

Philologisches und Historisches
zwischen Anatolien und Sokotra

Analecta Semitica

In Memoriam Alexander Sima

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Harrassowitz Verlag

Maritime terminology in the Mehri-language of the east coast of Yemen

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0. Preface: Mehri is a Semitic language spoken by approximately 100,000 people in both Yemen and Oman. In Yemen it is spoken in the eastern governorate, from Seyhut to the coast of the Yemeni-Omani border. Mehri is one of the Modern South Arabian languages: Ḥarsūsi (Oman), Jibbāli and Hobyōt (Oman and on the Yemenite-Omani border) and Soqōtri on the island of Soqōtra.¹

This research was carried out during several visits to the University of Heidelberg, beginning in December 2001. At that time the late Dr. Alexander Sima was working there with the help of the informant Mr. ʿAskari Saʿad Ḥujayrān. Mr. Hujayrān, apart from his teaching ability, appeared to be a person of wide knowledge of fishing, and was indeed a fisherman himself in a society of fishermen. He resided in the town of Ḥawf, on the eastern coast of Yemen, not far from the Omani border. In order to identify the fish species, I used photographs in books.² But it should be noted that the informant is not academically expert in the subject, and he sometimes hesitated about exact identification.

1. General: In the Mehri-language a fisherman is called *bāl³ di-rawrām*, literally “the owner of the sea”, sometimes also *msowlāk* from the Yemeni Arabic word *maslak* “profession” or “occupation”. Another Arabic loanword based on the Mehri

1 Harry Stroemer, *Mehri Texts from Oman based on the Field Materials of T. M. Johnstone* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), p. xiii.

2 Especially Randall's book on the fish of the neighbouring Oman; see John E. Randall, *Coastal Fishes of Oman* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995); also S. Frank, *Meeresfische* (Hanau: Werner Dausien, 1998).

3 Compare Wolf Leslau, *Lexique Soqōtri (Sudarabique Moderne)*. (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1938), pp. 90-91. See also T. M. Johnstone, *Ḥarsūsi Lexicon and English-Ḥarsūsi Word-list* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 14.

morphological system is *bəḥḥōr*⁴ from the Arabic "sea", i.e. *baḥr*. A fisherman who can swim is called *sibbōḥi*.⁵

The word *ṣayd*⁶ is used as in Arabic for "fishery" or "fish". A good catch of fish is called *xēr* (Arabic: "wealth"), while an extremely successful fishing expedition is designated as *nahib* (literally "booty").

A fisherman (*ṣayyōd* pl. *ṣayyōdi*) who is relatively new to the trade is called *ḥaydān*, whereas a veteran is *dwīl* or, in Arabic, *gādīm* (< *qadīm*). Fresh fish are called *ṣayd tariyy*⁷ versus *ṣayd ḥbēq* ("not freshly caught"), which are normally not eaten because there are rich fisheries in the region.

2. External features: The head is called *ḥrē*⁸ (pl. *ḥriyye*). Teeth normally denote shark teeth and the word is used in plural, *mīḥni* (sing. *māṭinyōt*)⁹. The mouth is called *qafṛr* (pl. *qafṛōr*)¹⁰. For the fins, the Arabic word *zaʿānif* is used, whereas the gills have the Mehri name *ṣagnōn*¹¹ (known also among fishermen as the Arabic *xayašim*).¹² The scales are named *šaʿāf*. The caudal fin has the generalizing name *ḍanūb* (literally "tail", pl. *ḍanābīn*).¹³

3. Weather

3.1 Weather Terms: The ocean can be calm - *šwōr* (this word is used only to denote sea-waves), e.g. "*rawrām šwōr*"¹⁴ *imō* ("the ocean is calm today"). The term for "wavy sea" is a loan-word from the Arabic noun with a Mehri morphological form i.e. *mawḡit* (Arabic *mawḡ* "wave" and not *māʿiḡ* "wavy"). If the waves are high, the Mehri of Ḥawf say *bīs šaʿfāt* (literally "it has winds"; the Arabic word *ryāḥ* is seldom used). A full storm is called *ḥmīmāt*; this term is used whether the storm is on the sea or on the coast. High tide is called *karr* in Mehri (and is known also by the Arabic term *madd*); the ebb is *fidā*.

