Linguistics

SEMANTIC SHIFTS IN THE LEXICAL FIELD OF TASTE IN GEEZ

The present contribution¹ deals with the semantic shifts in the lexical field of taste, based on the synchronic and diachronic analysis of taste terms of Geez (Old Ethiopic). The preliminary discussion concerns the main features of the lexical field of taste (in comparison to the lexical field of colour) and factors influencing its evolution. The first part contains a list of Geez roots used to describe various shades of taste,² along with a short discussion of their semantics in Geez and with etymological data. In the second part of the paper, the semantic developments attested in the analyzed roots are summarized. For the typological evaluation of the collected data a similar investigation on the material of Mongolian, Turkic and Indo-European languages carried out by I. Gruntov (ms.) and the relevant parts of a work on semantic shifts by M. Razuvaev (2004) were used.

Some remarks on the semantic structure of the lexical field in question are necessary. In the course of the investigation a strong similarity between the lexical fields of taste and colour has been observed (a research of the Geez colour terms has been carried out by the present author, see Bulakh forthcoming). This is by no means surprising, since tastes and colours have much in common, being sensory experiences, perceived by organs of taste and vision respectively. Both taste and colour concepts are expressed mostly by adjectives and by verbs of state. Both colour and taste names constitute structured systems, whose core consists of so-called basic terms and whose peripheral zone may be expanded through adding new members with the help of certain derivational devices (for colours, see the seminal work by Berlin and Kay

---

¹ The research is carried out within the framework of the project «Semantic shifts in the languages of the world», supported by the RFBR, grant # 03-06-08133a; for the general description of the project, see ZALIZNIAK 2001 [for the list of abbreviations used in this article see p. 349]. I would like to express sincere gratitude to my teacher L. Kogan, who carefully read and corrected the preliminary version of the paper. I am thankful to I. Gruntov and M. Razuvaev for their comments and improvements. Special thanks go to D. Nosnitsin, who provided me with some Geez sources. Needless to say, all possible mistakes are my own responsibility.

² Terms with meaning ‘insipid, tasteless’ are considered here too: although, strictly speaking, they do not refer to any kind of taste, they doubtlessly belong to the lexical field of taste.

1969; for tastes, see Gruntov, ms.). For both fields, the concept of prototype is crucial, that is, of an object that normally represents the best sample of the designated quality (for colour terms, see Wierzbicka 1996:160, 287–334). Thus, comparative constructions are typical for colour names, as well as for taste names, e. g., *black as soot*, *sweet as honey* etc. The prototypes are frequently involved in the semantic developments taking place in both fields. Their designations can be used to form new colour or taste names; and vice versa, lexemes with semantics of colour or taste may derive names for their prototypes. For colours, the process is well-known (cf. such English terms as *lemon-coloured* or *saffron-coloured*). Similar derivative strategy is attested in the lexical field of taste. Words denoting salty taste usually go back to the names of its prototype, salt (Gruntov, ms.; Razuvaev 2004:114f.). For some terms, the connection with a certain object can only be traced etymologically. Thus, Russian *пряный* ‘spiced, spicy, hot’ is derived from *перец* ‘pepper’ (Vasmer 341). The reverse process, that is, of naming prototypes after their taste qualities, is also attested, cp., for instance, Arb. *ḥummāḍ* — ‘oseille’ (BK I 493), ‘sorrel’ (Lane 645) < *ḥamaḍa* ‘être acide’ (BK I 492, Lane 644).

Another factor influencing the semantic developments in the names of colours and tastes is the connotations. Colour names and taste names often possess strong positive or negative associations and demonstrate them not only in their usage, but in the semantics of their derivatives and/or of their cognates as well. However, the taste names are more directly related to the evaluative meanings, which are in several cases included into the core of their semantics. It is obvious that the pragmatical necessity of a positive or negative evaluation of a kind of taste is higher than that of the evaluation of a colour: tastes constitute essential characteristics of food and drink and give us important information on the quality of the objects to be defined. Therefore, the primary classification of tastes will divide them into two classes: «good» ones, that is, signaling that the food/drink can be consumed, and «bad» ones, that is, informing of a danger of poisoning (see Razuvaev 2004:122f., Gruntov, ms., Viberg 1984:152–155).

The next point of similarity between taste and colour terms is the existence of certain objects that usually can be qualified by a limited number of taste or colour terms, and that slightly change the meaning of the terms in question. It has been observed that colour terms lose their direct meaning when applied to certain objects. Thus, the French colour term *blanc* ‘white’, when applied to wine, does not refer to literally white wine, but rather to a yellowish one: it is the opposition between two types, *vin rouge* vs. *vin blanc*, that is important in this case. It is evident that colour terms, when used not to describe an object, but rather to classify it, can alter their reference and hence, need special treatment.

Taste terms can also sometimes classify certain items of food/drink, and can then be used in a new meaning. A well-known case is the designation of

two kinds of water: river (drinkable) vs. sea (undrinkable) water are referred to in many languages with the help of taste names, which, however, experience a certain change of meaning in the application. Drinkable water can be described with a term originally meaning ‘sweet’ (cf. English *sweet water*, German *Süßwasser*, cf. also Arb. *ḥulw-* ‘doux, sucré’, BK I 484, which can be a qualifier to water, *māʔ-un ḥulw-un*, ‘sweet (drinkable) water’; see also Gruntov, ms., Razuvaev 2004:121f.). Although Gruntov argues that river water is indeed perceived as sweet when tasted immediately after salty water, it cannot be denied that an average English speaker calling the water sweet hardly refers to a taste similar to that of sugar. In Semitic languages, taste terms denoting a pleasant taste (without definite reference to a specific taste) are often employed to denote this kind of water. Thus, in Arabic drinkable water is frequently designated as *māʔ-un ʕadb-un* (BK II 198, Lane 1981), whereas the root *ʕdb* conveys the idea of pleasant, excellent (but not necessarily sweet) taste: e. g., the expression *ʔal-ʔaʕḏabāni*, lit. ‘the two most sweet things’, refers to saliva and wine (Lane 1083). In Tigrinya, sweet water can be described as *ṭəsum* ‘tasty, savoury’ (see I.9). Another example of classification with the help of taste terms is the nomination of two types of dough — leavened vs. unleavened — with adjectives whose primary meanings are ‘sour’ and ‘insipid’ respectively, cf. Russian *пресный* ‘insipid; unleavened (dough, bread)’, see also I.1. At the same time, another strategy, employing primary meaning ‘sweet’ to denote unleavened bread may be found as well (see, for instance, I.7).

I. GEEZ LEXEMES USED TO DEFINE THE VARIETIES OF TASTES.

1. *bəhiʔ* ‘vinegar, acid’ (LGz. 90), ‘acidus, acer’ (LLA 498)

The adjective is derived from the verb *bəhʔa* ‘to be fermented, ferment, turn sour’ (LGz. 90, LLA 498). Thus, the root primarily denotes the chemical process, fermentation, which is usually associated with sour taste (see II.2). The adjective *bəhiʔ* is normally applied to various kinds of liquids subject to the process of fermentation: *ʔəmənna bəhiʔ wayn wa-ʔəmənna bəhiʔ mes* (Num. 6:3) ‘from sour (fermented) wine and sour (fermented) mead’, to render Gr. *óxos ex oínou kaí óxos ek sikera* ‘vinegar of wine and vinegar of cider’. However, it could be applied as a purely taste adjective: *wa-nāʔta məsla ḥamla bəhiʔ təballəsu* (Ex. 12:8) ‘and they shall eat unleavened bread with sour herbs’ where the genitive construction *ḥamla bəhiʔ*, lit. ‘the herbs of the sour’ is used to render Gr. *pikrídón* ‘bitter herbs’, from *pikrós* ‘bitter’.

The term has no convincing etymology outside Ethiopian Semitic. Within the Ethiopian Semitic group, verbs with identical or related semantic and similar formal appearance (although demonstrating no regular correspondence) can be found. Formally, they reflect two consonantal roots:

1) *bḥk*:

Tna. *bāḥaḳʷä*, *baḥaḳʷä* ‘to be leavened (dough), to rise, to ferment (batter), become fermented’, *bəḥuḳ* ‘leavened (dough), dough, paste; leaven, ferment, fermented batter; fig. lazy, weak person’ (KT 1105).

2) *bk(k)*:

Amh. *bokka* ‘to ferment (batter); to become rancid (butter); to become thick and sticky (mud used to plaster the walls of a house); to be ready for use (traditional ink)’ (K 923), *buho*, *buko*, *bəho* ‘fermented dough for making dabbo-bread’ (ibid. 855);

Gur. Cha. Gyt. *bʷäka*, Eža Gog. *bʷäkka*, Enm. *boka*, Wol. *boke*, Muh. Msq. Sod. *bokka*, End. *bokkā*, Sel. *bökke*, Zw. *bohū* ‘ferment’ (LGur. 135).

The most plausible solution is to regard these Ethiosemitic terms as loanwords from various Cushitic lexemes meaning ‘to ferment’ (Oromo, Highland East Cushitic) or ‘to rot, stink’ (Agaw, Saho), possibly with contamination of these two roots (the process of rotting, decaying is also frequently associated with sour taste, see II.2):

Burji *boh-aaw-* ‘ferment’, *boh-ees-* ‘ferment’ (Hud 181); Kambata *buk-EEK-* ‘ferment’, *buk-ees-* ‘ferment’ (ibid. 311); Oromo *bukoo* ‘dough, batter’ (Gragg 65; according to Sasse 42, borrowed into Burji *bukk-aaw-* ‘be kneaded’, *bukk-ays-* ‘knead’);

Quara *bōhū* ‘faulen, stinken’ (Reinisch 1885:42); Saho *bah* ‘faulen, stinkend werden’ (Reinisch 1890:72); possibly borrowed into Ethiosemitic with reduplication: Gez. *baḫʷbaḫʷa* etc. ‘decay, become putrid’ (LGz. 96, LLA 517); Tna. *baḥbəḥe* ‘to stink, give off a bad, unbearable odor (goats in the rutting season, man); to pour, pour out brusquely, to flow vigorously, gush out; to splash, splatter, sprinkle (water) here and there’ (KT 1106).

2. *lāsuh* insipid, flavourless, tasteless, ineffective, used up, worn-out’, *lašə* ‘be insipid, be unseasoned, be tasteless, lose its saltiness, be flavorless, be ineffective, be inefficient, be harmless, be nonsense, be used up, be worn-out, blunder, fail (strength)’, *lašə* ‘insipidity, folly’ (LGz. 318, LLA 38).

This root is used to designate lack of taste; figuratively it is used to denote the absence of some important ingredient. In the contexts quoted in LLA 38 it is opposed to the quality of saltiness: *wa-?amma-ssa dəw lašə ba-mənt ?ənka yəḳassəməwo* (Matth. 5:13) ‘but if the salt becomes insipid, with what will they return taste to it?’, *dəw za-?afšamo la-ləsuh* (LLA 38) ‘salt that has given taste to the tasteless’, *lašəta nafsəya ḳəsəmi ba-dəw* (Grohmann 1919 168) ‘make the insipidity of my soul salty with salt’. A passage in the Book of Sirach demonstrates both the original meaning of taste and the figurative meaning ‘ineffective, lacking smth. important’: *wa-za-ssa yənabbəb ba-kama rakaba yālassəḥ rə?əso wa-?albo mogasa ḳālu; wəsta ?afuhomu la-?abdān ləsuh* [v. *yəlassəḥ*] *nagar* (Sir. 20:19) ‘and this one is speaking as he has

found, he is making himself ineffective, and there is no blessing of his voice; the speech is insipid in the mouth of the stupid people'; *wa-wəsta ʔafūhu la-ʔabd yəlassəḥ ʔamsāl* (Sir. 20:20) 'and the proverb is insipid in the mouth of the stupid'. At the same time, Dillmann quotes a passage where the adjective is obviously used in a purely figurative meaning, without any reference to taste qualities: *ləsuḥa ḥayl* 'lacking force' (referring to Satan) (LLA 38). The root is also used several times in contexts with the noun *məkr* 'judgment, understanding' (often associated with the taste of salt, see II.5): *təlassəḥ məkromu la-ʔabibān* (Jes. 19:11, see LLA 37) 'the wisdom of the wise men loses its savour'.

