THE CLASSIFICATION OF CHADIC
WITHIN AFROASIATIC

REDE
UITGESPROKEN BIJ DE AANVAARDING VAN HET
AMT VAN GEWOON HOOGLERAAR IN DE AFRIKAANSE TAALKUNDE
AAN DE RIJKSUNIVERSITEIT TE LEIDEN
OP VREIGAAG 5 JUNI 1980

DOOR

DR. PAUL NEWMAN

1980
UNIVERSITAIRe PERS LEIDEN
Mijnheer de Rector Magnificus,

Dames en Heren Leden van de Universitaire Genootschap,

Zeer gewaardeerde toehoorders,

The Chadic language family consists of some hundred and fifty languages found in northern Nigeria, northern Cameroon, central Chad, and neighboring areas in West Africa. One of these, Hausa, is probably the largest indigenous language in sub-Saharan Africa, being spoken by an estimated 20 to 25 million people. It has been the subject of serious linguistic study since the middle of the 19th century, and can boast having some of the best grammars and dictionaries of any African language. The other Chadic languages taken together probably number less than three million speakers. While isolated descriptions of these languages date from the beginning of the 19th century, they remained neglected on the whole until the 1930's, when they became the subject of study of Professor J. Lukas. While our knowledge of these smaller languages is still meagre by comparison with Hausa, an awakening of interest in Chadic over the past twenty years has resulted in new and descriptive studies of many of these languages, such that it has been possible for scholars to embark on intra-Chadic comparative work and achieve significant results (see Barreteau & Newman 1978).

As part of his comprehensive classification of the languages of Africa, Greenberg (1950) proposed that Chadic be incorporated as an integral

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1. A description of the Afrikada dialect of Koteko by U. J. Seetzen dates from 1816. This work seems to have been completely overlooked until brought to the attention of linguists in recent years by Silber (1967).
part of the Hamito-Semitic (later renamed "Afroasiatic") phylum. The proposal in effect embodied three separate hypotheses, none of which was original with Greenberg, but which when taken together, added up to a clear and unequivocal treatment of Chadic. The first claim was that Hausa, in spite of its numerical significance, was phylogenetically just one of a number of related languages in the area. Thus, in considering the possible relationship of Hausa to Egyptian or Berber or Semitic, one had to consider the whole Chadic group of which Hausa was a part and not just Hausa in isolation. Second, Greenberg rejected the putative Hamitic family and the well-established Semitic/Hamitic dichotomy, arguing instead for an overall Afroasiatic phylum with 5 parallel families, each provisionally treated as being fully coordinate with the others. Greenberg’s third claim was that Chadic did indeed belong to Afroasiatic.

The first claim is now accepted as fact. Barth in 1862 already recognized the relationship of Hausa to Logone, a smaller language spoken south of Lake Chad, and by 1884, Krause was able to speak of a “hausa-musunwakischen Gruppe”, including Hausa, Musgu, Logone, Nde, and Margi, among others. Migeod (1911-13) correctly related Hausa more specifically to the Angas-Role languages. Delafosse, in _Les langues du monde_ (1924), included Hausa in an even larger “nigérov-tchadien” family, a coalescence that formed the basis for Westermann’s “Hausa-Kotoko-Gruppe” (Baumann, Thurwald, and Westermann 1940: 393-95) and ultimately for the presently-constituted Chadic family. Lukas (1936, etc.) introduced an artificial distinction between languages such as Hausa, Bade, and Kotoko, which had grammatical gender, and those such as Mandara and Margi, which did not, a division rejected by Greenberg and further demonstrated to be false by Newman and Ma (1966). Nevertheless, although Lukas may have narrowed the limits of his so-called “Chado-Hamitic” group unnecessary, he more than anyone else was responsible for taking Hausa out of its traditional isolated status and establishing its position within a well defined family of languages.

The second hypothesis also gained quick and broad acceptance. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that Greenberg’s rejection of the Semitic/Hamitic dichotomy and its replacement by a super-phylum containing a number of coordinate branches was in line with the position that had been espoused for over a quarter of a century by Marcel Cohen, the leading figure in comparative Afroasiatic linguistics. The publication within a short period of time of Greenberg’s classification (1950, 1955a) and two major works by Cohen (1947, 1952) finally destroyed the linguistic foundations of the Hamitic concept. While many scholars doubt whether the various branches of Afroasiatic are really equally distant from one another, almost no one now believes that a valid sub-grouping of the phylum would show Egyptian, Berber, Cushitic, and Chadic to fall together into one common “Hamitic” branch as opposed to Semitic.

Greenberg’s third claim, the membership of Chadic in Afroasiatic, has not fared as well as the other two. While this classification has been accepted almost as a matter of course by Africanists in America and has

2. Greenberg’s 1950 article was reprinted as such in his 1955 book and with a much expanded comparative word list in his _Languages of Africa_ (1960). For the sake of convenience, I shall go ahead and use “Afroasiatic” as the general term of reference for the phylum, even when speaking of historical periods prior to the introduction of the term. For the best general overviews of the field of Afroasiatic linguistics, see Hodge (1975, 1975) and Diakonoff (1974).

3. Delafosse’s group also included a number of small non-Chadic languages spoken in the same geographic area about which little was known (e.g. Jarawa, Mandang, Wajh). These non-Chadic languages were again listed in the 1952 edition, although a note was added that they possibly did not belong.


5. Parsons’ (1970) misguided attempt to cast doubt about the relationship of Hausa to Chadic was answered succinctly, but sharply, by Newman (1971). For a review of the literature concerning the classification of Hausa, see Meyer-Bahlburg (1975/76).

6. Unfortunately, however, numerous scholars in linguistics, anthropology, and history— not to mention philologists and booklovers—persist in speaking of Hamitic languages and peoples, thereby keeping alive this anachronistic and pernicious concept. Ironically, Marcel Cohen, who more than anyone else had fought against the idea of a Hamitic family, unwittingly contributed to the survival of the concept by his use of the term “chamito-semicolonique”, which embodied the dichotomy he purported to reject.

