

ANDRZEJ ZABORSKI

(University of Cracow and University of Vienna)

FIRST PERSON PRONOUNS IN ARABIC IN THE LIGHT OF ARABIC AND HAMITO-SEMITIC DIALECTOLOGY

Whereas in classical studies on Semitic pronouns (cf. BROCKELMANN 1908, BARTH 1913) dialectal Arabic forms of pronouns that cannot be traced back to Classical Arabic have been used for comparison with other Semitic languages as well as for the reconstruction of Proto-Semitic, in later studies (e.g. CASTELLINO 1962, AFFUSO 1977, FISCHER, JASTROW 1980) dialectal variants have been overtly or tacitly considered as innovations in spite of the fact that some of them are recorded very early¹. In this article a revision of the traditional approach is undertaken with the use not only of Semitic but also of Berber, Cushitic, Egyptian and Chadic comparative data. One of the principal assumptions is that Proto-Semitic and Proto-Hamito-Semitic were composed of dialects with frequently contradictory isoglosses and that in the Proto-Semitic period the Semitic languages constituted a more or less regular dialect continuum (cf. ZABORSKI 1991).

For Proto-Hamitosemitic it is possible to reconstruct first person singular variants (cf. ZABORSKI, forthcoming, DIAKONOFF 1988, 72) as:

*^ʔ*an-ʔa*, *^ʔ*an-ī*, *^ʔ*an-u*
*^ʔ*an-ā-k-u*, *^ʔ*an-ā-k-i*

It is highly possible that originally there was case distinction so that variants with *-ī* were used as dependent (oblique) pronouns, cf. *^ʔ*an-ī*/*^ʔ*a-n-ī* and *-n-ī*. As is well known, Classical Arabic lacks not only variants with *-k-* (existing in Akkadian, Hebrew etc. in Semitic, in Berber **ʔnakkw* > Tuareg *nāk* and in Egyptian *jn-k* reconstructed as *^ʔ*anāku* > Coptic *anok*) but also variants with *-ī* (found e.g. in Hebrew and in Cushitic) and *-u* (found in Cushitic and therefore only provisionally considered as going back to Proto-Hamito-Semitic). It has been usually taken for granted (but cf. JOÜON-MURAOKA 1991, 120-121) that Hebrew ^ʔ*anī* is an innovation due to the influence of the suffixed first person singular *-nī* but ^ʔ*ani* is found also in Cushitic languages, where it can be traced back to Proto-Cushitic (ZABORSKI 1989). Moreover, if there is any suspicion of analogy of any kind, Hebrew (and Canaanite in general) ^ʔ*anōkī*, which also has final *-ī*, should be taken into consideration as well. There is an obvious parallelism between the first-person independent and suffixed pronouns but there is no compelling reason to consider it a result of analogy and not evidence of their common origin. At least both hypotheses are equally justified as working hypotheses. Most probably Proto-Chadic had at

¹ Cf. NÖLDEKE 1897, 13-14; BLAU 1966-67, 133-134; HOPKINS 1984, 63; FLEISCH 1990, 5-27.

least **'ani* as an independent first person singular (cf. DOLGOPOLSKIY 1988, 209, who reconstructs it as the only Proto-Hamito-Semitic form and ZABORSKI forthcoming) and the status of Egyptian "dependent" pronouns, among which the first person singular is *wj*, shows an intermediate stage between independent functioning and suffixation. Though **'ani* is not found in Classical Arabic and it is not mentioned by Mediaeval Arab grammarians (who, beyond any doubt, do not mention a lot of details which certainly did occur in different dialects in their times), nevertheless it is found at least in the following contemporary dialects:

1. ANĪ is found in some dialects of the Ša' dah region (BEHNSTEDT 1987, 64 and 163), in 'Aneze in the Syrian desert and in a part of Ḥōrān together with *'ana* (BARTH 1913, 4-5), in Egypt in the Eastern Delta (BEHNSTEDT, WOJDICH 1985-1988, part 2, 143), in Farafra and in West Dakhla (BEHNSTEDT, WOJDICH 1985-1988, part 3, vol. 2, 327).

2. ANI is found in Syrian Desert Beduin (CANTINEAU 1936, 70 cf. BARTH 4-5) and in some Northern Israel Beduin dialects (ROSENHOUSE 1984, 79), in the dialect of il-'Awāmra of East Šarqiyya in Egypt (WOJDICH 1979, 87).

