MEHRI AND HOBYOT
SPOKEN IN OMAN AND YEMEN

Marie-Claude SIMEONE-SENELLE (CNRS. France)
simeone@vjf.cnrs.fr

INTRODUCTION

In the South of the Arabian Peninsula in the Sultanate of Oman and in the Republic of the Yemen, live about 200,000 Arabs whose maternal tongue is not Arabic but one of the six so-called Modern South Arabian Languages (= MSAL).[1] Mehri, Harsusi [ħarsūsi], Bathari [baṯħari], Hobyot [hōbyyt], Jibbali [ǧibbāli],[2] and Soqoṭri [sḳʌ́ṭri]. Only Mehri and Hobyot are spoken in the two countries. Except Soqotri spoken only in the Yemenite islands of Soqoṭra, ʿAbd-el-Kūri and Samħa, all others are spoken in Oman.

The six MSAL within the Afro-Asiatic family belong, like Arabic, to the Western Semitic group. More precisely they are included in the Western Southern Semitic sub-group. They differ enough from Arabic to make inter-comprehension impossible. They exhibit common features with the Ancient South Arabian / Epigraphic South Arabian, and with Afro-Semitic languages of Ethiopia and Eritrea like geʕez henceforth only used in Christian liturgy, and Amharic, Tigrinya, Tigre … spoken nowadays in both countries. Although the relationship with Ancient South Arabian is indisputable, the exact degree of relationship between the ancient and modern languages remains unresolved today. The inscriptions in the six Ancient South Arabian languages are attested from about the seventh century BC until about the seventh century AD, but it remains unknown whether the written languages correspond to spoken languages during the same period. The MSAL have not known written tradition and the first lists and commentaries on these languages do not go back up farther than 1834[3]. As a matter of fact the modern languages are presently the only vestiges of the ancient languages of the Southern Arabia, witnesses of the cultural traditions and the history of the population of the region.

Hobyot and Mehri with Harsusi and Bathari are included in the same linguistic sub-group within the MSA group (Jibbali and its dialects are in the second one and Soqotri and its dialects in the third). Close linguistically, Hobyot and Mehri show also a geographical overlap in that Hobyot is enclosed inside the Mehri area (see the map) and both languages are the only ones to be spoken together in Oman and Yemen.

The aim of this contribution is to highlight the unity of this subset together with the principal dialectal similarities and the causes of differences between the Mehri variety spoken in Oman

---

[1] The languages spoken in Mahra and Dhofar were also called *hymiarite* or *hymiaric* (Fresnel 1838), Thomas (1937) put together four MSAL in the *Hadara group*.

[2] Also known in the scientific literature as *Ehhkili*, *Eḥkli, šḫawri, šḫawri*, *šḥeri, qarāwi* (cf. Johnstone 1981: xi).

[3] For Soqotri (Wellstedt 1835), Ehhkili (Fresnel 1838), Mehri (Wellsted 1840). Then in the beginning of the twentieth century, the scientists of the Austrian South Arabian Expedition (known as *Südarabische Expedition*) published their field researches on Mehri, Šḫawri, Soqotri (Jahn, Hein, Müller). The study of Harsusi, Bathari and Hobyot began only 1950 (cf. bibliography).

and that spoken in Yemen. Concerning Hobyot, a very little explored and never described language, I shall point out the links with Mehri and the differences which allow to consider it as a linguisitc entity within the subset. Both languages testify to a common culture and history. Their evolution has been and is depending on their linguistic and natural environment which explains differences .

The data concerning Mehri and Hobyot in Yemen were collected during my numerous fieldworks in the Mahra of Yemen.[4] Concerning Mehri spoken in Oman the data are essentially based on T.M. Johnstone publications. Because of such indirect access to the Omani varieties my knowledge of the varieties spoken in Yemen is much more complete but my somewhat unbalanced presentation should encourage the young Omani and Yemenite researchers to be involved in this linguistic research. Johnstone (1987: xi) reported the deficiency of data on Mehri and particularly on that spoken in Oman. Hobyot spoken in Oman is unknown. These observations are still valid today which is extremely worrying because the degree of endangerment for all the MSAL grows up vey fast.

1. Mehri

1.1 Survey on native speakers and the research on their language

The Mahra inhabitants in the desert steppe of Yemen and in the mountains of Dhofar in Oman are semi-nomads who breed camels and goats. In some wadis they cultivate palm-trees. In Yemen some of them are owners of four-wheel-drive cars which enable them to trade with other countries of the Peninsula and provide supplies for numerous shops in the coastal towns and villages. The sedentary population is settled on the coast. Here, the activities are sea-oriented: trading, shipping, fishing, fish drying and freezing. Some people are employees in public services in the main coastal villages.

Mehri with its dialectology is the best known and the most investigated of all the six MSAL. It is also the most widespread language with about 136,000 speakers.[5] Their majority lives in Yemen, in the far eastern Governorate of Mahra, the others (more than 50,000) in the mountains of Dhofar in Oman and on a narrow strip of the coast (Johnstone 1987: xi). In Yemen, its coastal area extends from the Omani border to the eastern bank of Wadi Masilah and not to Mukalla, as it was in 1975 (Johnstone 1975: 2). In the North it is spoken as far as the border of the Rub‘ al-Khali.

The first lexical list has been collected in the area of Qishn (Yemen) by a captain of the Indian British army in 1840, and both varieties spoken in Yemen have been invistigated by the scientists of the *Südarabische Expedition* (= SAE: A. Jahn, W. Hein, D.-H. Müller), at the very beginning of the 20th century (1898-1903). As for the variety spoken in Dhofar it has been studied by T.M. Johnstone. In 1983 the French linguists began to work in Mahra on the two varieties (my last survey in Jadib and Hawf comes back to 2007), the late Alexander Sima from University of Heidelberg had studied (2001-2004) the eastern dialect in al-Ghaydha area.

---

[4] I am very grateful to all the Mehri and Hobyot native speakers in Mahra from Sayḥut to Ḥawf. They always offered me a kind hospitality and contributed with efficiency, patience, and generosity to my researches. I am particularly indebted to Sabri Mohammed and his family in Qishn and in al-Ghayda.

[5] According to SIL estimation (2000). Population total for all countries is 135,800. 70,600 speakers in Yemen, 50,800 in Oman and 14,400 in Kuwait. They do not mention the Mahra speakers living in Kenya and Tanzania. The Yemenite estimation collected by a NGO in 2007 is different, it indicates 88,600 Mehri speakers in Yemen.