4 Compare *bəḥḥōr* "sailor" in T. M. Johnstone, *Mehri Lexicon* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1987), p. 46.

5 Compare the Arabic root *s-b-ḥ* (to swim).

6 *'aḡḥayk māken ṣayd* "he caught a lot of fish"; *'aḡḥayk xawr ṣayd* "he caught few fish". See also Joan Copeland Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabic Sabeian Dialect*. (Harvard: Harvard Semitic Studies 25. The President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1982), p. 421.

7 See Maximilian Bittner, *Studien zur Laut- und Formenlehre der Mehri-Sprache in Südarabien* (Wien: In Kommission bei Alfred Hoelder, 1914), IV. *Zu den Partikeln*, p. 55.

8 Compare Johnstone (1977), p. 61.

9 Compare G. Oman, p. 6.

10 Literally "lips".

11 Johnstone (1987), p. 375.

12 Compare *xasīm* "nose".

13 Compare Arabic *ḍanab* and Hebrew *zānāv*. Compare G. Oman, p. 10.

14 See Johnstone (1987), p. 388: "quiet, calm".

3.2 The seasons: (from Arabic *mawāsim*, sing. *mawsim*) The fishing season is normally from October until May. In May the ocean becomes high and the fish become scarce, except in the shore-city of Sayhūt some 200 km west of Ḥawf. Hujayrān mentioned that the year begins in spring, between March and the beginning of May. This season is called *zbġġ*. Thereafter, the rainy season begins and continues until the end of September, as a byproduct of the Indian monsoon. This season is called *xarf*, which means also “rain”.¹⁵ October is the hottest month of the year in the region of Ḥawf and is regarded as a season in itself, which is named *zayrəb*. The days with the highest temperature in this season are called *qayḡ*.¹⁶ December begins the cold season, which is dry and called *sētū*.¹⁷ Cold temperatures in December and January are called *zābāl* or *ħəbōr*, whereas severe cold is used with the terminology *qāsām* and *wīyān*.

4. Nets and fishhooks: The gill net is called *moġədfōt*.¹⁸ For smaller fish the cast net *maġwīr* is used, and if it is thrown while swimming it is called *zāġi*.¹⁹ A larger net is *məʿōn*, thrown from a little boat called *sunbūq* or *sambūq*. The beach seine *ġarf*²⁰ is used only on sandy beaches. Small nets for fishing sardines (*ʿayd*) are called *sāġid*, while larger nets for the same purpose are known as *sāqāt*. The hooks are called in Mehri *qaylēb*, *mšafarāt* and the fishing-rod *šinnōra*.²¹ Fish are caught with bait, *ʿawmīt*, usually consisting of worms, sardines, bread or octopus (*tārbaħt*²²). The anchor is called *bawharāt*, and a variant, *prūši*.²³ The informant insisted that this

15 Compare *xóref* in Modern Hebrew in the meaning of “winter”, whereas *xóref* in Biblical Hebrew and *xarf* in Arabic mean “autumn”.

16 The same word exists in Classical Arabic. See E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, repr. 1997), Part 7, p. 2579: “the most vehement, or intense, heat of summer”.

17 Compare *stāw* in Biblical Hebrew (“winter” and in Modern Hebrew “autumn”) and *šitā* in Arabic (“winter, rain”). Mehri children born in the relevant season, are named *zābani*, *xarfi*, *zarbi* and *šitwi*.

Other Mehri meteorological terms that concern fishermen are as follows:

Kaws nagdi (“northern breeze”); *ħazyēb* (“southern breeze”); *bīlōt* (“dusty wind”); *hudd* (“thunder”; cf. the Aramaic Weather God, Hadad); *barq* (“lightning”, the same word as in Arabic); *gallōt* (“fog”); *qazʿāt* (“clouds”, collective word); *āġeymōt hītəm* (“clouding”; literally: the skies (*hītəm*) are clouding); *nagš* or *naġas* (“drizzle”; the Arabic Term *radāḡ*, is also used among the Mehri).

18 See Johnstone (1987), p. 132: “big fishing net”.

19 “*aštīyūd bi-zāġi*” he uses the *-zāġ*-net for fishing.

