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**MORE ON THE ARABIC OBJECT MARKER *IYYĀ*:
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ORIGIN OF THE SEMITIC
*NOTAE ACCUSATIVI***

The Semitic *notae accusativi*, expressed variously as $\text{'yt} > \text{'t} > t$ in Phoenician and Punic, $\text{'t} > t$ in Hebrew, $\text{'yt} > yt$ and wt in Aramaic, and *iyyā-* in Arabic, have been attracting attention for more than a century. Yet, despite this attention, discovering an origin for the feature has remained elusive. One of the reasons for this must be its sparse attestation in some of the dialects in which it appears and its wide variation in function and inconsistent usage in many others (see the treatment in Rubin 2005: 91—103). Garr (1985: 170) concludes his survey of their manifestations in the Semitic dialects of Syria-Palestine by saying, ‘although [it] functioned as the direct object pronoun in Old Aramaic, Samalian, and Hebrew, these dialects do not necessarily exhibit identical usage.’ In summarizing the various attempts at discovering an origin, Rubin (2005: 120—1) maintains, ‘the ultimate source of these forms is indeed problematic to isolate.’ Maintaining, ‘that there is no need to find regularity in the development of the various *notae accusativi*’, he concludes that, ‘the problem must remain unsolved for now, and may remain so indefinitely.’ Regardless of this view, a solution may be found in a consideration of the *nota accusativi* of Arabic, where it is abundantly attested in living usage, and, as we shall presently see, in a few dialects, so is its likely precursor.

Lipiński (2001: 518) proposes a parent form *iyyāt ,¹ mentioning in passing a noticeable difference between the accusative pronoun in Arabic and its Semitic sisters: the *notae accusativi* of those languages all share a /t/ in common, whereas that of the Arabic notably lacks it (as does the Ethiopic *kīyā-*). It is precisely this /t/, however, that may hold the answer to the origin of all of the Semitic *notae accusativi*. Garr (1985: 115—6) hints at such a solution without elaborating upon it, noting the Samalian *wāt , which he suggests derives from *huāt , the latter attested in Ugaritic

¹ Rubin (2005: 93) supposes that the vocalization of Phoenician 'yt was probably /'iyyāt/.

hwt, along with a feminine *hyt*. Just such forms continue to survive in some current Arabic vernaculars, those being the northern Syrian varieties in what is now Turkey, around Antakya (Behnstedt: 2008: 162) and the rural Palestinian varieties around Bir Zeit, Ramallah, Jerusalem, and Bethlehem (Bauer 1926: 67; Shachmon 2013), whose 3rd-person pronouns retain this /t/: m. *hūta*, *hūte* or *hūtu* and f. *hūte*. Likewise, some Egyptian varieties exhibit variants such as m. *hūti*, *huwwati*, *huwwāti* and f. *hūti*, *hiyyat*, and *hiyyāti* (Behnstedt and Woidich 1985, Maps 148 & 149; Woidich 1996: 337). So, too, are these reflected in the demonstratives in Egyptian Arabics, including those of the capital, which, in addition to the basic forms *da*, *di*, and *dōl*, exhibit a wide range of variants containing /t/: m. *dawwat*, *dahuwwat*, *dihawwat*; f. *diyyat*, *dihyyat*, *dahiyyat*; and pl. *dōlat*, and *dahummat*, along with many others, ending in [k] or [n] (Badawi and Hinds 1986: 273; Woidich 2006: 44); in addition to these is the near deictic referent *hina howwat* ‘here’. These probably derive from Proto-Semitic oblique independent personal pronouns, and those, in turn, are likely the origin of the *notae accusativi*.

Semitic oblique pronouns

Lipiński proposes that, ‘the independent personal pronoun of Proto-Semitic most likely possessed at least one non-subject case’ (2001: 308). Full paradigms of non-subject pronouns are reconstructable only for East Semitic, where all persons of the pronoun contain /t/, but 3rd person pronouns with /t/, surely descended from the same source, are attested in some West Semitic languages. Included amongst those are the few extant varieties of Arabic and at least one extinct one—Andalusi Arabic (Corriente 1975: 97)—wherein are variants of the independent pronouns exhibiting /t/.