1.2. Dialectology and sociolinguistic situation

Mehri has a rich dialectology for which linguistic, sociological and geographical parameters are relevant. Johnstone distinguished two varieties : the *Southern Mehri* spoken in the governorate of Mahra in Yemen and the *Nagd Mehri* spoken in the governorate of Dhofar in Oman. The native speakers in Yemen refer to *Mehriyet* [mehrīyət] for the variety spoken in the western part between ras Fartak and the wadi Masila, and to *Mehriyot* [mehriyōt] for the variety spoken in the far-eastern part of Mahra until the border with Oman. In Oman the language as a whole is named *Mehriyyet* [məhrəyyət]. Within each variety there is also a distinction between the dialect spoken on the coast by the villagers and that spoken by the 'Bedouins' in the hinterland. In Yemen, the Mehriyet variety of the ancient historical capital of Mahra, Qishn, is highly appreciated, more than that of al-Ghaydha area. In the traditional literature, essentially in poetry, the Bedouin variety from any area surpass the villager variety.

Mehri has no official status, neither in Oman nor in Yemen. Arabic is the language used for official intercourse (administration, school, army, trade …), and as a *Lingua Franca* (a vehicular variety) between Arabic and Mehri native speakers or between Mehri native speakers and native speakers of another MSAL, sufficiently different to prevent mutual understanding. For example when a Mehri of Qishn meets a Jibbali or Hobyot native speaker they must resort to Arabic.

Native speakers use their mother tongue for private purposes, in the family circle and with other speakers of the same language. They also use their mother tongue to pass on the traditional literature (poetry, tale) to the young generation. However it is to be noted that while the poetry and poetical sparring match is a literary genre still practiced by the Mahra people born in the 50s, it is in the decrease among the young generation. The tales and the proverbs are endangered, especially in villages and cities where the television has become available.

For more than fifteen years many parents in the Mahra complain about the indifference of their children to their mother tongue. Actually the children ignore much of the basic Mehri vocabulary and more and more they reply in Arabic to a question in Mehri. With modernization and road construction which opened up the region by facilating the contacts and the schooling, many people tend to become bilingual (Arabic and Mehri) and even multilingual: Arabic, Mehri and other MSAL (Hobyot or/and Jibbali), especially in the border zones

Besides the influence of the permanent contact with Arabic (classical, standard or dialectal varieties) dialectal differences are also the result of contacts with other South Arabian languages and depend therefore on the geographical situation and the professional activity of the speakers. For example many features in Mehriyot are comparable to Mehri of Dhofar and to Jibbali . In Dhofar, according to Johnstone (1975: 94), some of the Mahra people living in the mountain speak Jibbali because they spend apart of the year with their Jibbali speaking neighbours.

1.3. Main dialectal features in Mehri.

Some features are common to two dialectal groups whereas others are so characteristic to one group that they can be used as isogloss. Johnstone (1977-8) claimed that the Nagd dialect is more conservative than Mehri spoken in Yemen:

> 'it has preserved a number of phonological and lexical features no longer to be found in the SW [south-western] wing of the Mehri people'.

In fact all the levels of the language are concerned : phonology and phonetics, morphology, syntax and vocabulary. Furthermore the dialectal situation as it has been evoked above is more complex, and it is not possible to set the so-called SW and NM (meaning Mehri spoken in Yemen and that spoken in Oman) as two distinct dialectal groups. Many features are common to one or two even three dialects whereas some of them are specific to dialects belonging not to the same group. Johnstone himself confirmed this mixed situation (1987: xi):

> 'It is possible that the speech of the Zaʕbənōt of the strip of coast immediately adjacent to S. [South] Yemen is of the south-western type [mehri of Mahra], and it is likely that the Bedouin Mahrah in that part of S. Yemen bordering on Nagd speak a dialect very like NM [Nagd Mehri]'

Among the main features only the most relevant ones are pointed out in this paper.

1.3.a Phonology and Phonetics

- The voiced pharyngeal /ʕ/.

As in (MO) (Johnstone 1987: xii), in some varieties of (Met) villages this phoneme occurs rarely. Its nonoccurrence has an effect on the contiguous vowel (lenghtening and/ or opening) and on syllabication:

Qishn <**bʕl**> : **bēli** (= MO) 'my God'; <**fʕm**> **fām** 'leg' ~ **fēm** in (MO).

It may occur as a consonant and be replaced by the glottal stop **ʔ** (even in words borrowed from Arabic)

Qishn : <**ʕmr**> : **ʔāmōr** 'he said' (= MO); <**ʕsr**> (Arabic) **ʔāsī́r** 'juice'

But in the Bedouin dialect of Qishn as in (Mot) /ʕ/ is maintained, however in (Mot) it is more unstable :

(Met) QishnB **faʕm** ~ (Mot) Damqawt **fām** and in plural **faʕmtə** 'leg' - The same speaker can say **ḳaʕ** and **ḳā** (= MO) 'ground, land'.

- The (Met) dialect of the coastal villages is alone to be marked out by the coalescence between dental plosives and interdental fricatives

(Met) Qishn **trəh** ~ (Mot) Hawf **ṯroh** ~ (MO) **ṯərō** 'two' - (Met) Qishn **dekəməh** 'that one' ~ (Met-B) QishnB & (Mot) Jadib **ḏekəm** ~ (MO) **ḏékemeh** - (Met) Qishn **ṭayrūb** 'piece of wood' ~ (Met-B) QishnB & (Mot) Jadib **ḍayrūb** / **ṭayrūb** ~ (MO) **ḍērōb**.

- In all dialects the voiceless ejective consonants are often realized with loosening of the articulation, provoking a phenomenon of 'creaky voice' (Lonnet & Simeone-Senelle 1997: 349). **ṣ́** and **ṣ** tend to be realized as voiced (*cf.* Jahn's transcriptions and Johnstone 1975: 98). The phenomenon seems to be more audible in (Met) than in (Mot), Johnstone noted it for **ṣ́** in MO.

<**ʕrṣ́**> in (Met) Qishn and (MO) **ʔārōẓ́** 'meet'; (Mot) Damqawt (= Jahn) **ḥāzan** ~ (MO) **ḥāṣ́ən** 'castle, large house' .

- Another phonetic phenomenon occurs in both dialects of Yemen and is not listed in Oman. When /**r**/ is followed by a denti- or lateral alveolar consonant, the cluster has a retroflex articulation

(Met & Mot) Qishn & Jadib /**kirś**/ > [**kiʈ́ʂ**] 'belly'; Jadib /**harṣōm**/ > [**haʈ́ʐ̪ōm**] 'tops of the feet'; (Met) Qishn /**boḥḥór d-ḳāsən**/ > [**boḥḥóʈd̪ḳāśən**] 'the fisherman of Qishn'.