3. ĀNI is found in Iraq (BARTH 1913, 4; ERWIN 1963, 271; BLANC 1964), in some Northern Israel Beduin dialects (ROSENHOUSE 1984, 79), in Bahraini dialects (QAFISHEH 1977, 159), in Libya (MARÇAIS 1977, 189), transcribed as *āni* in Kairuan, Susa, Monastir and Takruna in Tunisia (SINGER 1984, 250).

The final *-ī/i* has been considered as a case of *imāla* (i.e. *ani* has been interpreted as going back to alleged **ane* < *'āna*) by CANTINEAU (*op.cit.*) but it has to be pointed out that there are dialects with *imāla* in the third and second persons singular but without *imāla* in the first person, e.g. Damascus *hūwe*, *hīye* but *ana* (FISCHER & JASTROW 1980, 80); Bišmizzīn *huwwī*, *hiyyi* but *'ana* (and *niḥna!*). There are dialects with *ani* etc. and not *imāla* in the pronouns at all, e.g. Iraqi *'āni* but *huwwa*, *hiyya*, *inta* etc. (ERWIN 1963, 271); Northern Israel Beduin dialects have *'ani* but *'inta*, *huwwa*, *hiyya* etc. (ROSENTHAL 1982, 40), Libyan Tripoli *ane* but *inta*, *huwwa*, *hiyya* (ELFITOURY 1976, 95), Marāzig *'āni* but *'inta* though there is first person plural *ḥnē* (FISCHER & JASTROW 1980, 256) while in some dialects we do have *imāla*, e.g. Lebanese Zaḥle *huwwē*, *hiyyi* etc. and *āne* (FLEISCH 1974, 66, cf. also other Lebanese dialects on p. 207); Aleppo *hūwe*, *hiye* and *'ānā*, *nəḥne* (SABUNI 1980, 68); Ḥōrān *hīye* (but *hūwa!*) and *ani* (CANTINEAU 1946); Omani *huwwē*, *hiyye* and *ane* (PROCHAZKA 1981, 42), Mardin *hūwe*, *hīye* but *ana* (JASTROW 1979, 42). In one Egyptian Ša'īdi dialect there is *'ani*, *'inti* (masc. sing. sic!) in contrast with *inta*, *intey* (fem. sing.) in contrast with *inti* but *humma* without *imāla* (KHALAFALLAH 1969, 76). It is interesting that probably the number of dialects having *ane* with any kind of phonetic *-e* (e.g. Šan'ā *'anē'* — ROSSI 1939, 19) is rather limited though this may be illusionary because of the problems of phonological or phonemic interpretation, especially in cases of pre-phonological transcriptions. There is Tunis *ānā* with *hūwā*, *hīyā* etc. (SINGER 1984, 250) but Yemeni *ane* (QAFISHEH 1992, 179) occurs with *anta*, *huwwa*, *humma* but also *ḥne!* All of this indicates that although *imāla* could certainly contribute to the change (and/or petrification of older forms with *-i*?) of the first person, nevertheless only hypothetically can it be considered the

reason of the origin of some variants with *-il-ī*. Retention of an archaic variant going back to Proto-Semitic **ʾanī* in some dialects cannot be excluded. Reinterpretation of the original (i.e. not due to *imāla*) *ʾanī* could facilitate the spread of *imāla* elsewhere.

Some dialects of Arabic e.g. that of Yemen (cf. PROCHAZKA 1987, 65-66; GREENMAN 1979, 59; DIEM 1973, 68, 79; ROSSI 1937, 263-4; FISCHER & JASTROW 1980, 112) and in the Lower Gulf (HOLES 1990, 160 speaking of uneducated speakers) have *ʾani* as a feminine variant of the first person singular. This can be easily accepted, as it generally is, as an innovation since we do not find any distinction of gender in the first person elsewhere. But the usual explanation of the origin of this innovation as due to analogy with *ant-ī* "you" (fem. sing.) is, perhaps, partially a simplification. A better explanation would be that an originally free or stylistic genderless variant **ʾan-ī* has been reinterpreted by analogy with *ʾant-ī* as feminine. It is probably significant that the first person feminine singular occurs in dialects (the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula) which are in contact with dialects which have only one genderless *ʾanī/ʾānī/ʾani* in the first person singular.

The hypothesis about **ʾanī/i* variant(s) in prehistorical Arabic presented here obviously can be challenged but in my opinion it should be taken into consideration in future research.