All are shown in Figure 1 (adapted from Lipiński 2001: 307—8; Retsö 1987: 230; Zaborski 1995: 270—1):

Figure 1: Semitic personal pronouns with /t/

East Semitic		West Semitic				
Old Assyrian		Ugaritic	Sabaeen	Ge'ez	Andalusi Arabic	Arabic dialects
1s	yāti			ʾana	ana	
2ms	ku(w)āti			ʾanta	anta	
2fs				ʾanti		
3ms	šu(w)āti	hwt	hwt	wəʾətu	hu(wa(t))	hūta, huwwat, etc.
3fs	šiāti	hyt	hyt	yəʾəti	hi(ya(t))	hūte, hiyyat, etc.
2d						
3d	šunūti		hmyt			
1p	niāti			nəḥna	ḥinat	
2pm	kunūti			ʾantəmmu	antum	
2pf	kināti			ʾantən		
3pm	šunūti	hmt	hmt	wəʾətomu	hum(a(t))	dōlat, dahummat
3pf	šināti		hnt	yəʾəton	hunnat	

As oblique pronouns, these would have been available to serve as pronominal objects, likely remaining independent or loosely cliticized. Some Arabic varieties from the Syro-Mesopotamian dialect area and extending into the Arabian Peninsula continue to exhibit independent and loosely cliticized object pronouns, evidently an archaic feature preserved in these spoken vernaculars with ditransitive verbs like *aʿtā* ‘to give’:

- (1) a *aʿtay-tū-hu wē* (Mardin, Turkey) (Jastrow, 1978: 297)
 gave-I-him him/it
 ‘I gave him it’
 b *ʿaṭā-ni wa* (Mosul, Iraq) (Jastrow, 1979: 43)
 gave-he-me him/it
 ‘He gave me it’

A similar phenomenon is attested in the Syrian province of Aleppo, where an independent pronoun can stand as the pronominal direct object (Jastrow & Kazzarah 1980: 98):

- (2) *aṭ-ū-huwwa l-aḅu n-nəḡām hādā*
 gave-they-him/it to-possessor the-stars that
 ‘They gave it to that man with the stars [on his epaulet, i.e., the officer]’

Likewise Lebanon:

- (3) *b-a ʿt-īk hi(ye)* (Mt Lebanon) (Barthélemy, 1935-54: 878)
 I-give-you her/it
 ‘I’ll give you it’

In such constructions, either *hi* or *hiye* can appear: *ba ʿtīk hi* or *ba ʿtīk hiye*. About that, Fleisch remarks, ‘the use of *hi* ... in the role of pronoun affix ... occurs but is uncommon. The usual expression uses *-yyāha*’ (1974: 290):

- (4) a *a ʿtī-ni yyā-hon* (Beirut, Lebanon)²
 give-me yyā-them
 ‘Give me them’
 b *a ʿtī-ni hon*
 give-me them
 ‘Give me them’

² The Lebanese examples in (4) and (5) are from data collected from various sources by the author.

The same holds true for the pseudo-verb *badd-*, meaning ‘wish/want’, always appearing with a possessive pronoun, as in *badd-i* ‘my desire’, usually marking its object with *yyā-*, but occasionally with an independent pronoun:

- (5) a *badd-i* *yyā-ha*
 wish-my *yyā-her/it*
 ‘I want it’
 b *badd-i* *hiyye*
 wish-my *her/it*
 ‘I want it’

Attested in dialects extending from Anatolia southwards as far as the Arabia Petraea provinces of southern Jordan and the Hijaz of the Arabian Peninsula proper, the phenomenon of free-standing object pronouns stands in contrast to the more common Arabic (and general Semitic) principle of affixing an object pronoun directly to the verb. In Arabic, a second pronominal object, if there is one, is usually affixed either to the *nota accusativi*, as in (4a), or to the dative marker /*l*/ (for paradigms, see Wilmsen 2012: 215—17):³