➢ The non fricative lateral inside the word, at the end of the syllable is reduced to a long vowel in (Mot) and to the velar semi-vowel **w** in (MO). In Met, /**l**/ is maintained

(Mot) Jadib **mōse?** (sometimes **məlsé**) ~ (MO) **məwsē** ~ (Met) Qishn **mélsē** 'rain' - (Mot) Damqawt **kōtet** ~ (MO) **kəwtēt** ~(Met) QishnB **kəltēt**, Qishn **kəltēt** 'tale, story'.

1.3.b Morphology

In Yemen, the name given by the native speakers to their dialects reveals the morphology of each one. The name of the language is always feminine and in (Met) the feminine marker for the substantive is usually –**et**/ -**ət**, in (Mot) is –**ōt.** In Yemen every Mehri speaker, whatever his own dialect, refers to *Mehriyet* [mehrīyət] for the variety spoken in the western part and *Mehriyot* [mehriyōt] for that of the far-eastern part, and some of Mehriyet speakers include the variety spoken in Oman in Mehriyot, since the Dhofari people refer to Mehri language as a whole by *Mehriyyet* [məhrəyyət].

➢ Dual of nouns is attested in all dialects but dual of personal pronouns and in the verb conjugation (including the 1rst person) is only preserved in (MO) and to a lesser degree in (Mot).

The dual marker for nouns is everywhere –**i** suffixed to the noun and followed by the number 'two'. Usually the dual marker is realized as a prefix to the number. This phenomenon is systematic in (Met) /**ḥarmēt-i trīt**/ > [**ḥarmēt itrīt**] 'two women' ~ (Mot) **tēt itrīt** or **tēti trīt** ~ (MO) **tēt itrayt** or **tēti trayt** (cf. Johnstone 1970: 511).

Dual Pronouns in (Mot) Jadib : 1c. **key** or **kī** ~ (MO) **əkə́y** 2c. **tey** or **tī** ~ (MO) **ətə́y,** 3c. **hey** or **hī** ~ (MO) **əhə́y.**

The verbal dual is the same in (Mot) and (MO). In Jadib, the dual forms in imperfective for **təbūr** (MO) or **təbōr** (Mot) 'break' are : 1c. **ɛtbərō** - 2c. **tətbərō** - 3m. **yətbərō** – 3f. **tətbərō**. In perfective the desinences are 1c. & 2 c. –**ki**, 3m. –**ō**, 3f. –**tō**.

➢ Verb conjugations.

— The subjunctive in all the MSAL (except for some derived verbs) differs in syllabication from the imperfective. The clitic **l**- is prefixed in the three dialects to Sg.1c. and Du.1c. (when attested). In (Met) **l**- is also prefixed to Sg.3m., Pl.3m, where the personal index is realized vocalic [**i**] and not as semi-consonant **y**.

(Met) **iḥōm ləḳbōṣ** ~ (Mot)Jadib & (MO) y**iḥōm yəḳbōṣ** 'he wants to bite'.

— (MO) is alone to have a particular conjugation to express conditional. The conjugation is similar to the subjunctive one with the **l**- prefix to Sg.1c. and Du.1c. but with **n**- suffix along the whole paradigm.

➢ Verb derivation

The derivational morphem **h**- (prefix) in (Met) appears rarely in the perfective and imperfective conjugations, but it is always attested in the subjunctive. In (Mot) and (MO) the morphem is more often preserved in all the conjugations

In MO, the derived form with a transitive or causative value has a vowel prefixed to the modified theme by a long vowel after the first radical. In (Met) this derived theme is always without vowel prefix.

(MO) **arōkəb** / **yarákbən**/ **yarōkəb** 'to put (a pot) on the fire' ~ (Met) Qishn et QishnB **rōkəb**/ **irákbən**/ **lərōkəb** – (MO) **aṣōli** / **yaṣályən** / **yaṣōli** 'pray' ~ (Met) **ṣōli** / **iṣályən** / **lṣōli**.

To a derived form in (MO) may correspond a verb in the basic pattern in (Mot) with the same meaning.

(MO) **aḳáwnəm** 'collect fodder' ~ (Mot) **ḳʌnōm**

➢ Future Forms

In Mehri, the active participle has only a predicative function and is used to express future. The forms are common in all dialects for sg. m. and f., pl. m., but differ in pl.f. It is remarkable that in (Met) of Bedouins the pl.f. has the same scheme as in (MO) (a nominal feminine plural scheme). Moreover (MO) has dual forms.

Singular	Mehri	Dual (MO)	Plural	(Met)	(MO), (Mot), (Met-B)
m.	**kətbōna**	**kətbōni**	f.	**katbēya**	**katbēya**
f.	**kətbīta**	**kətbawti**	m.	**kətbatna**	**kətbūtən**

The participle of the derived forms has the **m-** prefix. In (Met) and (Mot) usually the –a suffix is lacking in sg.m. In (MO) unlike (Met) & (Mot) there is no gender opposition in plural. Example with the verb **šəxārəg/ǧ** 'interpret'. Cf. Johnstone 1987: lxix-lxxi, Simeone-Senelle 1993: 253-255.

Singular	Mehri	Dual (MO)	Plural	(Met) & (Mot)	(MO)
m.	**məšxārəj**	**məšxárgi**	f.	**məšxərgíyya**	m. & f. **məšxərgūtən**
f.	**məšxərjēta**	**məšxərgēti**	m.	**məšxərgítna**	

(Met) Qishn : **məntaḳéyl** (derived form in **-t-**) 'I/ you(sg.m.)/ he'll choose'

➢ The Definite article is attested in (MO) and not in (Met) and in (Mot). It is a real morphological isogloss. The form of the article and its phonetically conditioned presence are comparable to Jibbali and Harsusi. It is a clitic wovel /**ʔa**-/ realized '[**ʔa, a ɛ, ə**], prefixed only to nouns or adjectives with voiced or glottalized initial consonants (Johnstone 1987: 1)'. With other items there is no definite marker.

(MO) **aṣəlōt** 'the prayer', **skayn** 'the/a knife' – **aġayg** 'the man', **xəlūt** 'the/a paternal aunt'.

1.3.c Syntax

➢ (MO) like Jibbali and Harsusi, has a definite article. In the expression of possession or when two words are in a genitive relation, in these languages the two terms of the phrase are usually definite. Moreover when the determiner is a suffix pronoun it is suffixed to the definite noun with an article.

