

On some Animal Names in the Languages of Ancient Syria and Mesopotamia*

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The volume under review is a collection of articles dealing with the animal world of ancient Syria and Mesopotamia. The contributions are based on papers originally read at the international colloquium (Université Charles de Gaulle-Lille III, december 1998) and are now published by Dominique Parayre.

A brief presentation of the subject of the colloquium, its scope and goals (D.Parayre) is followed by 25 articles. Two concluding essays (J.-L.Huot and F.Poplin) close the book. The articles are classified into five thematic groups: “Faune, chasse et élevage, circulation des animaux”, “Cas d’espèces: réalité et représentation”, “L’image divine et les rituels”, “Bestiaires (textes, objets, images)” and “Classements: lexicographie et onomastique”.

There is no doubt that the general level of the contributions included into the volume is remarkably high whereas at least some of the articles are truly innovative in both the results and the evidence presented and discussed. In this sense, the volume is definitely successful and one can warmly congratulate its editors for their efforts.

The present reviewer whose scholarly interests lie in the field of comparative Semitic linguistics and philology will not dare to evaluate the merits of all the contributions, in particular those dealing with archaeological problems (which will surely raise much interest among more competent specialists). The following observations are limited to those articles for which a comparative Semitological approach might be of some relevance. Most of these remarks derive from my current work on the second volume of Semitic Etymological Dictionary (in collaboration with Prof. Alexander Militarev).

B.Lion - C.Michel, “Poissons et crustacés en Haute Mésopotamie” (pp. 71-110):

p. 80. The statement “Il existe des langues où l’on emploie le même mot pour sauterelle et langoustine” is certainly correct. It is important to add, moreover, that this semantic shift is not only attested in Semitic but directly affects the etymology of *erbu*, the main Akkadian term for locust. PS **šrbay-* ‘locust’ is usually thought to be absent from Aramaic and Arabic but this is hardly correct if such terms as Syr. *šrbītā* ‘cancer maritimus’ (Brock. 45) and Arb. *šrbiyān-* ‘locusta marina’ (Fr. I 24), ‘Seekrebs’ (Nöldeke BW 17) are taken into consideration.

On the other hand, I have to point out that Spanish *cigala* seems to denote only a kind of crustacean (at least in the standard modern language) so that its connection with the insect name is, *contra* Lion and

* Review article of *Topoi. Orient - Occident. Supplément 2 (2000). Les animaux et les hommes dans le monde syro-mésopotamien aux époques historiques*, Lyon 2000, Maison de l’Orient, 15,5 x 24, pp. 506.

Michel, purely etymological. It is Spanish *langosta* which does synchronically combine both meanings.

p. 81. If the interpretation of *karšu* as a kind of fish is still considered possible, cf. Jud. *kārēš* ‘name of a fish’ (Ja. 667).

P.Bordreuil-F.Briquel-Chatonnet: “Tiglath-Phalasar I a-t-il pêché ou chassé le *nāhiru*?” (pp. 117-124):

While the identification of *nāhiru* with hippopotamus could look attractive on various grounds, an etymological connection of this term with PS **nahar-* ‘river’ is most unlikely. The reasons are partly recognized by the authors themselves: WS *h* is not expected to be rendered by *ḥ* in the cuneiform whereas Ugr. *ḥnhr* ‘animal marino’ (DLU 39, in KTU 1.5 I 15 and 1.133.5) clearly points to *ḥ* as the second radical. Another serious objection is that denominative adjectives are almost never produced after the *katil*-pattern in Hebrew (see Fox 1996 382ff.; *šā ṭr* ‘hairy’ may be a unique exception) and there are good reasons to believe that the picture was largely the same in Ugaritic and Phoenician.

p. 122. *zebul yam* and *ṭipiṭ nahar* cannot be considered as adequate normalizations of Ugr. *zbl ym* and *ṭpṭ nhr* (instead of the expected *zubūlu yammu* and *ṭāpiṭu naharu*).