The above quoted passages from Sirach demonstrate the definitely negative connotations of the root. Still, the verb *ʔalsəḥa* (causative to *lašəḥa*), used in sense 'to render ineffective', may be applied to such objects as poison (*ʔalsəḥ həməza za-kaʔawa kətāli* 'make ineffective the poison that the murderer poured'), devils (*ʔəgziʔabḥer yālsəḥkəmu ʔo-ʔagānənt* 'let the God make you ineffective, oh devils') or fetters (*ba-hāymānota ziʔahu ʔalsəḥa kʔəllo mawāḳəḥtiḥu* 'with his faith he loosened all his fetters', *ibid.* 38).

Another question is the possibility of a connection between the meanings 'insipid' and 'smack the lips, chew saliva' (LGz. 318), which Leslau considers to belong to a homonymous verb *lašəḥa*, while Dillmann quotes it under the same entry as *lašəḥa* 'to be insipid' (LLA 37). The only passage quoted by Dillmann for this meaning is Sir. 34:16: *wa-bəlāʔ kama bəʔəsi ʔabib za-šarʔu laka; ʔi-təlsəḥ ʔənza təmaššər kama ʔi-tāšləʔo la-biṣəka* 'and eat as a wise man that which they placed before you; don't smack your lips when you are chewing lest you revolt your neighbour'. Dillmann reconstructs the meaning 'saliva' as the primary semantic component of the root, deriving from it the verbal meaning 'to have saliva in mouth, to make noise with saliva', on the one hand, and the attributive meaning 'to resemble the taste of saliva, to be tasteless, insipid', on the other hand. Doubtlessly, this conjecture is suggested by a similar semantic shift attested for the Proto-Semitic root **tpl* 'to spit' (Sam. *tpl* 'to spit', Tal 959; Arb. *tafala* 'cracher (une salive fine)', *tafl-*, *tufl-*, *tufāl-* 'cracat de salive fine; écume', BK I 201; Mhr. *təfūl/yətuḥfəl/yəḥfəl* 'to spit', *təfyōl* 'spit, saliva', JM 400; Jib. *tḥəl/yḥfəl/yḥfəl* 'to spit'; *tḥəl* 'spit, saliva', JJ 269; Hrs. *təfōl* 'to spit', *təfēll/təfeyōl* 'spittle, saliva', JH 126)³ whose Hebrew reflex has the meaning 'insipid': *tāpēl* 'ungesalzenes, Fades' (HALAT 1634, cf. *ḥayēʔāḳēl tāpēl mibbəlī-melaḥ*, Job 6:6, 'can that which is tasteless be eaten without salt?'), also attested in a figurative meaning 'useless, ineffective' (*nəbīʔayik ḥāzū lāḳ šāwʔ wəḥāpēl*, Lam 2:14, 'your prophets have seen for you useless and tasteless things').

³ The possibility of a connection with such meanings as 'slime', 'lime', 'to paste', as well as 'to slander' and 'to talk nonsense' requires a deeper study and will not be discussed here.

Needless to say, this semantics corresponds exactly to that of the Geez root *lsh*. Thus, we are justified to postulate a semantic shift ‘to spit’ > ‘to have the taste of saliva, to be insipid’, with possible intermediate meaning ‘saliva’ (which is missing in the Geez root *lsh*, but is attested for the reflexes of the root *tpl in Arabic, Mehri and Jibbali).

The only etymological link for this root, an equation with Arabic *salīḫ*- ‘insipide, qui n’a aucun goût’, *salāḫat*- ‘absence de goût d’un mets insipide’ (BK I 1121, Lane 1404), with metathesis, has been suggested by Praetorius (1890:369).

3. *maṣarṣir* ‘sweet, sweet-tasting, honey-sweet’ (LGz. 327, LLA 207).

This term is derived from the noun *maṣār*, *maṣar* ‘honey’ (LGz. 326), using a pattern with reduplication of the last two radicals (the same adjective pattern is attested in Geez, e. g., in *ḥamalmil* ‘green’ < *ḥaml* ‘vegetation’, LGz. 233, or *damanmin* ‘dark, obscure’ < *damanā* ‘cloud’, LGz. 135; for its usage in Semitic, see Barth 1967:218).

Honey as a prototype for sweet taste is, of course, widely used in the languages of the world (see Gruntov, ms.). An example of a taste name derived from the word for honey can be found in Akkadian: *dašpu* ‘sweet’ SB, NB (CAD D 120), ‘honigsüß’ (AHw. 165) < *dīšpu* ‘honey’ from OA, OB on (CAD D 161), ‘Honig’ (AHw. 173). In Geez, the derivative *maṣarṣir* is obviously used as an independent taste adjective ‘sweet’: e. g., in *māya sarḫ maṣarṣira sətay* (Prov. 9:17, see LLA 207), ‘water of theft is sweet for drinking’, where the Geez adjective is rendering Gr. *glukerós* ‘sweet’. Its belonging to the lexical field of taste is also testified by the opposition to *marir* ‘bitter’: *zəntu ʔarʔaya la-wəḥuda sabʔ marira wa-maṣarṣira* (Hen. 69:8), ‘this one showed the sons of men the bitter and the sweet’.

The term can be also applied to sounds with positive evaluation: *yāred maṣarṣira kāl* (Grohmann 1919:76) ‘Yārēd, sweet of voice’, *wa-baʔənta kāla māṣārṣir za-surāfel* (ibid. 259) ‘and because of the sweet voice of Seraphim’.

The noun *maṣar ‘honey’ is widely used in other Ethiosemitic languages, although only in Tigrinya is the taste meaning ‘sweet’ also attested:

Tna. *māṣar* ‘honey; sweet, good’, *māṣarä* ‘to be sweet, be like honey’ (KT 477).

Note also a further meaning development in Tigrinya: *ʔamṣarä* ‘to make sweet; to produce honey’ > ‘to be good for, be becoming, to suit, become one (ornament one is wearing)’, e. g., in the following context: *nəzu säbʔay šəlmat bəzuḥ yäməṣərällu* ‘this person’s ornate [dress] becomes him very well’ (ibid.).

Tgr. *maṣar* ‘honey’ (LH 135).

Amh. *mar* ‘honey’ (K 173).

Gur. Gog. *mʷär* ‘beeswax’ (LGur. 417), Enm. End. *maʔar*, Cha. Gyt. *mar*, Gog. *mʷär* ‘beeswax’ (ibid.).

Probably Har. *mār* ‘earwax’ (LHar. 110) goes back to the same root, with the semantic development ‘wax’ (cf. Gurage, and below, Hebrew) > ‘earwax’.

Outside Ethiosemitic languages, a likely cognate in Hebrew is attested, *yašar* ‘Honigwabe’ (HALAT 404). The semantic correspondence is all the more convincing in view of the meaning ‘beeswax’ attested in Gurage languages.

See further LGur. 386 (Gur., Gez., Tgr., Tna., Amh., Har.), LHar. 110 (Har., Gez., Tgr., Tna., Amh., Gur.).

4. *maḍiḍ* ‘acid, sour, angry, ill-tempered, rapacious’ (LGz. 330, LLA 229), *məduḍ* ‘fermented, sour’ (LGz. 330), *maḍḍa*, *maḍaḍa* ‘ferment, be acid, be sour’ (LGz. 330).

Of these lexemes, only the first is given in LLA. The latter two, although quoted in Grébaut 118f., are not provided with any textual reference. However, we can safely postulate the taste meaning ‘sour, acid’ for the term *maḍiḍ*, provided by such examples as *wa-ʔi-yəkawwən mašiša ʔallā lalla-gesamu yəsenni* ‘and it [wine] became not sour, on the contrary, it became better as each new morning appeared’ (Budge 1906:20 [text], 50 [translation]); *wayə-farri fəre maḍiḍ* (Jes. 18:5) ‘and the sour [grape] brings fruits’; *bəḥiʔ maḍiḍ* ‘sour acidity’ (LLA 229). The adjective is also attested in a figurative meaning ‘angry, ill-tempered’: *tak^wəlāt marirān wa-maḍiḍān* ‘bitter and sour wolves’ (corresponding to Gr. *lúkoī drimeis kaī pikroī*) (ibid.).

In Tigrinya and Amharic we find exact phonetic correspondences, demonstrating identical semantics as well:

Tna. (both non-palatalized and palatalized variants are attested): *mäšiš* ‘sour, bitter, tart, acid; vinegar’, *mäsäšä* ‘to turn sour, get sour’ (KT 536); *mäččäčä* ‘to turn sour (food), to go bad (food)’; *mäččäč bälä* ‘to become moldy (hay, etc. because it was not exposed to sun and air after getting wet)’ (ibid. 529).

The primary meaning ‘to be sour’ is illustrated, for instance, by applications of the root to sour mead: *mes mäšišu* ‘the mead has turned sour’ or to the skin of a citrus fruit: *məššaš* ‘the bitter or sour white inner skin of an orange or citrus fruit’. One should also note the figurative meanings in Tigrinya, such as ‘sour-tempered’ for *mäšiš* ‘sour’; ‘sharp-tongued woman, termagant’ for *mäššaš* (fem. of *mäšiš*); ‘irony, sarcasm’ for *məššät* ‘sourness’. An expression ‘sour mouth’ is used to refer to a harshly-speaking person: *ʔafu mäšiš zə-konä* ‘one who speaks harshly, bitterly, sharp-tongued person’, lit. ‘the one who had a sour mouth’ (ibid. 536).

Amh. (both reflexes with *d* > *t* and *d* > *s* are attested): *mättiṭ* ‘sour, vinegar, acid’ (K 361), *mättäṭä* ‘to ferment (batter), to turn sour, become sour, acid; to get angry’ (ibid. 360); *mäšiš* ‘sour’, *mäšaša* ‘vinegar, lemon, bean-flour paste’ (ibid. 370).

The examples attested in Kane’s dictionary demonstrate not only the meaning ‘to ferment, to turn sour’, but also ‘to become thick, stiff, hard’: *liṭu mättäṭä* ‘the batter fermented’; *səga mättäṭä* ‘the meat became stiff, hard’;

kuslu mättätä ‘the wound healed’; *ṣaybu mättätä* ‘the ayb-cheese turned sour’; *ṭälla maṭṭʿal* ‘the beer has gone sour’ (ibid. 361). The meaning ‘to dry up’ seems to be semantically related (however, it can also be derived from ‘to suck, suck up’, see below, or, most likely, appear as a result of the contamination of both roots ‘to be sour’ and ‘to suck’): *wəha mättʿal* ‘the water has almost dried up’; *čəḵaw mättätä* ‘the mud started to dry out’; *mättata* ‘almost dry, nearly dried up; lean, scraggy, wizened (man, animal); sunken cheeked, having drawn or haggard features’ (ibid. 361).

Outside Ethiopian Semitic, we find an Arabic term with a regular phonetic correspondence (suggesting a PS root *mṣṣ*) and a practically identical meaning:

Arb. *maḍaḍ*- ‘lait aigre’ (BK II 1119, Lane 2720), *mumidḍ*- ‘qui pique, qui picote (vinaigre, collyre)’ (BK II 1119), *maḍḍ*- ‘qui cause de la douleur, du picotement (p.ex. collyre à l’œil, vinaigre à la bouche)’, *maḍḍa* ‘faire du mal, piquer, picoter (se dit de l’action du collyre sur l’œil ou d’un vinaigre trop fort, etc., sur la bouche)’ (ibid. 1118).