(MO) **a-ġərōy-əh** <ART.-speech-PR.3SG.M> 'his speech' (cp. (Met) & (Mot) **ġərōy-əh**) – (MO) **arḥebēt ð-aġaggēn** <ART.country/ CON.- ART.boy> 'the boy's country' ~ (Met) & (Mot) **rḥebēt d-/ ð-ġaǧǧēn.**

➢ Expression of future

Besides the participle other possibilities are used to express imminent future.

— A periphrastic verbal phrase with the verb 'want' used as auxiliary followed by the verb in subjunctive. This construction with this value is rare in (Mot), usual in (MO) and (Met):

(MO) (Jonstone 1987: 195) **ħəybə́tk təħōm təháhḳəṭ** 'your she-camel is about to give birth' – (Met) **ħayōm** (f.) **təħōm təǧzā** 'the sun is about to set' – (Mot) **tħīm tśōwəl** 'you'll rest (sg.f.)'.

— In (Mot) for expressing an intentional future one uses the periphrasis with the noun **ḳās** ('intention, willing') + suf. pr. referring to the subject or the verb **ḳēs** (or **ḳīs**) used as an auxiliary, followed by verb in subjunctive. I have found this construction neither in MO nor in (Met). Cf. below 2.2.c.

(Mot) Jadib **ḳās-i l-ʕáśik** <intention-SUF.PR.1SG / SUBJ.1SG.give_dinner.SUF.PR.2SG.M> 'I'll give you a dinner'. In Damqawt to express the past future, the preverb can be an auxiliary on the same lexical root in the perfective conjugation : **ḳesk l-ʕáśik** 'I have had the intention to give you a dinner'; **ḳēs ixōləs** <intention/ SUBJ.3SG.M.finish.SUF.PR.3SG.F> 'he has have / he had intention to finish it'.

— Another periphrastic construction is used in Hawf, obviously under the influence of the expression of future in Hobyot: **med** ('intention') + suf. pr. referring to the subject (except in the sg.3.m.) and the verb in the subjunctive:

(Mot) Hawf **méd-iš tətīḳ ħmo** 'she'll drink water'.

➢ Expression of the negation

In (MO) usually the negation has two constituents **(ə)l-…laʔ** circumfixed to the negated term/sentence; only the first one is clitic and may have a reduced form.

(MO) (Johnstone 1987: 140) **abōḳi əl-ġərbēhəm laʔ** <ART-rest/ NEG.- know.PFV.SUF.PR.3PL.M./ NEG.> 'he did not know the rest' - **əl əġōrəb l-əġtáyr ārəbáyt ˀláʔ** <NEG.- IPFV.1SG. know/ SUBJ.1SG.speak/ Arabic/ NEG.> 'I wasn't able to speak Arabic' - **əl-šihəm wəlēd əlā** < NEG.- with.PR.3PL.M./ children/ NEG.> 'They have no children' ; **ʔəl səbēb-i laʔ** '(it's) not my fault'; **əl təhēləz bɛy laʔ** 'don't nag me!'

This construction is attested in (Mot).

(Mot) Jadib **l-ḳʌnōm láʔ** <NEG.-collect_fodder.PFV.3SG.M/ NEG.> 'he did not collect fodder' – al-Ghaydha **l-ʕáyḳər laʔ** (the verb is in subjunctive, without personal mark, to express prohibition) 'Don't be smug !'

Sometimes, in (MO), the first element occurs alone in interrogative sentences (Johnstone 1981:2). In prohibitive sentences usually only the final element is used

(MO) (Johnstone 1987: 230) **təḳtəlōb əlaʔ** 'Don't worry!' (but **l-əśtōm ðōməh** 'Don't buy that!').

In nominal sentences in (Mot) the negation is usually expressed only with the final element **láʔ**, like in (Met). There are rare examples with this construction in nominal sentences in (MO).

(Mot) Jadib **ḳāṣər bi-śi habwēbət láʔ** <castle/ in-there_is/ doors/ neg.> 'The castle has no doors'; **š-ī ḥmó láʔ** <with-SUF.PR.1SG/ water/ NEG.> 'I haven't water'– (MO) (Johnstone 1987: 390) **əbḳār śī-laʔ** 'there are no cows'.

When there is only one particle, it is placed always to the end of the clause.
In (Met), in all types of sentence (nominal, verbal, declarative, optative or prohibitive) the negation has only one component, no clitic and always at the end of the negated phrase or sentence.

(Met) Qishn **harɔ́wn tətáwiyən xʌnīn ṭrī lá?** (**lēkin tətáwiyən teh ḳáyśa**) 'the goats (pl.f.) don't eat fresh anchovies (but they eat them dried) - **šeh fēśəl lá?** <with.PR.3SG.M./work/ NEG>'he has no work, he doesn't work' – **hēt hēs-t-i hoh lá?** <you/ like-PREP-SUF.PR.1SG./ I/ NEG.> 'you (are) not like me'; **tǧīra ḳahwēt lá?** 'don't drink coffee!'

1.3.d Vocabulary

The most important part of the vocabulary are common to the three dialectal varieties. Some words have different phonetical or morphological structures but the same lexical root.

On the root <**ʔbw**>: (MO) **ħābu** (Johnstone 1987: 2-3) , in (Met) **hābu**(**n**), in (Mot) ħābu(n) or **hābu**(**n**) 'people'. In (Met) there is a minimal pair between **hābu**(**n**), and ħābu(n) 'children' – On <**bl**v>, the noun may have the following structures depending on its noun feminine morphology and CaCēt, CiCōt, CiCēt: (MO) (Johnstone 1987: 49) **balēt**, (Mot) Jadib **bilōt** and (Met) Qishn **bilēt** 'North wind'.

Some words are from different roots and could be used as shibboleths between the (Met) dialect and the (MO, Mot) ones included in the same group or between each of the three varieties.

The main one is the word meaning 'woman, wife': (MO) & (Mot) **tēt**, and (Met) **ḥarmēt**, **ḥarméyt**.

The hypothetical conjunction is **ham** in MO and **ʔem** in (Met), **ʔen** in (Mot). The plural of **bəḳərēt** 'cow' is always **bəḳār** in (Met), **əbḳār** or the suppletive **ləháytən** in (MO). In (Mot) when one uses **bəḳərēt**, the plural is identical to (Met), but when they use **leh** (as in Jibbali or Hobyot) the plural is **ləháytə**(**n**) or **lhóti** (as in Jibbali).