D.Parayre, “Les suidés dans le monde Syro-Mésopotamien aux époques historiques” (pp. 141-206):

p. 160. Connection between Ugr. *ḥnZR* and PS **ḥuzīr-* ‘pig’ is far from certain and its recurrent appearance in Semitological studies as the normal Ugr. term for pig is far-fetched. As rightly observed in Huehnergard 1987 84-85, the true Ugr. word for pig is attested only syllabically (*ḥu-zi-rū*, equated to Sum. [ŠA]Ḫ and Akk. *šeḥū*) and has no middle *-n-*.

D.Pardee, “Les équidés à Ougarit au Bronze Récent. La perspective des textes” (pp. 223-4):

p. 231. Pardee spends a welcome attention to the distribution of terms for ass in Ugaritic documents. Indeed, *ḥmr* is almost completely absent from the literary texts where *ṛ* or *pḥl* are normally used. However, there are at least two reasons which do not allow me to agree with Pardee’s attempt to regard this opposition as reflecting either “deux fonds dialectaux différents” (*ṛ* labeled as “un vieux mot amorite, remplacé dans la langue courante [Canaanite? Ugaritic? -L.K.] par *ḥmr*”) or even “deux formes différentes de l’espèce asine”. On the one hand, this kind of usage-distribution is by no means limited to the words for ‘ass’ in Ugaritic. On the other hand, similar lexical oppositions are well attested in (and even typical of) a number of ancient Semitic languages other than Ugaritic.

Thus, Ugr. *š* is the main designation of a head of small cattle in cultic texts which never appears in literary passages. Ugr. *pr* ‘bull’ is well attested in cultic and economic texts but not in poetry. Ugr. *šlp* is the main term for a head of large cattle, but only outside the literary texts where it is very rare. Instead, Ugr. *tr* with the same meaning is known only from literary texts. A reverse picture is observed in Hebrew: while *šlāp* is a rare and exclusively poetic word, *šōr* is the basic and most neutral term for bull and ox. Ugr. *llš* ‘kid’ is a literary term whereas *gd* seems to be its counterpart in economic and cultic texts. Ugr. *šmr* ‘lamb’ and *šrh* ‘cow’ are found only in literary texts whereas the terms for the snake (the common one *bṭn* and the much rarer *nḥš*) show a curious distribution between various literary genres (Hbr. *nāḥāš* is the common word for the snake whereas *pātān* and *bāšān* both are rare and specifically poetic terms). Should we assume different dialectal layers or different zoological realities in all these cases? Hardly so. Moreover, there is no need to stress that similar pairs are known from other fields of basic lexicon where “deux formes différentes de l’espèce” would sometimes be totally excluded.

In my opinion, the explanation of this curious phenomenon must be sought in the domain of poetic language and style rather than in historical dialectology or palaeozoology. The easiest solution would be to

assume that a kind of special poetic lexicon existed already in the language of early Semites which was inherited in different ways by its daughter tongues (that the phenomenon is both old and widespread is clear from the fact that already in Akkadian such functional doublets as *nēšu* ~ *labbu* ‘lion’ are well attested). While not impossible as such, this explanation does not look very attractive since, as I have just shown, even in such closely related languages as Hebrew and Ugaritic “high” and “low” terms go back to different (actually, the opposite) Common Semitic prototypes. Accordingly, it was rather the very idea of opposing synonyms as “profane” and “literary” that was inherited, no doubt as an important medium of enriching the inherently poor inventory of early Semitic poetic devices.

pp. 231-2. Normalizations *rākib* *ūrapāti* and *Šimmu paḥlu* for *rkb* *īpt* ‘cloud-rider’ and *Šim phl* ‘mother of the stallion’ look strange (*rākibu* *ūrapāti* and *Šimmu paḥli* are expected).