7. Polonsky (1971: 321-22) expresses what one might consider today’s balanced view: “The Hamitic languages thus constitute merely a ‘family’ within a ‘stock’ or ‘phylum’, to which the name Hamito-Semitic has been given. This name inevitably suggests a dichotomy into two major groups...Yet it is clear that there exists no ‘Hamitic’ family comparable to the Semitic family...The most sensible attitude is...to refrain from premature stratigraphical theories and to accept as of equal standing the four main groups, Semito,Egyptian, Berber and Cushitic,— plus any group which further research may find it necessary to add, such as Chad-Hamitic (including Hausa).”
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been endorsed as well by a wide range of scholars of various nationalities and disciplines (e.g., Westermann 1952, Mevissen 1957, and Diakonoff 1965), it has not been universally accepted. No one has actually denied the relationship, as was common earlier, but a number of scholars have been reluctant to accept it. Many of these, Leslau (1962) for example, have simply chosen to ignore Chadic as if it did not exist, and have described Afroasiatic as consisting of four groups only, namely Semitic, Egyptian, Berber, and Cushitic, a practice also common in standard reference works. Others, principally Marcel Cohen and his followers, have expressed their doubts more openly. Note, for example, the sharp rebuke found in a review by David Cohen of Diakonoff’s Semito-Hamitic Languages: “S’ensuit une hypothèse ancienne, toujours refusée à la mode il y a quelques années par J. Greenberg, E. M. Djakonoff les intègre dans le chamo-sémique, sans même signaler que des doutes continuent à s’exprimer à ce sujet parmi les chamo-sémistes, aussi bien que parmi les spécialistes des langues chadiennes” (D. Cohen 1971: 204).

Before discussing the substantive question of the classification of Chadic within Afroasiatic, I would like to go back and survey the history of this “hypothesis ancienne”.

The classification of Hausa (and thus ultimately of Chadic) as Afroasiatic was first proposed in 1844 by the Berberist, Francis W. Newman. Drawing on Hausa data published the previous year by Schön (1843), Newman pointed out detailed similarities between Hausa and other languages now accepted as Afroasiatic. He presented a short list of common lexical items and then remarked: “Far more important is the similarity which the Hausa discloses in its pronouns to the Hebrew family in general, and in its prepositions and demonstratives to the Berber language” (p. 628). Newman did not unequivocally assign Hausa to Afroasiatic (his “Hebraeo-Africain” family) as he had done in the case of Berber, but his arguments all pointed in that direction.

The proposed relationship between Hausa and other Afroasiatic languages was subsequently adopted by Max Miller (1855, 1861), a leading general linguist of the period. Miller, who seems to have had a clear understanding of hierarchic linguistic subgrouping, was aware that the different Afroasiatic groups were probably not all related to one another in exactly the same way: “Other languages which are supposed to belong to the Semitic family are the Berber dialects of Northern Africa... Some other African languages, too, such as the Hausa and Galla, have been classed as Semitic; and the language of Egypt, from the earliest hieroglyphic inscriptions to the Coptic, has equally been referred to this class. The Semitic character of these dialects, however, is much less clearly defined, and the exact degree of relationship in which they stand to the Semitic languages, properly so-called, has still to be determined” (1861: 269).

The explorer Barth, who knew Hausa intimately from his long travels in Africa, was also convinced of the relationship (1862: 470). Not everyone, however, was prepared to accept the idea. J. C. Prichard, the physical anthropologist in whose earlier work Newman had published his ideas about Hausa, was extremely negative: “That such a people should bear any relationship to the Semitic nations is a fact so contrary to prejudice and prevailing opinion, that the assertion will not be believed without proofs” (1853: 324, emphasis his). Similarly, C. Lottner, in an otherwise “remarkably prescient essay” (Greenberg 1950), explicitly excluded Hausa from among his Afroasiatic “sister families”. “And I especially most distinctly deny an assertion, which of late has been very confidently made, that the Hausa exhibits certain Semitic features” (1860; 61: 114, emphasis his).

The most influential linguistic classification proposed during this mid-nineteenth century period was that of R. Lepsius in the 2nd edition of his Standard Alphabet (1863). Lepsius accepted the relationship of Hausa to Berber, Egyptian, and Cushitic, but put all of these (along with Hotentot) in a family distinct from Semitic, which he termed “Hamitic”. As his Hamitic and Semitic families were presumed to be ultimately related, in that they, along with Indo-European, belonged to the common category of “Gender languages” (1864: 81), but otherwise, there was no special relationship between the two. The languages of Africa that were neither Semitic nor

8. Mevissen’s overall evaluation of Greenberg’s classification was high: “Greenberg heeft een meesterlijke klassificering van de Afrikanen talen opgesteld” (1957: 272).
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10. Contrary to oft-repeated statements on the subject, neither Lepsius nor Roman (1855) was responsible for introducing the term “Hamitic.” For an excellent study, which finally provides reliable information on the history of this field, see Biurini (1978-79).
11. This was not a typological grouping. For Lepsius, all of these “gender-languages” were descended from “one original Atlantic stock” (1863: 89).
Hamitic were put into a single "African" family. This same classificatory scheme was retained by Lepsius in his more extensive treatment of the languages of Africa which he published in 1880 as an introduction to his Nubian grammary.

Friedrich Müller (1867) followed Lepsius in treating Hamitic as a family separate from Semitic, but he excluded Hausa (as well as Hottentot), thereby pruning Hamitic down to its "orthodox" core of Egyptian, Berber, and Cushitic. The linguistic validity of this Hamitic group was demonstrated by grammatical comparisons involving pronouns, gender markers, plural formations, verbal extensions, etc. Interestingly, most of the phenomena later cited by Greenberg in support of Afroasiatic were already mentioned by Müller in his magnum opus, published in four volumes between 1876 and 1888. Hamitic and Semitic were still treated essentially as separate groups, although it was acknowledged that at a deeper level they constituted branches of a common family.12 Hausa and other Chadic languages that were getting to be known were relegated to a place among the Negro-African languages.13 Müller's classification, which was popularized by Cust in his Sketch of the Modern Languages of Africa (1883), became what was probably the dominant viewpoint on African and Afroasiatic languages for the next thirty years.14