20 In Palestinian Arabic *ġarf*. See Dani Golani and David Darom. *Handbook for the Fishes of Israel* (in Hebrew: *Madrix ha-Dagim shel Yisrael*) (Jerusalem: Keter, 1997), p.22.

21 Probably derives from the Arabic word *šinnāra*.

22 Occasionally the Arabic *uħtabūt*, a corruption of the Greek “octopus”.

23 Compare Leslau, pp. 96-97: *barōsi* “ancre”.

word originated with Indian sailors.²⁴ A relatively large and heavy anchor, let down to the sea bed, is the *hánabat*.

5. Boat Terminology: Small wooden boats for two or three fishermen are called *hūri*. Larger boats for sardine fishing are the *sunbūq*. In the past there used to be sailing boats, *ʿawēši*, which were typical for Rās ilXēme, but there are no longer seen. Today boats bigger than the *ʿawēši* are used and are called *lanč* or *ğalbūt*.

6. Sharks, Fish and other Sea Creatures

6.1 Sharks²⁵: The Mehri, according to the informant prefer to eat sharks rather than any other fish. All the shark species come under the general term *lxaym*²⁶ and they are eaten with enjoyment and believed to be beneficial for one's health, especially in potency problems. The informant noted that all the shark species are fished in deep water and not near the sandy shore (*hayq*²⁷). Queensland Shark (*Carcharhinus amblyrhynchoides*) is known by the Mehri as *bār*²⁸ *d*²⁹ *ʿayd*, i.e. literally 'the son of sardine', an ironical name considering its size, about 1.5 m. This shark is believed to be a very powerful stimulus for erection and very delicate in its taste. The genus is regarded among the Mehri as very dangerous to people. Another sort of shark is the Whitetip Reef Shark (*Triaenodon obesus*), called in Mehri *hulān*.³⁰ This type of shark is regarded as less tasty than the Queensland. The Whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*) is a very huge creature and is called among the Mehri *qōfōi*³¹. Another large shark is the *sirūt*. The informant was not sure about the picture of the specific type,

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- 24 The informant added that the fishermen from the Emirates in the Persian Gulf, pronounce this word *barūzi*.
- 25 In North Yemen *hash* or *gursh*, see Giovanni Oman, (*L'ittionimia nei Paesi Arabi dei Mari Rosso, Arabico e del Golfo Persico (o Arabico)*). Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale, Dipartimento di Studi e Ricerche su Africa e Paesi Arabi, 1996), p. 10.
- 26 On the root *l-x-m* or its variant *l-h-m* in Semitic languages and its connection to the main foods of each Semitic people, see G. Krotkoff 1969, "Lahm 'Fleisch' und lehem 'Brot'" in: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 162, pp. 76-82. The shark is called *samak ilgirš* in the Arabic dialect used in the region of Hawf. Compare also the meaning of the root *l-x-m* in Old South Arabic, see Biella (1982), p. 485: "strike, hit in the face". Compare in Soqotri "*l-h-m*", see Leslau, p. 232: "grand poisson, requin". On other shark types in the Red Sea, see Golani and Darom, pp. 30-31.
- 27 Johnstone (1987), p. 197. See also T. L. Kane, *Amharic-English Dictionary* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990), Volume I, p. 26.
- 28 Like the Aramaic *bar* "son". Compare Leslau, p. 95.
- 29 Like the Aramaic and Arabic meaning of "owner" or the genitive usage. Ibid, p. 119.
- 30 The root denotes in Mehri "madness" or "to be mad". Johnstone (1987), p. 194. See also Maximilian Bittner, *Studien zur Laut- und Formenlehre der Mehri-Sprache in Südarabien* (Wien: In Kommission bei Alfred Hölder, 1915), V. (*Anhang.*) *Zu ausgewählten Texten*, p. 16 "Zu B. Der närrische Mann", 3., *háywul*.
- 31 Compare G. Oman, pp. 22-23.

but it might be the Tiger Shark (*Galeocerdo cuvier*). He was also not sure about the exact identification of the shark called in Mehri *dāqasīt* but thought it might be the Tawny Nurse Shark (*Nebrius ferrugineus*). This type of shark is cooked after the flesh has been dried and is believed to be an aphrodisiac. Another shark type which was not identified is *bār dams*.

