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**«GENEALOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF SEMITIC:
THE LEXICAL ISOGLOSSES»**

Dissertation Summary

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Generalities

By the second half of the 20th century, most Semitists tended to adhere to a rather sceptical attitude towards genealogical classification: some prominent scholars labeled this procedure not only “useless”, but even “harmful” and “dangerous” for historical Semitic linguistics. However, genealogical subgrouping of Semitic is still of interest for many researchers in the field. The present author is among them: in his opinion, working on genealogical classification is among the most important tasks of the diachronic study of Semitic.

Research topic

The present study covers various aspects of interaction between lexical and morphological factors relevant for genealogical classification of Semitic. In each of its seven thematic chapters, this problem is considered with regard to one particular Semitic subgroup. Besides, this study discusses some theoretical aspects of the development of the basic vocabulary, as well as linguistic and philological methods which help us to define the functional status of lexemes in modern and ancient Semitic idioms. Last but not least, individual etymological comparisons, many of them newly introduced by the author, are of much importance for the present dissertation.

The **relevance of our study** is conditioned by the relatively poor state of affairs in the domain of Semitic subgrouping. This dissertation is the first and, so far, only book-size treatment of this question. Particularly relevant is the attempt at systematic comparison of classification models obtained by different means: throughout the dissertation, morphological innovations significant for genealogical division are compared to the results of the diachronic stratification of the basic vocabulary, both within and outside the Swadesh wordlists.

The **originality of the research** can be described by the following parameters.

- The present study is the first of its kind to provide a systematic correlation between morphological isoglosses relevant for classification and the data of the basic vocabulary.
- The study offers to the reader scores of newly suggested etymological comparisons.
- The Swadesh wordlists used in the book have been compiled with due attention to the most recent philological resources and methods. As a result, many comparisons suggested before have been rejected as unfounded and, conversely, some philologically convincing, but previously unknown exclusive lexical isoglosses have been proposed.
- Much of the Modern South Arabian lexical data have been obtained in the course of the author’s fieldwork on the island of Soqatra.

Methodological basis

According to a widespread opinion, genealogical classification of Semitic should be based on shared morphological innovations. This method, known to Semitists mostly from a series of

pioneering studies by R. Hetzron, was partly anticipated by O. Rössler. Recently, the most important contributions to its development have been made by J. Huehnergard.

The most evident difficulty which one faces when applying this method to the Semitic data is the relative rarity of clear-cut and, at the same time, sufficiently specific morphological innovations. On the one hand, Semitic languages use a rather restricted set of derivational and inflectional morphemes; on the other hand, the morphology of Semitic is very conservative: preservation of ancient affixes is more widespread than introduction of new ones. Finally, it is not always possible to identify relevant morphological features of ancient Semitic languages due to the consonantal nature of the respective writing systems, let alone the restricted and fragmentary state of many text corpora.

Scholars strictly adhering to the morphological approach to classification often ignore the fact that not every morphological feature that seems to be specific for a certain subgroup of Semitic can be automatically viewed as an innovation. In fact, the contrary is true: the innovative nature of a morpheme should be thoroughly demonstrated in each case. No morphological innovation can appear *ex nihilo*, it must go back to another morphological feature, formally and/or semantically more archaic. As long as the diachronic development of the respective morpheme is not convincingly demonstrated, one cannot view it as a common innovation, which considerably reduces its value for the elaboration of a classificatory model.

Moreover, morphological innovations potentially relevant for genealogical subgrouping often come into conflict with other other such features pointing to another classificatory scheme. Theoretically, the Rössler–Hetzron method implies some sort of hierarchical arrangement of morphological features: some of them are of more value than others. Unfortunately, such a hierarchical stratification has been very rarely undertaken in Semitic studies.

All in all, the Rössler–Hetzron method cannot be applied without serious restrictions. This by itself favors the use of other instruments potentially efficient for genealogical subgrouping – primarily, an in-depth analysis of the basic vocabulary.

According to the widely accepted consensus, lexical data cannot play any significant role in genealogical classification. Many Semitists take this view for axiomatic and see no need to substantiate it. When particular arguments are nevertheless adduced, three of them appear to be particularly weighty.

- Lexicon is open to borrowing, whereas morphological affixes (especially the inflectional ones) can rarely be borrowed.
- There are considerable difficulties in estimating the value of lexical features for genealogical division.

- The temporal gap between two or several languages under comparison may be so large that potentially relevant lexical data are irrevocably lost.

In our opinion, none of these arguments is weighty enough to reject the use of lexical data for genealogical classification of Semitic.

- The problem of borrowing becomes much less acute if we restrict the research scope to those layers of the basic vocabulary where borrowings are empirically known to be comparatively rare.
- Correct evaluation of the classificatory potential of lexical items is no more difficult than establishing the classificatory value of morphological isoglosses.
- Objections of chronological nature pertain not only to lexical isoglosses, but to genealogical classification in general. Still, many Semitists are inclined to believe that it is precisely the vocabulary that is particularly prone to abrupt and unpredictable changes. However, this concept is scarcely correct: the importance of the basic vocabulary for the communication process is by no means inferior to that of morphological markers, so any dramatic change in the fundamental layers of the vocabulary would inevitably threaten the very existence of a given language as an independent idiom.

Lexicostatistical methods of classification gained no wide popularity in Semitic linguistics in spite of the fact that a few rather convincing classification models, some of which well compatible with classifications based on morphological criteria, have been obtained in the framework of this trend.

General mistrust towards the lexicostatistical method among Semitists has seriously discredited any attempts to use the basic vocabulary as an instrument of genealogical classification. It is, nevertheless, obvious that lexicostatistics is not the only method of evaluating the relevance of the basic vocabulary for dialectal subgrouping.

It is well known that in the framework of the lexicostatistical procedure all lexical coincidences are estimated regardless of their diachronic nature. In the reality, however, any lexical isogloss is either a retention or an innovation. As vocabulary is no different from morphology in this respect, a natural question comes to one's mind: if it is generally accepted that common morphological innovations are highly important for classification, while the value of archaisms ranges from intermediate to zero, why not apply the same principle to the basic vocabulary?

According to this approach, each lexical isogloss shared by languages X and Y belongs to one of the following categories:

- (1) trivial retentions

- (2) non-trivial retentions
- (3) formal or semantic innovations
- (4) loanwords
- (5) words of uncertain origin.

Words that correspond directly to their Proto-Semitic prototypes in both phonological and semantic (functional) aspects are labeled **trivial retentions**. Preservation of their reflexes with the same meaning in a greater or smaller amount of Semitic languages is quite expected, therefore, trivial retentions are usually not significant for genealogical subgrouping. It is rather their *shared loss* that may be important in individual cases.

There are numerous basic concepts for which no single Proto-Semitic designation can be reconstructed compellingly enough. For instance, several verbal roots with the approximate meaning 'to come, to reach, to arrive' (**bw*?, **ʔtw*, **m̄ʔ*?) may be traced back to Proto-Semitic, but one cannot be sure which of them is the main Proto-Semitic exponent of the basic concept 'to come': in each language one of the possibilities is chosen, and it is practically impossible to establish the Proto-Semitic picture nowadays. The value of such **non-trivial retentions** for genealogical subgrouping depends on the specificity of a particular lexical feature. It is significant that non-trivial retentions often form greater or smaller clusters, so if a single isogloss may be considered a coincidence, the same choice in five, seven or ten cases made by the two languages that have no particularly close genealogical relation is rather improbable.

There is hardly any need to comment on formal and semantic **innovations**: the reflex of a Proto-Semitic term in a certain pair or group of languages undergoes phonological, morphological or, most often, semantic changes. Lexical innovations seem to be highly important for genealogical classification.

Some lexical resemblances between languages may be explained as **loanwords**. If there are no compelling arguments for assuming that a term was borrowed at an early stage of the existence of a proto-language, such isoglosses are practically useless as far as classification is concerned.

Quite numerous lexical isoglosses characteristic of particular subgroups of Semitic languages have no reliable etymology (in spite of their manifestly "Semitic" shape). The origin of such lexemes is unknown. Terms of this kind make us face, time and again, the well-known glottogonic problem: where do the "new" words appear from? Feasible alternatives are not many: either these lexemes have been inherited from Proto-Semitic by a given Semitic subgroup only, being entirely lost elsewhere; or else some atypical phonological and/or semantic transformations that are difficult to retrieve by the existing tools of etymological analysis have taken place. As a rule, the subgrouping potential of lexical isoglosses of **uncertain origin** is rather high: most

lexemes of this category are either highly specific non-trivial retentions, or innovations whose phonetic or semantic nature we are unable to establish.

Diachronic stratification of the Semitic basic vocabulary as practiced in this dissertation aims to disprove the widespread opinion according to which basic lexicon is a kind of shapeless mass of words. Rather – both synchronically and diachronically – it is a deeply structured system of terms corresponding to a relatively restricted range of fundamental concepts.

Within our methodology, the notion of the main (or basic) exponent of a semantic concept is of crucial significance, both for historically attested idioms and for reconstructed proto-languages. Although a given concept may be expressed by several synonyms, there is usually only one term that is truly neutral. When lexical data are used for genealogical classification, the functional status of each lexeme under examination must, therefore, be our primary concern. To put it differently, the presence of a lexeme *n* **not only** in languages X_1 and X_2 , but **also** in language Y does not by itself mean that X_1 and X_2 cannot be opposed to Y as a particularly close subgroup – unless it can be shown that *n* has the same **functional load** in Y that it has in X_1 and X_2 .

Our methodology owes much to the lexicostatistical method and could have hardly been developed without theoretical and practical acquaintance with its basic principles. However, there are several important aspects by which the two methods differ from each other.

First of all, our method of estimating the classificatory value of lexical isoglosses has no chronological dimension. Thus, if one has to prove, for instance, the common origin of the basic vocabulary of Ethiopian Semitic, there is no need to establish the absolute date when this subgroup separated from the Proto-West Semitic or when Proto-Ethiopian divided into separate branches and languages. In other words, there is no need to accept the questionable premise that the loss of lexical features occurs at an even pace in each Semitic language (which does not seem to be correct anyway).

The second difference is of no less importance: while the present study is focused on lexical innovations, lexicostatistical calculations do not distinguish between innovations and retentions. That is why it is impossible to detect which trends in the development of the basic vocabulary are conservative and which are innovative. In other words, one cannot say *why* languages X_1 and X_2 have this or that amount of lexical coincidences: is it because both of them are lexically conservative idioms which tend to preserve the Proto-Semitic lexical heritage, or rather because they are united by a shared stage of diachronic development not undergone by other Semitic languages.

Last but not least, in the framework of the present methodology there is no need to restrict the scope of lexical isoglosses under scrutiny to a fixed list of concepts. This seems to be an

important advantage for limited-corpus ancient Semitic languages, for which a complete Swadesh wordlist is often impossible to compile.

Goals and objectives

While working on genealogical division of Semitic, it is reasonable to distinguish between two main aspects of the classificatory procedure.

On the one hand, it is necessary to posit and justify several major splits, such as East Semitic vs. West Semitic or Central Semitic vs. South Semitic.

On the other hand, one has to justify the reconstruction of the common ancestors of minor Semitic subdivisions, such as Canaanite, Aramaic, Ethiopian Semitic, Modern South Arabian.

Establishing the affiliation of limited-corpus ancient Semitic languages (Ugaritic, Deir ʿAllā, Samalian) is also worth mentioning.

Theses to be defended

- The Proto-Semitic basic vocabulary can be reconstructed with a high degree of semantic exactitude. Furthermore, for many concepts it is possible to postulate a Proto-Semitic lexeme as its only main exponent. The same holds true for the proto-languages of lower taxonomic ranks.
- In spite of the apparent obviousness, there is much difficulty in justifying the East/West Semitic dichotomy with the help of morphological data. Similarly, specifically West Semitic lexical isoglosses are quite numerous (admittedly, mostly outside the Swadesh wordlist), but in most cases it is hard to prove their innovative nature.
- According to the lexical data, Modern South Arabian was the first subgroup to separate from the Proto-West Semitic stock. That means that Central Semitic and Ethiopian Semitic once formed a genealogical unity.
- The evidence of the basic vocabulary (first of all, the Swadesh wordlist) clearly points at a special genealogical proximity between Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic. Thus, they support the Rössler–Hetzron Central Semitic hypothesis and contradict the more traditional idea of the “South Semitic” genealogical unity comprising Arabic.
- The traditionally posited North West Semitic linguistic community that unites Canaanite and Aramaic is scarcely reflected on the lexical level. As morphological innovations pointing at its existence are also not numerous, the existence of this branch is at best questionable.
- The lexical data allow – *contra* the actual consensus – to attribute Ugaritic to the Canaanite linguistic community, where it sides with Phoenician and is opposed to Hebrew.