Note that the Arabic root is usually used in the figurative meaning ‘to hurt, to cause pain’: *maḍḍa* ‘affecter quelqu’un, lui causer de la peine (se dit des chagrins)’ (ibid.), ‘he suffered, or experienced, pain’ (Lane 2719). The semantic development is obvious, the verb originally denoting the effect of tasting an acid food, cf. such context as *maḍḍa l-ḫall-u fā-hu* ‘the vinegar burned his mouth’ (ibid. 2720). The meaning became gradually applicable to other sensory experiences, e. g., tactile in *ṭal-kuḥl-u yumidḍu l-ṣayn-a* ‘the collyrium pains the eye (or burns the eye)’ (ibid.; see II.3), and, finally, was broadened into ‘to cause pain’, without any association with senses of perception, for instance in *raṣul-un maḍḍ-u ḍ-dar-b-i* ‘Homme qui frappe fort et dont les coups se font sentir’ (BK I 1118, Lane 2720), or *ṣimraṭat-un maḍḍat-un* ‘a woman who does not bear, or endure, what displeases her, or grieves her; whom a small word pains; whom a small things hurts, or annoys’ (Lane 2720). The comparison with Ethiosemitic terms justifies the claim that the taste semantic is primary in this case, whereas the figurative meaning demonstrates the strong negative connotations of the root. Cf. also *muḍāḍ*- ‘eau très-salée’ (BK II 1119, Lane 2720), which shows a semantic development ‘acid, sour’ > ‘having an unpleasant taste’.

In view of the Arabic cognate showing the meaning ‘to be painful, to cause pain’, a comparison with Tgr. *maṣṣa* ‘to be ill, to suffer pain, to be tormented, to mourn’ (LH 145), Gaf. *māṣṣäṣä* ‘être malade’ (LGaf. 218), Arg. *mättätä*- ‘be sick’ (LArg. 214) is possible. Note, however, that alternatively they can be compared to Jib. *müttəṣ* ‘to become ill, unhealthy’ (JJ 175), Arb. *māṣṣat*- ‘sorte de maladie d’enfants...’ (BK II 1114).

See further LGz. 331 (Gez., Arb., Hbr., Tna., Tgr., Amh.).

W. Leslau suggests a comparison to Hbr. *maṣṣā* ‘Mazze: ohne Sauerteig schnell gebackenes Fladenbrot aus Gerstenmehl u. Wasser; das aus dem nicht

verbrannten Anteil der *minhā* am Heiligtum ohne Säuerung hergestellte, den Priestern vorbehaltene Brot' (HALAT 588), pB. *maṣṣā* 'unleavened bread, esp. the bread served at the Passover meal; a hide not tanned by a process of fermentation, untanned hide' (Ja. 823). However, this comparison is far from evident, since the essential component of the Hebrew lexeme is the absence of fermentation process, that is, the opposite of the semantics of Ethiosemitic and Arabic terms. It is more justifiable to connect the Hebrew term with the Proto-Semitic root *mṣṣ 'to squeeze, press, suck':⁴

Hbr. *mīṣ* 'Pressen' (HALAT 547).

pB. *mṣy*, *māṣā* 'to squeeze, wring, esp. to wring out the blood of the bird sacrifice' (Ja. 825), *māṣaṣ* 'to press, suck; to drain' (ibid. 827).

Jud. *mūṣ* 'to suck' (ibid. 746), *mṣ* 'to suck' (ibid. 778), *māṣī* 'to wring; to suck' (ibid. 826), *māṣaṣ* 'to suck, drain; to wring, press' (ibid. 827).

JPA *mṣṣ* 'to suck' (Sokoloff 326).

Sam. *mṣyṣh* 'sucking', *mṣṣ* 'to consume' (Tal 483).

Mnd. *MṢA* 'to press, to suck out, suckle' (DM 277).

Arb. *maṣṣa* 'humer, boire petit à petit en humain; sucer' (BK II 1114).

Tgr. *maṣiṣ* 'juice, sap (of plants)' (LH 145).

Amh. *mätṭätä* 'to suck, suck clean, e.g. finer of sauce, to suckle slowly (baby); to soak up, blot up' (K 360).

Har. *mätṭäta* 'absorb liquid, suck up' (LHar. 115).

Gur. Zwy. *mätṭäṭä*, Msq. Gog. Sod. *mätṭäṭä* 'absorb liquids, suck' (LGur. 439).

Mhr. *məṣ* / *yəmṣáwṣ* / *yəmṣāṣ* 'to suck' (JM 272).

Hrs. *meṣ* / *yemṣáwṣ* / *yemṣāṣ* 'to suck' (JH 91).

Jib. *miṣṣ* / *yəmṣéṣ* / *yúmmuṣ* 'to suck' (JJ 175).

Soq. *mṣṣ* 'lécher', *šimṣaṣ* 'qui suce' (LS 249).

See further LHar. 115 (Har., Tna., Arb., Hbr.), LGur. 439 (Gur., Arb., Hbr., Tna., Amh., Har.).

5. *mālḥ* 'seasoned with salt, salty, which is tasty' (LGz. 343, LLA 146), *malləḥa* 'season with salt, make tasty' (LGz. 343), *tamalḥa*, *tamalləḥa* passive, 'be salty' (ibid., LLA 146), *məlḥ* 'salt, taste, savor, intellect, insight, knowledge' (LGz. 343), 'sapor, judicium, scientia' (LLA 146).⁵

mālḥ 'salty' is quoted by Dillmann with only one example of usage, in a genitive construction *bāḥra mālḥ* 'sea of the salty' (ibid.). Obviously, the adjective is rarely used (and probably was formed under the influence of Arb. *mālīh*-, see below). However, the root itself is well attested, its association with the object 'salt' is clear (although no noun 'salt' is attested among derivatives of this root: the common word for salt in Geez, as in other Ethiosemi-

⁴ For a parallel semantic development s. I.7, PS *mtk.

⁵ Note that Leslau quotes various spellings of the word (such as *malḥ*, *mālḥā*, *məlḥ*) whereas LLA has *mālḥā*, although in the Dillmann's edition of Deuteronomy the variant *məlḥ* is used (DILLMANN 1853:376).

tic languages, is *dew*, see LGz. 565), and in most of passages *dew* ‘salt’ is added as a complement of the verb, e. g., *kʷəllu ba-šew yətmallāh* (LLA 146) ‘everything is salted with salt’. One should note the doubtlessly positive connotations of the root, so that metaphorically it can even refer to a saint: *hallo yəwaqqə? ?əm-zātti bə?əsit hətata šew yətmallāh bottu kʷəllu šālam* (Guidi 1909:263) ‘from this woman a grain of salt will emerge with which the whole world will be salted’. Another evidence of the positive connotations of the root *mlh* is its derivative *məlh* ‘intellect, insight’, which, according to LLA 146, is an antonym of *lašhat* ‘insipidness, dullness’ (see I.1). It is used in Deut. 32:28: *?əsmā həzb həgulāna məkr ?əmmuntu wa-?əlbomu məlha wa-haymānota* ‘because they are people deprived of understanding, and they have no insight and no faith’; the same passage with slight modifications (*?əsmā həzb həgulāna məkr ?əmmuntu wa-?əlbomu məlh wa-?i-hāymanot*) is quoted in Grébaut 74. The presence in Arabic of an exact semantic and phonetic correspondence *milh-* (see below) brings into question the possibility of a borrowing from Arabic; one should at least suspect an Arabic influence, causing this particular semantic shift.

The root goes back to PS **mVlh-* ‘salt’:

Hbr. *melah* ‘Salz’ (HALAT 557).

Pho. *mlh* ‘salt worker’ (T 179).

Bib. *məlah* ‘salt’ (HALOT 1916).

Old. Off. Palm. *mlh* ‘salt’ (HJ 632).

Jud. *melah*, *məlah*, *milhā* ‘salt’ (Ja. 788).

Syr. *melhā* ‘sal’ (Brock. 390).

JPA *mlh* ‘salt’ (Sokoloff 309).

Sam. *mlh* ‘salt’ (Tal 468).

Mnd. *MHL* ‘to salt’ (DM 260), *mihla* ‘salt’ (ibid. 266) (with metathesis).

Ugr. *mlht* ‘salt; salted (fish/meat)’ (DUL 549).

This sequence of consonants is attested both as noun (e. g., *alp ttm kbd mlht* ‘one thousand and sixty shekels of salt’ 4.344:22; *w hms w mlht* ‘and vinegar and salt’ 1.175:6, ibid. 549) and as an adjective (*uz mrat mlht* ‘a fattened goose, salted’ 4.247:20, ibid.). The noun *mlh* is usually interpreted as ‘beauty’ (ibid. 548) and derived from the root *mlh* ‘to be salty’, the semantic shift being explained by the well-known positive connotations of the root, as well as by semantic parallels in Arabic *mlh* and in Akkadian *tābtu* (see below). However, in case of Ugaritic *mlh*, the meaning ‘beauty’ is far from evident, the only passage quoted by DUL 448 being KTU 4.17:17: *mlh krn bn d(?)* ‘the beauty(?) of the horns of the son of D’. It seems that in this fragmentary and unclear context the interpretation of *mlh* as having the original meaning ‘salt’ is at least not more improbable than that suggested in DUL.

Arb. *milh-* ‘sel’, *malaḥa* ‘saler suffisamment’ (BK II 1144), *malīḥ-* ‘salé, qui a un goût salé (eau, etc.); salé (poisson, etc)’ (ibid. 1145).

The Arabic root has strong positive connotations, expressed by such derivatives as *maluḥa* ‘être beau de visage; être beau ou bon (se dit de toute chose)’ (ibid. 1144), *mulāḥ-* ‘beau (de visage)’, *ʔamlaḥ-* ‘... plus beau; meilleur, le meilleur’ (ibid. 1145), *malīḥ-* ‘beau (de visage); beau jeune homme, bel homme; bon’ (ibid., Lane 2733), cf. also *zayn-u l-milāḥ-i* ‘ornement des beaux’, an epithet of Mohammed (BK II 1145). Two other meanings associated with the concept ‘salt’ should be noted here, namely, ‘understanding’ (*milḥ-* ‘sel; l’esprit, le piquant (d’un discours, d’une oeuvre littéraire); science; les savants’, ibid. 1144, Lane 2732), and ‘irony’ (*malḥat-* ‘bon mot ou anecdote plaisante; facétie’, BK II 1144, *mulḥat-* ‘a goodly, beautiful, pretty, or facetious, story; a bon-mot’, Lane 2733).

Mhr. *amōləḥ* ‘to salt (food)’ (JM 266).

Hrs. *melḥāt* ‘salt’ (JH 88).

Jib. *mīlaḥ* ‘to salt’, *mīdḥśī* ‘salt’ (JJ 171).

Soq. *mīlḥo* ‘sel’ (LS 243).

A possible cognate in Akkadian is *milḥu* ‘(a mineral)’ SB, NA (CAD MII 69), ‘Salpeter’ (AHw. 653). Obviously von Soden’s translation is based on his comparison of this root to Proto-Semitic **mVlḥ-*; however, since no synchronic Akkadian evidence contradicts this interpretation, it can be provisionally accepted as a not improbable one.

Tgr. *malḥa* ‘to turn sour, to ferment; to salt’ (LH 107) presents a shift of meaning allowing various explanations. The semantic development could be based on the designation of the process of preparing food: ‘to be salted, to be submitted to a process involving addition of salt’ > ‘to be fermented, to be submitted to a process involving addition of fermenting substances’. Another explanation would suggest a generalization of taste meaning ‘salty, having sharp unpleasant taste’ > ‘having unpleasant taste, salty or sour’. The first option is, however, to be preferred, since the Tigre dictionary only attests to a verbal meaning.

In view of the Arabic figurative meaning ‘to be good’, one can compare this root to Harari verb *mālaḥa* ‘choose, select, prefer by choosing’, *muluḥ* ‘chosen, better’ (LHar. 107). It is unclear, however, whether the Harari lexeme is an independent development or a borrowing from Arabic.

In Amharic, we find only a Geez loanword *mālāhe*, *mālḥ* ‘salt’ (K 143).