The informant connects some other sorts of sea creatures the rays, to the shark family. Zoologically he is correct. The Giant Guitarfish (*Rhynchobatus djiddensis*) is called in Mehri *šamtūta* and sometimes phonetically *šantūta*. Among the Torpedo Rays (family *Torpedinidae*³²) the informant noted the *Torpedo panthera* which in Mehri is called *hiyžlīn*. According to the informant all species of this family are capable of delivering a powerful shock which may stun the prey or provide a defence. The sting is called *mūḡēt* in Mehri or *'ibra* or *msallaṭ* in the local Arabic. Here, too, all the details turned out to be very accurate. Bigger sorts of the *Torpedo panthera* were denoted by the informant as *kādēr* and *ḡaysuf*. Ḥujayrān added that the *Torpedo panthera* are eaten today whereas they were totally rejected in the past.

Mantas and Devil Rays were also associated by the informant with the shark family. Ḥujayrān mentioned the Kuhl's Devil Ray (*Mobola kuhlii*) which is edible and called in Mehri *bar-ta 'tarras*.³³ In this family we find also the Manta (*Mania birostris*), known in Mehri as *ṭabbōqāt*.³⁴ This genus is widely spread, has red flesh which is dried before cooking and is caught in large nets like *žāḡi* and *m'ōn*.

6.2 Other Fish names

Mehri	Latin	English	Arabic
	Family Scombridae	TUNA and MACKEREL	
<i>ṭarnīk</i>	<i>Scomberomorus commerson</i> ³⁵	NARROW-BARRED SPANISH MACKEREL	<i>kan'ad</i> ³⁶
<i>šarwīn</i> ³⁷	<i>Sarda orientalis</i>	STRIPED BONITO	
<i>ḡayḡār</i> ³⁸	<i>Thunnus</i> ³⁹	TUNA	<i>ḡawdar</i>

32 Compare Guido G. Lanfranco, *The Fish around Malta (Central Mediterranean)*. Malta: Progress Press Co. Ltd., 1996), p. 8-9.

33 Etymologically "the son of the bride". The informant observed that this sea creature looks like a bride.

34 The root denotes in Mehri "to fall in mud", "to be dusty, muddy, dirty". See Johnston (1987), p. 405.

35 See Menahem Dor, *Clofres Checklist of the Fishes of the Red Sea* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities 1984), p. 264.

36 In the Arabic dialect of Ḍofār, according to the informant. Compare G. Oman, p. 105.

37 In its early phase it is called *gidēb*.

38 A general name for tuna in Mehri. See also G. Oman, p. 104.

Mehri	Latin	English	Arabic
miriyēt	Family Gerridae	SILVWERBELLY	
	<i>Diplodus sargus kotschyi</i> ⁴⁰	ONESPOT PORGY?	
ğäzbüt, hib ⁵ ayd ⁴²	Family Serranidae	GROUPEr and SEA BASS ⁴¹	
	<i>Cephalopholis argus?</i>	PEACOCK GROUPEr?	
hadər ⁴³	<i>Epinephelus</i> ⁴⁴	SPOTTED GROUPEr?	hāmūr
ʿayd ⁴⁵ qīšarwīn	Family Clupeidae	SARDINE	
	<i>Escualosa thoracata</i>	WHITE SARDINE	Sardīn, bāga
	<i>Dussumieria acuta</i>	RAINBOW	
	<i>Valenciennes</i>	SARDINE	
ʿašfīn	Subfamily Pristigasterinae	ILISHA	
	<i>Ilisha compressa</i>	THIN ILISHA	
hilfōt ⁴⁶	Family Scaridar	PARROTFISH	
	<i>Scarus arabicus</i>	ARABIAN PARROTFISH	Babağā
labdžt ⁴⁷	Family Solediae	SOLE	