As far as the first person plural is concerned, it is usually taken for granted that there is no direct relation (except the first person singular prefix *na-* of the prefix conjugation in Western dialects of Arabic which is considered to be an innovation) between the first person singular and the first person of plural, though FLEISCH (1990, 10-11) did not reject such a possibility, indicating that in Berber the first person plural is morphologically connected with the first person singular and that such a connection, i.e. the first person plural being originally the first person singular plus plural marker, could not be excluded. As a matter of fact, the second and third persons plural are based on singular forms plus plural marker in Semitic, Berber, Cushitic, Egyptian and perhaps also in Chadic (see ZABORSKI forthcoming). Proto-Berber (see PRASSE 1972, 179-181, who reconstructs Proto-Berber first person singular as **ʾnakkw* and first person plural as **ʾnakkw-anī*; cf. ZABORSKI forthcoming) leaves no doubt that indeed it is composed of the singular form plus plural marker. Actually there is a possibility of reconstructing at least one Proto-Hamito-Semitic variant as **ʾan-ā-k-na/*ʾan-ā-k-nu* > *(*ʾa*)*n-a-ḥ-na/u* > *ʾan-aḥ-na/u* due to spirantization of /k/ after /ā/ at the end of the syllable.

For Proto-Semitic DIAKONOFF (1988, 72) reconstructs **na-ḥna/u* and **ʾana-ḥna/u* while earlier (see BROCKELMANN 1908, 299 following UNGNAD; cf. BARTH 1913, 5 and note 6) only **niḥnu* was reconstructed for Proto-Semitic following Akkadian (*a*)*nīnu/* (*a*)*nēnu/*(*a*)*nīni*, though VON SODEN 1952, 41 and GELB 1969, 177-178 say that /ḥ/ influenced the change from **naḥnu* to **nēnu, nīnu* in Akkadian while GELB says also that »The intrusive *ḥ* cannot be explained» and reconstructs **ʾan-nanu* for Proto-Akkadian with a question mark. Elsewhere GELB (1969, 177) accepts also a first person singular **annaku* with geminated *-nn-*, reconstructed by him from the later Assyrian

^ʔ*annuku*. The original *-ḥ-*, possibly going back to **-ḥ- < -k-*, vanished very early in some Hamito-Semitic languages since it does not occur in Egyptian, where we find *j-n-n* (reconstructed as **anīnu* or **janann(a)/janan* by KAMMERZELL 1991, 201, cf. SATZINGER 1991, 121, 127) going back to **^ʔVnVn < *^ʔVnnVn < *^ʔVnḥVn* or rather to **^ʔVnVnn < *^ʔVnVḥn*, cf. Coptic *anon*. Cf. also later Semitic ^ʔ*-n-n*, e.g. Babylonian Talmudic Aramaic and Mandaic (BARTH 1913, 6).

In several Arabic dialects we find forms with *-na*, e.g. *naḥnā* is registered early in Christian Arabic (BLAU 1966, 134) and by Ibn Ḥaldūn (NÖLDEKE in ZDMG 38, 420) and today it occurs e.g. in the region of Oran and in Libya (MARÇAIS 1977, 189), in Benghazi (PANETTA 1943, 123), in Damascus (BARTH 1913, 7), in the dialect of the Negev Bedouins (BLANC 1971). BLAU (*op.cit.*) says that this form presumably originated by adjustment to the pronominal suffix *-nā* (cf. NÖLDEKE 1904, 27, note 6). There is, however, a question of relative chronology not only in Arabic but in Semitic and probably also in Hamito-Semitic in general. Since there is *na-* in the first person plural of the prefix conjugation nobody denies that there is a genetic connection between the prefix, the suffix and a part of the independent (^ʔ*a*)*naḥnV*. It is better to assume that originally there was both *-n-a* and *-n-u* since we also have prefixed *nu-*. Therefore it is highly probable that Arabic dialects having forms like *naḥna-*, *neḥna*, *niḥna* (cf. PROCHAZKA 1918, 66) i.e. with final *-a* retain an archaism, as was already suggested by BARTH (1913, 7). Actually among Arabic dialects Classical Arabic is exceptional in having *-u*, and though this is also certainly an archaism (cf. Hebrew *naḥnū/ʔanaḥnū*), it does not exclude the existence of other archaisms in other dialects. E.g. in Christian and Jewish Baghdadi dialects (BLANC 1964, 60) there is *niḥna* (possibly already in Christian Arabic of the first millennium—cf. BLAU 1966, 134), also in some Ṣaʿdah dialects (BEHNSTEDT 1987, 66), in Daḥīna, in some Gulf dialects (QAFISHEH 1977, 159), in Mardin *neḥne* (but cf. *nāḥan* in BROCKELMANN 1908, 299, BARTH 1913, 7, h) explained by JASTROW (1978, 130) as going back to *niḥnā* though JASTROW accepts only a secondary analogical influence of *-nā*; in Sudanese Šukriyya there is *niḥna* (REICHMUTH 1983, 102), in Benghazi there is also *niḥna* (OWENS 1984, 91).