The major linguistic event at the beginning of the 20th century -- from which African linguistics is only now beginning to recover -- was the publication of Meinhold's Die Sprachen der Hamiten (1912), followed soon thereafter by his Introduction to the Study of African Languages (1915). Meinhold went back to Lepsius' classification in including Hausa and Hottentot in his Hamitic family, but went beyond it in adding Fulani (a West-Atlantic Niger-Congo language) and Masai (a Nilotic Nilo-Saharan language). But more important than the exact membership of the family was the fact that Meinhold endowed his family with racial characteristics, both physical and psychological. From that point on, Hamitic ceased to be an arbitrary name for a group of non-Semitic languages with Semitic-like features and became the name used for the languages spoken by a specific racial/ethnic group, the "Hamites", presumed to be fundamentally different from the "Negroes of Africa".15 The idea that the Hamites were not only different from but inherently superior to the Negro Africans became a dominant theme among anthropologists and historians, as well as linguists.16 Seligman's statement, for example, is typical: "Apart from relatively late Semitic influence . . . the civilizations of Africa are the civilizations of the Hamites . . . . The incoming Hamites were pastoral 'Europeans' -- arriving wave after wave -- better armed as well as quicker-witted than the dark agricultural Negroes" (1966, p. 61 and 100). The following statement by Aziselli (1950 : 161) captures even more vividly the romantic aspect of the Hamitic concept: "Certains traits caractérisés se retrouvent identiques aussi bien chez les Hamites septentrionaux [Berber] que chez les Hamites orientaux [Cushites], et le plus important est bien cette disposition apparente à la spiritualité . . . une spiritualité brutale, passionnée, fanatique rétive, qui distingue sans équivoque possible, la conscience hamitique de la placidité indifférente et conciliante des Négres".

Meinhold recognized remote affinities between Hamitic and Semitic, but in terms of his overall classification of the languages of Africa into Sasanic, Bastu, Hamitic, Semitic, and Cushitic, they were treated as separate families. For all practical purposes, Hamito-Semitic ceased to exist.

Not all scholars accepted Meinhold's total classification nor his views regarding the cultural/racial nature of the Hamites; but practically all those who accepted his idea of a separate Hamitic family also followed him in assigning Hausa to this group (e.g. O'Leary 1915, Troncheti 1923, Worrell 1927, Burton 1934). Westermann, in his introduction to Isagiri's monumental Hausa dictionary, wrote, "Hausa is a Hamitic language . . . The main proof of the Hamitic character of the Hausa language is its distinction of grammatical gender in noun and pronoun. This distinction
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is fully developed in Hausa and shows in its formation clear affinities to the Berber dialects. This same characteristic... is one of the connecting links between Hamitic and Semitic languages” (1934: xiii). 17 At first, scholars who accepted the membership of Hausa within Hamitic were essentially content to re-cite the evidence provided by Meinhold, but in the 1930’s, new and important studies appeared which explicitly set out to demonstrate the validity of this putative relationship. 18 Perhaps the most important single study was Vycichl’s long paper on Hausa and Egyptian (1954). But more influential in convincing other scholars that Hausa was Hamitic, or very probably so, was J. Lukas, who in a series of papers (1937/38 etc.) demonstrated the existence of unquestionable “Hamitic” characteristics, not only in Hausa, but in the whole group to which Hausa belonged. These were not isolated features but rather were extensive similarities covering the gamut of grammar, morphology, phonology, and lexicon. The term “Chado-Hamitic”, coined by Lukas, proved effective in highlighting the wider external relationship of this group to the Hamitic family.

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17. Curiously, a few years later, Westermans forgot about Hausa’s ties with Hamitic and classified it instead in the “Sprachenkreis” group of the “Sudan-sprachen” along with Kotoko and other Chadic languages (see Baumann et al. 1940: 393-95).
18. Klingenberg (1928/29) used Hausa data extensively in his comparative Hamito-Semitic works and thus implicitly contributed to the demonstration of the membership of Hausa in the phylum.

(Cohen 1924: 83). 19 Cohen explicitly excluded Hausa from this family notwithstanding the existence of what he termed “quelques traits isolés d’héritage de l’heure ancienne avec des éléments grammaticaux qui ne sont que des marqueurs d’appartenance à la famille chamito-sémitique” (p. 84) and relegated it to the chapter on Negro-African languages. Cohen’s classification thus constituted a return to the position proposed without success by Lotterm a half century earlier. As a matter of historical interest, it should be pointed out that this was hardly Cohen’s rediscovery, since the idea of an Afroasiatic family with a coordinate four-branch tree structure had already been revived by French scholars some ten years earlier, namely by the Egyptologist Pierre Lacau (1912-13) and, presumably independently, by Maurice Delafosse (1914), who, one might be surprised to hear, termed this family “Afro-asiatique.” 20 Cohen, nevertheless, clearly became the leading advocate of this conception of Afroasiatic, both in terms of its rejection of Hamitic and in its exclusion of Hausa and Chadic. In 1924, Cohen simply dismissed Hausa with a passing phrase. Ten years later, in response to Westermans’s assertion that Hausa was Hamitic, Cohen was more precise: “Les différences fondamentales du fonctionnement du haouassa et langues de son groupe d’une part, du chamito-sémitique de l’autre, et le manque de grandes séries de morphèmes communs, doivent faire écartar l’appartenance du haouassa à la famille chamito-sémitique” (1934/37: 3). In his influential, but – if I may be excused an apostasy – grossly overrated Essai comparatif sur le vocabulaire et la phonétique du chamito-sémitique, published in 1947, 21 Cohen began to wave regarding Hausa: “Si on ne

19. Cohen also rejected the idea of Egyptian being a Semitic language, an idea that had a following over a long period of time, e.g. Erman (1892), Albright (1923), Rieker (1977). Another idea that has also had a following is that Afroasiatic consisted of three branches, namely Semitic, Egyptian, and Hamitic, where Hamitic included at least Berber and Cushitic and often Hausa and other Chadic languages as well, see, e.g. Lesa (1922), Bade (1938, 1953). 20. “Eux montrent l’égyptien, les langues sémitiques, les langues berbères, les langues est-africaines (ou chamito-sémites); ils apparaissent comme quatre rameaux distincts issus d’une souche commune” (Lacau 1912: 207).
21. Delafosse (1914: 22) divides his “linguistic groups” into three groups: “sémítico-cushiti”, “hamito-berbéro”, and “hamito-kouchitique”. He makes no mention of Egyptian since he was only concerned with classifying living languages, but one can assume that he would have treated it as a fourth parallel group. Hausa was purposely excluded and put in a “Nigéro-Logonais” group among the African languages.
22. One of the few properly critical reviews of this work is Hinter (1951).
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20. “Des maintenant l’égyptien, les langues sémitiques, les langues berbères, les langues est-africaines (ou chamito-sémithiques de somali, galla, bishari, etc.) nous apparaissent comme quatre rameaux distincts issus d’une souche commune” (Lacau 1912: 207).