Some expressions collected in (Met) are not attested either in (Mot) or (MO):

kidi-kidi 'very much', and **waraʔ** for example in **waraʔ ǧid**/ **ǧitt** 'very good (m./f.)' in Qishn.

1.3.e Literature

Concerning the traditional oral literature, when we compare the texts collected by the SAE in (Met) and (Mot) at the beginning of the twentieth century with those collected by Johnstone (in the 70's) in (MO) and Simeone-Senelle & Lonnet (in the 1980's and until now)[6] in (Met) and (Mot), the richness of this literature is obvious whatever the concerned Mehri variety. However the variety of literary genres is more restricted in the corpus collected from the second half of the 20th century. The poetry and the poets are highly appreciated. The old and famous poems are transmitted, new creations are recorded and poetic sparring matches take place nowadays and arouse a vivid interest. However the young people are not very concerned and most often they transmit only short excerpts of the most famous poems, and the experts are people over 40 years; at least this is the case in the Mahra province. Proverbs and enigms are almost completly lost in the country and completely forgotten by the younger generation in the cities. In cities tales and the historical narratives about key events and heroic

[6] At the date when I am writing this paper I have not had the opportunity to read the just published book (Arnold & Watson eds 2009) with Mehriyot texts collected by Alexander Sima.

deeds of some famous figures in the history of the Mahra are about to definitely disappear. The causes are well known, they are the same ones which explain the loss of any language when it is not taught and when there are no special measures to preserve it.

1.3.f Conclusion

Table summarizing some more important features.

Features	MO	Mot	Met	Met-B
ʕ	-	+/-	-	+
Interdentals	+	+/-	-	+
ṣ́ ~ [**ź́**]	+	+/-	+	+/-
Retrofl.	-	+	+	+
Maintain of /**l**/	-	-/+	+	+
Dual V, Adj.	+	-/+	-	-
Subj. 3m. with **l-**	-	-	+	+
Condit.	+	-	-	-
Deriv.V with a-(Cv:CəC)	+	-	-	-
Pl.Fut. Nom. pl.f.	+	+	-	+
Pl.Fut.gender opp.	-	-	+	+
Def. article	+	-	-	-
Neg. (**ə**)**l**-… **lá**	+	+/-	-	-

Each variety has at least one distinctive feature (out of the 13 selected). Mehri spoken in Oman has nine features completely different from (Met) & (Met-B), and four from (Mot). The (Met) Bedouin variety is more conservative than the (Met) variety of the coastal villages, but the two varieties remain very close.

(Mot) occupies an intermediate position with two common features with (MO) and four with (Met), (Met-B). It has seven 'unstable' features which may be common to one or other group. The few more affinities with (Me) than with (Mot) explain it is included in the Mehri of Yemen, it has no specific feature allowing to class it apart. One reason of this situation for (Mot) is its geographical location: between the (Met) speaking area and the (Mot) and Jibbali ones and in contact with Hobyot.

Since the ancient times, and long before the road between the Sultanate of Oman and al-Ghaydha (modern capital of the Mahra, in Yemen) has been built, people of the eastern region of the Governorate of the Mahra were in regular contacts with people of the Governorate of Dhofar mountains speaking Mehri, Hobyot and Jibbali. Moreover, until 2006 when the coastal road has been put in circulation between al-Ghaydha and Qishn (and from there to Aden), contacts were very difficult with the western part of the Mahra bacause , Ras Fartak was a natural frontier uneasy and dangerous to pass. So, the more one goes towards the East, the more the Mehri language tends to have common features with the Omani Mehri, plus Jibbali and sometimes Hobyot.

Obviously, much more features need to be included in my summary Table to enforce its relevance. This will be the task of the future works aimed in a more complete understanding of the Mehri language and its rich dialectology. It goes without saying that researches carried out on both sides of the border and in collaboration would be of the highest interest.

2. Hobyot

2.1 The native speakers and their language

The term Hobyot [**həbyūt**, **hōbyōt, hə^{w}byūt**], in local Arabic **hubīya**, refers both to the speakers and to their language. Also commonly considered as a language of the **śħɛr** 'mountains', it is always differentiated from **əħkīli** or **əħkelyōt**[7] (Jibbali variety in contact with Hobyot in the mountain area).

My last recordings in December 2007 in Yemen obliged me to revise my first data about the number of speakers (Simeone-Senelle 1997: 379). The Hobyot speakers estimate that they would be approximately 400 in Yemen. According to H. Mutzafi (quoted by SIL, 1998), they would be 100 in Oman. They are settled in the far-east of Mahra and in Oman, in a very restricted area on the border. In Yemen, their settlements with houses having round-stone-walls and covered with branches are scattered on less than 12 kilometers on the slopes of the mountain overlooking the Hawf area. There, the Hobyot people breed camels, cows and goats, cultivate some garden produces as well as millet and fodder, and collect wild honey. They spend the rainy season with their cattle up in the mountain. Some are established in coastal villages: Hawf, 'Abri, Rehen, where they practise mainly fishing. They are in contact with the Mehri (Mehriyot and Dhofari Mehri) and Jibbali speakers.

The language is spoken by a small community with a very traditional way of life. It is depreciated as a 'country people language' and it is marked by the close contacts with other more 'prestigious' MSAL like Mehri and Jibbali. All the Hobyot people in the coastal area are multilingual ((Mot) and/or (MO), Jibbali in addition to Arabic). The Hobyot native speakers in the mountains even when they do not speak fluently Mehri (in its (Mot) variety) have a passive knowledge and understand the Mehri speakers, but these latter claim they can not understand Hobyot. When they go to settle in al-Ghaydha for a long time many of them abandon their language and speak Mehri and Arabic. Alexander Sima (2004) quoted the case of his main informant, the poet Askari who is a Hobyot native speaker having given up and forgotten his mother tongue to use Mehriyot in his daily life and his poet's activity. This case is not isolated and is an illustration of the very high degree of endangerment of Hobyot. Except the mountainers and the eldest generation in coast villages, many speakers claim to be Hobyot native speakers but mix Hobyot and Mehriyot in their speech, essentially when there is a Mehri native speaker nearby … or a linguist!

Hobyot is the last of the six MSAL to have been investigated and it remains the less known one, perhaps with the exception of Baṭħari. The process of endangerment is very highly advanced in Hobyot much more than it is the case for Mehri.