P.Villard, “Le chien dans la documentation néo-assyrienne” (pp. 235-249):

p. 246ff. Akk. *kalbu* ‘dog’ as a term for (self-)abasement is studied on these pages. Naturally, the discussion is limited to the Neo-Assyrian documentation but if a broader picture is considered, it is curious to observe that the use of *kalbu* for self-humiliation is restricted to Amarna, Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian. As an invective, it is sparsely attested in Old Assyrian and Mari but most relevant passages are again from late and peripheral texts. Should one suspect a West Semitic influence or a specifically Assyrian dialectal usage?

M.Bonechi, “Noms d’oiseaux à Ébla: les rapaces” (pp. 251-281):

p. 257. As rightly pointed out by the author, comparison of Ebl. *WA-zi-bū-um* to Hbr. *yanšūp* and Akk. *enšūpu* and *eššebu* proposed by M.Baldacci (1994 65) is phonologically unlikely (ZI does not reflect/render any of the sibilants which can be behind *š* in Hebrew and Akkadian). One wonders, however, why this problem should become less serious if the Ebl. form is regarded as “probablement une variante *yassibum* de **yansibum*”. Admittedly, I am not able to propose any alternative etymology.

p. 269. If *ir-lu-um* in VE 1232’ is indeed to be normalized as *ērrum*, an immediate cognate must be Jud. *ār* ‘a bird of prey, perhaps Lammergeyer’ (Ja. 1109), *āryā* id. (ibid. 1116), ‘eine Adlerart, Aar’ (Levy TW II 239), cf. also HJ 884 for a possible attestation of this term in Old Aramaic. Note that already in Zimmern 1917 51 the Aramaic term was compared to the main term for eagle in Akkadian, namely *arū/erū* (“entlehnt oder urverwandt”) whose traditional identification with Sem. terms for lion (Hbr. *šaryē* etc.) is in no way tenable (cf. Landsberger 1961 15). If the present etymological interpretation is correct, the Ebl. word may continue an old PS faunal term without any connection with verbal roots meaning ‘to shout’ etc. as proposed by M.Bonechi.

p. 274. Derivation of the bird name *a-bar-tum* from “sém. **šr*, acc. *apārum* ‘couvrir la tête’” is most unlikely since this Semitic root is to be reconstructed with **p* and not **š* as the first radical. Cf. Arb. *ḫr* ‘couvrir, recouvrir quelque chose; cacher, serrer quelque chose, p.ex., un objet dans un sac’ (BK 2 482), Ugr. *ḫrt* ‘n. de prenda de vestir’ (DLU 158), Mhr. *ḫfūr* ‘to hide’ (JM 135), Jib. *ḫfōr* id. (JJ 84), Hrs. *ḫfōr* ‘to pardon’ (JH 44); note also that the Akk. verb is once attested with *ḫ-* (*iḫ* *-pu-ur ka-aḫ-ḫá-as-sà* ‘she covered her head’ in Atra-ḫasīs I 284). As for PS **p* it is expected to be rendered (reflected) as *ḫ* and not \emptyset in Ebla.

p. 278. Without pretending to dismiss the internal Eblaite evidence for interpreting *ḫa-ḫa-tum* as a name of a bird of prey, I would hesitate to agree with the author in assuming that Akk. *ḫaḫḫūrum* is “un oiseau utilisé dans la chasse au faucon, donc d’un type de faucon”. This conclusion is most probably based on W.G.Lambert’s understanding of the third section of the Dialogue of Pessimism as a text dealing with hunt (Lambert 1996 324-5). Lambert’s interpretation of LÚ *mut-tap-raš-ši-di* as ‘hunter’ and *ḫa-ḫu-ru* [so in spite of the preceding *ša!*] *mut-tap-raš-ši-di* as ‘the hunter’s falcon’ is, however, more than uncertain

and is not accepted in recent translations of the Dialogue (“the roving man ... the roving raven” in Livingstone 1997 495, “the roaming man ... the roaming bird” in Foster 1993 815).