In view of semantic shift ‘salty’ > ‘good, beautiful’, attested in Arabic and (less probably) in Ugaritic, one cannot help mentioning Akkadian term *ṭābtu*, attested with semantics ‘goodness’ and ‘salt’: *ṭābtu* ‘Gutes, Güte, Wohltat’ Babyl., NA, lex. (AHw. 1377); *ṭābtu* ‘Salz’ OB, OA, NB, MA, NA, SB, LB, Nuzi, lex. (ibid.). Both meanings are obviously derived from verb *ṭābu* ‘to have pleasant taste; to be good’,⁶ which is widely used to express the idea

⁶ The Akkadian root goes back to well-known PS **tyb* ‘to have pleasant taste; to be good’: Ugr. *ṭb* ‘good, pure, sterling; sweet, generous; pleasant, dulcet’ (DUL 886); Hbr. *ṭōb* ‘gut’ (HALAT 355); Syr. *ṭāb* ‘bonus’ (Brock. 269); Mnd. *ṬAB*, *ṬUB* ‘to

of agreeable taste, being applied to such objects as water (according to von Soden, denoting sweet water, river water as opposed to salty, sea water: *mû tâmti mû řa-bu-tû*, ibid. 1378), wine, beer, oil, bread, fruits, sugar cane (ibid. 1378). The meaning ‘salt’ is probably developed from a more general meaning ‘that which has a pleasant taste’ or ‘that which provides a pleasant taste’; the concept of salt as a prototype of pleasant taste is widespread in the languages of the world (cf. Gruntov, ms.).

See further Brock. 390 (Syr., Arm., Hbr., Arb., Akk.), DM 266 (Mnd., Syr., Hbr., Arb., Akk.), BDB 571 (Hbr., Arb., Arm.).

6. *marir* ‘bitter’, *marara* ‘be bitter’ (LGz. 360, LLA 165).

The root is well attested in Geez, both in its primary taste meaning (*marira kona mes*, Jes. 24:9, see LLA 165, ‘the honey became bitter’; *wa-sə?ənu satya ?əmmərā ?əsmā marir māyu*, Ex. 15:23, ‘and they could not drink from Marah, because its water is bitter’) and in figurative meanings: ‘sorrowful, grievous’ (LGz. 360, e. g. *wa-tařaggāsu mota marira ba-?ənta mangəšta samāyāt*, Fries 1892 45, 64, ‘they have experienced a bitter death for the sake of the celestial kingdom’; *wa-yəbe nox ba-ķāl marir*, Hen. 65:2, ‘and Noah said in a bitter (grievous) voice’; *la-mənt řarāřka řabeya řərāřā marira wa-bəkaya*, Hen. 65:5, ‘why did you cry out to me with such bitter crying and weeping?’; *wa-marira řazana yātekkəzəwwo wa-yāmanazzəzəwwo*, Sir. 25:18, ‘they are saddening him and oppressing him by bitter grief’; *marira yəbakkəyu*, Jes. 33:7, see LLA 166, ‘they are crying bitterly’; *yəřeyyəs mawit ?əm-marār řəywat*, Sir. 30:17, ‘to die is better than the bitter life’); ‘embittered, ferocious’ (LGz. 360, e. g., *řəzb marirān*, Hab. 1:6, see LLA 165, ‘the bitter (cruel) people’; *marirāna nafs*, Jud. 18:25, see LLA 165, ‘the bitter (cruel) of soul’).

The term goes back to the well-known Proto-Semitic root **mrr* ‘to be bitter’:

Tna. *mārārā* ‘become bitter, sour’ (KT 361), *mārrir* ‘bitter, sour, pungent’ (ibid. 362).

Tgr. *marra* ‘to be bitter, to be bad’, *marir* ‘bitter; a bitter beverage; spice herbs’ (LH 113).

Amh. *mārara* ‘bitter, sour’ (K 178), *mārrārā* ‘to taste bitter, be sour or acid (green fruit); to be distasteful, unpleasant’ (ibid. 177).

Har. *mārāra* ‘be bitter’, *murur* ‘bitter’ (LHar. 111).

Gaf. (at) *mirrārā* ‘irriter, mettre en colère’ (LGaf. 217).

Arg. *mārrāra* ‘be bitter’ (LArg. 213).

Gur. Cha. Eža Muh. *mārara*, Msq. Gog. *mārara řəb*, Enm. Gyt. *marara*, End. *marārā* ‘fresh butter preserved for a long time by periodically adding spices’ (LGur. 423).

be well, good, wholesome” (DM 171); Arb. *řāba* ‘être bon; être agréable, d’un goût ou d’une odeur agréable’ (BK II 126, Lane 1900); Mhr. *řəyub* ‘to enjoy’ (JM 413), etc.

Hbr. *mārōr* ‘bitter’ (HALAT 603), pB. *mārar* ‘to be bitter’ (Ja. 847), *mārīrā* ‘bitterness, trnsf. sin’ (ibid. 843).

Off. *mrr* ‘to be bitter’, *mrr* ‘bitter’, *mrrw* ‘bitterness’ (HJ 696).

Jud. *mārar* ‘to be bitter’ (Ja. 847), *mārīr*, *mārīrā* ‘bitter’, *mārīrū*, *mārīrūtā* ‘bitterness; curse’ (ibid. 843).

Syr. *mar* ‘acerbus fuit’, *marrirā* ‘amarus’ (Brock. 400), *marrī* ‘amarum reddidit; amarus fuit’ (ibid. 402).

Sam. *mrr* ‘bitterness’, *mrrw* ‘bitter’ (Tal 488), *mryr* ‘bitter’ (ibid. 489).

JPA *mrr* ‘bitterness, bitter herb’, *mrr* ‘to make bitter’ (Sokoloff 332).

Mnd. *mura* ‘bitterness’ (DM 262f.), *mrira* ‘bitter’, *mrirta* ‘bitterness’ (ibid. 278), *MRR* ‘to be(come) bitter, afflict; to be spoiled’ (ibid. 279).

Akk. *marāru* ‘to be bitter; (with *kakku*) to prevail (said of military force)’ OB, SB, NB (CAD MI 267), ‘bitter werden, sein’ (AHw. 609), *marru* ‘bitter, brackish, biting’ Mari, MB, SB, Bogh. (CAD MI 286), ‘bitter’ (AHw. 612).

Arb. *marra* ‘être amer; dire des chose amères, désagréables’ (BK II 1083), *murr-* ‘amer’ (ibid. 1084).

Mhr. *mər* ‘bitter’ (JM 268).

Hrs. *mer* ‘bitter’ (JH 89).

Soq. *ʔimrir* ‘rendre amer’ (LS 251).

For this Proto-Semitic root, an excellent semantic analysis has been given by D. Pardee (1978). However, it is necessary to quote the attested meanings and relevant passages in the present contribution once again. One can summarize the meaning shifts attested in this root as follows:

a. Semantic shift within the lexical field of taste: broadening of the meaning ‘bitter’ > ‘bitter, sour’ (cf. Tna. *mārrir* ‘bitter, sour, pungent’, KT 362; Amh. *mārara* ‘bitter, sour’, K 178).

b. A (synesthetic?) shift ‘bitter, causing unpleasant taste sensation’ > ‘causing unpleasant (tactile?) sensation’ (applied to sun in Tna. *mārārā* ‘to be pungent; to be burning hot (sun)’, KT 361; to wind in Akkadian, *šāru marru itebbīma ebūra uṣeḫḫer* ‘a biting wind will come up and diminish the crop’, CAD MI 287). This seems to be a synesthetic development from taste to tactile terms, see II.3. However, both examples can be reinterpreted as ‘bitter’ > ‘cruel’ (see below), both wind and sun being able to be personified.

c. Semantic shift provoked by a general metaphor ‘to taste’ > ‘to experience’ (see II.4): ‘bitter’ > ‘hard, difficult to bear, harsh’ (cf. Amh. *nuro mārrārāw* ‘life was unpleasant/bitter for him’, K 177, *mārara mot* ‘bitter death’, *mārara nāgār* ‘grievous matter, affair’, ibid. 178; Jud. *mērūr* ‘em-bittering, hard labor’, Ja. 779; Sam. *mrrw* ‘bitter’: *ḥbwš mrrw ḥbwšh dḥškḥ* ‘a bitter jail is the jail of the darkness’, Tal 488; Mnd. *mura* ‘bitterness’: *ulṣnšia mura niḥuilun* ‘and there will be bitterness for women’, DM 262f.; for the application of the root in Syriac to describe torture, prison, difficult time, see Pardee 1978:269f.; see also a context combining both direct and metaphorical application of the root in Official Aramaic: *ʔm̄t ʔp zʔrr̄t? mrr̄t?*

w[ɪʃm]? ʔsyn wl? ʔʔty zy [m]ryr mn ʃnwh, Aḥiq 188, ‘I have tasted the bitter medlar and the taste is strong, but there is nothing more bitter than poverty’, HJ 696; cf. also Arb. *ʔš-un murr-un* ‘a bitter life’, *marrat ʃalayhi ʔamrār-un* ‘afflictions or calamities came upon him’, Lane 2701; for Geez, see above; a verbal realization of the same metaphor is causative ‘to make bitter’ > ‘to make difficult to bear, harsh’: Hbr. *wayəmərarū ʔet-ḥayyēhem baʃābōdā kəšā* ‘and they embittered their lives by hard labor’, Ex. 1:14; Sam. *myrr* ‘to embitter’: *whbt mrn rwh lyšḥḳ wlrḃḳh* ‘they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebecca’, Tal 488).

d. Application of the term to describe mental qualities and emotions (see II.5):

1) ‘bitter’ > ‘grievous’ (cf. Tna. *mārārä* ‘to be stricken with sadness, melancholy; to be sorry, grieve, be sad; to complain, grumble, gripe’, e. g., in *ʔamrirom bākäyula* ‘they cried bitterly for her’, KT 361f.; Tgr. *marra* ‘to be sulky’, LH 113; Amh. *mərr alä* ‘to be or become deeply grieved, very sad’, K 178; Hbr. *ʔāmārēr babbeḳī* ‘I weep bitterly’, Jes. 22:4; Syr. *mar* ‘dolui’, Brock. 400; Mnd. *MRR* ‘be grieved; to be spoiled’, DM 279; Jud. *mərar* ‘to grieve, mourn’, Ja. 847, *mārīr*, *mārīrā* ‘embittered, grieving’, ibid. 843; Sam. *mryr* ‘bitter’: *wšbʃ šbšh rbh wmryrh* ‘he cried out with a great and bitter cry’, Tal 489; cf. also Gur. Sel. *mārārä*-, Wol. *tämärärä*-, *tämarärä* ‘feel sorry for someone’, LGur. 423; for Geez, see above);

2) ‘bitter’ > ‘angry, violent, cruel’ (cf. Tna. *märrir* ‘one who only has bad words for others, crabbed, shrewish, cantankerous; inclement, harsh, severe, virulent’, KT 362; Amh. *märrärä* ‘to be angry, vexed, upset’, *yämärrärä* ‘violent’, K 177; Arg. *asmerrära* ‘irritate’, LArg. 213; Gur. Sel. Wol. *Zwy. mārärä*, Muh. Msq. Gog. Sod. *märrärä*, Cha. Enm. Gyt. *mänärä*, Eža *män-närä*, End. *mennärä* ‘be bitter, be angry’, Gog. Sod. *mərrätam*, Muh. *mərrätännä* ‘angry, furious, short-tempered’, LGur. 423; Syr. *marīr napšā* ‘malignus’, Brock. 400, cf. also the passage illustrating the meaning ‘terrible, cruel’ quoted in Pardee 1978:267f.; Sam. *mrr* ‘quarrel’, Tal 488; for Gafat, see above; cf. also the following context in Akkadian: *kīšaa martu mar-ra-tu-u-ni* [attunu] SAL.MEŠ-ku-nu DUMU.MEŠ-ku-nu DUMU.SAL.MEŠ-[ku]-nu ina muḫḫi aḫe ʔiš lu mar-ra-ku-nu ‘just as (this) gall is bitter, so may you, your wives, sons and daughters be bitter toward one another’, CAD MI 267, and the application of the same Akkadian term to the weapon: *kakkī* DN u RN *marrūtīm ukallamka* ‘I will show you the destructive weapons of Adad’, CAD MI 287; for Geez, see above);

3) the application of the root to qualify human speech probably unites synesthetic development ‘taste’ > ‘sound’ (see II.3) and metaphoric usage to describe human emotions: ‘bitter’ > ‘unpleasant, pungent, sharp (words, etc.)’ (cf. Tna. *märrir* ‘biting, sharp (words), acrimonious (debate)’, *märrir ʔalat* ‘harsh words’, *mälḥasu* (ʔafu) *märrir zə-konä säb* ‘evil-tongued fellow, harsh’, KT 362; cf. Arb. *ʔal-ḥaḳḳ-u murr-un* ‘la vérité est amère (à dire)’,

BK II 1084; *mā ʔamarra wa-mā ʔaḥlā* ‘he said not (or he did not) a bitter thing, and he said not (or he did not), a sweet thing’, Lane 2700; cf. also Hbr. *mərōrōt* ‘bittere Erfahrungen’, HALAT 603, in Job 13:26, as a complement to verb ‘write’: *kī-tiktōb ʔālay mərōrōt* ‘for you write bitter things against me’).