- The fundamental commonalities in the basic vocabulary is the crucial factor allowing us to view Aramaic as a homogeneous linguistic group from the most ancient epigraphic monuments to the Neo-Aramaic idioms spoken today.
- While apparently self-evident, the historical unity of Ethiopian Semitic can hardly ever be supported by morphological innovations shared by all major languages of this subgroup. In such a context, numerous commonalities in the basic vocabulary turn out to be the main argument for this thesis. And conversely, the lexical data do not support the idea of “North Ethiopian Semitic” and “South Ethiopian Semitic” originating from two different waves of Semitic colonization of the Ethiopian plateau.
- The extraordinarily high degree of lexical specificity is one of the crucial characteristics of Modern South Arabian. Within this group, lexical data point to a special proximity between Soqotri and Jibbali (as opposed to Mehri), which is also supported by several important morphological isoglosses.

Practical significance of the dissertation is conditioned, inter alia, by the large quantity of carefully elaborated etymological comparisons. In view of the absence of a fully-fledged summary handbook on Semitic etymology, such an extensive work on historical lexicography can serve as a makeshift for the etymological dictionary of Semitic. Of much practical importance is the didactic potential of the book for a wide spectrum of disciplines in the realm of Semitic linguistics and Ancient Near Eastern philology. Finally, due to the large amount of comparative philological observations, the dissertation may serve as a valuable auxiliary tool for reading and analyzing texts written in ancient and modern Semitic languages.

Approbation

The main body of the dissertation was published as *Genealogical Classification of Semitic: The Lexical Isoglosses* by De Gruyter international publishing house¹. In the subsequent five years, the book has become an often cited manual not only for the classification problem, but also for many other aspects of the Semitic historical grammar and lexicography, let alone individual etymological comparisons.

Particular issues touched upon in the dissertation have been discussed in detail in numerous articles by the author published in international scientific periodicals, among them 15 studies in journals indexed in WoS and Scopus (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*,

¹ Some reviews: Aaron Butts (*JNES* 77:144–149), Na‘ama Pat-El (*OLZ* 112:153–157), Gregorio del Olmo Lete (*AuOr* 34:359–369).

Journal of Semitic Studies, Brill's Journal of Afroasiatic Languages and Linguistics, Zeitschrift für Assyriologie).

Some of the theoretical points developed in the dissertation are reflected in other books by the author. The same is true of many specific observations and particular etymological comparisons. Thus, the two volumes of the “Semitic Etymological Dictionary” co-authored with A. Militarev offer detailed reconstructions of many items of the Proto-Semitic basic vocabulary (anatomic terms and animal names). “Corpus of Soqotri Oral Literature”, published in collaboration with V. Naumkin and M. Bulakh, contains scores of previously unknown Soqotri lexemes, many of which directly relevant for the historical analysis of the MSA lexicon. The annotated publication of the XIVth century “Arabic-Ethiopic Glossary” (co-authored with M. Bulakh) allowed us to detect many pan-Ethiopian lexical isoglosses in the early forms of unwritten Ethiopian Semitic languages previously known from modern publications only. Finally, throughout the first volume of the Etymological Dictionary of Akkadian (co-authored with M. Krebernik) the results of this dissertation are systematically used both theoretically (in what concerns, for instance, the role of the Eblaite lexicon in our understanding of the East/West Semitic dichotomy) and within the analysis of many individual etymological comparisons.

Many ideas elaborated in the eighth chapter of the dissertation have been tested during numerous field seasons on the island of Soqotra. The significance of the Soqotri grammatical and lexical data, received directly from Soqotri informants, for the correct evaluation of the lexical specificity of MSA is difficult to overestimate.

Many theoretical points elaborated in the dissertation have found their way into language classes and lecture courses taught by the author in HSE and RSUH (“Arabic”, “Biblical Hebrew”, “Ugaritic language and literature”, “Comparative Semitics”).

The results achieved in the dissertation have been presented during several international forums on Semitic linguistics and Ancient Near Eastern philology, such as Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, International Congress of Ethiopian Studies, the Annual Meeting of the European Association of Biblical Studies, the Biennial Meeting of the International Association for Comparative Semitics.

History of research

Lexical isoglosses are sporadically considered in many studies dealing with genealogical classification of Semitic. A representative list of authors who in some way addressed the issue includes such outstanding specialists in Semitic linguistics and philology as J. Cantineau, R. Hetzron, J. Tropper, J. Huehnergard, D. Pardee, S. Kaufman.

Lexicostatistical methods of genealogical classification have not achieved much popularity in comparative Semitics. Among the pioneering studies of 1960–1970s, one should mention the

articles by D. Cohen, L. Bender, H. Fleming, Ch. Rabin. Among more recent studies, the article by the late F. Corriente is worth mentioning. Works by A. Militarev, who examines a wide spectrum of languages, thoroughly selects relevant lexemes and suggests well-justified etymological comparisons, have made an important contribution to theoretical and practical elaboration of lexicostatistics as applied to Semitic data.

Structure

The dissertation consists of an extensive introduction, eight thematic chapters and a brief conclusion summarizing the main results of the study. A chart illustrating the subgrouping pattern of Semitic obtained from the the study and a list of references (ca. 700 entries) are appended.

An outline of the contents

In the **Introduction** general issues pertaining to the value of lexical isoglosses for the genealogical classification of Semitic are discussed. It also contains a history of research and a methodological summary.

Chapter 1 represents an attempt to reconstruct the Proto-Semitic basic vocabulary, with a special emphasis on the functional load of the reconstructed terms.

The opposition of retentions and innovations in the lexicon of a Semitic language becomes theoretically and practically meaningful only in comparison with the respective Proto-Semitic reconstructions. When one supposes that some Ugaritic, Aramaic or Geez lexemes are direct descendants of certain Proto-Semitic terms, can one be sure that these terms not only go back to Proto-Semitic, but also functioned there as basic exponents of the respective concepts? In our opinion, the answer to this question is generally affirmative: for many basic concepts – both nominal and verbal – only one “main” Proto-Semitic reconstruction can be suggested.

It seems reasonable to introduce two types of criteria that should provide the basis for the selection of items for the “Proto-Semitic Swadesh wordlist”.

If a Proto-Semitic root is attested with the same functional status in all of the main Semitic languages, there is no reason to doubt that it was the state of affairs already in Proto-Semitic. The same conclusion can be reached when the root under scrutiny has lost its basic status in a restricted number of languages or minor taxonomic subdivisions. In most of such cases, it does not disappear completely, but becomes more or less marginalized – that is, remains preserved with a less fundamental, peripheral meaning. With this criterion in mind, one can fill the following positions of the Proto-Semitic Swadesh wordlist.

1. ‘all’: **kal-*/**kull-*; 7. ‘to bite’: **nṭk*/**nkt*; 9. ‘blood’: **dam-*; 10. ‘bone’: **ʿatm-*; 13. ‘claw’: **ṭipr-*; 17. ‘to die’: **mwt*; 18. ‘dog’: **kalb-*; 19. ‘to drink’: **šty*; 21. ‘ear’: **ʿudn-*; 22. ‘earth’: **ʿarṣ-*; 23. ‘to eat’: **ʿkl*; 25. ‘eye’: **ʿayn-*; 32. ‘full’: **mlʿ*; 36. ‘hair’: **šʿr-*; 37. ‘hand’: **yad-*; 38.

‘head’ — **raʔš-*; 39. ‘to hear’: **šmʕ-*; 40. ‘heart’: **libb-*; 41. ‘horn’: **karn-*; 42. ‘I’: **ʔanā(ku)*; 44. ‘knee’: **birk-*; 48. ‘liver’: **kabid-*; 56. ‘mouth’: **pay-*; 57. ‘name’: **šVm-*; 59. ‘new’: **ḥdt-*; 60. ‘night’: **layliy-*; 62. ‘not’: **lā-*; 63. ‘one’: **ʔaḥad-*; 73. ‘seed’: **darʕ-*; 80. ‘star’: **kabkab-*; 82. ‘sun’: **šamš-*; 84. ‘tail’: **danab-*; 86. ‘this’: **dV-*; 87. ‘thou’ — **ʔantā-*; 88. ‘tongue’: **lišān-*; 89. ‘tooth’: **šinn-*; 91. ‘two’: **tin-ā-*; 94. ‘water’: **māy-*; 95. ‘we’: **niḥnu-*; 98. ‘who?’: **mannu-*.

If a Proto-Semitic root functions as the main exponent of a certain basic concept in several geographically distant languages with no special genealogical proximity, it is likely that this picture reflects the Proto-Semitic state of affairs. This criterion allows us to trace the following items of the Swadesh wordlist back to Proto-Semitic.

3. ‘bark’: **kVlp-at-*; 4. ‘belly’: **kariš-*; 15. ‘cold’: **krr-*; 28. ‘fire’: **ʔiš(-āt)-*; 35. ‘green’: **wrk-*; 45. ‘to know’: **wdʕ-*; 54. ‘moon’: **warḥ-*; 61. ‘nose’: **ʔanp-*; 68. ‘root’: **šVrʕ-*; 81. ‘stone’: **ʔabn-*; 90. ‘tree’: **ʔiʕ-*; 99. ‘woman’: **ʔant-at-*.

Thus, it is possible to reconstruct **52** items of the proto-Semitic Swadesh wordlist. Extending these results to the basic vocabulary in general, one can conclude that at least for a half of Proto-Semitic lexical items expressing well-defined basic concepts it is possible not only to reconstruct the phonological and semantic components, but also to establish their functional status in the proto-language with a high degree of accuracy.

An interesting question is to what extent the reconstructed Proto-Semitic terms are preserved in individual Semitic languages: is it possible that some of the daughter tongues are more (or less) archaic in this respect?

The vocabulary of the Modern South Arabian languages seems to be the most innovative. For example, deviations from the reconstructed prototypes are attested in no less than **25** cases in Soqotri. Elsewhere in Semitic, a comparable degree of innovativeness can be found only in Southern Ethiopian. On the contrary, Hebrew and Syriac are the most conservative languages. An intermediate position is occupied by Akkadian and Arabic.

It may seem that these statistics exhibit a clear chronological tendency: the earlier is the written record of a language, the more is the amount of retentions preserved in its lexicon. In the reality, however, temporal distance cannot be considered a universal explanation for the extant facts. Thus, Old Babylonian Akkadian texts are at least 1800 years older than the Ethiopian Bible; nevertheless, the amount of retentions attested in OB Akkadian and Aksumite Geez is approximately the same. Both Soqotri and Tigre are modern languages with no ancient written tradition; however, Tigre has lost only **8** terms from the first group and preserved **8** items of the second one, while the respective scores for Soqotri are **17** and **3**. Moreover, the Tigre picture is

not much more innovative than that of Quranic Arabic or Geez, although in both cases the gap between the two corpora is more than 1000 years.

Chapter 2 deals with the historical unity and internal subdivision of West Semitic.

The split between Akkadian and the remaining Semitic languages is universally considered to be one of the most axiomatic points in Semitic genealogical classification. Such an agreement is partly motivated by the fact that Akkadian linguistics has been long viewed as a highly peripheral branch of Semitics and, until quite recently, has usually escaped the Semitists' attention. Indeed, for most "old school" Semitists Akkadian was a kind of exotic idiom only vaguely resembling such well-established pillars of comparative Semitics as Hebrew, Arabic or Syriac. This very impression was enough to intuitively separate Akkadian from the rest of Semitic without looking for a truly linguistic explanation of such a separation.

In the reality, however, even a cursory look at the available evidence makes it clear that the the existence of the Proto-West Semitic genealogical unity faces very serious methodological and factual difficulties.

- Not all the features that oppose Akkadian to the remaining Semitic languages are significant for genealogical classification. If these features are Akkadian innovations, all the remaining languages should be considered archaic, but by no means necessarily related to each other. Conversely, if the Akkadian peculiarities are to be qualified as Proto-Semitic retentions lost in the other languages, all these languages turn out to be innovative, but such "negative" innovations are again not necessarily shared. The definition of West Semitic as a kind of "minus-Akkadian residual" – "the part of Semitic that did not go along with the innovations of (Proto-)East Semitic" (N. J. C. Kouwenberg) – is thus scarcely acceptable. In other words, isoglosses relevant for the West Semitic genealogical unity should be looked for not in Akkadian, but in the West Semitic languages themselves: namely, lexical and morphological peculiarities typical of all the three major West Semitic subgroups (Central Semitic, Ethiopian Semitic and Modern South Arabian), but absent from Akkadian.
- The chronological gap between the hypothetical East/West Semitic split and the earliest West Semitic written evidence is very large. The pre-written history of Akkadian also comprises many centuries. Taking this into account, it is almost certain that numerous potentially significant lexical and morphological peculiarities once shared by all West Semitic subdivisions and opposing them to Akkadian must have been lost or changed beyond recognition.
- The East Semitic branch is represented by only one language, Akkadian. This circumstance considerably hampers the evaluation of potentially significant Proto-West Semitic

isoglosses. If these features are Proto-Semitic retentions, they could have been preserved in East Semitic languages genealogically related to Akkadian and would have been thus on reasonable grounds excluded from consideration. When dealing with Proto-West Semitic innovations, the data of other East Semitic languages could have served as an important auxiliary tool for the reconstruction of the respective formal and semantic shifts.