Until 2009, no exhaustive linguistic description has been published on Hobyot.[8] Johnstone (1981) was the first to allude to Hobyot and to localise its area. The first data were collected on the field in Oman by Miranda Morris and published in *Mehri Lexicon* (Johnstone 1987). Other data have been collected in Yemen (in the Mahra governorate) since 1984, some were published (Lonnet 1985, Simeone-Senelle 1991, 1997) and I am keeping on with linguistic surveys surveys in the Hobyot speaking area in Yemen.

In 1993 Arnold studied the position of Hobyot within the MSAL. The Hobyot data were collected not in Oman but in Syria with a 'speaker of Hobyot' (Arnold 1993: 18) from

---

[7] Contrary to the assertion of Arnold (1993: 18).

[8] A chapter is devoted exclusively to Hobyot spoken in Yemen in the forthcoming book (Simeone-Senelle *Les langues sudarabiques parlées au Yémen: mehri, hobyot et soqotri*. Sanaa, CEFAS)

Dhofar. The phonological, morphological comparisons with MO and the two western and central Jibbali dialects allow him to conlude that Hobyot can be considered as an independent member of the South Arabian language group (Arnold 1993: 24).[9] The more recent development of the research on Hobyot spoken in Yemen confirms this conclusion. The paucity of data explains why Johnstone (1981: 82) has quoted just one lexical feature common to Hobyot and Harsusi. Later (1981: xii) he recognized the 'idiosyncratic' character of Hobyot and the combined influences of Mehri and Jibbali: 'It may indeed be that Hōbyōt is a dialect of J[ibbali] of this western type though it seems to be too idiosyncratic for this. However, it has in it both M[ehri] and J[ibbali] elements'.

Hobyot is a language and not a Jibbali or Mehri dialect, but it is submitted to the influences of these two languagesto the degrees (more or less) depending on the linguistic proximity (it is closer to Mehri than Jibbali) and the geographical proximity: Hobyot spoken in Yemen are closer to (Mot) on the coast and to (Mot), (MO) and Jibbali in the mountains.

In Rehen, coastal village adjacent to Jadib, a majority of people speak Hobyot while the minority speaks (Mot). It is to be noted that Hobyot and Mehriyot spoken there by some Yemeni citizens of African origin have atypical characteristics which should be due to an unknown non-semitic substrate. The study of **rehenyōt** (name given by the inhabitants to their Hobyot or Mehriyot speech) begun only in 2004's. There is no description on Hobyot in Oman. In disagreement with the opinion of Johnstone (1982: 339b) for whom the name **whēbyōt** collected in Oman is perhaps a variety of Hobyot[10] it should be affirmed that in the present state of our knowledge it is not yet possible to recognize any dialectal varieties of Hobyot.

Obviously there is a close relationship between Hobyot and Mehri; but the inventory of many linguistic features allows to classify each one as a specific language within the same sub-group. Only some features, among the more characteristic ones in Hobyot of Yemen will be discussed below.

2.2 Main linguistic features

2.2.a Phonology and phonetics

➢ The voiced pharyngeal /ʕ/ is conserved for the vast majority of speakers unlike in Mehri (MO, Met & Mot)

ʕɔ̄śər 'ten'; **hēmaʕ** 'he heard'; **ṣalʕɛ́yt** 'baldness' ; **wuʕɔ̄n** '(kind of) conjunctivitis'.

➢ Interdentals are maintained, including ejective ones in some words where (Met) has dentals.

mtɛniyōt 'tooth' ; **ðor** 'blood'; **ḍarb** 'piece of wood'; **ənṭayfōt** 'tibia'.

➢ There is a retroflex realization like in (Met) and (Mot).
Only a few speakers who have lived in Salalah for a long period have not it. Among Rehen inhabitants some do have it, others not.

---

[9] '[…] so muss man das Hóbyót als eigenständiges Mitglied der südarabischen Sprachgemeinschaft betrachten'.

[10] '[...] **whēbyōt**, may in fact be the same as Hobyot, with perhaps a greater admixture of Djibbali'.

beʈsɛn <ber.COP.+ sɛn.PR.3FPL.> 'they (f.) are here' ; **ḳəṛḍ** 'voice' ; **ṣūṛṯ** 'photo, image' ; **sənnuṛṯ** 'cat' . Unlike in (Met) & (Mot) there is no voiced realization of the feminine marker **-t**.

In some words /r/ is vocalized:

ānəb 'rabbit' (cf. (Mot) **aṛṇab**, (Met) **ḥaṛṇayb**).

➢ Reduction of the final nasal consonant may lead to the nasalization of the neighbour vowel (like in Jibbali) and dropping of the nasal.

fāṭəm > **fāṭə̃** 'Fatima'; **sɛn** > **sɛ̃ⁿ** 'they (f.); **rehén** > **rehɛ̃ⁿ** 'Rehen (village of)'; **xōm** > **xō̃** 'want'

With some speakers a fricative laryngeal ultra-short replaces the final nasal:

tum > **tŭʰ** 'you (pl.m.)'; **ten** > **tɛ̆ʰ** 'you (pl.f.)'.

The dropping of the final dental nasal explains the particular form of external feminine plurals **–tə**, **-te**, or **–tɛ** (instead of **-tən**), specific to Hobyot.

ħadūte/ɛ 'hands' ; **ħayrómtə** 'roads'; **faʕmtə** 'legs, feet'

➢ **s̻** instead of **š**

This realization of **š**, with the lips 'rounded and pounted' (Johnstone 1981: xiv), is characteristic to Central Jibbali. Although not attested in the speech of Arnold's informant (Arnold 1993: 19) some speakers have this articulation in Yemen.

➢ Weakening of /**l**/

Like in (Mot), (MO), Jibbali, Harsusi, the lateral /**l**/ may be vocalized into **–ō-**

ǧōd 'skin' (pl. **ǧilēd**) (~ **gēd**, pl. **gəlēd** (MO), Jibbali **gɔd**, Harsusi **gōd**, but (Met) **ǧeldīt**).

➢ The voiced velar fricative /**ġ**/ may be realized as a voiceless uvular [**q**] in borrowings from Arabic. The same phenomenon is attested in local Arabic and in some borrowings from Arabic in (Mot).

➢ Diphtongs

Like in Mehri, unlike in Jibbali, Hobyot has two diphtongs **aw/ɔw**, and **ay/ɛy/ey**. Their occurrence is less frequent than in Mehri.

ħōf 'Hawf (village of)' (~ **ħawf** in Mehri); **ʕayṣ̻ēṣ̻** 'bone' (~ Mehri **ʔāṣ̻áyṣ̻**) ; **īḳɛ́ybīn** 'scorpion' ; **kɔ̄b** 'dog' (Mehri in Yemen and in Oman **kawb**).