Besides, the root *mrr* is attested as referring to strength or courage in Ugaritic, Arabic and Modern South Arabian:

Ugr. *m-r-(r)* G ‘to strengthen’, N ‘to be strengthened’ (DUL 577f.).

Arb. *marīr*- ‘fort, robuste, solide (homme); résolution ferme et inébranlable’ (BK II 1084, Lane 2701).

Mhr. *amrīr* / *yamrīrən* / *yamrīr* / *yammrīrən* ‘to give so. courage, embolden’ (JM 268).

Hrs. *merrēt* ‘...strength’ (JH 89).

Jib. *emrēr* / *yšēmrēr* / *yšēmmər* ‘to be emboldened’, *merrōt* ‘courage’ (JJ 173).

Note also the usage of Tgr. *marir* ‘bitter’ to describe a horse hoof: ‘hard, powerful’ (LH 113), possibly also Amh. *amärrärä* ‘to make a difficult and final decision’ (K 177).

The usage of the Arabic and Tigre terms has been discussed in Pardee (1978:270–274). Pardee’s conclusion is that in both cases the meaning ‘strong’ is attested, in Tigre probably under Arabic influence. However, one cannot suspect a calque from Arabic in the case of Modern South Arabian, since, at least in the contexts quoted by Pardee for Arabic, no exact semantic identity is present. Moreover, the meaning ‘to give courage, embolden’ in Mehri and Jibbali corresponds to the meaning usually reconstructed for Ugaritic (where the verb *mr(r)* is paralleled by *brk*, ‘bless’, Pardee 1978:250f.). It seems that, contrary to Pardee, the Modern South Arabian evidence, as well as that of Arabic and (probably) Tigre, does favour the reconstruction of a verb *mrr* ‘to strengthen’ in Ugaritic.

It is tempting to consider these terms as eventually developed from the meaning ‘violent’ (derived, in its turn, from ‘bitter’, see above). However, this semantic shift would be the only one involving the loss of negative connotations of the root, and, as Pardee rightly observes (1978:275), would present a typologically unlikely semantic development. A contamination of **mrr* with **mr?* ‘man’ > ‘manly, courageous’ is not improbable.

See further LGz. 360 (Gez., Arb., Mhr., Hbr., Arm., Syr., Mnd., Akk., Tna., Tgr., Amh., Arg., Har., Gur.), LS 251 (Soq., Arb., Mhr.), LGur. 423 (Gur., Arb., Hbr., Gez., Tna., Tgr., Amh., Arg., Har.).

Note also PS **mi/ar(r)-at-*, **mirār-at-* ‘gall, gall-bladder’ (SED No. 188). While the authors of the dictionary tend to regard the two terms as belonging to homonymous roots, later connected through contamination, such a coincidence in semantics seems highly improbable; a derivation of one from another may be safely reconstructed on the Proto-Semitic level (presumably, from the taste term ‘bitter’ a name for its prototype, ‘gall-bladder’, was derived). Some of the reflexes of the noun ‘gall, gall-bladder’ have meaning

‘poison’ (Hbr.pB, Off., Warka, Dem., Syr., Mnd., see SED No. 188); this semantic development is based on the conception of bitter taste as a token of poisonous qualities (one can probably regard the bitter taste as a prototypical taste of poison).

7. *məṭuḵ* ‘sweet’, *məṭkat* ‘sweetness’ (LGz. 373, LLA 221).

This root is poorly attested in Geez. Dillmann quotes one passage where the adjective *məṭuḵ* is used in a figurative meaning as a qualifier of light (*məṭuḵ bərhān* ‘sweet light’), and one usage of the noun *məṭkat* in Jud. 9:11, where it corresponds to Gr. *glukùtés* (LLA 221).

In Ethiosemitic languages, the root is widely attested, although with considerable semantic deviations:

Tna. *mätäkä* ‘to bake the bread used in brewing beer; to dry, dry up, go dry (spring)’, *mätäka*, *mätäḵka* ‘unleavened bread baked for use in making beer; scraps of *əngēra* which are dried and used in making beer’ (KT 521f.).

Tgr. *maččaka* ‘to eat up, to end; to revile strongly’ (LH 144).

Amh. *mätäkä* ‘to be or become very thin, water-like (dough, bread); to rise (dabbo-bread), to bake an unleavened cake’ (K 355).

Har. *mičiq āša* ‘squeeze something so that it squirts’ (LHar. 103).

Gur. Wol. (a)*mčaçäkä*, Sel. *amčäčäkä* ‘milk a cow without leaving some milk for the calf; pull out completely’ (LGur. 389).

The cognates in other Semitic languages demonstrate both the meaning ‘to be sweet, of pleasant taste’ and ‘to taste, try (food, drink), to suck’. Thus, a PS root **mtḵ* ‘to taste, to suck; to be sweet, of pleasant taste’ can be reconstructed. A phonetic alternation *t > ṭ* is unproblematic and can be explained through the influence of emphatic *ḵ*:⁷

Hbr. *mtḵ* ‘süss sein, werden’ (HALAT 619), *mātōḵ* ‘süss = angenehm’ (ibid. 618).

Note that the root was applied to water that became drinkable: ... *wəlō yāḵəlū lištōt mayim mimmārā kī mārīm hēm* (Ex. 15:23) ‘and they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter’; ... *wayyašlēk ʔel-ham-mayim wa-yyimtəḵū hammāyim* (Ex. 15:25) ‘and he threw it into water and it became sweet’.

PB *mātaḵ* ‘to be sweet, palatable’, pi. ‘to sweeten, season’ (Ja. 864), *mātōḵ* ‘sweet, pleasant’ (ibid. 860), *məṭikā* ‘sweet taste; seasoning, relish; sweetmeats, delicacies; sweet drinks’ (ibid. 862).

Jud. *mətaḵ* ‘to be sweet, palatable’, pa. ‘to taste, suck’ (Ja. 864), *məṭik* ‘sweet’ (ibid. 862).

Syr. *mətaḵ* ‘suxit; sorpsit; inhalavit’ (Brock. 410).

JPA *mtḵ* ‘to suck’ (Sokoloff 338).

Sam. *mtḵ* ‘sweetness’, *hmtyḵ* ‘to make sweet’ (Tal 493).

⁷ A well-known example of such change is root **ḵtl* ‘to kill’ (Arb. *ḵtl* vs. Hbr. *ḵtl*).

Akk. *matāku* ‘to become sweet’ SB, NA (CAD MI 405), ‘süß werden, sein’ (AHw. 632), *matku* ‘sweet’ from OAkk., OB on (CAD MI 413), ‘süß’ (AHw. 633).

The root is well attested in Akkadian, its meaning can be illustrated by such passages as *kī ša dišpu ma-ti-ku-u-ni damu ša SAL.MEŠ-ku-nu... ina pī-kunu li-im-ti-iq* ‘just as (this) honey is sweet, so may the blood of your wives (and children) become sweet-tasting in your mouth’ (CAD MI 405).

The adjective *matku* is used to describe such objects as pomegranates, dates, almonds, melons, honey, milk, apples, bread (ibid. 413).

Arb. *tamaṭṭaqa* ‘goûter, essayer le goût de...; savourer quelque chose’ (BK II 1123).

Mhr. *maṭṭ* ‘sweet’, *məṭāwṭ* ‘to taste’ (JM 273).

Hrs. *maṭṭ* ‘sweet’ (JH 91).

Jib. *múṭṭək* / *yəmtéṭékən* / *yəmtéṭók* ‘to have st. sweet in your mouth to chew; to try, taste st. before swallowing it’, *miṭáyḱ* ‘sweet’ (JJ 176).

Soq. *métoḱ* ‘sucré’ (LS 242).

The semantic deviations of this root in Ethiosemitic languages remain to be explained. The range of meanings attested in this language group comprise such as ‘to be sweet’ (Gez.), ‘to be dry’ (Tna.), ‘to be non-fermented, unleavened’ (Amh., Tna.), ‘to squeeze’ (Har.), ‘to eat up’ (Tgr.), ‘to milk a cow without leaving milk for a calf’ (Gur.). One can suggest various ways of semantic evolution; naturally, the evidence from other Semitic languages should be taken in consideration. Thus, in view of the meaning ‘to suck’, attested for the root in Judaic Aramaic, Syriac and Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, one should reconstruct the meaning ‘to suck’ as early as in the Proto-Semitic. This semantics would be hardly related to the concept of sweetness, had it not been for the verbs ‘to taste’, attested in Arabic, Mehri and Jibbali: the semantic shift ‘to taste’ > ‘to be of pleasant taste, to be sweet’ is well attested (see II.2), whereas the meaning change ‘to suck’ > ‘to taste’ (or vice versa) can also be easily imagined (the specific semantic developments in Tigre and Gurage go back in all probability to the meaning ‘to suck’ as well).

Other meanings attested for the reflexes of **mtḱ* in Ethiosemitic languages (‘to be dry’, ‘to be unleavened (bread)’, ‘to squeeze’) should be grouped together, since they correspond exactly to the semantics of reflexes of another PS verb ‘to suck’, namely, **mšš* (see I.4). Therefore, we are justified in supposing that these meanings are related to each other and can be organized into a chain of semantic evolution. The meanings ‘to suck’, ‘to squeeze’ and ‘to dry up’ are connected through the common component ‘to remove liquid’ (obviously, Gurage ‘to milk a cow without leaving milk for a calf’ also belongs here, being derived from any of these meanings). The designation of unleavened dough through the root ‘to squeeze, to dry, to suck’ can have different explanations. One can argue, for instance, that the

unleavened dough was perceived as hard and dry, being opposed to the soft leavened dough. However, it should be noted that in Judaic Aramaic the root *mtk* is used to denote the unfermented drinks, opposed to the fermented ones: *hnydr mn htyrwš ?swr bkl myny mtykh* ‘he who vows abstinence from tirosh, is forbidden all kinds of sweet (unfermented) drinks’ (Ja. 862). Either this is a generalization of the meaning ‘unleavened (bread)’ > ‘unfermented (bread, beverage)’ (which should suggest that the meaning ‘unleavened’ was already present on Proto-Semitic level), or both applications to unleavened bread and unfermented beverage should be explained in the context of another semantic development, namely, ‘sweet, of pleasant taste’ > ‘unfermented’. Such usage of the term ‘sweet’ is provoked by its opposition to ‘sour’, the process of fermentation being normally associated with the sour taste (see I.2).

See further Brock. 410 (Syr., Jud., Hbr., Arb., Gez., Akk.).

8. *kasama*, *kassama*, *kaššama* ‘season, make tasty’, *kəssum* ‘well seasoned, tasty, that has savor’, *kasm* ‘seasoning’ (LGz. 446, LLA 432).

The root conveys the idea of good taste, being contextually opposed to the root *lsh* (see I.2) and marked by positive connotations. One should note that in almost all passages quoted by Dillmann the precise taste designated by the root is salty, and the verb is complemented by the prepositional phrase *ba-šew* ‘with the salt’: *wa-yərassəyani kəššuma ba-ḏewa malakot wa-yābrəh wəsta ləbbəya māḫtota ṭəbab* (Grohmann 1919: 168) ‘let him make me salted with the salt of divinity and let him light in my heart the torch of wisdom’. The meaning ‘salty’ is probably a secondary development, explained by the fact that the taste of salt was considered the best representative of the good, pleasant taste, cf. a figurative usage of the root *ksm*, where a comparison with salt is employed to stress its positive connotations: *tagšās ṭəsum wa-zenā kəssum kama šew* ‘the sweet chastisement and the announcement which is good-tasted as salt’ (LLA 432). In the rest of the contexts its meaning is non-specified, as in *kəssum māʔədd* ‘the spicy food’, *la-ḳasima ləsanəya* ‘to sweeten (lit. ‘to add taste to’) my tongue’ (ibid.).