A. Millet Albà, “Les noms d’animaux dans l’onomastique des archives de Mari” (pp. 477-487):

For two reasons, this contribution will be the only one with which I will deal in more detail. On the one hand, A. Millet Albà is the first scholar in the field who systematically collected the available evidence for faunal terms used as personal names in Mari texts. There is no need to stress the importance of such a collection for our understanding of the respective animal names in early Semitic and one can easily perceive how serious is the progress if the number of terms discussed in this contribution is compared to that found in the corresponding section of the pioneering work by Huffmon (1965 151-2). On the other hand, a deeper investigation of Common Semitic animal names and their continuants in the daughter languages might throw a new light on some problematic issues discussed by Millet Albà.

Perhaps the most controversial problem treated in the present article is the linguistic affiliation of the names under discussion: West Semitic or Akkadian? No easy solutions are at hand: Semitic languages are notoriously poor in phonological features allowing a precise linguistic attribution. Moreover, many of such would-be diagnostic features are partly or completely concealed by the ambiguity of the cuneiform writing.

If purely linguistic arguments are taken into consideration (and this indeed seems to be a convenient starting point for a more comprehensive discussion), evidence collected in Millet Albà’s contribution can be classified in the following way¹.

An onomastic element should be provisionally regarded as Akkadian if:

1. No WS etymology for the term in question can be proposed.

- *ašḫud-* ‘a rodent’ (CAAA No. 940ff.). Usually written with AŠ in the proper names, but always with AS in Akkadian texts; the unique HA-spelling is also noteworthy, cf. Huffmon 1965 152.

- *as-/asāt-* ‘bear’, *barbar-* ‘wolf’ (Durand 1997 659), *kulīl-* ‘dragon-fly’, *lakān-* ‘(kind of) sheep’, *burḫuš-* ‘buffalo’.

2. Specifically Akkadian phonological features are observed or the morphological shape of a given term matches with the Akkadian cognate but is not attested in WS:

- *būr-* ‘calf’ (Durand 1997 659, CAAA No. 1354-5). Note the loss of - ʾ and the *u*-vocalism of the base (the latter, admittedly, may be also behind Gez. *bə ʾər*).

- *būṣ-* ‘hyena’ (CAAA No. 1382ff.). Metathesis of PS **šābu ʾ* (attested in WS already in Emar: *ša-ba-ú* ‘bear’, see Penttinen 2001 160-1), cf. Huffmon 1965 151 (“...could probably be Amorite. In the absence of proper West Semitic correspondents, however, the suggestion cannot be pressed”).

- *dabi-* ‘bear’ (CAAA No. 1412, Durand 1997 659). Only forms with geminated *b* and *u*-vocalism of the base are known from WS so that one wonders why this element is listed among the very few ones explicitly classified as WS by Millet Albà; geminated *-b-* in *da-ab-bu* (Malku V 50) is probably due to a WS influence, cf. now also Ebl. *da-bū(-um)*, *dab₆-bū* = AZ in VE 870a.

- *iššūr-* ‘bird’. Ugr. *šr*, the only reliable WS parallel to Akk. *iššūru* ‘bird’ is to be normalized as *ūššūru*, cf. Huehnergard 1987 162.

- *šēlab-*, *šēleb-* ‘fox’ (CAAA No. 5886). The shift *-a ʾ > ē* and especially the vocalic harmony in the second variant are specifically Babylonian; the WS ‘Fox’ is of course *šuhāl-*.

1. Whenever I was able to localize a given onomastic element in the important collections of Amorite proper names compiled by Gelb and Durand, references are given in brackets; many names treated by the author must come from unpublished Mari texts and are not listed in these collections.

- *summ-* ‘dove’ (CAAA No. 6641). Arb. *samāmat-* ‘sorte de petit oiseau semblable à l’hirondelle’ (BK 1 1134) is a plausible cognate for Akk. *summu* but the morphological shape is completely different.

- *mīrān-* ‘cub’. WS parallels like Ugr. *šrn* ‘cachorro de perro, gozquejo’ (DLU 50) are not unknown, but *mV-*prefixation is attested only in Akkadian.