- At present, external verification with the help of non-Semitic Afroasiatic data is difficult insofar as the relevant domains of Afroasiatic historical morphology are rather poorly developed.

With this in mind, one is not surprised that during almost a century the description of the linguistic specificity of Proto-West Semitic has been usually restricted to only one crucial isogloss: the “New Perfect” **qatala* that substituted the “Old Preterite” **yaqtul*. Whatever remarkable this feature may seem, it is difficult to agree that such a crucial postulate in the Semitic genealogical classification should be based on just one morphological isogloss. Moreover, a closer inspection of the opposition between the West Semitic perfect and the Akkadian stative shows that its diachronic nature is by no means as transparent as it is usually presented in standard manuals on comparative Semitics.

It turns out, however, that a few additional morphological isoglosses for the East/West dichotomy are in evidence, some of them discussed in previous research and some newly suggested in the present dissertation.

- In all West Semitic languages the vocalic alternation *a : i, u* expresses diathetic oppositions within one verbal root in the basic stem. This phenomenon is absent from Akkadian.
- The internal passive – the prefix conjugation **yuC₁C₂aC₃* and the suffix conjugation **C₁uC₂aC₃-/*C₁uC₂iC₃-* – is a shared feature of Central Semitic and Modern South Arabian which can be viewed as a Proto-West Semitic innovation missing from Akkadian.
- The adjectival patterns **C₁aC₂īC₃-* and **C₁aC₂ūC₃-*, widely used in most of the West Semitic languages, are practically unknown in Akkadian.
- The opposition *m : n* in the masculine and feminine plural forms of 2 and 3 personal pronouns (**-umu : *-ina*) is normal for West Semitic, but alien to Akkadian where the distinction is expressed through the vowel alternation only (*-unu : -ina*).
- Quadriradical roots of the reduplicated structure *C₁C₂C₁C₂* are attested throughout West Semitic, but absent from Akkadian.
- The inventories of *mV*-prefixed nominal patterns in Akkadian and West Semitic are quite dissimilar: whereas in Akkadian the pattern *ma-pras-* is used almost exclusively, in West Semitic languages there are usually two or three patterns with different functions.

- The patterns *C₁aC₂C₃- and *C₁aC₂aC₃- widespread in the word formation system of West Semitic are practically unknown in Akkadian.

The following sections of the chapter are intended to complete the picture obtained through the analysis of morphological isoglosses with the evidence of the basic vocabulary – first of all, the Swadesh wordlists. As far as the East/West Semitic dichotomy is concerned, these data turn out to be quite contradictory.

Thus, there are five cases in the Swadesh wordlist when an Akkadian lexeme is opposed to a single West Semitic semantic equivalent (*kātu* vs. **yad*- ‘hand’, *kaḫḫadu* vs. **raʕš*- ‘head’, *amūtu* vs. **kabid(-at)*- ‘liver’, *mūšu* vs. **layliy(-at)*- ‘night’, *sinništu* vs. **ʔant(-at)*- ‘woman’), but in each case the West Semitic lexemes are obvious retentions, reliably (even if rudimentarily) attested also in Akkadian.

The only case when a common West Semitic innovation can be reasonably said to be opposed to an Akkadian functional equivalent is the demonstrative pronoun ‘this’: sg. **dV* : pl. **ʔVll* in contrast to Akkadian *annû*. Other possible, but less transparent, candidates may be **ḫrr* ‘to be cold’, **ʔtw* ‘to come’, **whb* ‘to give’, **ʕgl*/**gʕl* ‘to be rounded’. One may conclude that the amount of evidence for the historical unity of West Semitic in the Swadesh wordlist is rather restricted.

If one expands the research scope to other segments of the basic vocabulary, it becomes possible to produce a broader corpus of shared West Semitic lexical isoglosses absent from Akkadian: **ʔalp*- ‘thousand’, **ʔmn* ‘to be true, reliable’, **ʔiṣbaʕ*- ‘finger’, **ʕād*- ‘still’, **ʔš* ‘to sneeze’, **ʕwr* ‘to be blind’, **bi* ‘in; through’, **baʕda* ‘after, behind’, **blʕ* ‘to swallow’, **bin*- ‘son’, **bayna* ‘between’, **dād*- ‘paternal uncle’, **dirāʕ*- ‘elbow’, **ḫadr*- ‘inner room’, **ḫVḫw*- ‘lower part of the back’, **ḫalab*- ‘milk’, **ḫlm* ‘to dream’, **ḫkm* ‘to be wise’, **ḫVnVk*- ‘palate’, **ḫrm* ‘to forbid’, **ḫḫb* ‘to gather wood’, **ḫyy* ‘to live’, **ḫsr* ‘to be deficient; to lose’, **ḫl* ‘to be able’, **kwn* ‘to be’, **ḫbl* ‘to meet’, **ḫnʕ* ‘to be jealous, to envy’, **ḫny* ‘to acquire’, **mhr* ‘to be skilful’, **milḫ*- ‘salt’, **mlk* ‘to rule’, **mal(i)k*- ‘king’, **min* ‘from’, **napš*- ‘self’, **našr*- ‘eagle’, **piry*- ‘fruit’, **pry* ‘to bear fruit’, **ptw* ‘to desire’, **rḫb* ‘to be wide, broad’, **rVmḫ*- ‘spear’, **rwh* ‘to blow’, **rVḫ*- ‘wind’, **rwy* ‘to be abundant (said of water)’, **rym*/**rwm* ‘to be tall, long’, **str* ‘to hide, to conceal’, **shb* ‘to draw, to drag’, **šahr*- ‘new moon, crescent’, **šḫk* ‘to laugh’, **širš*- ‘molar tooth’, **tam(a)r*- ‘date palm; dates’, **tall*- ‘dew’, **try* ‘to be fresh, raw’, **waʕil*- ‘ibex’, **wrt* ‘to inherit’. The list is of much interest in many respects, but one has to acknowledge that in most

cases it is difficult to say whether we are dealing with common innovations or Proto-Semitic retentions.

An important problem discussed in a separate section of the chapter is the internal division of West Semitic. The relationship between the Central Semitic group and two of the other West Semitic branches, namely Ethiopian Semitic and Modern South Arabian, may correspond to one of the four possible models of genealogical division:

- CS vs. “South Semitic” (MSA + EthS);
- CS, EthS and MSA as three independent branches of the West Semitic stock;
- EthS + CS vs. MSA;
- MSA + CS vs. EthS.

The first hypothesis (MSA + EthS vs. CS), the most popular in today’s Semitic linguistics, is a modernized (“post-Hetzronian”) version of the traditional “South Semitic” theory: the “true” South Semitic linguistic type is represented by Ethiopian Semitic and Modern South Arabian as opposed to Central Semitic (including Arabic). In our opinion, there are no reliable morphological arguments for this model, whereupon the “South Semitic” hypothesis should be rejected. It is not supported by the lexical data either (thus, the only position of the Swadesh wordlist in which one finds an exclusive lexical isogloss between EthS and MSA is * $\text{ṢVb}h_1$ - ‘fat’).

The second model, according to which CS, EthS and MSA are three independent branches of West Semitic, was suggested in its nuclear form by V. Porkhomovsky and later supported and elaborated by J. Huehnergard, who codified it in his recent summary works on the subject. This model is attractive insofar as it challenges the traditional “South Semitic” theory, but due to its negative nature it can hardly be proved or disproved.

The lexical evidence of the Swadesh wordlist strongly supports the third hypothesis which suggests the close genealogical proximity of Central Semitic and Ethiopian Semitic as opposed to Modern South Arabian: at least nine positions of the Swadesh wordlists favor this line of thought to a certain degree (* $ybs̄$ ‘to be dry’, * $ʔahad$ - ‘one’, * $k̄tl$ ‘to kill’, * $k̄wm$ ‘to stand’, * $rʔy$ ‘to see’, * $bašar$ - ‘meat’, * $škb$ ‘to lie down’, * $ʔawp$ - ‘bird’, * $k̄aml$ - ‘louse’). Quite numerous exclusive isoglosses in other segments of the basic vocabulary also speak in its favor: * $ʔVd$ ‘when; then’, * $ʔapʔaw$ - ‘snake, viper’, * $ʔVwVl$ - ‘animal’s young, foal’, * $ʔmk̄$ ‘to be deep’, * brd ‘to be cold’, * $barad$ - ‘hail’, * $dabr$ - ‘open country’, * $gibb$ - ‘pit, well’, * gwr ‘to dwell together, to be a neighbour’, * $h̄dy/h̄zy$ ‘to see’, * $hbʔ$ ‘to hide’, * $hlk̄$ ‘to divide, to measure’, * $hayl$ -/* $hayl$ - ‘strength’, * kry ‘to dig’, * $k̄sm$ ‘to practice divination’, * $k̄awl$ -/* $k̄āl$ - ‘voice’, * li ‘to, for’, * $lʔk$ ‘to send’, * $ngš$ ‘to pursue, to drive to work, to oppress’, * $parh_1$ - ‘chick, young of a bird’, * ryb ‘to be

hungry’, **rayab-* ‘hunger’, **rḵ* ‘to spit’, **rpʔ* ‘to heal’, **rwṭ* ‘to run’, **šdk* ‘to be righteous’, **šwʔ* ‘to be bad’, **šamr-* ‘wool, fleece’, **hišn-* ‘lap, bosom’, **tVlm-* ‘furrow’, **taḥta* ‘under’, **ṭhr* ‘to be pure’, **ṭaly-* ‘lamb’, **watr-* ‘sinew, tendon’, **wayn-* ‘grapes, wine’. One has to admit that no substantial morphological isoglosses shared by the two groups could be detected (but cf. the adjectival patterns with long vowels, especially **C₁aC₂ūC₃-*, as well as substantival patterns belonging to the **C₁VC₂C₃ān-* type).

The internal passive and the affix **-na* (instead of **-ā*) in the plural feminine forms of the third and second person of the prefixed conjugation could be viewed as evidence for the hypothetical unity of CS and MSA. At the same time, there are no lexical isoglosses to support this hypothesis in the Swadesh wordlist (a possible exception is **lbn* ‘to be white’). Some exclusive isoglosses are available in other segments of the basic vocabulary, but they are not very numerous: **ʔayr-* ‘donkey’, **dVbr-* ‘bee’, **ḵšr* ‘to be short’, **ḵayṭ-* ‘summer’, **nam(a)l-* ‘ant’, **šʔḵ* ‘to cry’, **ṭad(y)-* ‘breast’, **ṭapan-* ‘hyrax’, **ṭuhr-* ‘noon’.

In **chapter 3** the lexical basis for the Central Semitic hypothesis is exposed. The Central Semitic hypothesis that posits a special genealogical proximity between Arabic and North West Semitic was originally formulated in Otto Rössler’s classical work (1950). Contrary to the common opinion of that epoch, Rössler viewed Arabic separately from the other “South Semitic” languages (Geez and Mehri) on the grounds of one fundamental feature of the verbal system: the loss of the “Old Present” **yV-C₁aC₂(C₂)VC₃* replaced by the “New Imperfect” **yV-C₁C₂VC₃-u*. Together with other languages sharing this isogloss (Aramaic and Canaanite), Rössler separated Arabic into a genealogical branch that he called *zweite jungsemitische Stufe*. In spite of the chronological rather than genealogical connotations of this term, it corresponds exactly to the modern concept of Central Semitic.

Rössler’s concept in its modernized and elaborated form has been propagated in numerous works by R. Hetzron published in mid-seventies, thanks to which it quickly obtained popularity. At present, the Rössler–Hetzron hypothesis is almost universally accepted in summary works on Semitic classification.

J. Huehnergard’s special study (2005) marked a new stage in the history of the Central Semitic hypothesis. As a positive outcome, it provided a list of morphological features that, according to the author, may serve as a reliable basis for the Central Semitic hypothesis. Among these features one can mention, for instance, the prefix conjugation system which, in addition to the indicative in *-u* and the jussive in *-Ø*, also includes the subjunctive in *-a* and the energetic in *-V(n)na*, as well as the terms for tens formed by means of adding the plural masculine affix to the respective numeral of the first decade.

In spite of the wide scope of the data considered in Huehnergard's study, it cannot be said to be exhaustive: a systematic survey of the Central Semitic morphological systems yields some additional isoglosses that could be interpreted as Central Semitic innovations.

- Infinitives of the derived stems with $*\bar{a}$ before the third radical.
- The adjectival pattern $*?aC_1C_2aC_3-$: Arb. *ʔaḥmar-* 'red', *ʔaʕwar-* 'one-eyed'; Ugr. *ʔalʔiy(n)* 'the strongest'; Hbr. *ʔakzāb* 'deceptive (torrent)', *ʔētān* 'perennial (torrent)'.
- The special pattern for the numerals of the second decade: Arb. *sabʕata ʔašara* '17_{with masculine counted nouns}' / *sabʕa ʔašrata* '17_{with feminine counted nouns}'.
- A considerable amount of verbal nouns derived from the same root by means of the same pattern with approximately the same meaning.