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considéré que les caractéristiques personnelles, on doit reconnaître que le haoussa et son groupe présentent des concordances frappantes avec le chamito-sémitique” (p. 44, italics mine). “Il s’imposait donc de ne pas exclure le haoussa d’une recherche lexicales” (p. 45). Although in the 1952 edition of Les langues du monde the classification of the earlier edition was readopted, i.e. an Afroasiatic family with four branches and elsewhere an all-embracing category of Negro-African languages to which Hausa and other Chadic languages were assigned, Cohen added a brief prefatory note in which he admitted that the classification of Lakas’ Chado-Hamitic group represented a serious problem. Around 1970, as time for the next edition of Les langues du monde drew near, what to do about Chadic became, according to Cohen’s own admission, an embarrassment. Cohen was obviously still not ready to reverse himself and welcome Chadic in his Hamito-Semitic family; but the publication in the meantime of Greenberg’s classification and its broad acceptance by a wide range of Africanists and Afroasiaticists was making it more difficult to avoid. The solution – if one can call it that – was to sidestep the problem by leaving Chadic unclassified in a sort of linguistic purgatory: “Nous avons décidé de faire une place à part au haoussa [and related Chadic languages] en le détachant suffisamment des langues africaines sans l’inclure totalement dans les langues chamito-sémitiques” (1974 : 17). As David Cohen, Marcel Cohen’s former colleague and successor in Paris, put it, “les langues tchadiennes sont encore bien trop insuffisamment étudiées pour qu’il soit possible, au stade actuel, d’aboutir à des conclusions définitives” (1968 : 1209).

But is this true? We know that there are scholars who have expressed and who continue to express doubts about the inclusion of Chadic within Afroasiatic; but scientifically, are these doubts justified? Is it really true that with all the developments of descriptive and comparative linguistics in the second half of the 19th century and some three-quarters of the 20th century, we are still not able to decide about the correctness of the hypothesis dating back to 1844?

The answer is that we can decide and that there is no question but that the entire Chadic family, including Hausa, constitutes an integral part of the Afroasiatic phylum. There is no room for doubt. Any scholarly work that omits Chadic in specifying the membership of the Afroasiatic phylum on the grounds that the classification is still unproved is committing an error of omission which is equally as serious as the inclusion of some language or group of languages that does not belong. All of the hedging and vacillation under the guise of prudence and conservatism is nothing but a refusal to accept the facts. Admittedly the relationship between Chadic, Semitic, Egyptian, Berber, and Cushitic is a distant one – a separation of 10,000 years would not be an extravagant estimate – but using the normal criteria employed in linguistic classification, if Chadic languages had been spoken by Semitic-looking peoples in scattered oases in North Africa, their membership in Afroasiatic would have been settled long ago. But this is not the case. Chadic languages are spoken in sub-Saharan Africa by black people belonging to small “tribal” groups, and thus there has been not just a reluctance to accept Chadic, but rather a deep-seated resistance to the idea. When one looks objectively at the evidence, however, it is impossible to conclude anything else than that Chadic belongs within Afroasiatic.

Not surprisingly, some of the evidence presented over the past hundred years in support of the classification of Chadic as Afroasiatic is incorrect, being based on faulty interpretation of the data, unjustified generalization from Hausa to the Chadic family as a whole, or simply accidental resemblance. Other comparisons, however, continue to hold up, even under extremely careful scrutiny. Among the distinctive Afroasiatic features that can be shown also to exist in Chadic, one can cite: (a) a feminine formative t with the triple function “female/diminutive/singularative”; (b) an n/i/n gender-number marking pattern in the deictic system (Greenberg 1960); (c) an m- prefix forming nouns of place, instrument, and agent; (d) the formation of noun plurals, among other ways, by the suffixation of -n and by the insertion of an internal vowel -w- (Greenberg 1955b); (e) the formation of intensive (“pluralional”) verbs by internal consonant gemination, also often accompanied by the use of an internal -n-23 and (f) an asymmetrical conjugational system involving suffixed feminine and plural markers in addition to pronominal prefixes.24

The lists of supposedly cognate lexical items between Chadic and

23. Greenberg (1952) correctly drew attention to the general Afroasiatic nature of such form, but incorrectly described them as belonging to the aspect system rather than to the verb derivational system. In my opinion these verb forms represent, not “Present” stems, but rather iterative, habitual, intensive, or, what I prefer to call, “pluralional” stems. See Newman (1977b), Wolff (1977) and Fousseny (1979).

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In his opening address at the Hamito-Semitic Colloquium held in London in 1970, Diakonoff stated: "Many Semito-Hamiticists doubt the possibility of classing Chado-Hamitic among the Afroasiatic languages — erroneously, as my senior colleague Professor Olderogge has taught me to think — but it would seem that the demonstration of the advisability of such classing has not been convincing enough" (1975:32). Actually, the evidence in the aggregate has probably been more than sufficient. Nevertheless, in order to settle the question definitively, what I would like to do here is to describe three specific phenomena, previously not recognized or not fully appreciated, which demonstrate conclusively the validity of the Chadic/ Afroasiatic relationship.

