on them. The separation of the «Western Cushitic» from the rest of the Cushitic Languages, and their renaming as the Omotic family seems to be widely accepted. Cushitic and Omotic each number equally from 60 to 70 languages.

Now the languages of the Northern branches, viz. Libyo-Berber, Egyptian and Semitic, which were documented since antiquity, were, hitherto, mostly taken as representative of the whole. But they are now outnumbered by far by the Southern languages. And while the Semitic languages form a closely related group, and Berber a dialect cluster, Egyptian being a single language (probably also comprising some dialects, as does Coptic), the Southern Hamito-Semitic subgroups show wide divergences. They display, indeed, many differing varieties in various respects which all have to be taken into consideration for the reconstruction of Common Hamito-Semitic by now.

Comparative studies of Hamito-Semitic will thus need still some time before detailed results can be expected. But this situation does not preclude the appraisal of some materials. For this end let us underline the following points:

1. Berber, Egyptian or Semitic lexical roots which possess cognates in Cushitic, Omotic or Chadic in all probability reflect old Common Hamito-Semitic roots.
2. Borrowing is rare in cases of basic vocabulary.
3. If Southern Hamito-Semitic forms are more similar to their Basque counterparts than their northern cognates, borrowing is also quite unlikely.
4. The increasing number of comparable cases rule out sheer coincidence.
5. There can be demonstrated a seeming regularity of sound correspondence. A number of such cases which can be related to a common proto-phoneme /+B/ are discussed subsequently.

1. *barria-tu, barrai-tu* (et al.) «spread, scatter, demolish» is regarded as borrowed from Romance, e. g. Catalan *barrejar* «devastate, mix», Portuguese (obsolete) *barrejar* «invade». But the word lacks an obvious etymology.

Semitic: Geez *bärbära* «to plunder» Tigre *bärbära* «spread out»

Egyptian: *b r b r* «devastate»

Cushitic: Northern: Bedauye *berir* «spread, scatter»

Central: Bilin *barbar* «spread out; take honey from a bee-hive»

Xamir *birbir* Quara *mir*

Eastern: Saho *balala* «rob, plunder» Afar *bala* «take»

2. *belhaun* «knee», *belhaurikatu* «kneel down»

Semitic (Common): *b-r-k* cf. Akkadian *birku* Ugaritic *b r k* Hebrew *berekh* Syriac *burkaa* Geez *bärk* Tigre *birk* Tigrinya *bärki* et al. Cf. Arabic *baraka* Amharic *tambarakka* «kneel down».

Omotic: Ari *buuka* Dime *book* Banna *buuko*, with loss of the median consonant, still traceable in the length of the stem vowel, and merger of *k* and *k*.

Chadic: + *p r k* is assumed as a common root for Central Chadic, e. g. *Gisiga* *poporok*.

Notes: 1. Arabic *rukbah* Rabbinic Hebrew *arkubbah* have the same root consonants, perhaps due to metathesis.

2. Other Chadic languages point to a common root + *g^w r p* which is similar to another stem widespread in Cushitic and the Semitic languages of Ethiopia, e. g. Kemant *girib* Kembata *gulubita* Burji -*gilba* Konso *kilba* Amharic *gulbät*. It also might be due to metathesis.

3. Etymologically Basque *b* may correspond to an older velar plosive, such as in (h) *arri* «stone», (h) *il* «to die», (h) *or* «dog», cf.:

Cushitic:	Central:	«stone»	«die»	Eastern:	«dog»	
	Awiya	<i>kariŋ</i>	<i>kir</i>	Saho	<i>kare</i>	
	Kemant	<i>kerna</i>	<i>kii</i>	Rendille	<i>kar</i>	
	Bilin	<i>kəriŋa</i>	<i>kirux</i>	Baiso	<i>kerre</i>	
	Xamir	<i>qarəŋa</i>	<i>qiruu</i>	Gidole	<i>həra</i>	
	Quara	<i>kriŋ</i>		Gawwada	<i>haaro</i>	
				Weize	<i>xero</i>	
Omotic:	Shinasha		<i>kiri</i>	Tsamai	<i>karo</i>	
	Süd-Mao		<i>keera</i>	Arbore	<i>kair</i>	et al.

Chadic:	Musgu	kiriid	Hausa	kàree	
	Glavda	akura	Bokkos	kyàraa	
	Logone	ɲkudu	Logone	køle	
			Hitkala	kr-i	
			Matakam	kød-a	
Berber:	Tuareg	e-kade	Mandara	kør-e	et al.