In spite of its popularity, the Central Semitic hypothesis is not shared by all Semitists. The arguments against it can be divided into two main groups.

(1) Criticism of morphological isoglosses uniting Arabic with Aramaic and Canaanite. Thus, a number of scholars (F. Rundgren, N. J. C. Kouwenberg) do not acknowledge the innovative nature of the $*yVC_1C_2VC_3-u$ form and, on the contrary, consider it the most ancient Proto-Semitic form of the imperfect.

(2) Detection of innovations shared by Arabic and EthS/MSA, among which the following are worth mentioning.

- The specific inventory of broken plural patterns in Arabic and Geez: patterns with $*?a-$; patterns with $*-u-$ or $*-\bar{u}-$ after the second radical; the pattern $*C_1aC_2\bar{a}C_3iC_4-$.
- The thematic vowel $*-a-$ in the suffix conjugation of the intensive and causative stems: Arb. *qattala*, *ʔaqtala*, Gez. *naggara*, *ʔangara*.
- The thematic vowel $-a-$ in the imperfect/jussive of the intensive-reflexive stem: Arb. *yataqattal*, Gez. *yətnaggar*.
- Derived stems with $*\bar{a}$ after the first radical.
- The use of the active participle pattern $*C_1\bar{a}C_2iC_3-$ for of ordinal numerals.

Whatever complicated and conflicting are the isoglosses considered above, one agrees with R. Ratcliffe who stresses that such agnostic notions as *dialect continuum* cannot be accepted as a reliable alternative for the traditional procedure of genealogical division. Two alternative approaches to the problem have been aptly formulated by Ratcliffe himself:

"The linguistic ancestors of Arabic speakers belonged to a Proto-SW Semitic speech

community. They separated from this community and came to live in close proximity with speakers of a NW Semitic language” or “The linguistic ancestors of Arabic speakers belonged to a Proto-NW Semitic speech community. They separated from this community and came to live in close proximity with speakers of a SW Semitic language”.

In our opinion, the morphological arguments used by several generations of Semitists in the discussion of this question are not enough to prefer one of the two possibilities. In such conditions, a diachronic stratification of the the basic vocabulary of the hypothetic CS branch seems to be practically inevitable.

As in the other chapters of the dissertation, the Swadesh wordlist has been chosen as a starting point. The analysis of the list has shown that the closest relatives of Arabic are Syriac and Hebrew, with which it shares **47** and **44** items respectively. The number of coincidences with other Semitic languages (**38** between Arabic and Geez, **30** between Arabic and Akkadian, **23** between Arabic and Mehri) decreases so notably that a special genealogical proximity between these languages and Arabic is hardly possible.

A closer analysis of the list allows to detect six concepts having the same basic exponents in Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic. These lexemes may be reasonably evaluated as specifically Central Semitic: **baṭn-* ‘belly’, **bayṣ-at-* ‘egg’, **riḡl-* ‘leg’, **maṭar-* ‘rain’, **ʔinš-* ‘man, person’, **maha* ‘what?’.

A systematic examination of the Central Semitic lexicon outside the Swadesh wordlist has allowed to detect more than a hundred other lexemes which can be interpreted as diagnostic features of this subgroup.

**ʔadam-at-* ‘earth, soil’, **ʔilāh-* ‘god’, **ʔilay* ‘towards, up to’, **ʔabd-* ‘slave’, **ʔimm(-a)* ‘together with’, **ʔamm-* ‘people, nation’, **ʔVšb-* ‘grass’, **baḡar-* ‘large cattle’, **ḡady-* ‘kid’, **ḡapn-* ‘vine’, **ḡVrm-* ‘bone’, **ḡalm-* ‘boy, lad’, **ḡny* ‘to sing’, **halumma* ‘hither’, **hrg* ‘to kill’, **ḡbl* ‘to be pregnant; to suffer labor pains’, **ḡagg-* ‘festival’, **ḡll* ‘to be common, usual, secular, profane’, **ḡilb-* ‘fat’, **ḡuld-* ‘mole’, **ḡatan-* ‘son-in-law’, **kʔb* ‘to be in pain’, **karm-* ‘vineyard’, **kdb* ‘to lie’, **laḡm-* ‘food’, **layṭ-* ‘lion’, **maḡār-at-* ‘cave’, **maḡar-* ‘tomorrow’, **nʔm* ‘to be good, pleasant’, **npl* ‘to fall’, **nVš-ūma* ‘women’, **parḡ-* ‘sprout, blossom, flower’, **rbb* ‘to be large; to be numerous’, **rib(a)b-at-*, **ribw-at-* ‘ten thousand, myriad’, **rkk* ‘to be soft’, **šllḡ* ‘to be well, to prosper’, **šʔr* ‘to remain’, **šlw* ‘to have rest, to be at ease’, **šurr-* ‘navel(-string)’, **šwy* ‘to be equal’, **šVʔ(V)r-* ‘barley’, **šʔr* ‘to know’, **škr* ‘to pay, to reward’, **šaml-at-* ‘cloak, outer garment’, **šnʔ* ‘to hate’, **šrd* ‘to flee away’, **ṭmʔ* ‘to be unclean’, **ṭamma* ‘there’, **ṭpt* ‘to judge’,

**twb* ‘to return’, **tūr-* ‘mountain’, **wṯt* ‘to advise’, **wsd* ‘to lay the foundations’, **watid-* ‘peg’, **ṯm* ‘to be guilty’, **ṯdr* ‘to help’, **dahab-* ‘gold’, **gVbn-at-* ‘cheese’, **gVdVr-* ‘wall, fence’, **gann-at-* ‘garden’, **ḥbš* ‘to tie, to band’, **ḥmd* ‘to desire; to be desirable, pleasant’, **ḥpt* ‘to be attentive, to care’, **ḥurr-* ‘free, noble ones’, **ḥarb-* ‘sword, knife’, **ḥamr-* ‘wine’, **ḥawt-*, **ḥayt-* ‘thread’, **kāhin-* ‘priest, wizard’, **ktb* ‘to write’, **kr* ‘to call’, **kVry-at-* ‘village, town’, **mn* ‘to prevent, to forbid’, **mnḥ* ‘to give, to grant’, **naṯl-* ‘sandal’, **nḥl* ‘to own, to possess’, **nḥm* ‘to take revenge’, **nḥy* ‘to be clean’, **nšb/*wšb* ‘to stand upright’, **nšm* ‘to breathe’, **rgm* ‘to stone’, **rnn* ‘to shout’, **ṯyd* ‘to hunt’, **šby* ‘to take captive’, **škn* ‘to stay, to reside’, **tmm* ‘to be completed, to end’.

Not all of these examples are equally reliable and significant, but even if a half of them is proved to be specifically Central Semitic, such a large amount of commonalities in the realm of the basic vocabulary can hardly be accidental. In our opinion, these isoglosses suggest that the basic lexicon of Arabic was formed in close connection with Aramaic and Canaanite, which makes these isoglosses an important argument for the Central Semitic hypothesis.

One must admit that relatively few of these terms can be proved to be shared innovations. This difficulty inevitably leads us to the fundamental problem: where do “new words” come from? As rightly observed by John Huehnergard, the only reasonable alternative to an innovation is a retention: “It is usually possible – and probably often correct – to suggest that such lexemes are inherited from the proto-language and were simply lost in the languages in which they fail to appear”. Should one indeed suppose that **riḡl-* ‘leg’, **ṯabd-* ‘slave’, **baḡar-* ‘large cattle’, **ḡalm-* ‘boy, lad’ and many other specifically Central Semitic lexemes are directly inherited from Proto-Semitic, but lost in Akkadian, EthS and MSA? The danger hidden in such an assumption was clear to Huehnergard himself: “Such reasoning also leads inevitably to the unlikely conclusion that the lexicon of the proto-language must have been larger than that of any of its descendants”. Indeed, if all the lexemes with uncertain etymology which we reconstruct for minor and intermediate taxonomic subdivisions of Semitic are evaluated as retentions inherited from Proto-Semitic, the basic vocabulary of PS will increase up to an incredible size.

All in all, even if some of the specifically Central Semitic lexemes do belong to Proto-Semitic retentions, this evaluation can hardly be applied to all the examples under scrutiny. There is no reason to doubt that in fairly many cases we have to deal with formal and/or semantic innovations whose diachronic nature we are unable to establish – in particular, due to the large temporal distance between Proto-Central Semitic and the most ancient recorded Semitic languages. It stands to reason that the roots that once served as derivational sources for the terms

discussed presently have either been lost with no trace, or changed their form and meaning beyond recognition.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the lexical evidence for the the North-West Semitic hypothesis. Following a long-established tradition, most scholars assume the existence of a specific North-West Semitic group which includes Canaanite and Aramaic, as well as Ugaritic.

An analysis of the existing studies on this subject shows that grammatical features common to Canaanite and Aramaic are only rarely significant for genealogical classification. As a rule, there are only three isoglosses considered in this connection:

- the shift of the word-initial **w* into *y*;
- the double plural-marking of the segolate nouns (**malak-ūma* ‘kings’, **malak-ātu* ‘queens’);
- the base **C₁aC₂C₂iC₃-* in the suffix conjugation of the intensive stem (as opposed to **C₁aC₂C₂aC₃-* elsewhere in West Semitic).

Only the first of these features seems to be certainly significant, whereas the classificatory value of the other two isoglosses is far from evident. Thus, the description of the plural-formation of the segolate nouns proposed by J. Huehnergard is synchronically correct, but diachronically we are in all probability dealing not with an innovation, but with a Central Semitic retention (see *ban-ūna* ‘sons’, *ʔarad-ūna* ‘lands’, *ʔahl-ūna* ‘families’, *darab-āt-* ‘blows’ in Arabic). The diachronic status of **-i-* in the second syllable of the perfect base of the intensive stem also remains a debated issue and can hardly be viewed as a reliable innovative isogloss.

There are **56** features in the Swadesh wordlist that are common to Hebrew and Syriac. If one compares each of these languages with any other Semitic language, the amount of common isoglosses will substantially decrease (for instance, **47** coincidences between Syriac and Arabic, **44** between Syriac and Akkadian). Moreover, a comparison between Hebrew and those Aramaic idioms that are chronologically closer to it (e.g. Old Aramaic) would yield an even more impressive result (up to **61** coincidences).

However, a detailed analysis of the Hebrew–Aramaic lexical similarities shows that the great majority of them are trivial retentions inherited from Proto-Semitic (**47**), Proto-West Semitic (**4**) and Proto-Central Semitic (**4**). These coincidences have no value for classification, as they only point at the high degree of conservatism typical of both idioms.

Only in **6** cases it is possible to assume that an isogloss under consideration was formed in the linguistic ancestor of the hypothetical Canaanite–Aramaic community. These are ‘bird’: Hbr. *šippōr* – Syr. *šepṛā*; ‘breast’: Hbr. *ḥāzā* – Syr. *ḥadyā*; ‘cloud’: Hbr. *ʔānān* – Syr. *ʔnānā*; ‘neck’: Hbr. *šawwā(?)r* – Syr. *šawrā*; ‘sand’: Hbr. *ḥōl* – Syr. *ḥālā*; ‘to swim’: Hbr. *šḥy* – Syr. *šḥā*.

One can conclude that the data of the Swadesh wordlist do not provide sufficient evidence for the North-West Semitic hypothesis.

A comprehensive examination of the Aramaic and Canaanite basic vocabulary supports the preliminary conclusions made on the basis of the Swadesh wordlist. The amount of exclusive lexical isoglosses shared by the two taxonomic subdivisions is very scarce: **ʔarway-* ‘lion’, **dmy* ‘to resemble, to be similar’, **gʔy* ‘to be high’, **gnb* ‘to steal’, **ɣarpill-* ‘storm cloud’, **hšk* ‘to be dark’, **kšp* ‘to be angry’, **naḳib-at-* ‘woman’, **šmḥ* ‘to sprout, to bloom’, **šul-* ‘handful’, **šrk* ‘to whistle’, **tayr-* ‘gate’, **ykl* ‘to be able’, **yamm-* ‘sea’.

Thus, the cumulative lexical evidence does not favor the traditional idea that the North-West Semitic languages represent a close genealogical unity. The relatively rare North-West Semitic lexical isoglosses can be explained in one of the two possible ways:

- the linguistic ancestor of the group was too short-living, therefore no sufficient amount of exclusive lexical isoglosses could be formed;
- the common linguistic ancestor of the group did not exist at all; the extant isoglosses are due to secondary interaction between two originally independent branches of the Central Semitic group.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the problem of the genealogical affiliation of Ugaritic and the closely related issue of the diachronic nature of the Canaanite linguistic community.