- *arrab-* ‘dormouse’. WS parallels are augmented with the prefixal element *ya-*: Syr. *yarbū ā*, Arb. *yarbū ʿ*, differently from Akk. *arrabu, arrabū*.

The number of proper names which can be linguistically identified as Akkadian is thus not very high but still remarkable enough to make one hesitate to agree with the author’s statement “seulement un très petit nombre d’entre eux sont accadiens”.

Similar criteria can be proposed for classifying a given onomastic element as West Semitic.

1. The relevant Semitic root is not reflected in Akkadian.

- *gad-* ‘kid’. NB *gadū* must be a WS loan.

- *ḥasīd-* ‘stork’ (CAAA No. 223ff.). Hbr. *ḥāsīdā* on which this identification must be based is completely isolated in Semitic.

- *ḥarād-* ‘wild ass’ (CAAA No. 2181, Huffmon 1965 152). Akk. (*h*)*arādu* in Malku must be a WS (loan)word.

- *šuhāl-* ‘fox’ (CAAA No. 5926-7, Huffmon 1965 152). Only PS **ta ʿlab-* is reflected in Akkadian.

- *āyar-* ‘ass’ (hardly ‘poulain’), *āgal-* ‘calf’ (CAAA No. 2014-5, Durand 1997 661), *burbur-* ‘cock’ (CAAA No. 1370, 1376, Durand 1997 659).

2. The onomastic element in question exhibits specifically non-Akkadian morphological and phonological features.

- (*h*)*immar-* ‘lamb’ (Durand 1997 661). The author’s translation ‘ass’ is rather unlikely in view of the explicit doubling of *-m-* (note that **š** rendered by H-signs is not uncommon in Amorite personal names, cf. Streck 2000 232ff.) Both *h-* and *-a-* are hard to explain if the name is Babylonian but are well conceivable if it is West Semitic.

- *ḥimār-* ‘ass’ (CAAA No. 2276-7), clearly opposed to the normal Babylonian *imēru*.

- *sūs-* ‘horse’ vs. Akk. *sīsū*.

The number of proper names which can be clearly identified as West Semitic on linguistic criteria is thus surprisingly small.

As suggested already in Huffmon 1965 151, very often no linguistic evidence for identifying the base as West Semitic or Akkadian is at hand. This fact is duly recognized by Millet Albà (“il y en a d’autres ... qui ne peuvent pas être distingués des formes accadiennes”). This difficult problem can be illustrated by the following examples:

ḥuzīr- ‘pig’ (CAAA No. 2369ff., Durand 1997 662). Akk. *ḥuzīru* is reliably attested in OA and might be the main term for pig in Assyrian as opposed to Babylonian *šahū*.

ḥuzāl- ‘gazelle’ (CAAA No. 2361ff., Durand 1997 662). Treated as Amorite in Huffmon 1965 151 but note that the Akkadian word (*h*)*uzālu* is attested not only in (Amorite) personal names, v. AHW. 362, 1447, *contra* CAD H 265.

kabs- ‘ram’ (CAAA No. 3902, 4010). Akk. *kabs(at)u* is known mostly from NA and is often regarded as a WS borrowing (v. Huffmon 1965 152) but note that it is now detected in the late OB letter AbB 9 162:12 where the presence of a WS loanword is by far less expected.

parr- ‘bull’ (CAAA No. 5126, Durand 1997 667). Akk. *parru* is traditionally regarded as an Aramaic loanword as it is attested in later texts with the typically Aramaic meaning ‘lamb’. This assumption becomes less evident in view of its attestation in the OB letter AbB 9 161:18.

dītān- ‘aurochs’ (CAAA No. 1516 and many examples on p. 295, under DTN). A number of phonetically similar terms are attested in both Akkadian and WS (discussed in a number of recent studies,

e.g. Durand 1988, Lion 1991, Conti-Bonechi 1992) but it would be clearly premature to speak about their ultimate origin.