➢ Vocalic system

Unlike Jibbali and like Mehri, Hobyot has an opposition of quantity for the vowels.

2.2.b Morphology

➢ Dual

It is attested for nouns, pronouns and verbs. For adjectives it is more rare. The mark is **–i** suffix like in other languages, the noun in dual is usually followed by 'two'.

Like in other languages with pronominal dual, except in Rehen's speech, there is no opposition between the common 1rst and the 2nd persons.

Independent pronouns (no gender opposition) : 1st dual **tī** (Rehen **ki**); 2nd **ti**; 3rd **hī**.

➢ Deictic pronouns and adjectives

Formally the demonstratives are closer to Jibbali than Mehri. They vary in gender in singular and have a common form in plural. The proximal has two forms in singular (final **–h** or **–n**)

	Sg.m.	Sg.f.	Pl.c.
proximal	**đéh**, **đénəh**	**đih**, **đíneh**	**lɔnʰ** [lɔ̃ʰ] / **lēnɛh**
distal	**đɔ́hun** [đɔ̃ʰ]	**díhun**	**lɔ́hun** [lɔ̃ʰ]

➢ The most relevant feature in the noun morphology is the external plural of many feminine nouns (and a few masculine ones). The mark is –**tə**/-**tɛ**/-**te** (cf. above 3.2).

➢ There is no definite article in Hobyot but its traces can be found in the speech of some speakers in regular contact with (MO) and Jibbali. The presence of the definite article induces a gemination of the first consonant of the definite noun:

The same speaker in the same sentence: **beyt đə-ġī** and **a^{b}beyt đə-ġī** 'the house of my brother'.

➢ Subjunctive

Only the 1st sg. has the preformant element **l-** (like (Mot), (MO) and other languages in Oman).

➢ Conditional

Hobyot has conserved a particular but vestigial form to express conditional (with an irrealis value), only for some verbs like **kun** 'be, become'. The paradigm is similar to conditional in MO (with a clitic –**n** suffixed to the subjunctive scheme).

2.2.c Syntax

➢ When the definite article is used, the construction of the determined phrase is not submitted to the essential rule in MO and Jibbali, and the personal pronoun is not suffixed to a noun determined by the definite article (cf. ex. above in 2.2.b)

➢ The direct construction (or *status constructus*) between two nouns when they are in a genitive relation is very rare in my corpus. The two elements of the phrase are usually connected by the connective **đ-** (when the determined noun is singular) and sometimes **l-** when it is plural).

➢ In Rehen the pronominal dual is reinforced by the use of the number 'two'

troh/trit-i-kī 'we two(m.)/(f.)' ;

and sometimes expressed by a periphrastic construction <two - prep 'from' and independent pronoun in plural>.

troh mən həm sīro 'They two left'

In this example the speaker is using the dual verb form and the same pronoun as in (Mot).

➢ Agreement

The agreement with a noun in dual is often in plural.

ġağğen-i troh syōrəm 'The two boys left'

➢ Future

Future is not expressed by the verbo-nominal form (participle) but with a periphrasis compound by a noun : **mɛd/med** + suf. pr. referring to the subject, the verb is in subjunctive:

mīt mɛd-ək tənkaʕ ħōf 'When will you (sg.m.) go to Hawf?'

This form is specific to Hobyot. It can be borrowed by (Mot) speakers of the common area (cf. above).

➢ Negation

The negative particle is simple (**laʔ**) and placed at the end of the sentence as in (Met), or it is double ((v)**l-** … **laʔ**) and each element is circumfixed to the negated phrase or sentence as in (Mot) and (MO). Both constructions may alternate with the same speaker:

> **ḥad láʔ** <someone/ NEG.> and **əl- ḥad láʔ** <NEG./ someone/ NEG.> '(there is) nobody' ; **b-śḥɛyr l-šīn siyērōt láʔ** 'in the mountains we have not car'; **hoh ʾxɔm ləktəb láʔ** <I/ want.IPFV.1SG/ write.SUBJ.1SG./ NEG.> ; and **hoh ɔl ʾxɔm ləktəb láʔ** 'I don't want to write' ; (**əl**) **yixɔm yə́nśɔz šehi láʔ** 'he doesn't want to drink tea'

In prohibitive sentence, only the second element is expressed in the final of the sentence:

> **tezēm láʔ !** 'Don't give!'

2.2.d Vocabulary

Among the typical Hobyot words we selected:

> **mḳʌṭiʕōt** 'middle finger' (**mənḳɛyrōt** (Mot), **mənḳərēt** (MO), **mənšérɔ́t** (Jibbali)) - **būwah** 'here' and sometimes **boh** (= MO). Compare with Hobyōt in Oman bōn (*ML*) ,**bɔh** in Jibbali, **būma** (Mot), **bōma(h)** (Met)).

A very common expression in Hobyot is used in (Mot) but not in (Met)

> **l-ʕadēt** (or **l-ʕadēd**) **đə-ħayōm** 'every day' (cf. **ʔādēd** (MO) and **aʕdéd** (Jibbali) 'every, each').

xōm 'want' as in Harsusi differs from Mehri (where all the varieties have **ħō/ɔ̄m**)

> **txōm śxōf** ? 'Do you (sg.m.) want milk?'

skóf is the common term to mean 'sit, stay, rest'. To my knowledge it is not used in (Mot) and not attested in *ML*. But in Jibbali **səkuf** means 'sit'.

Words are common to oriental varieties of Mehri (see above) and sometimes to Jibbali:

> **tet**, pl. **ħaynɛt** 'woman' - **ġoğğit** 'young girl' - **śḥɛyr**, **śḥēr** 'mountains' like in (Mot), **śhayr** (MO), **śḥɛr** (Eastern Jibbali), but **ğibēl** in (Met)**.**

The name of the village of Jadib is **ğōdub** in Hobyot, **ğōdeb** in (Mot) and **ğādib** in (Met).

Many idiolectal or dialectal variants can be explained by the influence of languages and dialects in contact:

> A Hobyot native speaker settled in al-Ghaydha uses **nṣərōməh** 'now' but in Hawf they use **nəṣānoh.** The former is to compare with Mehri **ṣərōməh,** and the latter with Jibbali **náṣanu**. The two Hobyot occurences have the preformant **n-. –** Hobyot **ṭōna** or **ṭāne** 'thus' is comparable to **ṭénu** in Jibbali**.** In Rehen they use **wutōm** close to Mehri **wuṭōmə** (Met), **uṭōma** (Mot), **wəṭōməh** (MO).