The position of Ugaritic in the genealogical classification of Semitic has been in issue from the very discovery of this language. Among the many suggested hypotheses, one can distinguish two main lines of thought: some scholars view Ugaritic as an independent branch of North-West Semitic (J. Huehnergard), while others attribute it to the Canaanite subgroup (J. Tropper).

Tropper made an attempt to justify the Canaanite affiliation of Ugaritic using the following criteria.

- Loss of the emphatic lateral **š*.
- Contraction of the sequences **aw* and **ay*.
- Mimation in the dual and masculine plural forms.
- Validity of Barth’s law.
- The forms *yʔubd*, *yʔuhb*, *yʔuḥd*, *yʔukl* и *yʔusp* in the prefix conjugation of the verbs with the meanings “to perish”, “to love”, “to take”, “to eat” and “to collect” (compare Hbr. *yō(?)bad*, *yō(?)kal*).
- Loss of *h* in the prefix conjugation of the verb *hlk* ‘to go’.

- The form **miya* of the interrogative pronoun ‘who’.
- Preservation of the terminative-adverbial marker *-Vh*.
- *t*-prefix in the 3 pl. f. form of the prefix conjugation.
- *a*-extended forms of the prefix conjugation (mostly 1 sg. and pl. forms) and the imperative (“cohortative”).
- Narrative use of the infinitive absolute.

Huehnergard, in turn, adduces two arguments against the Canaanite affiliation.

- Ugaritic does not participate in the shift *a > i* in the first syllable of the suffix conjugation base of the intensive and causative stems, which is typical of Canaanite languages of the first millennium (Hbr. *ḫittēl*, *ḫiktīl*), but first attested already in the Amarna Canaanite.
- The *Auslaut* of the 1 sg. personal pronoun did not change from **-ū* to *-ī* (*a-na-ku* vs. Hbr. *ʾānōkī*).

It is difficult to object against Huehnergard’s arguments. At the same time, while some of Tropper’s arguments are not quite convincing, many of them are certainly worth considering. Moreover, it is possible to detect other Ugaritic features that unite it with Canaanite.

- *pōlēl* allomorph of the intensive stem for roots IIw/y.
- Biconsonantal structure of the active participle from roots IIw/y in the basic stem.
- N-stem participle with *nV*- prefixed.

It appears that Ugaritic shares a part of Canaanite innovative isoglosses, but does not participate in some others. This state of affairs could be best explained in the framework of a reconciliatory hypothesis according to which Ugaritic represents a special branch of Canaanite that underwent some specific changes characteristic of this subgroup, but separated from it before other typically Canaanite innovations took place. In the present chapter, the validity of this and other hypotheses is checked on the basis of the basic vocabulary.

Ugaritic is a dead language with a restricted and often poorly understood text corpus, so in this case detecting basic designations of fundamental concepts turns to be a complex philological task. It has been established that **62** positions of the Ugaritic Swadesh wordlist can be filled with a high degree of plausibility.

1. ‘all’: *kl*; 6. ‘bird’: *ʿsr*; 7. ‘to bite’: *nṭk*; 9. ‘blood’: *dm*; 10. ‘bone’: *ʿṭm*; 11. ‘breast’: *ʿirt*;
12. ‘to burn’: *šrp*; 14. ‘cloud’: *ʿrpt*; 7. ‘to die’: *mt*; 18. ‘dog’: *klb*; 19. ‘to drink’: *šty*; 21. ‘ear’: *ʿudn*;
22. ‘earth’: *ʿarṣ*; 23. ‘to eat’: *lḫm*; 25. ‘eye’: *ʿn*; 26. ‘fat’: *šmn*; 28. ‘fire’: *ʿišt*; 29. ‘fish’: *dg*; 31. ‘foot’: *pʿn*; 32. ‘full’: *mlʿ*; 33. ‘to give’: *ytn*; 37. ‘hand’: *yd*; 38. ‘head’: *ʿriš*; 39. ‘to hear’: *šmʿ*; 40. ‘heart’: *lb*; 41. ‘horn’: *ḫrn*; 42. ‘I’: *ʿan*, *ʿank*; 44. ‘knee’: *brk*; 45. ‘to know’: *ydʿ*; 47. ‘to lie’: *škb*;

48. ‘liver’: *kbd*; 49. ‘long’: *ʔrk*; 53. ‘meat’: *bšr*; 54. ‘moon’: *yrḥ*; 55. ‘mountain’: *γr*; 56. ‘mouth’: *p*; 57. ‘name’: *šm*; 58. ‘new’: *ḥdt*; 60. ‘night’: *ll*; 61. ‘nose’: *ʔap*; 62. ‘not’: *l*; 63. ‘one’: *ʔaḥd*; 68. ‘root’: *šrš*; 71. ‘to say’: *rgm*; 73. ‘seed’: *drʕ, dṛʕ*; 74. ‘to sit’: *yṯb*; 76. ‘to sleep’: *yšn*; 79. ‘to stand’: *ḵm*; 80. ‘star’: *kbkb*; 81. ‘stone’: *ʔabn*; 82. ‘sun’: *špš*; 86. ‘this’: *hnd*; 87. ‘thou’: *ʔat*; 88. ‘tongue’: *lšn*; 89. ‘tooth’: *šn*; 90. ‘tree’: *ʔš*; 91. ‘two’: *ṯn*; 92. ‘to walk’: *hllk*; 94. ‘water’: *my*; 96. ‘what’: *mh*; 98. ‘who’: *my*; 99. ‘woman’: *ʔatt*.

In **18** cases the exponent of a basic concept is not fully transparent, but still reliable enough to be subject to diachronic analysis.

2. ‘ashes’: *ʔmr*; 5. ‘big’: *rb*; 16. ‘to come’: *mγy*; 30. ‘to fly’: *ʔp*; 34. ‘good’: *nʕm*; 36. ‘hair’: *šʕr*; 43. ‘to kill’: *mḥš*; 52. ‘many’: *mʔad, mʔud*; 64. ‘person’: *bnš* или *mt*; 65. ‘rain’: *mṯr*; 67. ‘road’: *ntb(t)*; 72. ‘to see’: *phy* или *ʕn* или *ḥdy*; 75. ‘skin’: *γr*; 78. ‘smoke’: *ḵtr*; 84. ‘tail’: *ḍnb*; 85. ‘that’: *hnk, hnkt*; 97. ‘white’: *lbn*; 100. ‘yellow’: *yrḵ*.

For **20** positions of the Swadesh wordlist, the Ugaritic equivalents could not be found. In other words, **80%** of the Ugaritic Swadesh wordlist can be filled, which is a rather high score for such a limited-corpus idiom.

Approximately two thirds of the established exponents represent more or less trivial retentions with no particular significance for classification. Only **26** entries (about **30%** of the list) can be regarded as truly specific. These can be divided into three groups.

The largest group (**12** entries) contains Ugaritic lexemes that have no parallels with the basic status anywhere else in Semitic: 16. ‘to come’: *mγy*; 23. ‘to eat’: *lḥm*; 26. ‘fat’: *šmn*; 34. ‘good’: *nʕm*; 43. ‘to kill’: *mḥš*; 64a. ‘person’: *bnš*; 64b. ‘person’: *mt*; 67. ‘road’: *ntb(t)*; 71. ‘to say’: *rgm*; 72a. ‘to see’: *phy*; 72b. ‘to see’: *ʕn*; 85. ‘that’: *hnk(t)*.

Two other groups comprise the exclusive isoglosses that Ugaritic shares with Hebrew and Akkadian respectively.

Ugaritic-Hebrew isoglosses (**5** entries): 29. ‘fish’ (*dg – dāg*); 30. ‘to fly’ (*ʔp – ʔwp*); 75. ‘skin’ (*γr – ʕōr*); 76. ‘to sleep’ (*yšn – yšn*); 98. ‘who’ (*my – mī*).

Ugaritic-Akkadian isoglosses (**6** entries): 2. ‘ashes’ (*ʔmr – tumru*); 6. ‘bird’ (*ʔšr – iṣṣūru*); 11. ‘breast’ (*ʔirt – irtu*); 14. ‘cloud’ (*ʔrpt – erpetu*); 52. ‘many’ (*mʔad, mʔud – mādu*); 78. ‘smoke’ (*ḵtr – ḵutru*).

The data provided by the Swadesh wordlist do not allow to decidedly confirm the hypothesis of the Canaanite affiliation of Ugaritic. In such conditions, it seems advisable to widen

the scope of the lexical evidence, that is, to compile relatively complete lists of exclusive and highly specific isoglosses uniting Ugaritic with both Canaanite (Hebrew and Phoenician) and non-Canaanite Semitic languages (Akkadian, Aramaic, Arabic).

As a result of this research, more than **80** exclusive isoglosses uniting Ugaritic with the traditionally posited Canaanite community (primarily, Hebrew and Phoenician) have been detected: *ʔibr* ‘bull; horse’, *ʔabyn* ‘poor man’, *ʔdm* ‘to be red’, *ʔadm* ‘man, person; people, mankind’, *ʔadn* ‘lord, master’, *ʔadr* ‘great, huge; magnificent’, *ʔhb* ‘to love’, *ʔamš* ‘to be strong’, *ʔin* ‘there is not’, *ʔan* ‘strength’, *ʔun* ‘trouble, misfortune’, *ʔany(t)* ‘ship’, *ʔapn* ‘wheel’, *ʔaps* ‘edge, end’, *ʔurbt* ‘window’, *ʔms* ‘to carry; to load’, *ʔpʔp* ‘pupil’, *ʔr* ‘city’, *ʔšy* ‘to do, to make’, *bd* ‘by, at’, *bkt* ‘to search for, to look for’, *brdl* ‘iron’, *dbr* ‘to speak’, *dgn* ‘grain’, *gg* ‘roof’, *gl* ‘to rejoice’, *grš* ‘to expel, to drive out’, *gšm* ‘rain’, *gt* ‘farmstead, rural settlement’, *hlm* ‘to hit, to strike’, *hmlt* ‘crowd’, *hr* ‘mountain’, *hdt* ‘new moon, month’, *hln* ‘window’, *hmt* ‘wall’, *hrš* ‘craftman, artisan’, *hwy Št* ‘to prostrate oneself’, *kbs* ‘fuller, launderer’, *ksm* ‘spelt’, *ln* ‘to spend the night’, *msk* ‘to mix’, *nʔr* ‘boy, lad’, *nbk* ‘source, spring’, *nbt* ‘honey’, *ngh* ‘to gore’, *nḥš* ‘snake’, *pḳ* ‘to obtain, to acquire’, *pnt* ‘joint, vertebra’, *pšʕ* ‘sin, crime’, *ptt* ‘linen’, *rtt* ‘net’, *sbb* ‘to turn’, *spr* ‘to count; to recite’, *šd* ‘field’, *šmh* ‘to rejoice, to be glad, merry’, *šns* ‘to gird oneself’, *šph* ‘family, clan’, *št* ‘to put’, *tk* ‘center, middle’, *tlln* ‘table’, *wsr* ‘to teach, to instruct’, *yn* ‘wine’, *yr* ‘rain’, *yrʔ* ‘to be afraid’, *yšk* ‘to pour’, *ytn* ‘to be old (said of objects), to wear out’.

Such an ample corpus of exclusive isoglosses makes a distinct contrast with **18** Ugaritic–Arabic and **26** Ugaritic–Akkadian parallels, let alone **5** exclusive lexical features that Ugaritic shares with Aramaic. Many of the lexemes under consideration belong to deeply fundamental lexical layers (**ʔdm* ‘to be red’, **ʔadam-* ‘man, person; people, mankind’, **ʔhb* ‘to love’, **ʔayn-* ‘there is not’, **ʔšy* ‘to do, to make’, **bād-* ‘by, at’, **dbr* ‘to speak’, **gašm-* ‘rain’, **hlm* ‘to hit, to strike’, **harr-* ‘mountain’, **lyn* ‘to spend the night’, **naʔr-* ‘boy, lad’, **nub-t-* ‘honey’, **naḥaš-* ‘snake’, **šyt* ‘to put’, **tawk-* ‘center, middle’, **yrʔ* ‘to be afraid’, **yšk* ‘to pour’, **ytn* ‘to be old’). Conversely, rare, poorly attested lexemes do not play any significant role in the list.