baḫḫ-/buḫāḫ- ‘gnat’ (CAAA No. 1037, 1349ff.; Amorite according to Huffmon 1965 152), *ayyal-* ‘stag’ (CAAA No. 9, 301ff., Durand 1997 658; Amorite according to Huffmon 1965 152), *kalb-* ‘dog’ (CAAA No. 3914ff., Durand 1997 663, Huffmon 1965 152), *šulp-* ‘bull’ (CAAA No. 715; “...could be Akkadian or Amorite...” according to Huffmon 1965 151), *šurnab(at)-* ‘hare’ (CAAA No. 905ff., Durand 1997 657; apparently treated as Amorite in Huffmon 1965 152), *nūb-* ‘bee’ (CAAA No. 5065, Durand 1997 667), *rimmat-* ‘kind of insect/worm’, *zīb-* ‘jackal, wolf’ (CAAA No. 6434, 6440), *šurān-* ‘cat’ (CAAA No. 5952), *šaršar-* ‘grasshopper’ (CAAA No. 6327), *kudinn-/kudunn-* ‘mule’ (note that only *-a-* in the second syllable is attested in both Akk. and WS), *labas/labuš-* ‘lion’ (several examples in CAAA p. 314, under LBW), *mūr-* ‘foal’ (CAAA No. 4756, Durand 1997 666), *lasas-* ‘kid’ (CAAA No. 4281ff., Durand 1997 665).

A delicate case is that of a few terms which are present in both Akkadian and WS but only in those West Semitic languages which are usually not regarded as particularly close to Amorite: Arabic, Ethiopian, Epigraphic and Modern South Arabian. Thus, *ayyaš-* ‘mouse, weasel’ (CAAA No. 309) can be compared to both Akkadian *ayyašu* and Amharic *ay(ə)t* ‘mouse’ (K 1296; cf. also Gez. *šunšawā* ‘mouse, weasel’, LGz. 32). In the same way, *bibb-* ‘wild sheep’ may be identical to Akk. *bibbu* but cf. also Tgr. *buba* ‘antelope koodoo’ (LH 286). The element *šurwiy-* supposed to mean ‘gazelle’ (CAAA No. 917ff.) is now reliably attested in Akkadian texts (ARM 14 38:6, OECT XI 19 22) whereas in WS it is known only in Arb. *šurwiyat-* ‘chèvre de montagne’ (BK 1 959), Sab. *šwy-n* (pl.) ‘(female) mountain goat, ibex’ (SD 7, uncertain) and Mhr. *šurīt* ‘goat’ (Nakano 116). A similar example is of course *asd-* (CAAA No. 927) supposed to mean ‘lion’ on the base of Arb. *šasad-* but clearly absent from both Akkadian and Canaanite-Aramaic.

Very remarkable is the case of a few “goat-names” which are based on various kinds of phonetic evolution of PS **Vnz-*. The element *ḫazz-* (CAAA No. 1987, 2236) with *ḫ* and **-nz-* > *-zz-* is clearly West Semitic and is also known as a foreign word *ḫazzu* from Mari Akkadian (v. Streck 2000 96). The fem. formation *azzatu* (*ḫazzatu*) is attested in the OB texts from Chagar Bazar and in Nuzi documents (CAD A2 531, AHw. 339) and now also in *šakkanakkū*-documents from Tuttul, v. Krebernik 2001 234 (*‘azzatum* ‘Ziege’). As for *inz-* and *ezz-*, both Akkadian (v. CAD E 180) and WS prototypes can be adduced (though, admittedly, Akk. *ezzu* is only marginally attested).