3. *berri* (*Biskayan barri*) «new»

Egyptian: Coptic *berre*, believed to derive from:
Late Egyptian *b r y* «young»

Cushitic: Eastern: Galla *baro*

Omotiic: Mocha *bero* (from Galla?)

Chadic: + ^mb r is set up as a common root, e. g.:

Western (Southern Bauchi): Bändas (or Dür) *bari* Dikshi *mbori*
Zumbul *bwàri* Zaar *mbur*, *muuri* et al.

Central: Buduma *bilin*

Note: It has been pointed out by A. Martinet that Basque *berri* «new», used in compound words such as in old place names as *Ilumberri*, points to the possible former existence of a prenasalized voiced labial plosive in Basque.

4. *bero* «warm»

Egyptian: *b r b r* Coptic *berber* «to boil»

Berber: Northern: Tashilhayt *berbur* Mzab *aber* «to boil»

Cushitic: Central: Bilin *bir* «be or become hot» Xamir *bir* Quara *bel*
Eastern: Afar *mir*

Omotiic: Koyra *biina* Gidicho *biinna* Zergulla, Zayse *bin* She *bins*

5. *bide* «path, road»

Berber:

Southern: Tuareg *a-bareqqa*


Cushitic: Eastern: Konso *pora* Gidole *pana* Bussa *paana* Werize *paano*

Omotiic: Becho *bød* She *bød*

Chadic: + *b t* (-*l*) is assumed as a common root found in Central and Eastern Chadic, cf. Musgu *fit(t)i*, *fut(t)i* Mubi *bødəl*. Another root is assumed as + *b d m*.

6. *bi(h)ar* «to-morrow» (-*rr* from -*r*, cf. *biharamun* «following day»)

Semitic: Hebrew *boqār*; in Colloquial Arabic *bukr-ah*, perhaps from:

Egyptian: *b k ʒ* (𐓚 = ʒ corresponds often to  = *r* in older texts).

Cushitic: Eastern: Afar *beera* Somali *berri* Galla *boru* Konso *parre* probably with loss of the median root consonant.

7. biribil «round», cf. borobil «ball, sphere»

Egyptian: b n n.t «ball» (the hieroglyph = n corresponds to l of other languages)

Cushitic: Central: Bilin embilbilaa «ball».

Eastern: Galla bururi «round»

Note: Connected with this stem are probably Egyptian d b n «round»

Cushitic: Northern: Bedauye debala «round» Semitic: Ethiopian: Amharic dōbēlbēl «ball».

8. gibel «liver»

Semitic (Common): k-b-d «liver» cf. Akkadian kabittu Ugaritic k b d Hebrew kaabheedh Syriac kabhdaa Arabic kabid-un Tigre kābed Tigrinya kābdi Amharic gubbāt et al. «liver»

Note: In Geez kābəd means «belly».

8a. gibel «back part»

Cushitic: Central: Bilin gurbēt Xamir jirbaa Quara gibra «back»

Omotic: Mocha gúbbo «back»

Note: Luis Michelena (in his *Fonética Histórica Vasca*, 1961, p. 241) speaks of «two variants of the same word».

Of course the regularity of sound correspondences between all the different branches of Hamito-Semitic as well as between the individual languages has still to be established. If so, these examples already demonstrate the validity of the assumed genetic relationship, but there are still more comparable cases. Especially, *if/+B/* can be reconstructed at the level of Macro-Erythraic - this term I propose for naming the older common denominator of both Basque and Hamito-Semitic - we can reverse the procedure, and look for more reflexes of the assumed protophoneme. Some cases of more problematic nature are dealt with subsequently.

9. begi «eye» and behatu «look at» may be cognates of:

Semitic: Syriac beqaa «to examine» Arabic baqiya «to watch, look at»

Egyptian: b 3 k «see» appears in texts of the late period and is a rare word.

Probably from b 3 k.t «eye of Horus» cf. b 3 k «be bright».

Cushitic: Eastern: Galla beekuu «know» Burji beex «know»

Omotic: Kafa bek «see» Mocha bāqqi- Bencho beka She beka Basketo beko Kullo be'e Chara, Wellamo, Dache be'- et al.

