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RESEARCHES

INTO THE

PHYSICAL HISTORY

OF

MANKIND.

BY

JAMES COWLES PRICHARD, M.D., F.R.S., M.R.I.A.

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FRANCE,
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE CAMBRIDGE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, OF THE ROYAL
ACADEMY OF MEDICINE OF PARIS, OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL
SOCIETY, OF THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA,
OF THE ORIENTAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA, OF THE ETHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NEW YORK,
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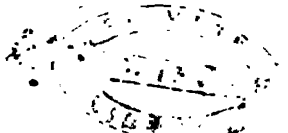
RESEARCHES INTO THE HISTORY OF THE ASIATIC
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APPENDIX II.

ON THE STRUCTURE OF THE BERBER LANGUAGE, BY

F. W. NEWMANN, ESQ.

In this and the following paper it has not been thought worth while to introduce unknown types of letters. In consequence, *sh*, *ch*, *j*, must receive their popular English sounds: an apostrophe will denote the *Ain* of the Hebrews and Arabs; δ , θ , χ , γ , will receive the aspirated utterance given them by the Greeks; *q* stands for the Arabic and Hebrew *Qâf* (פ); and a *Roman t* distinguishes the Hebrew τ . The long vowels and diphthongs are *a*, *ey*, *y*, *o*, *ou*,—the two last being modifications of the consonant *w*,—and have the sounds of Italian \grave{a} , \acute{e} , \grave{i} , \acute{o} , \acute{u} . The short vowels are *e*, *i*, *u*, of which the first is probably very obscure and intermediate to the English vowels in *bet* and *but*. Final *a* also is short unless accented.

The information of the present writer concerning the Berber language is derived from a very imperfect translation of the four gospels, the property of the Bible Society, which was made by a native Berber, said to belong to the region of Algiers. The conclusions hence obtained have been checked by the slight notice of the language extracted from the papers of Venture by M. Langlés, the French editor of "Hornemann's Travels." It is easy to see that M. Venture has had access to a Berber dialect far less adulterated with Arabic than that of the MS. which has furnished the following conclusions. It is moreover stated by M. d'Avezac, that the dialectal variations of the language are very considerable.

The *vocabulary* of the Berbers differs so largely from that of the Arabs and Hebrews, that, judged of by this test, no

one could suspect any connexion between the languages. Whether it has greater similarity to any of the Abyssinian idioms must remain for future inquiry. Even when Berber words are found, as occasionally happens, to be more like Hebrew than Arabic, the question arises, whether they may not be Punic importations. The Berbers, near Algiers, have adopted the Arabic numerals, except for One and Two; the true Berber numerals, however, are given by Venture, and they are not entirely unlike the Arabic. In fact, the numbers Two, Six, Eight, Nine, are manifestly at bottom the same as in that language; and the same is probable both of Five and Seven. This brings the Berber as near to the Arabic as the Amharic is. The isolated pronouns are as follows:—

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Nekki</i> , I | <i>Kachchi</i> ; thou (m) | <i>Netta</i> , he |
| | <i>Kemmi</i> , thou (f) | <i>Netteθ</i> , she |
| <i>Nekni</i> , we | <i>Kuwwi</i> , ye (m) | <i>Nuθni</i> , they (m) |
| | <i>Kuwwiθ</i> ? ye (f) | <i>Nuθnet</i> , they (f) |

| <i>Suffixed</i> | 1st. s. | 1st. pl. | 2nd. s. m. | 2nd. s. f. | 2nd. p. m. | 2nd. p. f. | 3rd. s. | 3rd. p. m. | 3rd. p. f. |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------------|------------|-------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------|------------|------------|
| To Nouns | -y,-iw | -ney | -ik | -im | -wen | -went (?) | -is | -sen | -sent |
| To Preps. | -i,-u | -ney } -ey } | -ek | -em } *-ekim } | -wen | -went (?) } -χant } | -es | -sen | -sent |
| To { dat. Verbs { accus. | -i,-y,-yi | -ey | -ik | -em | -ewen | | -as | -asen | -asent |
| <i>Prefixes</i> | | | | | | | | | |
| To dat. | | | | em- | { ewen on- | ewent- | es- | es(e)n- | |
| To Verbs accus. | ey- | ey- | ek- | { ek(l)m- | ekun- | ekunt- | eθ,-θ- | eθ(e)n- | |

The pronouns of the first and second person are obviously Syro-Arabian, though scarcely more like than to those of the Coptic. As for the third person, there is in it also a distant similarity to the Coptic, which makes *Neθof* he, *Neθos*, she, *Neθóu*, they. *Es* also, which marks the suffix *him* or *her*, in Coptic means *her*.