1. The pronominal system

From the time of Francis Newman (1844), all scholars who have looked

at Hausa comparatively have been struck by the remarkable similarity of its personal pronouns to those of other Afroasiatic languages. And rightly so, for what linguist looking at the beautiful tables in Llexa's (1922) monograph or at the large fold-out sheets accompanying Barton's (1934) otherwise out of date book could not respond to the monotonous sameness in the pronominal paradigms of Semitic, Egyptian, Berber, Cushitic, and Hausa? Even Marcel Cohen, in refusing to admit Hausa in the Afroasiatic family, had to admit that the resemblances in the pronominal systems were "reptantane" (1947:44). In fact, when one looks, not at present-day Hausa forms but at earlier forms reconstructable by comparison with other Chadic languages, the already striking similarities become even more so, such that any explanation other than retention from a common proto-system is ruled out. The proof of the common origin of the Hausa-Chadic system and that of other Afroasiatic languages has not just in surface similarities, but in the nature of the pronominal system as a whole and in the details of shared asymmetries and irregularities. Consider Table 1, which illustrates non-subject pronouns in the five major branches of Afroasiatic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chadic (Old Hausa)</th>
<th>Berber</th>
<th>Semitic (Akkadian)</th>
<th>Cushitic (Beja)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1c</td>
<td>*wu</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>wá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2m</td>
<td>*wu</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>wá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3m</td>
<td>*wu</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>wá</td>
<td>wá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1e</td>
<td>*nu</td>
<td>ná</td>
<td>ná</td>
<td>ná</td>
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<tr>
<td>2e</td>
<td>*num</td>
<td>num</td>
<td>num</td>
<td>num</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3e</td>
<td>*num</td>
<td>num</td>
<td>num</td>
<td>num</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The first feature to note is the peculiar shape of the 2nd person feminine singular pronoun *wu, found in Chadic, Berber, and Egyptian. What is so strange about this form is (a) no other singular pronoun contains more than one consonant, i.e., the canonical shape of these pronouns is CW, and (b) the consonant *wu, which here serves as a feminine marker, never has this gender-marking function anywhere else in any of these
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25. Hodge (1969), for example, presents a list of some hundred etymologies between Hausa and Egyptian, two of which I would consider likely!
26. Robinson (1950), in his review of Cohen’s East comparatist, points out that if Cohen’s intent had been to demonstrate the genetic unity of the Hamito-Semitic family — which it was not — he would have done much better to have presented a short list of “sure” etymons than to have presented 500 items, many of which were very questionable.

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<td>i</td>
<td>i, ni</td>
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<tr>
<td>2m</td>
<td>*ku</td>
<td>za</td>
<td>k</td>
<td>ku</td>
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<td>2y</td>
<td>*kim</td>
<td>kum</td>
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<td>(ku)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3m</td>
<td>*kum</td>
<td>si</td>
<td>f</td>
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<td>*ku, ku</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>s</td>
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<td>3l</td>
<td>*wu</td>
<td>ra</td>
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<td>3l</td>
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<td>3l</td>
<td>*nu</td>
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<td>*ku, ku</td>
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<td>3s</td>
<td>*jan</td>
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</table>

The first feature to note is the peculiar shape of the 2nd person feminine singular pronoun *kim, found in Chadic, Berber, and Egyptian. What is so strange about this form is (a) no other singular pronoun contains more than one consonant, i.e. the canonical shape of these pronouns is CV, and (b) the consonant -m, which here serves as a feminine marker, never has this gender-marking function anywhere else in any of these
languages. The existence of theķm forms in Egyptian and Berber was first described by Maspero (1899), who at the time fully appreciated their significance in indicating genetic relationship (cf. Edel 1955/64: 2). Vysshil (1953: 386, 1959: 37) pointed out that the Chadic language Logone also had a form ķ∅m as its 2nd feminine singular pronoun; but this observation seems to have gone unnoticed. Even Greenberg (1963: 47–48), who explicitly discussed Chadic pronouns in relation to Afroasiatic, didn’t mention this form. This was probably an oversight, although it is possible that Greenberg didn’t consider an isolated citation from one out-of-the-way language a sufficient basis on which to make an assertion about Chadic as a whole. It turns out, however, that ķ∅m in Logone is not an isolated case, but rather represents a form that is widely distributed throughout Chadic and is clearly reconstructable at the Proto-Chadic level. The Chadic: Berber: Egyptian comparison in this regard is thus as valid, and as significant, as the generally accepted Berber: Egyptian one. There is something else of importance to add, since vowels are so often neglected in comparative Afroasiatic studies. The Chadic 2nd feminine singular pronoun differs from its masculine counterpart, not only in having a final -m, which is commonly lost, but also in having -a as its vowel as opposed to the masculine -u, a feature also paralleled elsewhere in Afroasiatic (cf. Maspero 1875). Note, interestingly, that in the 3rd person, the opposite is usually the case, i.e. it is the feminine pronoun which has -a and the masculine which has the high vowel (either -u or -a).

The other asymmetry in the pronominal system that Chadic shares with Afroasiatic is to be seen in the set of plural pronouns. While the 2nd and 3rd persons have the shaxe CVn, the C being the same consonant as found in the corresponding singular pronoun (see Maspero 1875), the 1st person plural pronoun is simply CVn (most probably *na). Taking Hausa as the sole representative of Chadic, the “irregular” 1st

27. Methodologically the neglect was correct, assuming the form to be an isolated case. It is not justified to resolve a form found in only one of some 150 Chadic languages to some look-alike in Egyptian or Akkadian no matter how striking the comparison might seem.

28. Apart from Logone (and the closely related Kotoko and Bidema, which belong to the Blu-Mandara branch), few forms (or variants thereof) are found in West Chadic languages such as Bade/Njirim, Bokhom, and even Hausa (see Newman & Schmitt 1974) and in East Chadic languages such as Mokulu and Nsamere.

29. Compare Hausa, where the normal 1st person plural pronoun is muna, but na is still to be found in the indirect object form muna, derived historically from a possessive. Meinhof (1923/25) tried to resolve the Hausa form *mua to the general Afroasiatic na by a change *mua < *nu < *na=-u, a derivation repeated innumerable times across them, e.g. Westerners (1934: xvi-xvii). It is obviously not correct since both *muna and *na can be reconstructed for Proto-Chadic.