- (6) *iddi-hā* *l-u(h)* (Cairo, Egypt)
 give-her/it to-him
 ‘Give it to him’

Yet, even with ditransitive verbs in dative constructions, the dialects with freestanding object pronouns leave those pronouns independent:

- (7) a *ğab-ū* *l-o* *hūwe* (Aleppo)(Jastrow & Kazzarah 1980: 110)
 brought-they to-him him/it
 ‘They brought to him it’
 b *ğib-ti* *l-ik* *hum* (Tafilah, Jordan) (Wilmsen forthcoming)
 brought-I to-you them
 ‘I brought for you them’
 c *ğāb* *l-i* *humma* (Mecca, Saudi Arabia) (Sieny 1972: 23)
 brought to-me them
 ‘He brought to me them’

³ Lipiński (2001: 518) states that the *notae accusativi* mark ‘the determinate direct object’, but he adduces an example from Arabic of its use marking what he interprets to be the indirect object (or beneficiary or recipient): *a ‘tāhā iyyāya* ‘he gave her to me’. See Wilmsen (2011: 301) for two other examples of marking the beneficiary with *yyā-*, one from a modern grammar and one from the earliest Arabic writing (Qur’ān 8:114).

In a comparative study of the objects of ditransitive verbs in Semitic and Afroasiatic languages, Gensler (1998: 265 & 271) proposes that, ‘verbs in pre-Proto-Semitic could take two post-verbal pronominal object markers which were very clearly clitics not affixes ... [and] the situation in Proto-Semitic was still like that in Pre-PS: both of the object pronouns were still clitic like and only loosely bound to the verb’. As such, Retsö’s observation about Arabic, ‘the dialects of ... Mosul, Syro-Palestine, Mecca would thus represent a typologically older stage with morphological identity still extant between independent and enclitic pronouns’ (1987: 235), is probably correct: the independent and loosely enclitic forms are the older. That is, the independent object pronoun is the original, probably Proto-Semitic (or pre-Proto-Semitic). These independent and cliticized forms look to be two steps along the way to the development of full dative and accusative marking of pronouns. At an earlier stage, the same sort of object marking would have fallen to Lipiński’s ‘non-subject’ pronouns, that we are calling oblique pronouns. In Arabic, those have generally lost the /t/, it being retained in but a few dialects.

A developmental sequence may thus be envisioned (for discussion and difference in detail, see Wilmsen 2013a):

1 *ndn šu-wāti šī-yati > 2 *a ‘tā hu(wa)(ti) hiya(ti) > 3 a ‘tā-hu(w) h(iy)ā > 4 a ‘tā-hu īyyā-ha

This sequence has the virtue of corresponding from its second step onwards to historically attested analogues or actual living Arabic speech. Assuming that oblique pronouns with /t/ were the original object pronouns and that with their cliticisation, the /t/ became optional, constructions very similar to those in step two are, thus, attested both in the medieval grammatical tradition and in modern living vernaculars of Arabic. For its part, the third step, analogues of which are attested in modern dialects of Arabic from Anatolia, northern Syria, and Iraq, is documented as far back as the Arabic writing of the 2nd/8th century in the writings of the grammarian Sībawayhi (who was active, as it happens, in Iraq), in his discussion of the two pronominal objects of a ditransitive verb, *a ‘tā* ‘to give’: ‘the second object if it is pronominal can either be marked with or without *īyyā*-.’ (*Kitāb* II: 386). Although Sībawayhi’s main concern was that the personal pronouns be arrayed in the proper sequence, that is, 1st precedes 2nd, precedes 3rd (e.g., *a ‘tānīhi* ‘he gave me it’), he, nevertheless, allows two third person objects *a ‘tāhūhā* ‘he gave 3rd m. 3rd f.’ and *a ‘tāhāhu* ‘he gave 3rd f. 3rd m.’ (*Kitāb* II: 387). Sībawayhi actually writes something graphically akin to the third step in the sequence أعطاهوها {a ‘tāhūha}, with the letter {و} ({ū/w}) possibly having been realized in the speech of his day as something close to a long vowel with a semivowel coda: *a ‘tāhūwha*. This, another option for expressing two pronominal objects in Arabic, usually considered a verb with two pronominal suffixes (for which, see their lengthy treatment in Gensler 1998), looks much