10. beltz «black» (Biskayan baltz) is connected with Aquitanian belex, Iberian beleś. Yet in compound words its stem appears without the third consonant, as in ar-bel «dark stone, slate», and perhaps also in the bird name bele (Biskayan bela) «raven».

Semitic: Hebrew apel «dark» Arabic 'afala (ya'fil-) «set» (star, sun)

Berber: Northern: Tashilhayt a-bexx-en Tamazight a-bersa-n Rif a-berxa-n Beni Snus bers-en Qbayli a-berka-n suggest a trilateral verbal root b-r-k «be black». The normal counterpart of its third consonant -k in Basque would have been h which would have dropped out in a position other than initial of a syllable; Basque tz would thus constitute an augment.

Cushitic: Eastern: Konso bu'uri Gidole ipor Bussa poora Arbore boriyda
Southern: Iraqw bor'

11. bil(h)o, billo «hair» was supposed to derive from Latin pilu-m which would, however, have rather given + biru in Basque. Contrary to this assumption it might be a cognate of:

Cushitic: Eastern: Somali baal-ka Baiso baale, bal Galla ball Konso balla Sidamo ballico Hadiyya balla'e which all mean «feather».

12. aba «father» is Common Hamito-Semitic as well:

Semitic (Common): 'ab- . In modern Ethiopian lgs. e. g. Amharic abbat .

Berber: Northern: Tamazight ibba
Southern: Tuareg abba

Cushitic: Eastern: Saho, Afar abba Somali 'aabo Baiso abbo Rendille aba Burji aabbo Galla aaba Konso, Gidole appa Arbore iva

Omotic: Kullo awwa Dache aua Janjero aaba She imba

Chadic: + (a)bb-(a) is assumed as a common stem, e. g. Hausa ùbáa Musgu appa et al.

13. ebri (eubri, euri, ebi et al.) «rain» was alleged to be borrowed from Latin imbre-m. Rather it may be a cognate of

Cushitic: Northern: Bedauye bire, bile «sky, rain».

14. ibai «river» may as well be a cognate of:

Cushitic: Northern: Bedauye aba «river»

It deserves a mention that among these 14 examples the selection of which was limited to Basque words containing b as their first (or, in one case, second) consonant, not less than 10 are found in the «test list of 100 diagnostic items» of non-cultural viz. basic vocabulary, proposed by Maurice Swadesh for lexicostatistical purposes.

Let us examine a contrasting example:

15. bar(h)e «spleen» (Biscayan are, with unexplained loss of b- in initial position) cf. barhe «appendix of liver, liver»

Cushitic: Eastern: Somali beer-ka «liver», beer yéro «spleen» is a seemingly good correspondence, but the further evidence is not favorable for assuming primary /+B/:

Hadiyya, Libido *afère* Kambetta *afelita* Alaba *afelit*

Gudella *afäre* Sidamo *afali*, *affale* Burji *aaffela*; they all mean «liver».

Omotic: South Mao *afaaro* Shinasha *afaara* Mocha *ap'áaro*: According to Wolf Leslau Mocha *p'* is an unvoiced glottalized labial plosive which corresponds etymologically to *f* of Kafa and other Cushitic (and Omotic) languages.

Chadic: Gisiga *me-vel* Glavda *érèva* (metathesis) mean both «liver»

Semitic (Ethiopian): Mesmes, a dialect of the Western Gurage Cluster, and a neighbour of Hadiyya has *fore* «liver».

The evidence thus points to the assumption of an original labial plosive of other kind than /+B/, perhaps a glottalized plosive such as it exists in Mocha. An «emphatic» *p* has been assumed, besides *b* and *p*, by Diakonoff for Proto-Hamito-Semitic.

A correspondence between *b* of Basque and Hamito-Semitic languages is not of genetic nature also in the case of a cultural term taken over with the object it named. An example is given by:

16. *burdina* (*burdiña*, *burduña*, *burni* et al.) «iron».

Now the oldest known name of iron is Sumerian *an-bar* which means «brightness of sky»; a similar compound term was borrowed by Akkadian as *parzillu(m)* and by Phoenician and Hebrew as *bharzel*. Reminiscent of this are Latin *ferr-um*, from older *fers-om* and Anglo-Saxon *braes* from which modern English «brass» derives. They all display a sibilant as third consonant.