30. For a generally neglected, but extremely interesting, study of pronominal systems in the languages of the world, see Forshheimer (1953).
languages. The existence of the kım forms in Egyptian and Berber was first described by Maspero (1899), who at the time fully appreciated their significance in indicating genetic relationship (cf. Edel 1955/64 : 2). Vuyk (1955 : 386, 1959 : 57) pointed out that the Chadic language Logone also had a form kım as its 2nd feminine singular pronoun; but this observation seems to have gone unnoticed. Even Greenberg (1963 : 47-48), who explicitly discussed Chadic pronouns in relation to Afroasiatic, didn't mention this form. This was probably an oversight, although it is possible that Greenberg didn't consider an isolated citation from one out-of-the-way language a sufficient basis on which to make an assertion about Chadic as a whole.\textsuperscript{27} It turns out, however, that kım in Logone is not an isolated case, but rather represents a form that is widely distributed throughout Chadic and is clearly reconstructable at the Proto-Chadic level.\textsuperscript{28} The Chadic : Berber : Egyptian comparison in this regard is thus as valid, and as significant, as the generally accepted Berber : Egyptian one. There is something else of importance to add, since vowels are so often neglected in comparative Afroasiatic studies. The Chadic 2nd feminine singular pronoun differs from its masculine counterpart, not only in having a final -m, which is commonly lost, but also in having -a as its vowel as opposed to the masculine -u, a feature also paralleled elsewhere in Afroasiatic (cf. Maspero 1875). Note, interestingly, that in the 3rd person, the opposite is usually the case, i.e. it is the feminine pronoun which has -u and the masculine which has the high vowel (either -a or -au).

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2. Grammatical gender

In the history of African linguistic classification, grammatical gender has played an inordinately conspicuous role. It underlay the early classifications of Biéck (1862) and Lepsius (1863), and became one of the cornerstones of Melchert's misguided Hamitic family. Hausa's candidature for membership within Afroasiatic – in some cases, even its acceptance – was due in great part to its having gender. The strong reaction by Diakonoff, for example, against the use of gender in historical classification has to be seen against the background of its misuse by other scholars, most especially Melchert. The importance of this feature has formerly been much overrated ... It is obvious that this purely typological feature, and a typological feature not of the first order at that, can

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\textsuperscript{28} Apart from Logone (and the closely related Kotonou and Rudoms, which belong to the Blu-Mandara branch), CV forms (or variants thereof) are found in West Chadic languages such as Badu/Nafizim, Bokhom, and even Hausa (see Newman & Schuh 1974) and in East Chadic languages such as Mokulu and Namere.

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in no way be proof of genetic relationship” (Diakonoff 1965: 55).

In one sense Diakonoff is correct – the mere presence or absence of gender is of no historical significance – but in another sense he is wrong. While gender as a crude typological feature is irrelevant for historical purposes, detailed similarities in form, meaning, and function in a gender system, and shared patterns of organization can be taken as evidence of linguistic relationship. The studies of gender in Afroasiatic by Klingenberg (1951) and Greenberg (1960), both of which include material from Chadic, are significant because they go beyond surface homologies and facile typology. In both of these studies, archaisms, frozen constructions, and morphological re-formulations in the gender system are analyzed and interpreted in such a way that the existence of historically related phenomena going back to a common Afroasiatic source is thereby demonstrated.

In addition to identifying cognate forms for particular gender-marking morphemes, another non-typological use of gender – which, to my knowledge, has never previously been suggested for Afroasiatic – would be to identify and match the inherent gender specification of individual lexical items. If Afroasiatic had a system of two genders, as seems certain, then each of the nouns in the Proto-Afroasiatic lexicon must have had a definite gender specification. That is to say, some words, such as ‘feat’ and ‘root’, would have been masculine, while others, such as ‘woman’ and ‘egg’, would have been feminine; and, in principle, this

31. For early scholars such as Birk and Lesieur, the characterization of gender as a “purely typological” feature is misleading. The importance they ascribed to this feature is due to their view of it as reflecting a mental faculty, i.e. a racially-based psychology. “The nations speaking Sex-denoting languages are distinguished by a higher poetical conception... this faculty is not developed in the Kaffir mind” (Birk 1862: 10). “It is not accidental but very significant, that, as far as I know, without any essential exception, only the most highly civilized races – the leading nations in the history of mankind – distinguish throughout the genders” (Lesieur 1860: 89).

32. Diakonoff (1965), going back to an old idea of Melchert (1972), of whom he is otherwise so critical, proposed that Afroasiatic gender developed from an older system of numerous “grammatical classes”. This idea, which has gained a following of late, is wholly unsubstantiated. I see no evidence but that Proto-Afroasiatic had a system of two grammatical genders such as one tends to find in Afroasiatic languages today (i.e. a masculine vs. feminine contrast in the singular, with no distinction of gender in the plural). Apparently in Indo-European it was otherwise, i.e. although gender is widespread throughout the family, it is not so clearly reconstructible for the proto-language (see Krochwie 1964 and Lehmann 1974 for a discussion of ideas going back to Meillet 1931, if not before).
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should be reconstructable. Changes in gender, like changes in phonology, do of course take place, but the changes are not as fluid and random as one is often led to believe. As Jespersen (1924: 228) observed, “in the vast majority of cases the gender of words is handed down traditionally from generation to generation without any change”. The idea of trying to reconstruct the gender of individual words in Afroasiatic might at first seem quixotic, especially given the near-absence of fully established proto-forms; however, I would suggest that an attempt in this direction is feasible, even at this stage in our knowledge. The feasibility is due to another curious phenomenon, namely that the gender of a word has a tendency to remain stable even though the stem, i.e. the phonological representation of that “sense”, might be replaced by another stem. In other words, one finds a pattern of matching genders for the same word in related languages even though the forms are not necessarily cognate.