like the loosely bound pronominal clitic constructions of ditransitive verbs and pseudo-verbs in those modern dialects of Arabic in which it appears, such that it is feasible to suppose that Sībawayhi's pronominal object suffixes are not actually suffixes at all but loosely-bound clitic pronouns similar to those surviving in modern Syro-Mesopotamian dialects and that the affixing onto the verb of two object pronouns, already a rarity in Semitic languages (Gensler 1998: 265), and surely rare in Arabic writing, even in Sībawayhi's day, by his own admission,⁴ is, in Arabic at least, an artefact of writing with no reality in natural speech.

As for the fourth step in the sequence, the transition from *a'ṭā-hu(w) h(iy)ā* to its current *a'ṭā-hu iyyā-ha*, it cannot be as simple as it looks. The greatest of the many difficulties with such a step as presented is the generalizing to all personal pronouns of an operation that applied to the 3rd-person feminine singular pronoun *hiya*. Any other pronoun coming second in the sequence, whether affixed or independent, does not yield the same configuration. If an oblique feminine pronoun *hiyat* had a role to play in the formation of the *nota accusativi*, especially perhaps in Arabic, it must have come about in a different manner.

Mechanism

Recent evidence from Aramaic suggests a mechanism for the transition from oblique pronouns to *notae accusativi*, in that language, variously *ʔt*, *yt*, and *wt*. The latter, *wt*, is attested only once with certainty in Samalian (Pardee 2009: 59) and lately in another 'previously unattested dialect of Aramaic, situated typologically between Samalian and Old Aramaic' (Pardee 2009: 52–3). In discussing its attestation in Samalian, Pardee (2009: 52, 59, & 67) renders it *wt-*, suggesting that something must be affixed to it, and, in his newly attested dialect of Aramaic, it is {h}, which cannot be other than a 3rd-person pronoun, that is suffixed to it. Pardee (2009: 54) renders the transcription and translation respectively as follows (8a), an amplified running gloss of our own interpretation (8b) following that:

- (8) a wšmt . wth . bsyr/d . ʾlmy
 and I placed it in my eternal chamber
- b w-šm-t wt-h
 and-placed-I ACC-it
 'And I placed it ...'

⁴ About such constructions, he cautions, 'this is allowable Arabic...[but it is] also not common in ... speech, the more common being *a'ṭāhu iyyāhu* 'he gave 3rd m. 3rd m.' (Kūṭāb II: 387).

Motivation

If this interpretation is correct, what we see here is an erstwhile oblique 3rd-person masculine singular pronoun **hwt*, now eroded to *wt*, with a conventional Semitic suffixed object pronoun *h*. This implies that the oblique pronoun at some earlier stage ceased to function as a pronoun but became simply a marker of whatever follows it. This is precisely what Saydon (1964) suggests; writing about the Hebrew accusative marker *'t*: the particle marked either an object or a subject, meaning that it originally would have been both a *nota accusativi* and a *nota nominativi*:

The origin of the particle is very obscure and probably goes back to prehistoric times [having] one meaning alone and consequently one main use alone which is, or was originally, that of emphasizing the word to which it is attached ... this word may be either object or subject ... and corresponds more or less to Engl. *self* in such expressions: He, himself, killed the man and He killed the man himself ... The emphatic meaning is apparent when the particle ... has the meaning of a demonstrative adjective ... If emphasis is considered to be the original meaning of the particle ... many of its special uses are easily explained (1964: 192—3).