The principal tense (or Aorist) of the verb is thus conjugated; supplying from Venture the *feminine* plural of the second person, which is defective in the MS.

| | | |
|----------|--|--|
| | <i>Singular.</i> | <i>Plural.</i> |
| Aorist { | 3. <i>Isher</i> (m); <i>Θesker</i> (f) | <i>Esheren</i> (m); <i>Esherent</i> (f); |
| | 2. <i>Θeskeret</i> | <i>Θesherem</i> (m); <i>Θesherent</i> (f); |
| | 1. <i>Sekrey</i> | <i>Nesker.</i> |

Imperat. } 2 s. *Esker*, make thou
 } 2 pl. (m) *Sekreθ*, make ye
 (f) *Sekerimt.*, do. (Venture)

The Aorist, when not otherwise influenced, bears a *past* sense; so that *Isker* means "He made;" but it is capable of meaning present or future time when the context suggests it.

Every one acquainted with any of the languages immediately allied to Hebrew, will see at a glance how similar this tense is in form to the Hebrew present or future. A striking discrepancy, however, is found in the first person singular (*Sekrey*); but in the Ghyz, the Maltese, and the later Samaritan, the first person singular ends in *k* (Gesenius.) Both γ and *k* must come from *Nekki*, I; for which the dialects of Coptic have *Anok* and *Anoy*.

By prefixing *Eθ* to the Aorist a sort of present tense is produced, which admits equally of a future or subjunctive meaning; as *Eθisker*, *facit*, *faciet*, *faciat*, *faceret*.

By prefixing *Ere* in like manner, a tense arises which seems to be specifically future and also potential,—to use the common term,—as *Ereyisker* "he will make," *Ekhenni ereyisker*, "that he *may*, or *might*, make."

The two prefixes are often combined; as *Eredisker* or *Ereddisker*, "he is about to make."

The syllable *Ey* appears often to stand for *Ere*, but some uncertainty hangs over its real meaning.

Another tense is produced by annexing the termination *ed* or *d* to the Aorist, after the pronominal parts, when they follow the root; as *Iskred*, *Eskerend*, *θessekreted*; and if a pronoun is suffixed to the verb the syllable *ed* follows even it; as *Iban*, apparuit (Aorist); *Iban-es* or *Iban-es-ed*, apparuit ei. It would appear that this expresses specifically and essentially past time; and that when a pronoun is prefixed to the verb the *ed* becomes prefixed also, but follows the pronouns; as *Isheyya'* or *Ishey'ed*, misit, *Eyisheyya'* or *Eyeddisheyya'*, me misit. But both of these points need confirmation.

The participial system of the Berbers is important, and, in the syntactical use of it, the language approximates to

the Amharic. The simple or Aorist participle has the form *Isekran*, "making" or "having made;" it sometimes degenerates into an adjective, but much oftener into a mood of the verb,—undistinguished in the three persons,—which follows a relative or interrogative. Compound participles are also found, generated by prefixing *Ed* and *Ere*, on which there is no room to enlarge here.*

Participles take the affixed pronouns *before* the verbal root; as *Izran*, videns, *Ey-izran*, me videns, *Eθ-izran*, eum videns. The syllable *Ere* in the participle, and in the verb both *Ere* and *Eθ* require the affixed pronoun to follow them immediately; as *Ediniy*, dico; *Eθ-on-iniy*, vobis dico; *Iseyel*, interrogavit; *Er-es-iseyelan*, ei interrogaturus.

The negative particle *Ur* is only used when prefixed to a verb, and not merely draws all affix pronouns close to it, so as to precede the verb, but, what is still more characteristic, forces the final *an* of the participles into the same position. Thus, we get

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>Is'an</i> , habens; | <i>Ur-nes'a</i> , non habens |
| <i>Izran</i> , videns; | <i>Ur-n-erri</i> , non videns |
| <i>Iman</i> , sciens peritus; | <i>Ur-n-essan</i> , non sciens, imperitus |

Minutiæ of this sort eminently testify to a genuine native system.