- 39 On the sorts of tuna in Oman, see Randall, pp. 375-376. See also R. Paxton and W. N. Eschmeyer, *Fische: Enzyklopaedie der Tierwelt* (Singapore: Orbis Verlag, 1993), pp. 190-192.
- 40 The informant was not sure about the identification of this fish. See G. Oman, p. 84.
- 41 Compare this genus in the Palestinian dialect of Northern Israel: Aharon Geva-Kleinberger, "A text in the fisherman dialect of Acre (Akko)". In: *Estudios Dialectología Norteafricana y Andalusí 7*, (Zaragoza: Institución "Fernando el Católico", 2003), pp. 129 line 3.
- 42 The popular Mehri etymology for this fish is "seven sardines" or "seven people who tried to catch this fish and did not succeed".
- 43 A tasty fish, according to the informant.
- 44 All the colours of the *Epinephelus* are called *hadər*. A very big fish of this family is called in Mehri *wé yqad*. All the members of this family are caught on a fishhook (*šinnōra*).
- 45 Compare the meaning in Soqotri of "soul". See Leslau, p. 298.
- 46 Compare G. Oman, pp. 100-101.
- 47 A general name for soles. In Mehri the root denotes "to strike, knock, hit". See Johnstone (1987), p. 250.

Mehri	Latin	English	Arabic
<i>baʿl d-ŋūç</i> ⁴⁸	Family <i>Belonidae</i> <i>Ablennes hians</i>	NEEDLEFISH FLAT NEEDLEFISH	' <i>Abu-Rimh</i> , ' <i>Abu-Harba</i>
<i>zarb/š'ubōn</i> ⁴⁹	Family <i>Chanidae</i> <i>Arius bilineatus</i>	MILKFISH ROUNDSNOUT SEA CATFISH	
<i>ħimīr</i> ⁵⁰	<i>Plotus lineatus</i>	STRIPED EEL CATFISH	
<i>mšurfayn</i>	Family <i>Holocentridae</i> <i>Sargocentron diadema</i>	SQUIRRELFISH and SOLDIERFISH CROWN SQUIRRELFISH	
<i>bādrayb/ bār ħamrān</i> ⁵¹ <i>xamximōt</i> ⁵²	Family <i>Carangidae</i> <i>Carangoides</i> <i>Caranx melampygius</i>	JACK (LONGFIN?) JACK BLUEFIN TREVALLY	
<i>ħigālālār</i> ⁵³	<i>Trachinotus botla</i>	LARGE SPOTTED POMPANO	
<i>mižrāq</i> ⁵⁴	<i>Carnax djedaba</i>	KINHFISH	<i>Mašaṭ</i>

48 Literally "spear-owner". A general terminology for all needlefish.

49 This fish is regarded as not tasty and is normally not eaten. The informant noted that this sort of fish is found near the shore (*ħayk*). See also *ħayq* in Bittner, (1915), I. *Zur Lautlehre und zum Nomen in engeren Sinne*, p. 22.

50 Fish with barbells.

51 A very delicious fish according to the informant. Actually all the *Carangoide* are good to eat

52 The *xamximōt* is preferred for soups. Another fish of this family is called *quz'ēr*. The informant could not identify it exactly.

53 This sort of fish is edible. The informant noted that it has three spots. Randall, p. 188: "silvery grey, darker dorsally, with one to five large, vertically oblong, dark grey spots along lateral line (spots touching to one-third below lateral line, increasing in number with growth, none on fish less than 10-13 cm fork length)".

54 Compare the word *mižrāq* to the biblical Hebrew *mašrēq* or *masrēq* (comb). Indeed, this type of fish is called *mašaṭ* (comb) in Arabic in the Region of Ḥawf. See Maximilian Bittner, *Studien zur Šhauri-Sprache in den Bergen von Dofār am Persischen Meerbusen* (Wien: In Kommission bei Alfred Hoelder, 1916), II, *Zum Verbum und zu den übrigen Redeteilen*, p. 5. See G. Oman, p. 70.

Mehri	Latin	English	Arabic
	Family Lutjanidae	SNAPPER	
ʿalīšarrīn	<i>Lutjanus argentimaculatus?</i>	MANGROVE SNAPPER	
ḡattōḡ	<i>Lutjanus monostigma</i>	ONESPOT SNAPPER	
	Family Haemulidae	GRUNT	
zēki ⁵⁵	<i>Plectorhinchus</i> ⁵⁶ <i>gibbosus?</i>	DUSKY THICKLIP?	
šabīdis ⁵⁷	Family Lethrinidae	EMPEROR	
libidēt ⁵⁸	Family Acanthuridae	SURGEONFISH	
	Family Balistidae ⁵⁹	TRIGGERFISH	
karbōbāt ⁶⁰	<i>Abalistes stellatus</i>	STARRY TRIGGERFISH	
	Family Diodontidae	PORCUPINEFISH and BURRFISH	
ʿayn qašunt ⁶¹	<i>Diodon liturosus</i>	BLACKBLOTCHED PORCUPINEFISH	
	Family Hemirhamphidae	NEEDLEFISH	
ḡabhāb	<i>Hemirhamphus marginatus</i>	NEEDLEFISH, BARRED HALF-BEAK	ḡabhāb ⁶²