The borrowings from Arabic are not more important than in Mehri.

2.2.f Literature

No Hobyot literary text has been collected. The speakers say that their poetry is only in Mehriyot.

2.3. Conclusion

The few examples presented above highlight the complexity of the linguistic situation and the difficulty of determining the boundaries between an idiolectal and dialectal variety, the difficulty to classify a feature as specific to a subgroup or as resulting from the influence of contacts inside the subgroup. It is virtually impossible to know presently what variety influences the other.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

All the Modern South Arabian languages are endangered to variable degrees which makes urgent a more extensive investigation. They are implanted in the South of the Peninsula for several millennia and convey therefore a very ancient common culture of Yemen and Oman which has also spread to the African shore of the Red Sea. Because of the absence of written documents in the modern languages, it is vital to preserve languages and culture by collecting data in the mother tongues: recording conversation, literary texts, narratives and witnesses on the way of life, traditional techniques. This is the only way to acquire a deeper knowledge of the Southern Semitic family and the history of populations speaking MSAL, and to pass on the future generations a possibility to be acquainted with their nonmaterial patrimony. The present illustration of the originality of Mehri and Hobyot, of their linguistic relationships, of their common features and differences show that in spite of the incompleteness of the data, their description allows to better access the structure of the Semitic languages in general. This research also provides information bearing on the history of populations, their social life, their moving, the relations with their neighbours. Moreover, it makes a substantial contribution to the preservation of the entire human heritage.

ABBREVIATIONS

Names of Languages : -B Bedouin variety - (Met) Mehriyet – (MO) Mehri spoken in Oman (= Nagd Mehri (NM) for Johnstone) - (Mot) Mehriyot – (MY) Mehri spoken in Yemen (Met & Mot) (= Sharqiya Mehri or Southern (SM) for Johnstone).

AUX. auxiliary - c. common - C consonant - COP. copula – Deriv. derived - F. feminine – IPFV. imperfective - M. masculine –NEG. (particle of) negation - PFV. perfective - PL. plural – PR. pronoun – PREP. preposition - SG. singular — SUBJ. subjunctive - SUF. suffix(ed) - V. verb – v. vowel – v : long vowel

Besides the IPA symbols some symbols usually used by Semitists are conserved:
ś voiceless lateral fricative (IPA **ɬ**) and its ejective equivalent **ṣ́** (voiced **ẓ́** ~ **ɮ** in IPA) - **š** ~ **ʃ** in IPA – **đ** ~ **ð** and **ŧ** ~ **θ** in IPA – **ġ** ~ **ɣ** - **ǧ** ~ **ʒ** in IPA, **j** in Jahn's transcription- All the ejectives are transcribed like the Arabic emphatics ex. **ḳ** ~ IPA **k'** – **y** palatal semi-vowel ~ **j** in IPA.

REFERENCES

Arnold, W. 1993. Zur Position des Hobyot in den neusüdarabischen Sprachen, *ZAL* 25, p.17-24.

Fresnel, F. 1838. Lettres sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'Islamisme. *Journal Asiatique* 3e série, V (janvier, février, juin 1838), VI (août, septembre 1838). Paris.

—— 1838. Note sur la langue hhimyarite. *Journal Asiatique* 3e série, VI (juillet 1838). Paris : 79-84.

Hein, W. 1909. *Mehri- und Ḥaḍrami-Texte gesammelt im Jahre 1902 in Gischin, bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Dav. Heinr. Müller.* Wien, Alfred Hölder.

Jahn, A. 1902. Mehri-sprache in Südarabien. Texte und Wörterbuch. Wien: Hölder.
—— 1905. *Grammatik der Mehri-Sprache in Südarabien* (KAWW, Phil.-Hist. Kl. 150/6). Wien, Hölder.

Johnstone, T.M. 1975. The Modern South Arabian languages, *Afro-Asiatic Linguistics* 1/5, p. 93-121.

——1977. *Ḥarsūsi Lexicon and English-Ḥarsūsi Word-List.* London: Oxford University Press.

—— 1981. *Jibbāli Lexicon*. London, Oxford University Press.

—— 1982. Ḥadramawt. iii. Language and Dialect. *Encyclopedia of Islam*, n.e. Supplement, fasc.5-6. Leiden, Brill**:** 339-340.

—— 1987. *Mehri Lexicon and English-Mehri Word-List, with Index of the English Definitions in the Jibbāli Lexicon, compiled by G. Rex Smith*. London, SOAS.

Lonnet, A. 1985. The Modern South Arabian languages in the P.D.R. of Yemen. *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 5: 49-55.

Müller, D.-H. 1902. *Die Mehri- und Soqoṭri Sprache*. I *Texte*. (Südarabische Expedition, Band IV) Wien, Hölder.

—— 1907. *idem.* III *Šḫauri-Texte*. (Südarabische Expedition, Band VII) Wien, Hölder.

Simeone-Senelle, M.-Cl. 1991. Récents développements des recherches sur les langues sudarabiques modernes, in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Hamito-Semitic Congress 1987*, vol. II. H.G. Mukarovsky ed. Wien, Beitrage zur Afrikanistik: 321-337.

—— 1991, 1992. Notes sur le premier vocabulaire soqotri: le Mémoire de Wellsted (1835), *Matériaux Arabes et Sudarabiques* (*MAS*), n.s.3: 91-135 and n.s.4: 4-77

—— 1993. L'expression du futur dans les langues sudarabiques modernes, *MAS*, n.s.5, p. 249-78.

—— 1994. La négation dans les langues sudarabiques modernes, *MAS*, n.s.6, p. 187-211.

—— 1995. Incantations thérapeutiques dans la médecine traditionnelle des Mahra du Yémen [text in Mehriyot] *Quaderni di Studi Arabi* 13: 131-157.

—— 1997. The Modern South Arabian Languages. *The Semitic Languages*. R. Hetzron ed. London, Routledge**:** 379-423.

—— 1998. Les langues sudarabiques modernes: des langues sémitiques en danger? *16th International Congress of Linguistics, 20-25 July 1997*. B. Caron, Elsevier**:** CDRom Paper n°044.

Thomas, B.1937. Four strange tongues from South Arabia - The Hadara group, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, p. 231-329.

Wellsted, J. R. 1835. Report on the Island of Socotra. *The Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* iv / 39. March 1835: 138-166.
—— 1835. Memoir on the Island of Socotra. *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* v: 129-229.
—— 1840. *Travels to the City of the Caliphs*. London.

Les langues sudarabiques modernes