From any verbal root are deduced several other verbs, just as in the Syro-Arabic and Abyssinian tongues, though under different forms. When the Berbers adopt an Arabic verb, they immediately subject it to these processes. Some of the most important derived forms are here given.

Root.

Ikθay-[putavit (?) not yet found.]

Iikaθay-ratioclnatus est.

Imakθay-secum reputavit, meminerat, (plur.) inter se reputaverunt.

Itmakθay-pluries (?) meditatatus est.

Ishukθay-dubitavit-opinatus est.

Root { *Awal*, rumor, vox-
 { *Issawal*, nunciavit, narravit.

Roots { *Ikkar*, surrexit: *Itar*, descendit:
 { *Isakkar*, surgere fecit *Issatar*, descendere fecit.

* These are all the tenses as yet positively ascertained; but their form is varied by Euphonic changes, which cannot be here further developed. It may, however, be well to state, that *δδ*, *θθ*, *nb*, *dn*, systematically change into *dd*, *tt*, *nt*, *nn*, and that *δ*, *θ* appear very seldom to have any significant difference from *d*, *t*.

Of these, the best defined in meaning are, first, the *causative* verb, beginning with *Is*; next, the reciprocal or reflective verb, beginning with *Im*; which in sense resembles Latin verbs compounded with *con*. The form beginning with *It* sometimes appears to be a genuine passive,—as in the VIth form of the Ghÿz, and in Isenberg's IVth form of the Amharic,—but it oftener assumes either a frequentative meaning, with much analogy to the Vth and VIth of the Arabs,—Hebrew, *Hithpahhel*,—or becomes entirely deponent, to the great injury of the language. Altogether there is much doubt and difficulty hanging over its meaning as yet.

The form beginning with *Is* has a perfect counterpart in the VIIIth of the Amharic, and in both languages is of equal utility and extensive application. Gesenius mentions the same form as existing in the Himyaritic.

The demonstrative pronouns of the Berber are numerous and important. The language is not destitute of the definite article, but appears to have neglected and corrupted it, so that it now is found *chiefly*, but not solely, as a substitute for the sign of the genitive case.*

The Berber article appears under two or three forms, if, indeed, they are not two different words. 1.—Chiefly with proper names, monosyllables and dissyllables beginning with a consonant, and with feminine nouns,—nearly all of which, in genuine Berber, begin with Θ ,—it has precisely the form of the Hebrew article, dropping the *h*; namely, it doubles the first consonant of a word and prefixes *e* or short *a*. Thus, $\Theta idet$, truth, $Et-tidet$, the truth; *Namus-em-Musa*, the law of Moses ($\nu\omicron\mu\omicron\varsigma \delta \text{ Μωσ}\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$); *Ussan-ah-Heyridus*, the days of Herod. This is, at first sight, nothing but the Arabic article. But the Arabic distinction of solar and lunar letters, which the Berbers faithfully observe in all Arabic words, has no place with native nouns; a fact which assimilates it to the Hebrew. 2.—If the noun is of one or two syllables and begins with a vowel, *w* is first superadded, and then we proceed

* M. Abbadie, in a recent letter in the "Journal Asiatique," makes the same remark concerning the article of the Saho, an Ethiopian tongue.

as before. Thus, *Elgem* a camel, *Ew-welgem* [sounded *Owelgem*] the camel. 3.—If it is polysyllabic, its initial *E* becomes *U*; as *Emegran*, great, grandee; *Umegran*, the grandee, the mighty one. All masculine Berber nouns are apt to begin with a vowel, and in the singular they have a strong tendency to superadd *w*, which there is much room for thinking to be only a degenerate article.

In at least one instance the *w* before a participle is employed with all the conciseness of Greek idiom. *Ikshem*, he entered, makes *Ereyikshemen*, about to enter, and *Wereyikshemen*, that which will enter, τὸ εἶσθον, *Mat.* 15, 11. Scattered analogies of this kind lead the writer to believe, that, at least in a former state of the language, *Ew* and *w* were the true article; and the analogy of the kindred languages would then justify us in regarding this as a softened form of *El*. The Berbers sometimes use *El* before native nouns: with Arabic nouns they habitually incorporate it,—as the English say the *Alcoran*,—without understanding its meaning.