In detailed comparative work within the Chadic family (Newman 1979), it was found that the pattern of gender assignment from one language to the next shared sufficient regularities (whether the corresponding items were cognate or not) such that it was possible to ascertain with reasonable confidence the Proto-Chadic gender of a core of basic nouns. This is less easy at the Afroasiatic level; nevertheless, given the tremendous time depth involved in the Afroasiatic phylogeny, the consistency in gender that does occur cannot be considered anything less than phenominal. When one looks at a range of Afroasiatic languages from whatever branch, one finds that the words for ‘blood’, ‘moon’, ‘mouth’, ‘name’, and ‘nose’, for example, tend to be masculine; ‘eye’, ‘fire’, and ‘sun’, feminine; and ‘water’, grammatically plural, with strong indication that these gender specifications reflect the original situation in Proto-Afroasiatic. This is illustrated in Table 2, where the overall consistency in gender assignment contrasts strikingly with the considerable diversity in form. Obviously, this approach to gender reconstruction has to be used with care; nevertheless, the results so far are extremely promising and suggest that from this point of view Chadic is going to prove to be a very typical, conservative member of the Afroasiatic phylogeny.
3. The imperative of 'to come'

In trying to establish genetic relationship, there is a temptation to keep on adding examples of greater or lesser cogency, forgetting that it is the quality, not the quantity, of the evidence that matters. A particular case of extremely high quality, but infrequently available, evidence is shared suppletion, such as one finds, e.g., in the English and Dutch use of better as the comparative of good. Greenberg has discussed this matter thusly: "Since it is precisely such arbitrary variations, 'irregularities' in non-technical language, which are subject to analogical pressure, they tend to be erased in one or the other language, even if some instances existed in the parent-language. Where they exist, however, they are precious indications of a real historical connection" (1955: 271). Such a precious archaism is to be found in Afroasiatic, namely in connection with the verb 'to come'. In many Afroasiatic languages, the imperative 'come!' is expressed, not by a regular imperative construction using the normal verb form 'to come', but by a phonologically unrelated, suppletive form. Ferguson (1976: 74-75) pointed out the existence of such irregular imperatives in Cushitic and Ethio-Semitic, but described them as manifestations of an Ethiopian areal feature. But, in fact, the feature has a geographical distribution in Afroasiatic that goes far beyond the Ethiopian area. Consider Table 3.

Table 3. Suppletive imperatives of 'to come'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal Verb Stem</th>
<th>Imperative Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proto-Chadic</td>
<td><em>/ja</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berber (Kabye)</td>
<td><em>a</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egyptian</td>
<td>*/j/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cushitic (Beja)</td>
<td><em>ja</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cushitic (Saho)</td>
<td><em>ma</em>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semitic (Amharic)</td>
<td><em>me</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As one can see from Table 3, it is not only the phenomenon in a vague typological sense that is shared, but in addition the specific forms

34. Ferguson, unfortunately, failed to distinguish three cases where the language had a suppletive imperative form for 'to come' from those where the language used the normal verb stem but had some kind of irregularity in forming the imperative.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>arij</td>
<td>arij</td>
<td>arij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbare (Kebara)</td>
<td>arij</td>
<td>arij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cushitic (Berta)</td>
<td>arij</td>
<td>arij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cushitic (Balto)</td>
<td>arij</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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employed. These display an interesting interlocking pattern. Saho, for
example, appears to have the same imperative form as Egyptian and
Beja, but to share its normal verb form with Amharic. Proto-Chadic,
Kabylé, Egyptian, and Beja all share the same root, although in the
first two cases the root is limited to the imperative, while in the latter
two it is the normal verb form not used in the imperative. The s root
found in Chadic and Berber as the normal verb stem 'to come' shows
up in Egyptian as a special imperative form of the verb 'go' (ιτ). It
should be emphasized that the two Proto-Chadic forms for 'come' were
reconstructed with the shapes shown and with the specification of ιτ
as a special imperative form before I was aware of the parallel phenom-
non and cognate forms in Berber.\(^{35}\) Given the arbitrariness of the
relation between the normal and imperative forms of the verb 'come'
represented in Table 3, and given the wide distribution of similar patterns
involving similar forms, it is evident that we are dealing with inherited
features of real classificatory significance. One could hardly present
better proof of distant genetic relationship.

The classification of Chadic within Afroasiatic is no longer a question;
\(^{36}\) it is a fact. In spite of cultural, geographical, not to mention racial
differences between Chadic peoples and the Afroasiatic peoples of
northern Africa and the Middle East, from the point of view of language,
Chadic definitely belongs to this phylum. This is just as certain as the
inclusion of Bantu in Niger-Congo or of Celtic in Indo-European. Using
the words of Sir William Jones, Chadic is related to Semitic, Egyptian,
Berber, and Cushitic 'wears a stronger affinity, both in the roots [of
words] and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been
produced by accident; so strong, indeed, that no philologer could examine
them all . . . without believing them to have sprung from some common
source' (quoted from Pedersen 1931:15) One still has to work out a
hierarchic family tree structure for the phylum and determine precisely
where Chadic should be placed in it;\(^{37}\) and, eventually, one will have

\(^{35}\) In an observation that I had overlooked, Gouffé (1969/70:31) explicitly
noted that the ιτ form in Tuareg was like the similar Hausa form in being restricted
to the imperative. However, he seems to have missed the significance of his finding.

\(^{36}\) My own impressions at this point favor a tree-branch structure for Afro-
asiatic, each branch containing two members, namely, (1) Libyco-Chadic (= Berber
+ Chadic), (2) Egypto-Semitic (= Egyptian + Semitic), and (3) Cushitic (= Beja
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"Western Cushitic") to be Afroasiatic at all.
employed. These display an interesting interlocking pattern. Saho, for example, appears to have the same imperative form as Egyptian and Beja; but to share its normal verb form with Amharic, Proto-Chadic, Kapelye, Egyptian, and Beja all share the same root \( y \), although in the first two cases the root is limited to the imperative, while in the latter two it is the normal verb form not used in the imperative. The \( y \) root found in Chadic and Berber as the normal verb stem ‘to come’ shows up in Egyptian as a special imperative form of the verb ‘go’ (\( \hat{a} \)). It should be emphasized that the two Proto-Chadic forms for ‘come’ were reconstructed with the shapes shown and with the specification of \( y \) as a special imperative form before I was aware of the parallel phenomenon and cognate forms in Berber.\(^{35}\) Given the arbitrariness of the relation between the normal and imperative forms of the verb ‘come’ represented in Table 3, and given the wide distribution of similar patterns involving similar forms, it is evident that we are dealing with inherited features of real classificatory significance. One could hardly present better proof of distant genetic relationship.