In a number of dialects we have forms without initial *na-*, e.g. *iḥna/eḥna* widespread at least in Muslim Baghdadi (ERWIN 1963, 271), Jordan, Palestine, Palmyra, Southern Lebanon, Hauran, Khabura, several Saudi Dialects (PROCHAZKA 1988, 125 *ḥin*, and *ḥina*), some Ṣaʿdah, Western Libyan (ELFITOURY 1976, 95), Jewish Tunisian (D. COHEN, 1975, 210-211), Tunis (SINGER 1984, 250) and elsewhere in the Maghreb. According to authorities such as CANTINEAU, M. COHEN and D. COHEN, the disappearance of *nV-* is probably due to dissimilation (BROCKELMANN 1908, 299; BARTH 1913, 7) but D. COHEN (1975, 211) rightly suggests that since this form is widespread not only in Arabic but also in other Semitic languages perhaps we should consider it an archaism. In my opinion, it is an archaism limited not only to Semitic, since we have Beja *henén* (cf. Syriac *ḥnan*) and also **^ʔiḥnu* and **naḥnu* can be reconstructed for Proto-Cushitic (ZABORSKI 1989 and forthcoming). The disappearance of *n-* could be due to dissimilation or haplology but if we compare ^ʔ*ana* "I" and **(^ʔa)na-ḥna* we may assume the possibility of a secondary morphological reinterpretation of the plural form which could con-

tribute to *(ʔ)na-ḥna > Vḥna, cf. BROCKELMANN 1908, 299.

Modern Arabic dialects contain some archaisms going back to Proto-Semitic which do not occur in one Arabic dialect, namely in Classical Arabic. This is one obvious argument for the view represented by a number of Arabists that Modern Arabic dialects (though certainly not all of them) go back to ancient Pre-Islamic dialects, and in the course of Arab conquests, migrations and interaction with different dialects and languages they have been merely modified, introducing various innovations but preserving some archaisms unknown to Classical Arabic.

*

REFERENCES

- AFFUSO, E. 1977. I pronomi di I e II persona in semitico, egiziano e berbero. — *Annali del Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 37, 249-281.
- BARTH, J. 1913. Die Pronominalbildung in den semitischen Sprachen. Leipzig.
- BEHNSTEDT, P. 1987. Die Dialekte der Gegend von Ša‘dah. Wiesbaden
- , & WOIDICH, M. 1985-1988. Die ägyptisch-arabischen Dialekte 1-3. Wiesbaden.
- BLANC, H. 1964. Communal dialects in Baghdad. Cambridge Mass.
- , 1970. The Arabic dialect of the Negev Bedouins. — *The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities Proceedings* IV:7, 112-150.
- , 1971. The Arabic dialect of the Negev Bedouins. — *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 4, 112-150. Jerusalem.
- BLAU, J. 1966-1967. A grammar of Christian Arabic 1-3. Louvain.
- BROCKELMANN, C. 1908. Grundriß der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen 1. Berlin.
- , 1916. Semitische Sprachwissenschaft. Berlin.
- CANTINEAU J. 1934. Le dialecte arabe de Palmyre. Beyrouth.
- , 1936. Études sur quelques parlers nomades d'Orient. — *AIEO* 2, 1-118; 3, 1-121.
- , 1946. Les parlers arabes du Hōrān. Paris.
- CASTELLINO, G. R. 1962. The Akkadian personal pronouns and verbal system in the light of Semitic and Hamitic. Leiden.
- COHEN, D. 1963. Le dialecte arabe ḥassānīya de Mauritanie. Paris.
- , 1975. Le parler arabe des juifs de Tunis. The Hague.
- DIAKONOFF, I. M. 1988. Afrasian languages. Moscow.
- DIEM, W. 1973. Skizzen jemenitischer Dialekte. Beirut.
- DOLGOPOLSKIY, A. B. 1984. On personal pronouns in the Nostratic languages. — *Linguistica et Philologica. Gedenkschrift für Björn Collinder*. Eds. O. GSCHWANTLER & K. RÉDEI & H. REICHERT, 65-111. Wien.
- , 1988. On etymology of pronouns and classification of the Chadic languages. — Y. L. ARBEITMAN, *Fucus - A Semitic/Afrasian Gathering in Remembrance of Albert Ehrman*, 201-220. Amsterdam.
- ELFITOURY, A. A. 1976. A descriptive grammar of Libyan Arabic. (Diss.) Georgetown University Washington D.C.
- ERWIN, W. M. 1963. A short reference grammar of Iraqi Arabic. Washington.
- FISCHER, W. & JASTROW, O. (eds.) 1980. Handbuch der arabischen Dialekte. Wiesbaden.
- FLEISCH, H. 1968. Sur les pronoms personnels en arabe classique. — *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 44:6, 65-73.
- , *Traité de philologie arabe* II. Beyrouth.
- , 1974. Études d'arabe dialectal. Beyrouth.
- GELB, I. 1969. Sequential reconstruction of proto-Akkadian. Chicago.
- GREENMAN, J. 1979. The Arabic dialect of the Central Yamani Tihāmah. — *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik* 3, 47-61.
- HODGE, C. T. 1969. Afroasiatic pronoun problems. — *International Journal of American Linguistics* 35, 366-376.