The element *Wa* seems to be detected, with the sense of the demonstrative *That* or *This*, and likewise as a relative, in several rather rare forms; but this must not yet be pronounced positively. *Ida* is a similar element, seeming at bottom to be the Arabic إِذَا , Hebrew אִדָּא , which pervades numerous words. The actual demonstratives, however, are as follows:—

This, (m.) *Wayyi*, (f.) *Geyyi*, (com.) *Eyyi*.

These, (m.) *Weyyini*, (f.) *Geyyini*, (com.) *Eyyini*.

That { (m.) *Winna*, (f.) *θinna*, *Enni*, (m.) *Netta*, (f.) *Netteθ*.
(m.) *Widek* (?), (f.) *θidek* (?), *Idek*, *Idej* (?).

(cf. Arabic أَيْدِي)

Those (m.) *Widek* (f.), *θidek*, *Ittedek*, *Enni*, *Nuθni*.

Demonstratives are often connected with the article, as in Greek:

Winna ew-was, that day: *κεῖνη ἡ ἡμέρα*

Meryema et-teyyini, that Mary: (quasi, *Μαριάμ ἡ κεῖνη*)

Widek em-meddan, those men, *κεῖνοι οἱ ἄνδρες*.

Here the article cannot be resolved into a mark of the genitive case; nor, indeed, can many other uses of it which might be produced.

The demonstrative joins itself with the participle, so as to pass over into the idea of a relative and verb. Thus, *Winna isallan*, Ille audiens (ὁ ἀκούων), is the common expression for *Is qui audit*. In fact the participle is at least ten times found in this connection for once in any other; and, as a consequence, we find a double demonstrative sometimes used, of which the latter evidently imparts the feeling of a relative.

Urilli edwoyyi edwinna, widék ibyan ebmudis J. 7, 25.

Nonna-eat hicc ille, qui desiderata (?) mors-ejus. [Ese enjus deaderant mortem ejus.

In short, the finite verb is sometimes, though less seldom, used after the demonstrative, with the full sense of the relative implied in the latter. The demonstrative *Netta* is not used as a pure relative, but for "Utpote qui" or else for the conjunction "Quod," the latter use often causing extreme ambiguity.

As interrogatives, are found *Enwa*, (f.) *Enta*, besides the word *Uyomi*, which often appears as an oblique case of the relative, especially as a genitive. Perhaps its essential part lies in the last syllable; for *Ma* is a Berber conjunction or relative adverb, which may be rendered by *Quod* and *Si*; having several usages very similar to those of the Arabic particle *Ma*. A closer likeness to *Uyomi* is found in the Amharic relative *Yam*.

As an inseparable interrogative particle an initial *E* is employed, which may be compared with Arabic ؤ and Hebrew ׀; especially as the two former are also marks of the vocative case.

The word *Eshu* and (apparently its feminine) *Eshuth* are very common in the Berber MS. for "What?" with derivatives *Eshuera*, What in the world? (τί ποτε); *Eshixel*, How many? Yet it is certain that the word is imported, since, even in Arabic, it is of known and of recent formation, being a vulgarism for the three Arabic words *Ey shi hu*, "what thing is it?" This may teach us caution as to ethnological inferences from such similarities.

The nouns, it has been seen, freely admit of that substitute for a genitive case which is in Hebrew and Arabic.

entitled the putting of two nouns into regimen or construction. In fact, several of (what we may presume to be) the oldest nouns of the language, have a real construct form, which consists in adding *θ*; as *Baba*, father, *Yemna*, mother, *Emmi*, son; whence *Babaθ-ney*, our father; *Yemnaθ-san*, their mother; *Emmiθ-wen*, your son. Besides this, the Berber forms a dative by initial *I*, which, perhaps, may be compared to the genitive of the Amharic, formed by initial *Ya*. There is also a very characteristic case, which for the present may be called the "Emphatic," produced by prefixing *Eδ*. The usage of this has many similarities to that of the Hebrew לְ , to which it is so similar in sound; and the fact is more striking, since each word *likewise* indicates the preposition *with*.

The plurals of nouns are very irregular in the Berber, though not quite to the same extent as in Arabic; for, with considerable vowel changes, the plural generally ends in *en*. So too in Arabic the regular plural masculine is in *un* or *ya*. Considering that in the third person plural of the Aorist the Berber verb ends in *en* or *an*, which in old Arabic is *un*, the two coincidences can hardly be accidental.