The doubtlessly related verb in Amharic, *kəssämä* (‘to season, render savory (with salt or spices); to compound, mix or blend together’, K 751f.; cf. also *kəsəm* ‘force; pleasing, dignified presence or appearance; taste, flavor of wood, food, dew which may be bitter or sweet depending on the climate and soil’, ibid. 752) may be a borrowing from Geez. Cf. also Amh. *kəssämä* ‘to smell, to sniff s.th.’ (K 752), presenting a synesthetic change from taste to smell.

We find a more reliable cognate in Arabic, where the meaning ‘to eat, to choose best pieces of food’ is attested: *kašama* ‘manger; manger beaucoup; choisir les meilleurs morceaux, et le manger en laissant les autres’ (BK II 744). At the same time, in view of the Arabic meaning, a comparison to Tna. *kəssämä*, demonstrating a rather distant semantic ‘to sip nectar (bee), gather

nectar' (KT 962) becomes more likely; a possible reconstruction of the semantic evolution would be to derive the Geez meaning 'to have good taste' from the meaning 'to taste' (attested as 'to eat; to eat best morsels' in Arabic and as 'to sip' in Tigrinya).

Cf. also Sab. *ks²m* 'a vegetable plot' (SD 108).

At the same time, it is difficult to refrain from relating the root in question to the common Ethiosemitic verb *kms 'to taste':

Tna. *ḳāmäsä* 'to taste (a dish), take a taste of s.th., to have a bite to eat, a snack' (KT 914); *ḷaḳmäsä* 'to give s.o. some bits of food or drink (host to a guest), to cause to taste; to snack, to have a bite to eat', *ḳəmso* 'taste; example or sample' (ibid. 915).

Note also further semantic development of the causative verb *ḷaḳmäsä* 'to cause to taste' > 'to let somebody experience s.th.': *bättri ḷaḳmisuwo* 'he beat him with a stick' (ibid.) (lit. 'he caused him to taste a stick').

Tgr. *ḳamša* 'to dip; to take a pinch of snuff; to go to a prostitute for the first time' (LH 237).

Amh. *ḳammäsä* 'to taste, take a taste of s.th., fig. to experience (misfortune, etc.), to suffer a beating; to be a mixture of many kinds of soil; to do s.th. first, be first in s.th.' (K 702).

For the meaning 'to experience', cp. such contexts as *batr ḳammäsä* 'to receive a beating', *nuro ḳammäsä* 'to experience life', *yäfitən ḷor ḳammäsä* 'to be the first to engage the enemy' (ibid.).

Arg. *ḳammäsa* 'taste' (LArg. 216).

Gur. Cha. Enm. End. Gyt. Sel. Wol. Zwy. *ḳämäsä*, Eža Muh. Msq. Gog. Sod. *ḳämmäsä* 'taste; have intercourse (euphemism)', Cha. *ḳamus*, Eža *ḳammus* 'tasty', Muh. *ḳəmša* 'a taste of something', Cha. Enm. *ḳəmamäsä*, Eža Muh. *ḳəmamämäsä*, Enm. End. Gyt. *täḳmamäsä*, Eža Muh. *täḳmamämäsä*, End. *täḳwamäsä* 'eat a little bit' (LGur. 482).

One wonders whether this root could be related to Har. *ḳēmäsa* 'sharpen a pen, pencil or reed, sharpen a point', through the synesthetic transfer of meaning 'tasty, spicy (taste sense)' > 'sharp (tactile sense)' (which would, however, contradict Williams's generalization, see II.3). At the same time, the meaning 'beautiful', also attested in Harari for this root (*täḳēmäsa* 'become slim, become elegant', (*aḳōmäsa* 'be beautiful', LHar. 126), may be derived from the meaning 'tasty, having good taste' as well (cf. II.6).

See further LGur. 482 (Gur., Tna., Tgr., Amh., Gez.).

9. *ḷəḷma*, *ḷaḷama* 'taste, be tasty, be delicious, be savory, be sweet, experience', *ḷəḷum* 'tasty, savory, sweet, pleasant, delicious' (LGz. 582, LLA 1241f.).

The root is widely used and conveys the general idea of pleasant taste, cf. such usages as *fət ḷəḷum* (Prov. 17:1) 'delicious morsel', *mabäləḷət ḷəḷum* (2 Par. 9:24, see LLA 1242) 'delicious dishes'. Unlike the root *ḳsm* (see I.8),

the root *ṭsm* seems to be associated with the sweet taste, and is used to qualify such objects as honey: *maṣār ṭṣum* (Hez. 3:3, see LLA 1242) ‘sweet honey’. Of special interest is its use as an attribute of water, designating drinkable water, cf. such usages as *wa-rəṭəyat ṣazaḳta māy ṭṣum* (Gen. 21:19) ‘she saw a well of fresh water’; *wa-rakabu naḳṣa māy ṭṣum* (Gen. 26:19) ‘and they found a spring of fresh water’; *wa-yəṭabbəḥəwwā la-yəṭəti dorho wəsta māy ṭṣum* (Lev. 14:5) ‘and they kill this chicken in fresh water’; *māy za-ṭṣum marira yəkawwən* ‘the water which is sweet becomes bitter’ (see LLA 1242). Note that the verb *ṭṣma* is used to describe a situation when bitter, brackish water becomes fresh, drinkable: *wa-ṭarṭayo ṭəgzīṭabḥer ṣəda wa-wadayo wəsta māy wa-ṭṣma māyu* (Ex 15:25) ‘and God showed him a piece of wood and he threw it into water and the water became good’.

The verb *ṭṣma*, *ṭaṣama* can also be used, on the one hand, as a predicative form of the adjective *ṭṣum* (*yəṭṣəm ṭəmənna maṣār zəkrəya*, Sir. 24:20, ‘mentioning me is sweeter than honey’) and, on the other hand, as an active verb ‘to taste, to try (food, drink)’ (*ṭi-yəḳəl ṭṣima mabləṣa*, Job 33:20, ‘he cannot taste the food’).

One should also note the usage of the root in application to sounds, retaining the meaning ‘pleasant’: *ləsān ṭṣum yābazzəḥ tāṭəḥāhu*; *wa-ṭaf ṭṣum yābazzəḥ māṭməra* (Sir. 6:5) ‘the sweet tongue multiplies his brothers; and the sweet mouth multiplies the knowledge’; *masanḳo wa-mazmur yəḥewwəzā la-naṣṣ*; *wa-ṭəmənna kəlṭehomu ləṣān ṭṣum* (Sir. 40:21) ‘the violin and the singing gladden the soul; but the pleasant tongue does better than both of them’; *ṭṣum nagar* (Job 6:6) ‘pleasant speech’; *wa-gʷəmā ḳāloṃu ḥawāz wa-ṭṣum* (Sir. 47:9) ‘and the melody of their voice is pleasant and sweet’; *ṭəbab la-samiṣ ṭṣum* ‘the wisdom, pleasant to hear’; *ṭṣumāna zenā wa-zəkr* ‘the pleasant of announcement and commemoration’ (LLA 1242).

Note also the figurative usage of the verb *ṭṣma* in the sense ‘to experience’: *ṭi-yəṭṣəməwwo la-mot* (Matth. 16:27) ‘they will not experience death’.

The cognates in Ethiosemitic demonstrate both the meaning ‘to have pleasant taste’ and ‘to taste, to find out the taste of s.th.’:

Tna. *ṭäṣamä* ‘to taste, try (a dish), to take a sip (of beer); to be sweet, savory, to be tasty, to be pleasing, pleasant, e. g., speech, to be good, convenient, suitable, comfortable’ (KT 2472), *ṭṣum* ‘sweet, good, tasty, savory, delicious, appetizing, luscious, succulent, toothsome; gentle, amiable, cheerful, pleasing, agreeable, mellifluous; livable, cozy, fig. good, kind, gentle; comfortable, convenient’ (ibid. 2473).

One should note a peculiar semantic development in Tigrinya: ‘to have taste of s.th.’ > ‘to seem, to be like s.th.’. Consider the following usage: «*bäyyänä yəṭṣəm*» *bälä däbäsäy ṭanfät nayti ṭawyāt fäṣimu səlläzäy tärädə* «‘It sounds like Bäyyänä [lit. ‘it has the taste of Bäyyänä’]» said Däbäsäy since he did not realize the direction the cries [were coming from]’ (ibid. 2472). Cf. similar metaphors involving the visionary or acoustic per-

ception: English *look* (*it looks like rain*), *sound* (*it sounds a good idea*); German *aussehen* (*ihre Reise sah nach Flucht aus*).

Tgr. *tašama* ‘to be sweet, savoury; to taste’, *ṭəlum* ‘sweet, savoury’ (LH 619).

Amh. *ṭamä* ‘to be tasty, taste pleasant, be of good taste, be savory, to taste (vt.), take a taste of; to be deeply in love; to satisfy, content (vt.)’, *yäṭamä* ‘savory, tasty, flavorful’ (K 2097).

Har. *tāma*, *tēma* ‘taste good, be tasty, have flavor, taste’, *yiṭīmzāl* ‘sweet’, *ṭima* ‘taste, pleasure’ (LHar. 154).

Gaf. *čamä* ‘avoir bon goût’ (LGaf. 193).

Arg. *tāhama* ‘taste good, flavor’ (LArg. 223).

Gur. End. *tāmā*, Msq. *ṭamä*, Cha. Eža Muh. Msq. *tamä*, Gyt. *tāmā*, Muh. Msq. Gog. Sod. Wol. *čamä*, Sel. Zw. *čāmā*, End. *eṭēmä*, Enm. *ēṭēmü* ‘taste good, have flavor, be sweet, be dear, be expensive’ (LGur. 619).

Another set of Gurage lexemes with similar semantics demonstrate a metathesis: *ṭamä* > *māta*, possibly influenced by another taste term, *mšš (see I.4): Gur. Cha. (a)*māta*, Gyt. *amätā*, Enm. *amätā*, Eža *amäṭta* ‘taste good’, Cha. *amṭaṭa*, Enm. Gyt. *amṭaṭā*, Eža Muh. *amṭaṭta* ‘find out the taste of food or drink’ (LGur. 437).

The root goes back to the well-known PS *ṭšm ‘to taste, to try (food)’:

Hbr. *ṭšm* ‘Geschmack v. Speisen versuchen, kosten; Speise geniessen, essen’, *ṭašam* ‘Geschmack (v. Speise)’ (HALAT 361).

Off. *ṭšm* ‘to taste’ (HJ 426f.), Palm. *ṭšmh* ‘virtuals’ (ibid. 428).

Jud. *ṭəšam*, *ṭəšēm* ‘to taste’; *ṭəšam*, *ṭəšēm*, *tāšāmā* ‘pleasure, will; good cheer’ (Ja. 543), *maṭšāmā* ‘savory, refreshing’ (ibid. 769).

Syr. *ṭəšem* ‘gustavit; edit; usus est’, *ṭašmā* ‘gustus’, *ṭašīmā* ‘sapidus’ (Brock. 283).

JPA *ṭšm* ‘to taste, eat’, *ṭšm* ‘taste’ (Sokoloff 228).

Sam. *ṭšm* ‘tasting, eating’, *ṭšm* ‘taste; food’ (Tal 319).

Mnd. *ṭAM* ‘to taste, try, test, examine, eat’, *ṭama* ‘taste, flavour, savour, quality; appreciation, pleasure, will’ (DM 174).

Arb. *ṭašima* ‘manger, avaler, prendre quelque chose; goûter, deguster’, *taṭaššama* ‘goûter, déguster; savourer’ (BK II 83), *ṭašm-* ‘goût, saveur; ap-pétit’ (ibid. 84).