Finding Saydon's term 'emphasis' to be so vague as to be meaningless, Khan (1984: 496) attempts to explain it as marking non-volitional intransitive subjects:

Constructions with *'et* before the subject in Biblical Hebrew can be neatly explained as being clauses which evince traces of 'active'-type (quasi-ergative) morphology. This is demonstrated by the fact that in nearly all instances *'et* co-occurs with intransitive subjects, all of which are to be construed as non-volitional. According to this interpretation, the subject is not the initiator of the action, i.e. the event is generated elsewhere (1984: 496—7).

That may well be, but Khan's explanation cannot alter the reality that in Saydon's examples, it remains the subject that is marked by *'et*. Indeed, his explanation is reminiscent of Blau's 'contamination theory', which Saydon dismisses thus:

According to this theory the $\pi\aleph$ -subject-intransitive or passive construction consists of the combination of two different constructions, a subject-intransitive or passive construction and an $\pi\aleph$ -object-transitive or active construction... This and all other explanations are based on

the assumption that the particle *ḥa* invariably denotes the accusative, a supposition which is not necessarily true. In fact ... the belief that the particle *ḥa* denotes the accusative is derived from the fact that it is used with the object of transitive verbs. But as the *ḥa* is used also with the subject of intransitive and passive verbs, it has an equal right to be called *nota nominativi*. The mere use of the particle *ḥa* with the subject or the object is not a sufficient indication of case (1964: 197).

What is more, Khan's misgivings notwithstanding, Sībawayhi indicates an emphatic quality in the warning: *īyyāka wa-al-asada* 'beware the lion' (*Kitāb* I: 230). Indeed, he expends more of his attention on this aspect of the word than he does on its object marking function. Anticipating the obsessions of the Arab grammarians to follow him, in his treatment of it, he is more concerned with the accusative case of the noun *asad* than he is with the status of the pronoun. Irrespective of his unconvincing attempt at explaining the phrase as involving an elided verb, he nevertheless recognizes the independent pronominal status of *īyyā-k*, glossing it as *anta* 'you', giving the meaning to be, 'as it were, "You! Know [be aware of] the lion!"' (*Kitāb* I: 230). This looks like a relic of its original usage as Saydon defines it: a particle emphasising the word to which it is attached.⁵

A second-hand corroboration from a generation earlier than Sībawayhi is his explanation of the meaning of *īyyā-* as marking an inflected pronoun, when he cites his mentor al-Khalīl adducing a vocative utterance meaning something like 'Hey you!': 'al-Khalīl, God rest his soul, claimed to have heard some Arabs say *yā anta* [O you] ... So, if you wanted to say *yā fulān* [O so-and-so] ... then you could say, *īyyāka!*' (*Kitāb* I: 350).

This function of emphasis remains extant in Arabic personal pronouns retaining a /t/ that Shachmon 2013 calls 'extended pronouns':

hūta and *hīta* seem to alternate freely with *hū* and *hī*, without bearing any supplementary or contrastive meaning. ... Not always, however, can a *t*-pronoun be translated by its simple lexical equivalent, viz. "he" or "she". Rather, in various contexts the extended form seems to add meanings of stress, emphasis and focus. It may also clarify ambivalent phrases, indicate sudden change or occur as part of an identificatory formula ... It seems to be the case that the *t*-pronoun is often loaded with various additional nuances, mainly of emphasis and focus' (Shachmon 2013: 74—6).

⁵ A demonstrative aspect to *īyyā-* continues to operate in modern spoken and written Arabic, explicated in Wilmsen 2013b.

Shachmon's extended pronouns thus continue to carry some of Saydon's proposed original emphatic function. Noteworthy, too, is that, in Shachmon's data, the extended pronouns are always the subjects. Shachmon does, however, also adduce the oblique form *īyyātu* in Galilean dialects (2013: 79). For its similarity to Lipiński's etymon **īyyāt*, this bears urgent investigation, lest this unusual feature be lost to analysis resulting from the relentless dialect levelling that is proceeding apace with the urbanization of Arab society in general and from the unpredictable effects on local Palestinian dialects of contact with modern Hebrew (Horesh 2013).