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35. In an observation that I had overlooked, Gouiffès (1969/70: 31) explicitly noted that the \( y \) form in Tsueng was like the similar Hauoa form in being restricted to the imperative. However, he seems to have missed the significance of his finding.
36. My own impression at this point favors a three-branch structure for Afroasiatic: each branch containing two members, namely, (1) Libyco-Chadic (= Berber + Chadic), (2) Egypto-Semitic (= Egyptian + Semitic), and (3) Cushitic (= Beja + ‘Narrow Cushitic’, i.e., the languages usually included under Central, Eastern, and Southern Cushitic). I do not consider the Omotic languages (Greenberg’s ‘Western Cushitic’) to be Afroasiatic at all.
### Appendix

**Afrasian Comparative Word List**

The following list includes 28 highly probable Afrasian etyma for which a reflex exists in Proto-Chadic. Except for three new reconstructions, which are accompanied by supporting examples, all of the Proto-Chadic forms are taken from Newman (1979a). Note, however, that the symbol *z* used in that work has been replaced here by J. Eger's examples are transcribed according to Fasold (1976), except for the substitution of *f* for *j* and *f* for *d*. Berber citations are generally from Tuaereg (Foucraut 1951-52) although examples from other dialects are sometimes used instead. For Cushitic, two citations are provided wherever possible, one from Beja and one from "Narrow Cushitic". The Proto-Afrasian reconstructions are provided in the form of a consonantal skeleton, even though one can assume that vowels were lexically significant for all classes of words. The number, C225, G11, etc. refer to relevant entries in the comparative word lists of Cohen (1945) and Greenberg (1963).

Abbreviations: Ar = Arabic, Ber = Berber, Ch = Chadic, Cush = Cushitic, Eg = Egyptian, Heb = Hebrew, Rend = Rendille, Sem = Semitic.

1. "body" *zi*          Ch: *zi*; Eg: *ji*; Cus: Rend to "self"
2. "hand" *ki*         Ch: *k/伯*; Ber: *c*; Eg: *ki*
                         [C225, G11]
3. "to build" *lua*     Ch: *lua* (listed under "ful"); Sem: Heb *manh;* Cus: Rend ma "house"
4. "child" *d*          Ch: *d* (e.g. Kambata *d*, Konso *wa*); Ber: ar "daughter"; Sem: Ar *vatir"
                         [Kulig, G14]
5. "to come" *a*        Ch: *a* (imperative form); Ber: *ma* (imperative form); Eg: *la*; Cus: Beja *a*
                         [C225]
6. "to die" *am(s)/*av(s) Ch: *am*; Ber: *ama*; Eg: *av*; Sem: Heb *am*
                         [C406, C23]
7. "to drink" *a*       Ch: *a*; Sem: *am*, *am* (intensive form); Cus: Beja am "food"
                         [C226, C25]
8. "to eat" *ny(s)/*nyu* Ch: *nyu*; Ber: *ni* (imperative form); Eg: *ny* (broad); Sem: Soqotri *ny*; Cus: Beja am "food"
                         [C115, C27]
9. "eye" *zi*          Ch: *zi* (pl.); Eg: Lamang *zi*, Konso *zi* (pl.); Ber: *zi*; Eg: *zi*; Cus: Rend *zi*, Beja *zi"*
                         [C31, C39]
10. "fire" *z*          Ch: *za*; Sem: Shilluk *za*; Eg: *za*; Cus: Beja *za*; Sem: Soqotri *za*; Cus: Beja *za"
                         [C142, C30]
11. "fly" *a*          Ch: *a*; Ber: *a*a; Sem: *a*a; Cus: Beja *a*
                         [C96, G32]
12. "four" *a*         Ch: *a*a; Eg: *a*a; Cus: Rend *a*a; Beja *a*a"
                         [G11]
13. "to hear, ear" *en* Ch: *en*; Ber: *en*; Sem: Beja am "ear"; Eg: *en* ("hear"), *en* ("ear or horn") (7); Sem: Beja am "be"
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15. "moon" *m
[G55]
16. "name" *nm
[G52]
17. "root" *r
[C262, G60]
18. "to see" *s
[C465, G52]
19. "to smell" *sn
[G54]
20. "to spit" *st
[C319, G70]
21. "to split" *st
[C190, G71]
22. "stone" *stn
[C77]
23. "tongue" *t or *ts
[C426, G72]
25. "tooth" *ts
[C262, G73]
26. "to walk" *vm or *vn
[Leclant 1962, no. 16]
27. "water" *w
[C435, G73]
28. "what?" *w
[G77]

Ch. *jws; Ber: jwz; Eg: zwn
Ch. *wmw; Ber: *wmw; Cushi: Baja wwm
Ch. *zm; Ber: zmm; Som: Heb jmm;
Cushi: Angus zm, Baja zm;
Ch. *zrm; Ber: azrm; Som: Heb jrm;
Cushi: Angus zm; Baja ar zmm;
Ch. *sr; Ber: zrr; Eg: mw
Ch. *wm; Eg: mn; Cushi: Somali xwn *nowe
Ch. *st; Ber: ast; Eg: dt; Sem: Hb tsf,f;
Cushi: Rend sf, Baja tf
Ch. *swm; Ber: asur; Eg: pg
Ch. *wm; Ber: akw; Eg: dtt *thud
Ch. *wm; Som: *tmm; Chushi: *mm;
Eg: hwm / hmltmm; Sem: Heb tmm;
Ch. *swm; Ber: som; Eg: m; Sem:
Ch. *wm; Ber: xwn *mson, Sem:
Ch. *wm; Som: *tmm; Tuba (som);
Ch. *wn (pl.); Ber: amm (pl.); Eg: mw (pl.); Sem: Heb
Ch. *wm; Ber: zmm; Cushi: Baja zwwm
Ch. *nm; Ber: mw; Eg: mw; Sem: Heb mwm; Cushi: Rend mwm

References

[For journal abbreviations, see the master list in the annual Linguistic Bibliography/ Bibliographie Linguistique.]


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