In the above analysis, I departed from an *a priori* assumption that the author’s identifications of onomastic elements with this or that animal name are always correct. There is no need to stress, however, that many of such equations are for obvious reasons more or less uncertain and one can only congratulate the author who generously provided with question marks many of her translations. Still, it is equally certain that interpretations which seem definitely unlikely are quite few. Thus, I do not know any evidence for the translation ‘poulain’ for *mūr-* since Akk. *mīru* is attested only with the meaning ‘young bull’ (CAD M2 109, AHw. 658); the meaning ‘jument’ for *merš* would also require some justification. Interpretation of *baz-* as ‘faucon’ is most unlikely since all known WS parallels are very late and rightly thought to be borrowed from Iranian (Ciancaglini MS, s.v.). Millet Albà follows J.-M. Durand (1997 638) in interpreting the element *ḫagal-* as ‘calf’ which is rather unlikely since the corresponding WS terms are always attested as monosyllabic bases with a stable *i*-vowel (contra Durand, the Hbr. word for ‘heifer’ is of course *‘ēglā* and not *‘ēglā*). Alternatively, Akk. *agalū* ‘an equid’ should probably be taken into consideration but no WS parallel for this interesting term is known so that the nature of the initial laryngeal is hard to establish (Ebl. *ag-lum* = ANŠE.NITA.KUR in VE 039 is unfortunately of no help in this respect).

In the **epilogue** by F. Poplin (pp. 504-505) two quasi-linguistic speculations are found, both out of

place in the closing section of a volume of so high qualities.

The term **ṣarnab-* ‘hare’ is just one from dozens of Semitic animal names which may be applied to the female without expressing it explicitly by the feminine marker *-at-* (consider Hebrew *lābī* (𐤁𐤁) ‘lion/lioness’ or *dōb* ‘he-/she-bear’). It is quite natural that in many cases such non-augmented forms in one language are paralleled by cognates with explicit gender-marking in others (e.g., Hbr. *lābī* (𐤁𐤁) vs. Akk. *labbu/labbatu*). It is therefore hard to understand what reasons are behind the statement “le lièvre ... donne lieu à une anomalie amenant un redoublement de la femme [sic!, L.K.]” –all this in connection with the remarkable (but by no means extraordinary) fact that both *arnab-* and *arnab-t-* are known as personal names of women in Mari documents.

Arb. *nahr-* has nothing to do with Hbr. *naḥal* from the etymological point of view and the apparent phonetic similarity of the two terms (or the graphic proximity of their transcriptions?) should not mislead even a layman. Furthermore, the very idea of comparing Arb. *nahr-* and *baḥr-* “dans l’histoire des mots” is nonsense and betrays a surprisingly light attitude towards historical linguistics as a scholarly discipline.

Abbreviations of language names

Akk. - Akkadian, Arb. - Arabic, Ebl. - Eblaite, Gez. - Geez, Hbr. - Hebrew, Hrs. - Harsusi, Jib. - Jibbali, Jud. - Judaic Aramaic, Mhr. - Mehri, NB - Neo-Babylonian, OB - Old Babylonian, PS - Proto-Semitic, Sab. - Sabaic, Sem. - Semitic, Sum. - Sumerian, Syr. - Syriac, Tgr. - Tigre, Ugr. - Ugaritic, WS - West Semitic

Lexicographic tools

- AHw. W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Wiesbaden 1965-1981.
 BK A. de Biberstein-Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français*. Vol. 1-2, Paris 1860.
 Brock. C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, Halle 1928.
 CAAA I. J. Gelb, *Computer-aided Analysis of Amorite*, Chicago 1980.
 CAD *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute, the University of Chicago*, Chicago 1956.
 DLU G. Del Olmo Lete, J. Sanmartín, *Diccionario de la lengua ugarítica*, Sabadell (Barcelona), 1996-2000.
 Fr. G. W. Freytag, *Lexicon arabico-latinum*, Halle 1833.
 HJ J. Hoftijzer, K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, Leiden-New York-Köln 1995.
 Ja. M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*. New York 1996.
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 JJ T. M. Johnstone, *Jibbāli Lexicon*, Oxford 1981.
 JM T. M. Johnstone, *Mehri Lexicon*, London 1987.
 K T. L. Kane, *Amharic-English Dictionary*, Wiesbaden 1990.
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