Sab. *ṭšm* ‘give enjoyment of crops’ (SD 152).

Mhr. *ṭšm*: *tām* / *yəṭōm* / *yəṭáyman* ‘to eat, taste, try (food)’, *ṭəṭēm* ‘food’ (JM 405).

Hrs. *ṭšm*: *tām* / *yeṭōm* ‘to taste, have taste of’ (JH 128).

Jib. *ṭašām* / *yəṭōšūm* / *yəṭšūm* ‘to eat, taste’, *ṭašmún* ‘tasty; tasted’ (JJ 273).

Soq. *tāšam* ‘manger, goûter’ (LS 206).

Although the meaning ‘have a pleasant taste’ occurs in many reflexes of the root (Gez., Tna., Amh., Har., Gaf., Arg., Gur., Jud., Jib.), one can doubt whether this semantics should be reconstructed on the Proto-Semitic level; it

may be that the semantic shift ‘to taste’ > ‘to have pleasant taste’ (see II.2) has taken place independently in Ethiosemitic languages, Judaic Aramaic and Jibbali.

One should note such semantic shifts as ‘to taste, to try the taste of food/drink’ > ‘to experience s.th., to learn smth. through experience’ (see II.4; cf. Hbr. *ʔīm* ‘durch Erfahrung spüren, merken, lernen’, HALAT 361: *ʔaʕāmū ū-rəʔū kī-ʔōḇ ʔādōnāy*, Ps 34:9, ‘taste and see that the Lord is good’; *ʔāʕāmā kī-ʔōḇ sahrāh*, Prov. 31:18, ‘she tasted that her merchandise is good’; pB. *ʔāʕam* ‘to examine, to taste, test, try, experience’, Ja. 543; Bib. *ʔīm* (pa.) ‘to give to eat’, HALOT 1885; Jud. *ʔəʕam*, *ʔəʕēm* ‘to examine, to taste, test, try, experience’, Ja. 543; Mnd. *ṬAM* ‘appreciate, perceive, discern, experience, savour’: *ʔama d-muta laʔaimin* ‘they do not taste the taste of death’, DM 174; Syr. *ʔəʕem* ‘percepit, cognovit’, Brock. 283; cf. also Gez. above) and ‘taste, sense of taste’ > ‘judgment, perception, understanding’ (see II.5; cf. Hbr. *ʔaʕam* ‘Geschmack (v. Speise); Empfindung, Verstand’, HALAT 361; pB. *ʔaʕam* ‘sense, wisdom, sound reasoning’, Ja. 543; Bib. *ʔəʕēm* ‘understanding, command, advice, report’, HALOT 1885; Jud. *ʔəʕam*, *ʔəʕēm*, *ʔaʕāmā* ‘reason, argument, sense’, Ja. 543; JPA *ʔīm* ‘reason, reasoning’, Sokoloff 228; Sam. *ʔīm* ‘sense’: *ʔīmḥ dsbth brkn ʔīmḥ dʔrhwth mḵrth* ‘the sense of the Sabbath lies in the blessings, the sense of the Torah lies in the reading’, Tal 319; Mnd. *ʔama* ‘judgement, perception, discrimination’, DM 174; Syr. *ʔaʕmā* ‘prudentia’, *ʔaʕīmā* ‘prudens’, Brock. 283; cf. also Arb. *raʕul-un dū ʔaʕm-in* ‘a man possessing intelligence, and prudence, or discretion’, Lane 1854). It seems that the semantic development belongs to the Proto-Semitic level, so that in some languages the original meaning ‘to taste’ was entirely lost: Off., Nab. *ʔīm* ‘order; decision, resolution; authority; matter, affair’ (HJ 427), Akk. *ṭēmu* ‘Planungsfähigkeit, Entschluß(kraft); Verstand; Anweisung, Bescheid’ OB, NB, NA, MB, OA (AHw. 1385).

See further AHw. 1385 (Akk., Hbr., Arm.), LHar. 154 (Har., Arb., Gez., Tna., Tgr., Amh., Arg., Gaf., Gur.), LGaf. 193 (Gaf., Arb., Gez., Tna., Tgr., Amh., Arg., Har., Gur.), LGur. 619 (Gur., Arb., Hbr., Gez., Tna., Tgr., Amh., Har., Gaf., Arg.), LGz. 582 (Gez., Arb., ESA, Jib., Hbr., Arm., Mnd., Akk., Tna., Tgr., Amh., Har., Gur., Gaf., Arg.), LS 206 (Soq., Mhr., Arb., Hbr., Syr., Akk., Gez.).

II. THE SEMANTIC CHANGES INVOLVING THE TASTE NAMES THAT HAVE BEEN OBSERVED IN THE CONSIDERED MATERIAL

1. The derivation of taste names from names of prototypes and vice versa.

The following taste prototypes have been found out in the course of the investigation: ‘honey’ > ‘sweet’ (cf. Gez. *maʕarʕir* ‘sweet’ and Akk. *daʕpu* ‘sweet’, see I.3), ‘salt’ > ‘salty’ (see PS **mlḥ*, I.5).

The reverse process is also attested: ‘sour’ > ‘vinegar’ (cf. Tna. *mäšiš* ‘sour; vinegar’, Amh. *māšaša* ‘vinegar’ < *mäšiš* ‘sour’, see I.4); ‘sour’ > ‘lemon’ (cf. Amh. *māšaša* ‘lemon’ < *mäšiš* ‘sour’, see I.4).

2. Derivation of taste terms from verbs denoting actions or processes and vice versa.

The most common type of derivation is a formation of a taste name from a root primarily meaning ‘to taste, try (food, drink)’. The semantic change taking place in the roots *kms* (see I.8) and *ʔmʃ* (see I.9) can be generalized as ‘to taste, try (food, drink)’ > ‘to have good, pleasant taste’ (cf. also PS **mtk* ‘to taste, to suck; to be sweet, of pleasant taste’, see I.7).

Taste names can also be derived from verbs that denote various processes associated with acquiring a specific taste. Thus, sour taste may be associated with the process of fermenting (cf. Gez. *bh?* ‘to ferment; to be sour’, see I.1; cf. also Gruntov, ms.) or with the process of rotting, decaying (cf. Tna. *mäšiš* ‘sour’, *mäččäčä* ‘to go bad (food)’ and *mäččäč bälä* ‘to become moldy’, see I.4).

3. The synesthetic changes.

In his research on synesthetic semantic changes, Williams postulates that the only sensory lexemes that can switch their meaning to taste are touch-words. At the same time, according to his investigation, «taste-words do not transfer back to tactile experience or forward to dimension or color, but only to smell (sour smells) and sounds (dulcet music)» (Williams 1976:463f.). The present study confirmed the frequent change from taste to sound meaning (cf. Gez. *mašaršir* ‘sweet’, see I.3; Gez. *ṭəšma*, *ṭašama* ‘to be sweet’, see I.9). At the same time, very little direct evidence on applicability of taste-words to smells has been elicited (one possible example is Amh. *ḳassämä* ‘to smell’ < *ḳässämä* ‘to taste’, see I.8). Neither did the Geez vocabulary present an example of touch > taste semantic change. Rather, we have several contradictory examples, e. g., Arb. *mḍḍ* ‘to be sour; to be pungent, to burn’ (see I.4); PS **mrr* ‘to be bitter’, the reflex of which in Tigrinya can be applied to sun in the meaning ‘to be pungent; to be burning hot (sun)’, in Akkadian to wind ‘biting, sharp’, and in Tigre can be used to describe a hard horse hoof (see I.6). Obviously, all these contexts involve the touch experience rather than any other sensory experience and would suggest a synesthetic development of a taste term into various touch terms (‘hot’, ‘sharp’, ‘hard’). One has to admit, however, that such applications are poorly attested and may be explained through an intermediary emotional meaning. Another possible contradiction is Har. *ḳēmäsa* ‘to sharpen’, which may go back to Ethiosemitic root **kms* ‘to taste’ (see I.8).

4. The changes suggested by metaphor ‘to taste, to try (food, drink)’ > ‘to experience s.th.’.

The generalization into the meaning ‘to experience s.th.’ is a well-attested semantic shift for the verbs originally meaning ‘to taste, to try (food, drink)’

(cf. Tna. *ʔaḳmäsä* ‘to cause somebody taste s.th.; to cause somebody experience s.th.’, Amh. *ḳämmäsä* ‘to taste; to experience’, see I.8; cf. also PS **ʔsm* ‘to taste; to experience, to learn by experience’, see I.9). A particular case of this development of meaning is ‘to taste’ > ‘to have a sexual experience’ (cf. Tgr. *ḳamša* ‘to go to a prostitute for the first time’ < ‘to taste’, Gur. *ḳämmäsä* ‘taste; have intercourse (euphemism)’, see I.8; this semantic change is, on the other hand, related to a wide-spread metaphor ‘tasty food’ > ‘attractive woman’, see Razuvaev 2004:47).

The metaphor ‘to taste, to try (food, drink)’ > ‘to experience s. th.’ provokes a number of other semantic shifts. Various taste adjectives are widely used to describe various events of life, naturally the pleasant tastes describing happy events (cf. Tna. *ʔəsum* ‘having pleasant taste; pleasant, agreeable, comfortable’, see I.9) and the unpleasant ones being associated with calamities and disasters (cf. PS **mrr* ‘to be bitter’ > ‘to be hard, difficult to bear, harsh’, see I.6). The life itself is often described in taste terminology, e. g., as bitter (see I.6.c).

5. The semantic changes involving transfer of a taste term into lexical field of mental qualities or of emotions.

General verbs ‘to taste, try (food, drink)’ can derive such meanings as ‘judgment, perception, understanding’ (cf. reflexes of PS **ʔsm* with meanings ‘taste’ and ‘judgment, understanding’, see I.9). Probably this semantic shift is suggested by metaphor ‘to taste s.th.’ > ‘to experience, learn s.th.’, see II.4. For a similar semantic development, cf. Latin *sapere* ‘to taste, savour’ > ‘to know, be wise’ (Viberg 1984:158).

The pleasant tastes are employed to characterize positive emotions or mental qualities (cf. Gez. *ʔəṣma*, *ʔaṣama* ‘to be sweet; to be pleasant’, see I.9), and the «bad» tastes describe the negative ones (cf. Gez. *maḳid* ‘sour; angry’, Tna. *mäṣiṣ* ‘sour; sour-tempered’, see I.4; for the shift ‘to be bitter’ > ‘to be grievous’ and ‘to be bitter’ > ‘to be angry’ in the PS root **mrr*, see I.6.d; rather unexpected meaning shift ‘to be bitter’ > ‘to be brave, courageous, strong’ is also, however, attested for the latter term, see I.6). The terms for salty taste usually have positive connotations, and are often employed to describe a high degree of intelligence (cf. Gez. *məḷḷ* ‘understanding’ < *mlḷ* ‘to be salty’, Arb. *milḥ*- ‘salt; knowledge’, see I.5), frequently being associated with sense of humor (cf. Arb. *mulḥat*-, *malḥat*- ‘a bon-mot’ < *mlḷ* ‘to be salty’, see I.5; cf. also Gruntov, ms.). At the same time, the semantic shift ‘sour taste’ > ‘irony’ is also attested (Tna. *məṣṣät* ‘sourness; irony, sarcasm’, see I.4). The opposite meaning ‘to lack understanding’ can be expressed by a root meaning ‘to be tasteless’ (see Gez. *lṣḥ*, I.2).