The Berber has a large stock of prepositions, totally different from those of Arabic and Hebrew, with the single exception that *Eδ*, *with*, has a similarity to לְ . In conjunctions the language is very deficient, and clearly to distinguish between the ideas of *Si*, *Utrum*, *Ut*, *Quòd*, *Quare*, *Quoniam*, appears to be rather difficult. The Hebrew particle אֲשֶׁר , *as*, is perhaps an element in the Berber *Ekkayyi*, so, *Ekkenni*, as.

As a universal remark, the principles of radical letters and of syllabic distribution are in this tongue thoroughly Syro-Arabian. The roots are in appearance oftener biliteral than trilateral; but, according to a well known law of the Shemitic languages, the lost radical *w* or *y* often reappears in the inflexions. Thus, *Ifka*, "he gave;" but, *Ifkayes*, "he gave to him;" showing the true root to be *Efkay*: similarly *Ishfa*, "he abode;" but *Ishfuth*, "abide ye" (with *u*), and *Ishfawa*, "abidingly;" the root being *Eshfaw*. Either of

the three radicals may thus be liable to vanish; which, together with the system of derived forms in the verbs, gives rise to a necessary division and subdivision of conjugations on the same principles as in all the recognized Shemitic tongues.

The general structure and order of a Berber sentence is strikingly like to one in Arabic or Hebrew. The chief exception is found in the power of *prefixing* the fragmentary pronouns to the verbs, and the peculiar usage of the participle. Moreover, the possession of a double set of affixes to distinguish *dative* from *accusative* gives a great complexity and precision to the Berber speech; which, in fact, occasionally combines three pronouns with one verbal root; as, *Efki-γ-eh-et*, "I give thee it."

The verb *to be* appears to express by its Aorist essential past time; *Illa*, "erat;" just as in Arabic *Kān*. Hence, exactly as the Arabs put *Kān* before another verb to impart a clear idea of past time, so do the Berbers with *Illa*; which is as if the Latins were to say *Erat venit* for He came. In sound, the verb *Illa* (present *Eḍyili*) comes very close to the Amharic verb *Ala*, "he is."

The sounds of the language also are such as might be expected from a Shemitic tongue though in some respects nearer to Hebrew than to Arabic or Amharic. They possess *ʔ*, although these letters are less common than in the other languages; and various cases appear in which they have been softened away. It is comparatively rare to find roots distinguished merely by significant vowels; and in some of the cases where this *seems* to happen (though the vowel-points of the MS. cannot be wholly trusted), there is room to suspect that one or other verb has been imported. [Thus *Ichchi*, he ate, and *Ichcha*, he left; *Iswa*, he drank, *Yusa*, he came, *Issa*, he strowed or spread. But *Chi*, eat, is found in the Haussa language, and the Berbers have also another word for it: *Se* means drink in Coptic, and so does *Sha* in the Haussa. *Yusa* is a verb very common in the MS., but unknown to Venture.]

To sum up what has been said.

The Berbers have a verb too elaborate in its system,
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especially in its union with affixed pronouns and participles, to allow us to suppose any large part of it to have been borrowed from the foreigner. Its most essential part, and that only, is Syro-Arabian, namely, the personal endings of the principal tense and the *idea* of derived forms of verbs, just as we find Latin and Greek to have the personal endings of the present tense (primitively) identical; but in the rest of the developement of the verb to be diverse. The double set of pronoun-affixes in Berber is a refinement which could hardly have been attained, unless the pronominal system had been worked out from the beginning by the nation itself; and the use of the participle is another home-sprung peculiarity which forbids us to attribute much to the action of Arabic on the language in imparting the more fundamental principles of the verb.

It has been further seen that the Berber article is closely similar to that of Arabic, or still more to that of Hebrew, while it does not seem to have been borrowed; that the demonstratives are based on similar elements; and that the nouns are declined with several points of principle in common, especially that of "regimen;" that the general principles of inflexion, euphony, and radical letters are identical.

On the whole, the evidence appears to show that the Berber is a *Hebræo-African* tongue, like the Ghÿz and Amharic. With an enormous difference of vocabulary, its pervading genius is thoroughly the same; and, following grammatical peculiarities as our guide, the received doctrines on this subject would seem to justify the inference, that the Berbers are a race anciently connected by blood with the Canaanites and the Ethiopians.