In approximately **20** cases it is possible to reconstruct the formal or semantic mechanism of a Proto-Canaanite innovation with a sufficient degree of reliability: **ʔab(b)ʔr-* ‘bull, horse’ < **ʔbr* ‘to be strong’, **ʔVby-ān-* ‘poor man’ < **ʔby* ‘to ask, to request’, **ʔayn-* ‘there is not’ < ‘where?’, **ʔVny(-at)-* ‘ship’ < ‘pot, vessel’, **ʔVpn-* ‘wheel’ < **pny* ‘to turn’, **bād-* ‘by, at’ < **bi-*

yadi ‘in the hand’, **bkt* ‘to search for, to look for’ < ‘to dig, to excavate’, **gyl* ‘to rejoice’ < ‘to whirl, to dance’, **hudt*- ‘new moon, month’ < ‘to be new’, **hāmiy-(a)t*- ‘wall’ < ‘to defend, to protect’, **ha(r)raš*- ‘craftman’ < **hrš* ‘to be wise, skilled’, **kbs* ‘to wash clothes’ < ‘to tread, to trample’, **kussam-t*- ‘spelt’ < ‘to cut, to divide in two’, **lyn* ‘to spend the night’ < **layliy*- ‘night’, **nub-t*- ‘honey’ < **nūb*- ‘bee’, **naḥaš*- ‘snake’ < ‘animal’, **paʿm*- ‘time’ < ‘foot’, **šyt* ‘to put’ < ‘to leave’.

The close genealogical relationship between Ugaritic and Canaanite, not so evident as far as the concepts from the Swadesh wordlist are concerned, turns out to be quite probable: if there is any taxonomic subdivision of Semitic to which Ugaritic could once belong, that subdivision must have certainly been Canaanite.

Accepting the Canaanite affiliation of Ugaritic prompts several fundamental questions of genealogical, geographic and historical nature. Among these, the problem of how the very notion of “Canaanite” should be defined seems to be the most essential one.

In fact, some of the most impressive isoglosses which we have labeled “Proto-Canaanite” affect only Ugaritic and Phoenician and are poorly represented in Hebrew. Conversely, some lexemes typical of Hebrew are only sporadically attested in Ugaritic and Phoenician. Since both Phoenician and Hebrew are generally considered to represent the Canaanite linguistic type, we have to conclude that even within these “traditional” or “classical” Canaanite languages two different sets of lexical isoglosses only partly overlapping with each other should be distinguished – a “Southern” and a “Northern” one.

Within such a dichotomy, Ugaritic is evidently associated with the Northern Canaanite area. The easiest way to explain this phenomenon is the geographic proximity between Ugarit and Phoenicia as opposed to more southern and more inward areas of Canaan. However, a true genealogical hypothesis envisaging a special degree of genealogical proximity between Phoenician and Ugaritic within the Canaanite group is also worth considering. The vocabulary of such a “Phoenic group” (H. L. Ginsberg) can be characterized – both positively and negatively – by several important lexical features: **paʿm*- (**rVgl*-) ‘foot’, **nʿm* (**tyb*) ‘to be good’, **ytn* (**ntn*) ‘to give’, **ʔdr* (**gdl*) ‘big, large’, **bād*- ‘by, at’, **šyt* (**šym*) ‘to put’, **nub-t*- (**dibš*-) ‘honey’, **kwn* (**hwy*) ‘to be’, **ḥarūš*- (**dahab*-) ‘gold’, **ʔalp*- (**tawr*-, **bakar*-) ‘bull; large cattle’.

Within this approach, Ugaritic should be regarded not just as Canaanite, but as Canaanite *par excellence*. On the contrary, for Hebrew a kind of “de-Canaanization” has to be posited.

Correct estimation of their classificatory value of isoglosses between Ugaritic and

Canaanite is possible only in comparison with exclusive lexical peculiarities that Ugaritic shares with other Semitic languages. Three groups of exclusive lexical features seem to be potentially relevant in this respect: Ugaritic–Arabic, Ugaritic–Aramaic and Ugaritic–Akkadian.

Exclusive isoglosses between Ugaritic and Arabic occupy a special place in the history of Ugaritic lexicography: the extraordinary richness of the traditional Arabic vocabularies made them one of the key sources for the interpretation of numerous Ugaritic lexemes whose meaning was not sufficiently clear from the context. An extensive application of this practice led some researchers to seriously consider the possibility of a special genealogical proximity between the two languages.

Careful examination of the Ugaritic lexicon allows one to detect no more than **18** exclusive Ugaritic–Arabic isoglosses, such as *ʔušn* ‘present, gift’ – Arb. *ʔws*; *ʔkk* ‘ripper’ – Arb. *ʔqq*; *ʔtk* ‘to tie, to fasten, to bind’ – Arb. *ʔtk*; *bšr* ‘to look, to watch’ – Arb. *bšr*; *gnn* ‘innards’ – Arb. *žanān*-; *γdd* ‘to swell’ – Arb. *γdd*; *hdy* ‘to lacerate oneself’ – Arb. *hdw*; *ltpn* ‘benevolent, merciful’ – Arb. *lṭf*; *myd* ‘food, provisions’ – Arb. *γdw*; *nγš* ‘to tremble, to shake’ – Arb. *nγd*; *pʔid* ‘heart’ – Arb. *fuʔād*-; *mryt* ‘suckling’ – Arb. *ryt*; *mzʔ* ‘to tear, ’ – Arb. *mzʔ*; *rḳš* ‘to jump, to leap’ – Arb. *rqs*; *šbm* ‘to muzzle’ – Arb. *šbm*; *tʔit* ‘clay, mud’ – Arb. *taʔtat*-; *ydy* ‘to scratch, to rip’ – Arb. *wadyat*-; *yly* ‘companion, friend’ – Arb. *waliyy*-.

This small number adequately reflects the comparatively low degree of diachronic proximity between the two languages. Moreover, the vast majority of the relevant Ugaritic lexemes are *hapax legomena* – words known to us as rare poetic occasionalisms. The fact that these lexemes have reliable parallels only in Arabic can be easily explained by the richness and diversity of the Arabic lexicon.

Potentially exclusive Ugaritic–Aramaic isoglosses are very few: *dhl* ‘to fear’ – Arm. **dhl*; *grdš* ‘to be ruined, to perish’ – Syr. *gardeš*; *nht* ‘to take down’ – Arm. **nht*; *šdy* ‘to pour’ – Arm. **šdy*; *škḥ* ‘to meet, to find’ – Arm. **škḥ*. Any special genealogical relationship between Ugaritic and Aramaic can be excluded.

One of the most interesting observations made in this chapter is a very significant number of exclusive lexical isoglosses between Ugaritic and Akkadian, such as *ʔugr* ‘field’ – Akk. *ugāru*, *ʔmr* ‘to look at’ – Akk. *amāru*, *ʔišd* ‘leg’ – Akk. *išdu*, *ʔušr* ‘penis’ – Akk. *išaru*, *ʔmk* ‘strong’ – Akk. *emūku*, *ʔrb* ‘to enter’ – Akk. *erēbu*, *hwt* ‘word’ – Akk. *awatu*, *ḥpr* ‘ration, supply’ – Akk. *ipru*, *ḥrn* ‘gang, caravan’ – Akk. *ḥarrānu*, *ḥt* ‘sceptre, rod’ – Akk. *ḥaṭtu*, *kms* ‘to bend, to kneel’ – Akk. *kamāsu*, *kšd* ‘to reach’ – Akk. *kašādu*, *ḥbʔ* ‘to call, to summon’ – Akk. *ḥabū*, *ḥrd* ‘hero’ – Akk.

ḵardu, *lsm* ‘to run, to hurry’ – Akk. *lasāmu*, *mdš* ‘perhaps’ – Akk. *minde*, *n-dd* ‘to stand’ – Akk. *izuzzu*, *ngr* ‘herald’ – Akk. *nāgīru*, *nmrt* ‘splendour’ – Akk. *namurratu*, *nš-m* ‘people, men’ – Akk. *niš-ū*, *phd* ‘lamb’ – Akk. *puḫādu*, *s’in* ‘edge, extremity, hem’ – Akk. *sūnu*, *tbš* ‘to depart, to go away’ – Akk. *tebū*, *tmn* ‘base, foundation’ – Akk. *temmennu*, *trbš* ‘yard, enclosure’ – Akk. *tarbāšu*, *trḫ* ‘to get married’ – Akk. *terḫatu*.

By their nature, the exclusive lexical isoglosses between Ugaritic and Akkadian are fundamentally different from the exclusive lexical matches between Ugaritic and West Semitic languages: in the former case, any kind of special genealogical proximity is excluded by definition. Lexical peculiarities that unite Ugaritic and Akkadian cannot be common innovations. Consequently, the presence of such isoglosses must be explained in one of the two alternative ways:

- either we are dealing with deeply rooted lexemes inherited from Proto-Semitic and lost throughout West Semitic except Ugaritic because of the archaic nature of this language and/or its early written attestation;
- or the lexemes under consideration are borrowings from Akkadian into Ugaritic which did not penetrate into other West Semitic languages, less affected by the influence of the cuneiform civilization.

Chapter 6 is dedicated to the historical unity of Aramaic and its reflection in the basic vocabulary. *What Is Aramaic?* The title of this groundbreaking article by J. Huehnergard anticipates much of its contents. In his study, Huehnergard analyzes phonological and morphological features generally recognized as characteristic of “Classical” Aramaic languages, such as Biblical and Jewish-Palestinian Aramaic, Syriac and Mandaic. The results of his study are rather unexpected: few of these features can be detected in the Old Aramaic inscriptions of 9th–8th centuries B.C. In an attempt to explain this peculiar fact, Huehnergard emphasizes “a certain amount of linguistic diversity” in the Old Aramaic corpus, where “clearly a number of distinct early dialects” can be detected. As Huehnergard suggests, many of the specific features of “Classical” Aramaic arose at some later stage of the development of Aramaic and were not reflected in the Old Aramaic corpus. The consolidation of “classical” Aramaic features is to be traced to Official Aramaic, which, in Huehnergard’s opinion, is a “watershed period in the history of the language” (a point of view convincingly criticized in recent studies by S. Loesov, for whom the East/West dichotomy in Aramaic goes back to the pre-written period and can be spotted from the earliest written monuments onwards).

While Huehnergard’s conclusions are based on the analysis of Proto-Aramaic phonological and morphological features, in the present chapter an attempt is made to justify

the historical unity of Aramaic using the evidence of the basic vocabulary.

The main body of the chapter consists of a detailed description of exclusive pan-Aramaic isoglosses attested in Old Aramaic inscriptions. Among these terms, one can mention such lexemes as **ʔapp-ay* ‘face’ (< **ʔanp-* ‘nose’), **ʔzl* ‘to go’, **ʔbd* ‘to make, to do’, **ʔikkār-* ‘root’, **ʔll* ‘to enter’ (< ‘to stick in, to insert; to immerge’), **gabr-* ‘man’, **gaww-* ‘interior’, **ḥsn* ‘to be strong’, **ḥrk* ‘to flee’, **mill-at-* ‘word’, **mll* ‘to speak’, **mišʔ(-at)-* ‘midst, middle’, **nḥt* ‘to descend’, **npk* ‘to go out’, **rāḥim-* ‘friend’, **rḥm* ‘to love’ (< ‘to be merciful’ < **raḥim-* ‘womb’), **slk* ‘to rise’, **špr* ‘to be beautiful’, **ḥiwy-* ‘snake’ (< **ḥwy* ‘to live’ < ‘animal’), **māriʔ-* ‘lord, master’ (< **marʔ-* ‘man, husband’), **šūr-* ‘wall’, **tVnan-* ‘smoke’.

The so-called morpholexical features, i. e. exclusive structural peculiarities restricted to individual lexemes with a high functional status, are also of much importance for establishing the “diachronic portrait” of Aramaic. Here belong such terms as **ʔuḥrān-* ‘other’, **ʔulaym-* ‘child’, **bay-* ‘house’, **hwk* ‘to go’, **kursiʔ-* ‘chair, throne’, **maʔVnay-* ‘vessel’, **rabrab-* ‘big, large (pl.)’, **bir-* ‘son’, **ḥad-* ‘one’, **pimm-* ‘mouth’.

The emergence of “new” lexemes in Proto-Aramaic naturally resulted in partial or complete loss of their historical predecessors, such as **pan-* ‘face’, **wrd* ‘to descend’, **wʔʔ* ‘to go out’, **hlk* ‘to go’, **rʔy* ‘to see’, to a certain extent also **inš-* ‘man, person’, **baʔl-* ‘lord, master’, **šurš-* ‘root’, **ʔly* ‘to go up, to ascend’. Complete (or nearly complete) absence of these roots already from the most ancient Aramaic monuments is an important evidence for the historical unity of Aramaic.

In the course of the foregoing analysis, **47** lexical and morpholexical features attested in Old Aramaic inscriptions and in later Aramaic dialects, but absent from all or most of the other Semitic languages have been detected. There is a certain amount of Proto-Aramaic lexical peculiarities in every Old Aramaic inscription. Thus, for example, the lengthy and well-preserved inscription KAI 224 contains 20 relevant peculiarities, but even such a short and damaged inscription as KAI 310 (Tel Dan) displays no less than eight pan-Aramaic isoglosses.

Taking into account the small size of the Old Aramaic corpus and a relatively poor state of preservation of most inscriptions, the extant set of lexical peculiarities should be evaluated as very significant: there is no doubt that many peculiarities of the Aramaic lexicon known from later dialects were well shaped already at the beginning of the first millennium B.C.