Another alleged etymology was a Latin word *pro-tumid-um* with a meaning «something embossed» which is quite artificial. Contrary to all that we have:

Semitic: Ugaritic *b r r* «lead or tin», perhaps Hebrew *‘opher-eth* «lead» could well be related with Basque *berun* «lead»

Ethiopian: Geez *bert* «bronze, copper», *beruur* «silver».

In modern Ethiopic languages Tigrinya *berät* Amharic *borät* Harari *brät* all mean «iron», but are, according to Leslau, all borrowed from Cushitic.

Egyptian: *b j 3* «metal» is related to Cushitic, according to Diakonoff, but has been identified as copper or bronze, the metal most used by the Egyptians. Coptic *baroot* «brass, bronze» has been explained as derived from *b j 3 r w d* «strong metal» while «iron» was called *b j 3 n p t* «metal (copper) of heaven» which gives *benipe* in Coptic.

Cushitic: Central: Xamir *birít*

Eastern: Saho *birta* Afar *birtaa* Somali *bir-ta* (here *-ta* is the feminine article) Kembatta, Quabenna *biräti* Tembaro *boräta*

Omotic: Kafa biretoo

Chadic: Gisiga bir (b = is a voiced glottalized labial plosive)

Now this is a typical wanderwort but its antiquity is attested by Egyptian. If its initial radical was, originally, a glottalized and therefore only partly voiced plosive, this feature must have been early lost. Final -t can be taken as a feminine ending in many Hamito-Semitic languages.

One may wonder whether the Basque ending -ina, -ña could not be connected with the feminine noun suffix which today is still found in animal names, such as asto-ña «she-ass»?

This suffix could have once been more productive, just as the Chadic noun suffix Hausa -nyaa, -yaa still is, which happens to look like its Basque counterpart, by mere chance or not.

The purpose of this paper was to attract the attention of Bascologists to the study of African Linguistics. The Hamito-Semitic Languages will offer a lot of interesting facts to them. I invite students of Basque to join in these studies! They certainly will be able to discover much more of the past of their language.

LABURPENA

Kamito-Semitiko familia edo ere Afro-Asiatiko edo Eritrearr familia deitzen den hizkuntza taldearekin ahaidegorik balin badu euskarak, ez du horrek erran nahi euskara bera talde horretan sartzen dela ez ere euskarak beste ahaidearik ez dukeela. Hemen askazgo urrun batetaz ari gara eta Filum edo Familia handi bat dugu gogoan, guziz hedatua, «Makro-eritrearr» familia autoreak deitzen duena.

Nahiz hauek aspaldidanik dokumentatuak diren, ez dezakegu gaur onar, mintzaira semitikoak, egiptiarra, libiarra eta berebertarra direla Kamito-Semitiko familiako mintzaira bakarrak. Gaurko egunean ezagutzen ditugu 200 mintzaira baino gehiago, Kuxitikoak, Omotikoak eta Txadekoak. Badituzte beren dialekto bereziak eta oro har guziz garrantzitsuak dauzkagu.

Kamito-Semitiko alorretan egin diren konparaketa lanak guziz apurrak ditugu zori gaitzez oraino.

Dena dela zenbait puntu badaude oraidanik ongi egiaztaturik. Hala nola berebertarren, Egiptiarren edo Semitarren hitz-erroen parekoak aurkitzen ditugularik Kuxitiar, Omotiar edo Txadiar mintzaira batean, badirudi Kamito-Semitar zaharraren hatzak dituzkegula hor ikusi behar. Ezen hoin aspaldian elgarretarik urrundu diren mintzaireren artean maileguak izaitzak ez du itxurarik. Eta bestalde, oinarrizko hiztegiaren eremuetan, guziz bakanak dira, oro har, maileguak. Mintzaireren arteko komunizadura fonetikoak hoin dira itxuraz erregularrak eta konparaketako kasuen kopurua hoin da handia, non ez baitira datu horiek suertearen kondu jartzen ahal.

Autoreak ikertzen ditu gero 16 hitz, euskal hiztegikoak, b letra daukatenak edo hastean edo tartean: barriatu, bel(h)aun, berri, bero, bide, bi(h)ar, biribil, gibel, begi, beltz, bil(h)o, aba, eberi, ibai, bar(h)e, eta burdina. Kamito-Semitar mintzairerako paraleloekin egiten du konparaketa eta euskalariak deitzen ditu Afrikanisten iker lanean partehartzera.