6. The generalizations and specific developments of meaning.

- a. ‘to be tasteless’ > ‘to be ineffective, lacking s.th.’ (Gez. *lṣḥ*, see I.2);
- b. ‘to spit’ > ‘to have taste of saliva, to be tasteless’ (Gez. *lṣḥ*, PS **tpl*, see I.2);
- c. ‘to be sour’ > ‘to hurt, to cause pain’ (cf. Arb. *māḍḍ* ‘to be sour; to hurt’, see I.4);

d. 'to be sour, to ferment' — 'to become thick, to dry up' (Amh. *bokka* 'to ferment, to turn sour; to thicken', see I.1; Amh. *māṭṭāṭā* 'to ferment, to turn sour; to become thick, stiff, hard', see I.4);

e. 'to have pleasant taste' — 'to be good' (PS *ṭyb, see I.5);

f. 'to have pleasant or sweet taste' > 'salt' (Akk. *ṭābtu* 's.th. having pleasant taste' > 'salt', see I.5);

g. 'to be bitter' > 'to be unpleasant, pungent, sharp (words)' (Tna. *mār-rir* 'sour; biting, sharp (words)', Arb. *ṣamarra* 'to make bitter; to say bitter things', Hbr. *mārōrōt* 'bitter things' < *mrr* 'to be bitter', see I.6.d);

h. 'to be sweet' > 'to be unfermented (drink), unleavened (dough)' (Hbr. pB. *māṭikā* 'sweet taste; sweet drinks', and the term for unleavened bread in Tna. and Amh., related to the same root, see I.7);

i. 'to be sweet' > 'to be good, becoming, beautiful' (Tna. *ṣamṣarā* 'to make sweet; to be good for, be becoming', see I.3; Amh. *ḫəṣəm* 'pleasing, dignified presence or appearance' < '(pleasant) taste'; possibly also Har. *täḫēmāsa* 'become beautiful', (a)*ḫōmāsa* 'be beautiful' < *ḫms 'to taste, to have good taste', see I.8);

k. 'to have the taste of s.th.' > 'to remind someone of s.th., to seem s.th.' (Tna. *ḫəmso* 'taste; example or sample', see I.8; Tna. *ṭäṣamä* 'to taste; to have pleasant taste; to remind of s.th., to seem s.th.', see I.9).

References

- J. BARTH, 1967. *Die Nominalbildung in den Semitischen Sprachen*, Hildesheim.
- B. BERLIN — P. KAY, 1969. *Basic colour terms: their universality and evolution*, Berkeley.
- M. BULAKH (forthcoming). «Basic colour terms in Geez: synchronic and diachronic aspects», in: S. Uhlig et al (eds.), *Proceedings of the XVth International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Wiesbaden.
- I. GRUNTOV (ms.). И. ГРУНТОВ, «Системы номинации вкусов: синхрония и диахрония» (Systems of taste nomination: synchronical and diachronical approach).
- D. PARDEE, 1978. «The Semitic Root *mrr* and the Etymology of Ugaritic *mr(r)* // *brk*», *Ugarit-Forschungen* 10: 249–288.
- F. PRAETORIUS, 1890. «Beiträge zur äthiopischen Grammatik und Etymologie (II)», *Beiträge zur Assyriologie und vergleichenden semitischen Sprachwissenschaft* 1: 369–378.
- M. RAZUVAEV, 2004. М. РАЗУВАЕВ, Деривационный потенциал значений «резать» и «рвать» в английском и русском языках (Semantic derivational valency of verbs with primary meanings «to cut» and «to tear» in Russian and English languages), Ph.D. thesis, Voronezh State University.

E. VIBERG, 1984. «The verbs of perception: a typological study», in: B. Butterworth — B. Comrie — Ö. Dahl (eds.), *Explanations for language universals*, Berlin, 123–162.

A. WIERZBICKA, 1996. *Semantics: Primes and Universals*, Oxford — New York.

J. M. WILLIAMS, 1976. «Synasthetic Adjectives: A Possible Law of Semantic Change», *Language* 52, no. 2: 461–478.

A. ZALIZNIAK, 2001. А. ЗАЛИЗНЯК, «Семантическая деривация в синхронии и диахронии: проект “Каталога семантических переходов”» (Semantic derivation in synchronic and diachronic aspect: project «Catalogue of semantic shifts»), *Вопросы языкознания* 2: 13–25.

Sources

Dictionaries:

[AHw.] — W. VON SODEN, 1965–1981. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, Wiesbaden.

[BDB] — F. BROWN — S. R. DRIVER — CH. A. BRIGGS, 1951. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Oxford.

[BK] — A. DE BIBERSTEIN-KAZIMIRSKI, 1860. *Dictionnaire arabe-français*, vol. I, II, Paris.

[Brock.] — C. BROCKELMANN, 1928. *Lexicon Syriacum*, Halle.

[CAD] — L. OPPENHEIM — E. REINER — M. T. ROTH (eds.). 1956ff. *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute, the University of Chicago*, Chicago.

[DM] — E. S. DROWER — R. MACUCH, 1963. *A Mandaic Dictionary*, Oxford.

[DUL] — G. DEL OLMO LETE — J. SANMARTÍN, 2003. *A dictionary of the Ugaritic language in the alphabetic tradition*, Leiden — Boston.

[Gragg] — G. GRAGG, 1982. *Oromo Dictionary*, Michigan.

[Grébaut] — S. GRÉBAUT, 1952. *Supplément au Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae de August Dillmann (1865) et Édition du Lexique de Juste d'Urbin (1850–1855)*, Paris.

[HALAT] — L. KOEHLER — W. BAUMGARTNER, 1974–1990. *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament (neu bearbeitet von W. Baumgartner)*, Leiden.

[HALOT] — L. KOEHLER et al., 1994–2000. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, transl. and edited by M. Richardson, Leiden.

[HJ] — J. HOFTIJZER — K. JONGELING, 1995. *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions*, Leiden — New York — Köln.

[Hud] — G. HUDSON, 1989. *Highland East Cushitic Dictionary*, Hamburg (Kuschitische Sprachstudien 7).

- [Ja.] — M. JASTROW, 1926. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic literature*, N. Y.
- [JH] — T. M. JOHNSTONE, 1977. *Ḥarsūsi Lexicon*, Oxford.
- [JJ] — T. M. JOHNSTONE, 1981. *Jibbāli Lexicon*, Oxford.
- [JM] — T. M. JOHNSTONE, 1987. *Mehri Lexicon*, London.
- [K] — T. L. KANE, 1990. *Amharic-English Dictionary*, vol. I, II, Wiesbaden.
- [KT] — T. L. KANE, 2000. *Tigrinya-English Dictionary*, vol. I, II, Springfield.
- [Lane] — E. W. LANE, 1863–1893. *Arabic-English Lexicon*, London (repr. New York, 1955–1956).
- [LArg.] — W. LESLAU, 1997. *Ethiopic Documents: Argobba. Grammar and Dictionary*, Wiesbaden (Aethiopistische Forschungen 47).
- [LGaf.] — W. LESLAU, 1956. *Étude descriptive et comparative du Gafat (Éthiopien méridional)*, Paris (Collection Linguistique publiée par la Société de Linguistique de Paris 57).
- [LGur.] — W. LESLAU, 1979. *Etymological Dictionary of Gurage (Ethiopic)*, vol. III, Wiesbaden.
- [LGz.] — W. LESLAU, 1987. *Comparative Dictionary of Geʿez (Classical Ethiopic)*, Wiesbaden.
- [LH] — E. LITTMANN — M. HÖFNER, 1956. *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Sprache*, Wiesbaden.
- [LHar.] — W. LESLAU, 1963. *Etymological Dictionary of Harari*, Berkeley — Los Angeles.
- [LLA] — A. DILLMANN, 1865. *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopicae cum indice latino*, Leipzig (repr. New York 1955).
- [LS] — W. LESLAU, 1938. *Lexique Soqotri*, Paris.
- [Reinisch 1885] — L. REINISCH, 1885. *Die Quarasprache in Abessinien*, vol. II, Wien.
- [Reinisch 1890] — L. REINISCH, 1890. *Die Saho-Sprache*, II: *Wörterbuch der Saho-Sprache*, Wien.
- [Sasse] — H.-J. SASSE, 1982. *An Etymological Dictionary of Burji*, Hamburg (Kuschitische Sprachstudien 1).
- [SED] — L. E. KOGAN — A. YU. MILITAREV, 2000. *Semitic Etymological Dictionary*, vol. I.: *Anatomy of Man and Animals*, Münster.
- [SD] — A. F. L. BEESTON et al., 1982. *Sabaic Dictionary*, Louvain-la-Neuve.
- [Sokoloff] — M. SOKOLOFF, 2002. *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, Baltimore — London.
- [T] — R. S. TOMBACK, 1978. *A Comparative Semitic Lexicon of the Phoenician and Punic Languages*, Missoula.
- [Tal] — A. TAL, 2000. *A Dictionary of Samaritan Aramaic*, vol. I, II, Leiden — Boston — Köln (Handbuch der Orientalistik 50).

[Vasmer] — M. VASMER, 1955. *Russisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. 2, Heidelberg.

Texts:

K. ELLIGER — W. RUDOLPH (eds.), 1969–1977. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, Stuttgart.

A. RAHLFS (ed.), 1940. *Septuaginta*, vol. I, II. editio tertiae. Stuttgart.

E. A. W. BUDGE, 1906. *The Life of Takla Hâymânôt in the Version of Dabra Libanôs, and the Miracles of Takla Hâymânôt in the Version of Dabra Libanôs, and the Book of the Riches of Kings*, 2 vols., London.

A. DILLMANN, 1853. *Veteris Testamenti Aethiopici*, vol. I: *Tomus primus, sive Octateuchus Aethiopicus*, Leipzig.

A. DILLMANN, 1894. *Veteris Testamenti Aethiopici*, vol. V: *Tomus Quintus, quo continentur Libri Apocryphi. Baruch, Epistola Jeremiae, Tobith, Judith, Ecclesiasticus, Sapientia, Esdrae Apocalypsis, Esdrae Graecus*, Berlin.

K. FRIES, 1892. *Weddāsē Mārjām. Ein Äthiopischer Lobsgesang an Maria*, Leipzig.

A. GROHMANN, 1919. *Aethiopische Marienhymnen*, Leipzig.

I. GUIDI, 1909. *Le Synaxaire Éthiopien. Les mois de Sanê, Hamlê et Nahasê. II. Mois de Hamlê*, Paris (PO 7, fasc. 3).

M. A. KNIBB, *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, vol. I, II, Oxford, 1978.

R. ZUURMOND, 2001. *Novum Testamentum Aethiopice. Part III: The Gospel of Matthew*, Wiesbaden (Äthiopistische Forschungen 55).

Abbreviations:

Akk. — Akkadian

Amh. — Amharic

Arb. — Arabic

Arg. — Argobba

Arm. — Aramaic

Babyl. — Babylonian

Bib. — Biblical Aramaic

Bogh. — Boghazkeui

Cha. — Čaha

Dem. — Aramaic texts in Demotic Script

End. — Endegeñ

Enm. — Ennemor

Gaf. — Gafat

Gez. — Geez

Gog. — Gogot

Gr. — Greek

Gur. — Gurage

Gyt. — Gyeto

Har. — Harari

Hbr. — Hebrew

Hrs. — Harsusi

Jib. — Jibbali

JPA — Jewish Palestinian Aramaic

Jud. — Judaic Aramaic

LB — Late Babylonian

lex. — lexical (texts)

MA — Middle Assyrian

MB — Middle Babylonian

Mhr. — Mehri

Mnd. — Mandaic

Msq. — Masqan

Muh. — Muher

NA — Neo-Assyrian

Nab. — Nabatean

NB — Neo-Babylonian	Sam. — Samaritan Aramaic
OA — Old Assyrian	SB — Standard Babylonian
OAkk. — Old Akkadian	Sel. — Selti
OB — Old Babylonian	Sod. — Soddo
Off. — Official Aramaic	Soq. — Soqotri
Old. — Old Aramaic	Syr. — Syriac
Palm. — Palmyrean	Tgr. — Tigre
pB. — Post-biblical Hebrew	Tna. — Tigrinya
Pho. — Phoenician	Ugr. — Ugaritic
PS — Proto-Semitic	Wol. — Wolane
Sab. — Sabaic	Zwy. — Zway

SUMMARY

The paper gives a survey of Geez lexemes belonging to the lexical field of taste, discussing each in terms of its usage in Geez texts and its etymology. The semantic shifts occurring both on a synchronic level (as polysemy) and on a diachronic level (as differences in meaning between cognates) receive special attention. Whenever possible, parallel semantic developments from other (as a rule, Semitic) languages are adduced. A list of the registered semantic shifts is given in the second part of the paper.