In the vast majority of cases (**40** out of **47**), Proto-Aramaic lexical isoglosses are attested in Modern Aramaic. This is, undoubtedly, a powerful demonstration of the extreme conservatism

of the Aramaic basic vocabulary whose main peculiarities remained stable for three thousand years at least.

At the same time, the extraordinary stability of the Aramaic basic lexicon should not be overestimated: as elsewhere in the world's languages, a certain degree of loss and replacement is also in evidence here.

Thus, several prominent pan-Semitic lexemes are still present in Old Aramaic, but completely or mostly lost in later dialects: *ʾrbh* 'locust' (⇒ **kamš-*), *ʾš* 'fire' (⇒ **nūr-*), *ʾzz* 'to be strong' (⇒ **tkp*), *gbl* 'border, territory' (⇒ **taḥūm-*), *hry* 'to be pregnant' (⇒ **bṭn*, **ʾbr*), *ḥpš* 'affair' (⇒ **šibūt-*), *ḥmh* 'war', *ḥm* 'to fight, to contest' (⇒ **karāb-*), *ḥy* 'bad' (⇒ **bʾš*), *zkn* 'to be old' (⇒ **šyb* or **kšš*).

At the same time, many lexical isoglosses traditionally considered typically Aramaic are only attested as late as in Official Aramaic. In the majority of such cases, it turns out that what is missing are not merely the lexemes as such, but rather the respective concepts. One cannot exclude that if they had been attested there, their exponents would not have differed from those used in later dialects. Here likely belong **ʾlān-* 'tree', **dmk* 'to sleep', **dnḥ* 'to rise (sun)', **kaʾp-* 'stone', **kpn* 'to be hungry', **šbk* 'to leave, to abandon', **šgʾ* 'to be numerous', **škḥ* 'to find', **ṭaly-* 'lad, boy', **zʾr* 'to be small', **zuḡayr-* 'small', **zbn* 'to buy'.

Some of the pan-Aramaic lexical isoglosses emerge only in Middle Aramaic. As an example, one can mention the concepts "to take" and "to carry", expressed by the pan-Semitic roots **lkḥ* and **nšʾ* in Old and Official Aramaic, but entirely ousted by other lexemes in later dialects (**nsb*, **nṭl*, **sbl* and **škl*). A similar situation is observed for the roots **khl* 'to be able' and **ʾšt* 'to think'.

When did the "new" Aramaic roots emerge? The ubiquitous presence of such lexemes as **nūr-* 'fire', **tkp* 'to be strong' or **bʾš* 'to be bad' in later Aramaic apparently suggests that they existed already in Proto-Aramaic. But how is it possible that these lexemes are completely absent from the most ancient written monuments obviously going back to that very proto-language? Several alternative (but not necessarily incompatible) ways of solving this problem can be proposed.

- The isoglosses under consideration were present in a rudimental form already in Old Aramaic, but do not appear in the available inscriptions because of the marginal functional status they had at that moment.
- The Old Aramaic idioms reflected in the inscriptions are not direct ancestors of all later

Aramaic dialects and, thus, do not represent the lexical specificity of Proto-Aramaic in its entirety. This possibility is in line with S. Loesov's concept according to which the West/East dichotomy can be detected already in the most ancient Aramaic monuments.

- Some of the lexical features under consideration could emerge in individual Aramaic (proto-)idioms and then penetrate into the other via borrowing and diffusion.

The present chapter also discusses the lexical grounds for genealogical attribution of two idioms whose Aramaic affiliation has been considered debatable in the Semitic scholarship, viz. the language of the inscriptions from Samal (KAI 214–215) and the inscription from Deir 'Allā. Given the fact that in most recent studies both idioms have been more often than not classified as Aramaic or close to Aramaic, it has been decided to take the Aramaic hypothesis as the basic one and to check whether it can be harmonized with the lexical evidence.

The Samalian inscriptions KAI 214 and 215 are considerably damaged, whereas their topics rather rarely overlap with those of the “standard” Old Aramaic corpus. Nevertheless, the overall length of these inscriptions is considerable and, taken together, they provide a sufficiently vast body of lexical evidence for a meaningful comparative analysis.

There are about ten features in the Samalian corpus that can be qualified as Proto-Aramaic (or at least “non-Canaanite”): *mšʿh* ‘middle’, *ʿnš* ‘people, mankind’, *ʿrḥ* ‘road’, *ḵdm* ‘in front of, before’, *mrʿ* ‘lord’, *br* ‘son’, *hwy* ‘to be’, *ḥd/ḥdh* ‘one (m.)’/‘one (f.)’, *pm* ‘mouth’, *šwrh* ‘cow’. In addition to these lexemes, which the Samalian corpus shares with the Old Aramaic inscriptions, it also contains a few other pan-Aramaic lexical items not attested in the Old Aramaic corpus (in all probability, due to the absence of the relevant concepts): *ḥṭr* ‘sceptre, rod’, *rgz* ‘anger’, *ybl* ‘to bring’.

Concepts attested in Samalian, but expressed with “non-Aramaic” lexemes, are not numerous. The most evident example is *hrg* ‘to kill’, whereas the pan-Aramaic *ḵtl* is attested only once in the nominal form *ḵtylt* ‘killed women’.

Summing up, comparison between KAI 214–215 and the contemporary Old Aramaic inscriptions hardly ever reveals any serious lexical divergence. Even if the Samalian vocabulary did not entirely overlap with the Old Aramaic one, the differences were most probably restricted to dialectal peculiarities.

When the same analysis is applied to the inscription from Deir 'Allā, the following features that unite it with Old Aramaic can be discovered: *ʿll* ‘to enter’, *ḵrk* ‘to flee’, *npḵ* ‘to go out’, *ʿšr* ‘place’, *ʿty* ‘to come’, *yhb* ‘to give’, *br* ‘son’, *ḥd* ‘one’. Besides, the inscription from Deir 'Allā contains several other lexemes characteristic of Aramaic, but absent from the Old Aramaic corpus:

ybl ‘to bring, to lead’, *hmr* ‘wine’, *htr* ‘sceptre, rod’, *hwy* ‘to tell, to recite’, *mlk* ‘to advise’, *mlkh* ‘advice’. Taking into account the poor state of preservation of this text and its relative brevity, one can state that the amount of Aramaic-like diagnostic features attested there is only slightly inferior to that of the Samalian corpus.

At the same time, the complete picture is considerably more ambiguous: unlike Samalian, in which there are practically no Canaanite-like lexical features, the Deir ʿAllā text displays several important isoglosses which do unite this dialect with Canaanite.

- Neither **ʔzl*, nor **hwk* for “to go” are present in Deir ʿAllā, but the imperative of **hllk* is attested in I:5.
- The root **hzy* is reliably attested only with reference to prophetic visions, whereas **ryy* is used in the neutral meaning “to see” in I:5.
- The verb **ʿbd* ‘to do’ is missing from Deir ʿAllā, whereas *pʿl* with the same meaning is reliably attested in I:2.
- Neither *mll* ‘to speak’, nor *mlh* ‘word’ are attested in Deir ʿAllā, whereas *dbr* is present in II:17, differently interpreted as ‘word’ or ‘he spoke’.

Thus, the results of our analysis of the vocabulary of the Deir ʿAllā inscription are contradictory. The number of specifically Aramaic lexical features and their quality are sufficient to make some kind of special genealogical connection between Deir ʿAllā and Aramaic practically unavoidable. At the same time, it is hardly legitimate to treat this idiom on the same taxonomic level as roughly contemporary Aramaic dialects. In all probability, a common ancestor of Deir ʿAllā and Old Aramaic (“Proto-Syrian” or “Proto-Aramoid” in Huehnergard’s terminology) is to be posited, where lexical features shared by these dialects and opposing them to other North-West Semitic languages started to crystallize. As for the Proto-Aramaic lexical isoglosses not shared by Deir ʿAllā, their origin must be attributed to a certain stage of the independent existence of the Aramaic branch.

Such a vision agrees with S. Loesov’s hypothesis of the division of the “broader Aramaic community” and contradicts the theories by J. Tropper (Samalian separates first, whereas Deir ʿAllā is considered one of the Old Aramaic branches) and J. Huehnergard (subsequent separation of Samalian, Deir ʿAllā and Old Aramaic from the common “Proto-Syrian” stock).

Chapter 7 is dedicated to the historical unity of Ethiopian Semitic, intuitively perceived as a close genealogical bundle by nearly all specialists in the field. Nevertheless, as rightly observed by A. Faber, morphological isoglosses confirming such a view are very difficult to find and, indeed, have not been detected, let alone properly described, until very recently.

In 2009, a special study by M. Bulakh and the present author appeared, in which all

morphological peculiarities of Ethiopian Semitic potentially relevant for genealogical classification have been systematically analyzed.

- Front vowel after the first radical in the long form of the prefix conjugation (Geez *yəfeṣṣəm* ‘he finishes’).
- The converb base $*C_1aC_2\bar{i}C_3-$ (Geez *ḵatil-o*).
- The base $*C_1aC_2\bar{a}C_3i$ of the agent noun (Geez *faṭāri* ‘creator’).
- The *-o(t)*-suffixed infinitive (Geez *nagir-o(t)* ‘to say, to speak’).
- Composite verbs consisting of a non-conjugated element expressing the lexical meaning and a conjugated auxiliary verb (most often going back to Proto-Ethiopian **bhl* ‘to say’).
- The frequentative stem $*C_1aC_2\bar{a}C_2C_2aC_3a$ (Amharic *güdaddäfü* ‘to make lots of mistakes’).
- The *ʔat*-prefixed causative stem.

Thus, even the most scrupulous search allows us to detect no more than seven potentially significant pan-Ethiopian Semitic morphological peculiarities. Only one of them is wholly reliable (the base $*C_1aC_2\bar{a}C_3i$ of the agent noun), whereas none of the Ethiopian Semitic languages shares all the seven isoglosses at once.

Such a poor amount of common morphological isoglosses hardly meets our expectations for a linguistic group instinctively perceived as an extremely close genealogical unity and plainly demonstrates the limits of genealogical classification using morphological isoglosses only. Strictly speaking, the heterogeneous origin of the Ethiopian Semitic languages once hypothesized by M. Cohen and supported by H. Fleming cannot be disproved on the basis of morphological isoglosses alone.

In such a situation, it is hard to overestimate the classificatory potential of lexical isoglosses, and it is no surprise that J. Cantineau and, later, R. Hetzron sporadically adduced lexical evidence in their descriptions of the lexical specificity of Ethiopian Semitic. In the present dissertation such a research has been, for the first time, systematically conducted using a wide scope of lexical data.

68 positions of the Proto-Ethiopian Swadesh wordlist can be filled with a high degree reliability; more than a half of them are trivial retentions (**36**).

As in other Semitic subgroups, non-trivial retentions (**15** entries) are heterogeneous in what regards their classificatory value: whereas such terms as **ḵwm* ‘to stand’, **rʔy* ‘to see’, **ḵtl* ‘to kill’, **whb* ‘to give’ are typical of a wide range of other Semitic idioms, items like **bhl* ‘to say’, **nʔs* ‘to be small’, **ʔawp-* ‘bird’, **ṭlm* ‘to be black’, **mṭʔ* ‘to come’, **ṣVbh-* ‘fat’, **ʔigr-* ‘foot’,

**qVnVm-* ‘rain’, **kbb* ‘to be rounded’ are highly specific and make the Ethiopian Semitic affiliation of a language quite unambiguous.

The following positions of the list may be attributed to Proto-Ethiopian lexical innovations: **liḥṣ-* ‘bark’ < **liḥṣ/*ḥlṣ* ‘to draw off’; **kabid-* ‘belly’ < ‘liver’, **midr-* ‘earth’ < **mVd(V)r-* ‘clod of clay’, **blʿ* ‘to eat’ < ‘to swallow’, **ṣahāy-* ‘sun’ < **ṣḥy* ‘to shine, to be bright’, **kilʿ-ay* ‘two’ < ‘both’.

**ḥamad-* ‘ashes, cinder’, **kuṣl-* ‘leaf’, **ṣabʿ-* ‘man, person’, **bzḥ* ‘to be numerous’, **kyh* ‘to be red’, **mwk* ‘to be hot’ belong to terms whose origin is uncertain or debatable.

The Proto-Ethiopian Swadesh wordlist displays several terms of Cushitic origin: **dammanā* ‘cloud’, **ʔankʷakʷiḥo* ‘egg’, **ʔāsā* ‘fish’, **ṣugr-* ‘hair’, **sigā* ‘meat’, possibly also **ṫs-* ‘smoke’ and **ʔwk* ‘to know’. In all probability, most of these terms penetrated already into proto-Ethiopian and, therefore, represent an important characteristic of the whole Ethiopian Semitic group.