RESUMEN

Si bien el vascuence está emparentado con la familia lingüística camito-semítica, también llamada afro-asiática o eritrea, ello no implica que él mismo forme parte de dicha familia, ni excluye tampoco que tenga otros parientes. Se trata de un parentesco lejano en el seno de un filo o gran familia de extensión desconocida que el autor denomina macroeritrea.

En cuanto al conjunto camito-semítico, las lenguas semíticas, el egipcio y el libico-berber, aunque estén documentados desde la antigüedad, no pueden ya ser considerados como únicos representantes, dado que conocemos en la actualidad más de 200 lenguas cuchíticas, omóticas y chádicas que muestran un gran número de variedades y cuya importancia debe de ser subrayada.

Desgraciadamente, los estudios comparativos camito-semíticos no están muy adelantados.

Sin embargo, algunas conclusiones parecen justificadas. Así, algunos radicales bereberes, egipcios o semíticos que poseen correspondientes en cuchítico, omótico o chádico, son con toda probabilidad «reflejos» del camito-semítico común, puesto que parece inverosímil que se produzcan préstamos entre lenguas que se separaron hace ya tanto tiempo, y que los préstamos son escasos en el dominio del vocabulario de base en general. La aparente regularidad de las correspondencias fonéticas así como el número de los casos comparables excluye que estas semejanzas sean únicamente fortuitas.

El autor presenta a continuación 16 palabras eúscaras con inicial (o con consonante *mediana*) b : *barriatu*, *bel(h)aun*, *berri*, *berro*, *bide*, *bi(h)ar*, *biribil*, *gibel*, *begi*, *beltz*, *bil(h)o*, *aba*, *ebri*, *ibai*, *bar(h)e*, y *burdina* y las confronta con sus correspondientes en las lenguas camítico-semíticas. E invita a los euskarólogos a participar en la investigación africanista.

RÉSUMÉ

Si le basque est apparenté avec la famille linguistique chamito-sémitique appelée aussi afro-asiatique ou érythréenne, cela n'implique pas qu'il fasse lui-même partie de cette famille, et n'exclut pas non plus qu'il ait encore d'autres parents. Il s'agit là d'une parenté lointaine au sein d'un phylum ou d'une grande-famille d'extension inconnu que l'auteur appelle macro-érythréenne.

Quant à l'ensemble chamito-sémitique les langues sémitiques, l'égyptien et le libyco-berbère quoiqu'ils soient documentés depuis l'antiquité, ne peuvent plus être considérés comme seuls représentatifs du fait que nous connaissons à présent plus que 200 langues couchitiques, omotiques et tchadiques qui montrent un grand nombre de variétés, dont l'importance doit être soulignée. Malheureusement les études comparatives chamito-sémitiques ne sont que peu avancées.

Néanmoins quelques conclusions semblent être licites. Ainsi des radicaux berbères, égyptiens ou sémitiques qui possèdent des pendants en couchitique, omotique ou tchadique, sont selon toute probabilité des «reflets» du chamito-sémitique commun, vu qu'il soit invraisemblable qu'il ait des emprunts entre des langues qui se sont séparées depuis aussi longtemps, et que des emprunts sont très rares dans la domaine du vocabulaire de base en général. L'apparente régularité des correspondances phonétiques ainsi que le nombre des cas comparables exclut que ces rapprochements ne soient que fortuits.

L'auteur présente ensuite 16 mots basque à l'initiale (ou à consonne médiane) b : *barriatu*, *bel(h)aun*, *berri*, *bero*, *bide*, *bi(h)ar*, *biribil*, *gibel*, *begi*, *beltz*, *bil(h)o*, *aba*, *ebri*, *ibai*, *bar(h)e*, et *burdina* et les confronte à leur pendants dans des langues chamito-sémitiques. Il invite les bascologues à participer à la recherche africaniste.

Bibliography

- MUKAROVSKY, H.: *El Vascuence y el Berber*. Euskera, Vol. XVII, pp.5-49. Bilbao 1972.
(Contains also a bibliography of earlier literature, including my own earlier essays.)
- BENDER, M. L.: *The Languages of Ethiopia*. *Anthropological Linguistics*, Vol. XIII, No. 5, pp.165 - 288. Chicago 1971.
- HERRMANN JUNGRAITMAYR AND KIYOSHI SHIMIZU: *Chadic lexical roots*. Tentative Analysis, Numbering and Distribution. (A First Evaluation of the Chadic Word Catalogue). In preparation (due to appear in Marburg, 1982).