55 Etymologically "tasty" and indeed, regarded as a very delicious fish type.

56 It was difficult to identify the specific fish, although the informant was sure about the family *Plectorhinchus*.

57 Etymologically "the glowing or shining one". According to the informant, the fish tail has a shining yellow colour. It was difficult for the informant to identify the exact sort of fish from this family. *Lerhrinus nebulosus?*

58 None of the fish of this family were eaten in the past, according to the informant. See G. Oman, pp. 82-83.

59 In German Drückerfische. See more on this family in S. Frank, *Meeresfische* (Hanau: Werner Dausien, 1998), pp. 206-209.

60 This fish has three dorsal fins which look like a cockscomb. Compare the Hebrew word *karbōlet!* Not only this genus is called *karbōbāt*, but also other fish which have a similar cock's comb, as the *Odonus niger* (Redtooth Triggerfish) and *Cantherhines paradalis* (Honeycomb Filefish) and other sorts of Filefish. On the dorsal fins, see John and Gillian Lythgoe, *Fishes of the Sea* (London: Blandford Press, 1971), p. 13. This type of fish is called in Saudi Arabia *samak xinzīr* ("pig-fish"); see G. Oman, pp. 122-123.

61 Called in Saudi Arabia *samak drinma*; see G. Oman, p. 125.

62 See e.g. Oman, pp. 54-55.

6.3 Oysters: It was relatively difficult for the informant to sort out this class, although there is a broad spectrum of oyster names in the Mehri language. A general name for oysters is *mzōbed* as a collective, rarely *mzōbdēt*. Children normally play with the common sort, which has various colours and is called in Mehri *hančōḡ*. The oyster known in Latin as *buccinum* is called by the locals *ʿašfōr*; *mytilusedulis* are called *fīdāk*; *ostrea edulis* are *zukt*. *hubē* is a black shelf oyster.

6.4 Crabs: The informant mentioned a red crab named in Mehri *hišyōt*, in Arabic *bū-maqaššayn*⁶³ or *gibgāb*.

6.5 Other sea creatures: the informant mentioned several maritime genera during our meetings. The first is the Moray Eel (family Muraenidae) generally called in Mehri *ʿarōf* in the singular and seldom, in the plural *ʿarfin*. This type is not eaten by the locals. Also jellyfish types are totally rejected as a dish. They have a generalizing terminology, in the singular *šarfāqat* and, very seldom *šarfāq*, in the plural. The jellyfish common in the region is white.

Whales are normally called *sōhawṭat*.⁶⁴ A common expression in Mehri is *felān* (or *ben-ʿādin*) *dī-lbōd ʿāmer ʿAllā hiš sōhawṭat* (This person became, by God's will, enormously fat as a whale). A very large sort of whale, according to the informant, is the *bahrōḡ*.

Dolphins (*gbēr*⁶⁵) are very common on the Hawf coast. Ḥujayrān remarked that every now and then they pop out of the water (*yḡōdeḡ*). Dolphins are rarely eaten by the local coast population.

Octopus (*tārbaḡt* in Mehri and *ʿuḡtabūt* in Arabic).

Ink-fish (*ʿaṭarwōt*, *hiḡfōt*⁶⁶).

7. Seaweed: The most common sort of seaweed sort is *zlaḡrōt*, which is widespread, and is rough and thin. The other sort known by the informant is called *qazamīr*, and is less common. Its colour is between green and black. Seaweed is not eaten among the coastal population of the Mehri.

8. Fish colours and features: The colours used for fish by the informant were: *hōwar*⁶⁷ (black); *lbōḡ*⁶⁸ (white); *ʿōfār*⁶⁹ or *qīrmizi* (red); *qīrqēmīd* (yellow); *hažōr*

63 Literally "the owner of two scissors".

64 Compare Kane, p. 1035. Compare Immanuel Loew, *Fauna und Mineralien der Juden* (repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1969), pp. 93-93.