A systematic analysis of the available lexical material allows one to detect quite a number of pan-Ethiopian lexical innovations in other segments of the basic vocabulary: **rḳ* ‘to be naked’, **blḥ* ‘to be sharp’, **batr-* ‘branch, stick’, **ḥmm* ‘to be ill’, **napāš-* ‘wind’, **maʔār-* ‘honey’, **ʔamlāk-* ‘god’, **marʔāt-* ‘bride, daughter-in-law’, **ngš* ‘to rule, to be king’, **rkb* ‘to find’, **ršʔ* ‘to forget’, **ṫbw* ‘to suck’, **wald-*, **lid-* ‘son’, **ziʔb-* ‘hyena’, **ʔilat-*, **maʔalt-* ‘day’, **hlw* ‘to be, to be available’, **ḥwr* ‘to go’, **ḥṣb* ‘to wash’, **kyd* ‘to walk, to tread, to make a step’, **maray-t-* ‘earth, soil’, **nbr* ‘to sit, to dwell, to reside’, **ndd* ‘to burn’, **ṣbb* ‘to be narrow’.

The emergence of the Proto-Ethiopian lexical innovations results in the loss or functional marginalization of the ancient exponents of respective concepts. Among the most remarkable terms of this kind one can find PS **ʔrw* ‘to be naked’, **mrṣ* ‘to be ill’, **dibš-* ‘honey’, **ʔil-* ‘god’, **kall-at-* ‘bride’, **ynḳ* ‘to suck’, **mlk* ‘to rule, to be king’, **mal(i)k-* ‘king’, **nšy* ‘to forget’, **bin-* ‘son’, **rḥṣ* ‘to wash’, **wṫb* ‘to sit’, **ʔarṣ-* ‘earth’, **ʔkl* ‘to eat’, **ṣamš-* ‘sun’, **ṫin-ā* ‘two’, **ṣyk* ‘to be narrow’.

Chapter 8 is dedicated to Modern South Arabian (MSA) as a genealogical unity. In his classical monograph on the lateral sibilants in Semitic, R. Steiner poses a question of linguistic reasons for considering Mehri, Jibbali and Soqotri as a genealogical unity called “Modern South Arabian” (MSA). Steiner did not succeed in finding substantial arguments for positing such a unity. From the moment of the publication of Steiner’s monograph, researchers on MSA have achieved much progress in synchronic and diachronic description of the languages of this group,

but the fundamental question of the linguistic grounds behind uniting them into a classification unit has been left without answer. The first part of this chapter represents a critical analysis of the MSA morphological peculiarities which would be common for all the languages of this group and, at the same time, specific enough when compared to other Semitic languages. The following morphological isoglosses may be relevant in this respect.

- The suffix **-in* as the marker of the imperfect of the intensive stem.
- The *n*-suffixed jussive form (conditional) marking the apodoses of unreal conditional sentences and a few other, more marginal, syntactic slots.
- The causative-reflexive stem with the sibilant prefix opposed to the causative stem with the guttural prefix.
- The broken plural in **-īn* traditionally described as the external plural masculine affix.
- The **-Vn*-extended feminine plural form in **-āt-*.
- Formation of the “broken plural” by substitution of the front vowel of the base by **a* (*a*-replacement in J. Greenberg’s terminology), practically absent from the other Semitic languages.
- Special diminutive patterns not attested elsewhere in Semitic.
- The dual of the second and third person pronouns **(?V)tī* и **šī*, in which the dual marker *i* is attached to the “core consonant” of the pronominal morpheme.

These morphological isoglosses, while certainly not without significance, do not really meet our expectations either quantitatively nor qualitatively. A close examination of the lexical peculiarities of MSA is thus highly desirable.

MSA Swadesh wordlists based on serious philological and linguistic research have not been published so far. Careful preparation of such lists has become an important task of the present chapter. The Soqotri list has been compiled via direct inquiry of the informants, with further comparison of these data to the evidence of the published text corpora. For Mehri and Jibbali, the lists have been compiled through a systematic analysis of all available text publications: from the “Vienna corpus” of the beginning of the 20th century up to the most recent publications by A. Rubin and J. Watson.

56 positions of the Proto-MSA Swadesh wordlist can be filled, among which **23** are trivial retentions (an exceedingly small number when compared to other Semitic subgroups).

12 Proto-MSA terms can be qualified as non-trivial retentions: **ramād-* ‘ashes’, **šablḥ-* ‘fat’, **kanam-* ‘louse’, **gald-* ‘skin’, **laban-* ‘white’, **kš* ‘to be dry’, **twy* ‘to eat’, **šiwāṭ-* ‘fire’, **šip-at-* ‘hair’, **lty* ‘to kill’, **tVwy-* ‘meat’. Nearly all these lexemes are highly specific in what

concerns their classificatory potential, being paralleled in just a few languages outside this group and, mostly, in a rather marginal form.

5 positions of the list can be recognized as common semantic innovations of Proto-MSA: ‘fish’ < *šyd ‘to hunt, to fish’, *Vrr-at- ‘moon’ < *rrr, *haw- ‘mouth’ < ‘hole, opening’, *nahīr- ‘nose’ < *nahīr- ‘nostril’, *pr ‘to be red’ < *apar- ‘soil’. The importance of these terms for establishing the genealogical specificity of MSA is hard to overestimate.

There are 16 concepts in the list whose exponents are of uncertain origin: *hwr ‘to be black’, *dVr(y)- ‘blood’, *nhy ‘to burn, to set on fire’, *kšm ‘to be cold’, *kahl- ‘egg’, *ššr ‘to be green’, *hā ‘I’, *yrb ‘to know’, *šaylap(-at)- ‘leaf’, *yayg- ‘man, person’, *tad- ‘one’, *ma-lsay- ‘rain’, *ar(V)m- ‘road’, *mr ‘to say’, *šny ‘to see’, *hVram- ‘tree’. In all probability, in most of such cases we are dealing with either non-trivial Proto-Semitic retentions or highly specific innovations involving unusual phonological and/or semantic characteristics.

The following section of this chapter offers a diachronic stratification of the basic lexicon outside the Swadesh wordlist. It has been possible to collect and analyze as much as 137 lexical items uniting Mehri, Jibbali and Soqotri and opposing them to the rest of Semitic languages: *rib-ā ‘people, men’, *irān- ‘goats’, *ibal- ‘flint’, *dg ‘to suck’, *kr ‘to grow, to be large, big’, *amk- ‘middle’, *an-at- ‘waterskin’, *šš ‘to rise’, *bdy ‘to lie’, *bā ‘here’, *bVr ‘already’, *bry ‘to bear’, *dVm(m)- ‘pus’, *dny ‘to be pregnant’, *twy ‘to smell’, *gr ‘to fall’, *glw ‘to be ill’, *yry ‘to speak’, *yšn ‘to love’, *hVIV- ‘shadow’, *hbr ‘to be cold’, *hilak- ‘smoke’, *hašy- ‘earth, soil’, *ka^l-at- ‘testicle’, *kyn ‘to be numerous’, *kapa[?]- ‘beestings, colostrum’, *ks[?] ‘to find’, *kny ‘to rear’, *kry ‘to hide’, *kaṭmīm- ‘fresh butter’, *mr_ṭ ‘to advise’, *nhg ‘to play’, *nk[?] ‘to come’, *nkl ‘to choose’, *nwḥ ‘to fight’, *paḥ- ‘half’, *pky ‘to cover; to wear clothes’, *pr ‘to yawn’, *pšy ‘to lunch’, *pt[?] ‘to be naked’, *rVmrVm- ‘sea’, *slb ‘to wait’, *sār ‘behind’, *šaprir- *št ‘to look, to watch’, *šahar- ‘old man’, *šny ‘to sow, to cultivate’, *šitim- ‘sky’, *šaṭar- ‘calf’, *šVgVr-at- ‘valley, ravine’, *šVhāp- ‘milk’, *tlk ‘to lead’, *tV[?]r- ‘clay’, *thr ‘to wound’, *w[?]kf ‘to be silent’, *wzm ‘to give’.

As elsewhere in Semitic, the emergence of the innovative lexical units leads to the loss of more ancient exponents of the respective concepts: *iṣ- ‘tree’, *aḥad- ‘one’, *anp- ‘nose’, *pay- ‘mouth’, *aṭm- ‘bone’, *kl ‘to eat’, *iṣ-āt- ‘fire’, *anā(ku) ‘I’, *šty ‘to drink’, *hdt ‘to be new’, *wrk ‘to be green’, *ybš ‘to be dry’, *ktl ‘to kill’, *ry ‘to see’, *kwm ‘to stand’, *nVš- ‘people,

men’, **ṭVrr-* ‘flint’, **ynḳ* ‘to suck’, **wld* ‘to bear’, **hry* ‘to be pregnant’, **ʕaḳib-* ‘heel’, **ṭill-* ‘shadow’, **ʕwr/*ʕrw* ‘to be naked’, **šamāy-* ‘sky’.

The basic lexicon of Proto-MSA displays a considerable number of non-trivial phonological and morphological peculiarities characteristic of individual lexemes.

- Gender suppletivism characteristic of the adjective “big, large”: Mhr. *šōh/nōb*, Jib. *ʕeb/ʕum*, Soq. *ʕeb/ʕām*.
- Forms with *-r-* characteristic of the lexemes going back to **bin-* ‘son’ and **tin-ā* ‘two’.
- 2 sg. m. and f. pronouns **hat*, **hit* (< PS **ʔanta*, **ʔanti*).
- The base **nāp-* of the reflexive pronoun “self” (< PS **napš-* ‘soul’).
- The base **saʕ* of the numeral “nine” (< PS **tišʕ-*).
- Complete or partial overlap between the exponents of the concepts “sun” and “day”.
- The verb **tḳṭ* ‘to wake up’ going back to Proto-West Semitic **ykṭ* where the reflexive *t-* prefix has become part of the root.
- The change of Proto-Semitic **yamīn-* ‘right side’ to **yamīl-*, influenced by **šimʕāl-* ‘left side’.

More than seventy years ago, the distinguished French Semitist J. Cantineau aptly evaluated the degree of lexical specificity of MSA: “Il est frappant de constater que des termes sémitiques très usuels sont souvent remplacés par des mots isolés et difficilement explicables”. The diachronic analysis of the MSA lexicon undertaken in the present chapter allows to fully detect both tendencies mentioned by Cantineau: an extraordinarily high amount of losses among the most basic and widespread Proto-Semitic lexemes; their replacement by “strange words” having no reliable parallels elsewhere in Semitic.

Such a considerable number of basic concepts expressed by exclusive exponents is an important argument for the genealogical unity of Mehri, Jibbali and Soqotri. Taking into account that exclusive morphological features (let alone confirmed common innovations) typical of these languages are rather scarce, the significance of the lexical factor for the evaluation of the historical specificity of MSA is difficult to overestimate.

The very exotic portrait of the MSA basic lexicon prompts some deliberation on the diachronic nature of the “new words” characteristic of these languages. This problem cannot be separated from another, equally important question: why is it precisely in MSA that such a lot of crucial Proto-Semitic lexemes have been so seriously marginalized or are missing altogether? Early separation from the Proto-West Semitic linguistic community, prolonged geographical and

cultural isolation, substratum or adstratum influence – all these factors certainly deserve attention, but, at present, none of them can be regarded as decisive for the formation of the lexical specificity of MSA.

The discussion of the internal subdivision of MSA occupies an important place in this chapter.

J. Rodgers opposes Soqotri to the continental languages on the grounds of his lexicostatistical calculations: while Mehri and Jibbali display no less than **88%** of common lexemes in the Swadesh wordlist, there are only about **60%** of common terms between each of these languages and Soqotri.

Another model of MSA classification has been suggested by A. Lonnet. According to his theory, Jibbali and Soqotri (*sudarabique moderne orientale*) are opposed to Mehri. Lonnet's conclusions are based on two morphological isoglosses: the use of *-i- as an apophonic marker of feminine in adjectives with quadriradical structure and the loss of *tV-* in the prefix conjugation of some verbal types and stems.

A thorough examination of the evidence provided by the basic vocabulary shows that Lonnet's theory is indeed appealing. However, it cannot be excluded that a relatively large number of lexical (and, for that matter, morphological) isoglosses between these languages should be explained by a higher degree of conservatism characteristic of them by contrast with the more innovative Mehri. The etymology of the Mehri terms corresponding to some of the shared Soqotri–Jibbali isoglosses is an important argument for such a suggestion: in many cases we are dealing with clear-cut Arabic borrowings (*gawf* 'breast', *ṭawāyl* 'long', *ṣayūr* 'to walk', *ʔarḵ* 'root', *hēšān* 'what'). In other words, exclusive lexemes shared by Jibbali and Soqotri are most probably ancient terms inherited from Proto-MSA, which once were present also in Mehri, but then were lost due to intensive interaction with Arabic.

In the **concluding part** of the thesis, its main results are summarized. It provides a brief comparison of the classificatory scheme based on the lexical evidence with the previously accepted classificatory models derived from shared morphological innovations. It contains a graph of the Semitic classification which features both the genealogical tree as such and a few possible spheres of areal influence.

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