- HOLE, C. 1990. Gulf Arabic. London.
- HOPKINS, S. 1984. Studies in the grammar of Early Arabic. Oxford.
- JASTROW, O. 1978. Die mesopotamisch-arabischen Qəltu-Dialekte. Wiesbaden 1978.
- , 1979. Zur arabischen Mundart von Mossul. — *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik* 2, 36-75.
- JIHA, M. Kh. 1964. Der arabische Dialekt von Bišmizzīn (Libanon). Münster.
- KAMMERZELL, F. 1991. Personalpronomina und Personalendungen im Altägyptischen. — *Afrikanistische Arbeitspapiere*, Sondernummer, 177-203.
- KHALAFALLAH, Abdelghany A. 1969. A descriptive grammar of Sa'īdi Egyptian Colloquial Arabic. The Hague.
- MARÇAIS, Ph. 1977. Esquisse grammaticale de l'arabe maghrébin. Paris.
- NÖLDEKE, Th. 1897. Zur Grammatik des classischen Arabisch. (Repr.) Darmstadt 1963.
- , 1904. Beiträge zur semitischen Sprachwissenschaft. Strassburg.
- OWENS, J. 1984. A short reference grammar of Eastern Libyan Arabic. Wiesbaden.
- PANETTA, E. 1943. L'arabo parlato a Bengasi II. Roma.
- PRASSE, K. G. 1972. Manuel de grammaire touarègue I. Copenhague.
- PROCHAZKA, Th. 1981. The Shi'ī Dialects of Bahrain. — *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik* 6, 16-55.
- , 1987. Remarks on the spoken Arabic of Zabīd. — *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik* 17, 58-68.
- QAFISHEH, H. A. 1977. A short reference grammar of Gulf Arabic. Tucson.
- , 1992. Yemeni Arabic reference grammar. Kensington M.D.
- RABIN, C. 1951. Ancient West-Arabian. London.
- REICHMUTH, S. 1983. Der arabische Dialekt der Šukriyya im Ostsudan. Hildesheim.
- ROSENHOUSE, J. 1984. The Bedouin Arabic dialects. Wiesbaden.
- , 1982. Some Beduīn dialects in the North of Israel. — *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik* 7, 23-47.
- SABUNI, A. 1980. Laut- und Formenlehre des arabischen Dialekts von Aleppo. Frankfurt a. M.
- SATZINGER, H. 1991. Structural analysis of the Egyptian independent pronouns. — *Proceedings of the Fifth International Hamito-Semitic Congress 1987* 2, 121-135. Ed. H. MUKAROVSKY. Wien.
- SINGER, H-R. 1984. Grammatik der arabischen Mundart der Medina von Tunis. Berlin.
- SODEN, W. von 1952. Grundriss der akkadischen Grammatik. Roma.
- WOIDICH, M. 1979. Zum Dialekt von il-ʿAwāmra in der östlichen Šarqiyya (Ägypten). Teil I: Einleitung, grammatische Skizze und Volkskundliches. — *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik* 2, 76-99.
- ZABORSKI, A. 1989. Cushitic independent pronouns. — *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies 1984* 2, 649-672. Ed. Taddese BEYENE. Addis Abeba.
- , 1991. The position of Arabic within the Semitic dialect continuum. — *Proceedings of the Colloquium on Arabic Grammar*, 365-375. Eds. K. DÉVÉNYI, T. IVÁNYI. Budapest.
- , forthcoming: Questions about Hamito-Semitic pronouns. Paper sent for the *International Congress on Hamito-Semitic Linguistics*, Moscow 1994. Preliminary version presented at the meeting of the Committee on Oriental Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow on February 23rd 1994 appearing in the *Proceedings of the Polish Academy of Sciences*, Cracow (Sprawozdania z Posiedzeń Komisji Naukowych PAN, Oddział w Krakowie).