65 See Johnstone (1987), p. 131.

66 In Arabic *ḡabbār* (< *ḡibr* = ink).

67 The root *ḡ-w-r* in North-Western Semitic languages denotes the colour white. See Johnstone (1987), p. 195. Compare also Leslau, p. 168.

68 Compare *lavān* in Hebrew.

(green); *krīmi* (creame); *bēḡ* (beige); *dhēb* (golden); *hīb ʿayd*⁷⁰ (multicolored); *šabīdiš* (glowing, radiant); *rzēz*⁷¹ (small color points); *mxatṭat* (stripped).

A relatively big fish is termed *šox*; middle-size fish are *wasat* or *mutawassit* in Arabic; tiny fish are given the general names *šabšōb* or *qašōwal*; The informant occasionally used *tahayq* and *qannūn* in the same meaning, literally “small”.

9. Culinary: Fish and all the shark types are dried, except for the head and intestines. First the fish is cut into two pieces and then into slices (*ʿaxādīd*). It is then salted for two days, rinsed and redried. A favorite combination for fish sauces is the *šfiyūf*⁷², which contains oil (*salīt*⁷³) and butter (*maḥḥ*⁷⁴).

If the fish is baked in an oven it is called *barāk furun*; if cooked over coal *šfiyūf ʿaṭār fhām*; if on glowing stones *zabyīn (mābūt) ʿaṭār šawīr*⁷⁵; if grilled it is *sā ʿaḡalōt biḥmu ʿaṭār šiwōt*⁷⁶; baking in a hole in the ground is the *dāhyūr barāk tānnūr*; fish grilled on a spit⁷⁷ is *šfiyūf ʿaṭār kabo* or *ṭifer*; fish-soup *təqazaḥ-d-šayd*.

Names of fish dishes: *zāynāt-w-ḥirēz* (fish-balls with rice); *zāynāt-w-xabz* (fish-balls in bread); *lxaym b-təqazaḥt-w-ḥirēz* (shark-meat soup with vegetables, especially onion, garlic and tomato sauce); *lxaym qaysaʿ-w-ḥirēz lbōḡ* (shark-meat in white rice); *ḥirēz bi-maḥḥ-w-ʿayd* (rice in butter and sardines); *ʿayd li*⁷⁸-*itōmar* (sardines in dates); *ʿayd midherōt w-xabz* (roasted sardines in wheat); *ʿayd qašʿit w-xabz-d-ʿays-d-ṭqīq* (dried sardines in bread and flour powder); *šayd-w-tōmar* (the fish of the season with dates).

Deep-sea fish are liked best for eating. These are called *šayd qašōr* in Mehri and in the local Arabic *šed ḡšār*, literally “scale fishes”.⁷⁹

69 Compare the root ʿ-f-r for “earth” or the colour of the “earth”.

70 In the Arabic dialect used in the region *maxlūt*. On the numeral “seven” see Maximilian Bittner, *Studien zur Laut- und Formenlehre der Mehri-Sprache in Suedarabien* (Wien: In Kommission bei Alfred Hoelder, 1913), III. *Zum Pronomen und zum Numerale*, pp. 80-81.

71 The informant mentioned the Arabic term used in the region which is *mnaqqat*. The word for “points” used by the informant was *ʿanqāt* (not *niqāt* as normally used in literary Arabic).

72 Johnstone (1987), p. 373: “to put (meat) on to roast”.

73 Compare Aki'o Nakano, *Comparative Vocabulary of Southern Arabic – Mahri, Gibbali and Soqorri* (Tokyo Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1986), p. 19: *salīt* means in Mehri “oil” and *maḥḥ* means in Gibbali “butter oil”.

74 Compare the Hebrew word *ḥemʿā* “butter”. Compare also Johnstone (1987), p. 263: probably the root *m-ḥ-ḥ* derives etymologically from (*m-š-ḥ*).

75 “Stones”.

76 Compare the Arabic word *mašwi*(yy).

77 The spit itself is called in Mehri *maškik* (pl. *māškik*).

78 Here, the preposition used is *li-* and not as normally *bi-*.

79 In literary Arabic *fašilat al-qašriyyāt*. Compare Johnstone (1987), p. 242.

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