Grammaticalization

A mechanism and a motivation are thus available whereby oblique pronouns, already somewhat grammatical in function, could become more fully grammaticalized, probably at first functioning to emphasize a following noun or pronoun. In accordance with one of the principles of grammaticalization, the original forms remain in a language (in this case, a group of languages) indicating the source of the gram (as the grammaticalized element is called). True to this principle, an emphatic function of *īyyā*-, adumbrated in Sībawayhi, continues in use occasionally in Arabic writing and more often in speech. Whereas Sībawayhi's particle appears to be used in warning, modern speech, while retaining that meaning, also carries a sense of strong (that is, emphatic) prohibition, analogous to English phrases like 'see that you don't ...', 'you'd better not ...', and so forth:⁶

- (9) buṣṣ īyyā-k ti-ġlaṭ ma'ā-ya
 look īyyā-you you-err with-me
 'Look here! You'd better not get sassy with me!'

Defining *īyyā*- as an 'introductory particle signalling prohibition' Badawi and Hinds, in their *Dictionary of Egyptian Arabic* (1986: 47), also acknowledge its demonstrative quality, going on to define it as a 'demonstrative particle signalling identity (often with pejorative connotation).' Davies (1981: 165—74), in an insightful discussion of demonstratives in Egyptian Arabic refers to its *allusive* quality, evoking both shared knowledge and shared attitude (favorable or unfavorable) amongst interlocutors. He, too, speaks of emphasis and a 'general intensity of feeling on the part of the speaker toward the object referred to' and

⁶ These examples are from the spoken vernacular of Cairo, Egypt, but other regional varieties use *īyyā*- in manners other than object marking, exhibiting local variation in usage, with prohibition and pronoun marking being the most commonly shared functions.

an, ‘increased intensity of awareness’ (1981: 166—7). Some examples of such follow (from Wilmsen 2013b):⁷

- (10) a *da ġēr il-‘alaqāt ma‘ banāt il-gam‘a iyyā-hum*
 that not the-relations with girls the-university iyyā-them
 ‘that’s quite aside from his relationships with those [immoral] university girls’
 (A wife complaining of her husband’s infidelities with all and sundry)
- b *na-ragga‘-hā l-ak il-‘awwil wi-ba‘dēn n-šūf ḥall li-l-muščila iyyā-ha*
 we-return-her to-you the-first and-after we-see solution to-the-problem iyyā-her/it
 ‘First let’s get her back, and then we’ll find a solution to that [vexing] problem’
 (A friend counselling another who is suffering performance anxiety at his wife’s wishing to leave him)
- c *kām zaġlūla madfūna fī l-‘aruz wi l-‘araʔš iyyā-ha*
 few songbirds buried in the-rice and the-flatbread iyyā-her/it
 ‘A few songbirds in rice and some of that [delectable] country-style flatbread’
- d *aṣḥāb-uh iyyā-hum ‘āl-l-uh inn abūh gāy*
 friends-his iyyā-them said-to-him that father-his coming
 ‘Those [despicable] friends of his told him that his father is coming’

Finally, in many spoken varieties of Arabic (and indeed occasionally in writing), *iyyā-* can mark an affixed pronoun, apparently without signalling any subtle difference in meaning. Compare the *iyyā-* form (11a) with its analog without it (11b); no difference in meaning obtains:

- (11) a *anā wa-yyāk*
 I and iyyā-you
 ‘You and I’
- b *anā wa-nta*
 I and-you
 ‘You and I’

⁷ Badawi and Hinds (1986: 47), adduce a similar set of situational references as those listed here, adding an interpretive gloss to their definitions: *il-bint iyyā-ha* ‘that girl—you know who’, *wirk il-wizza iyyā-ha* ‘the leg of that very same wretched goose (we’ve all been talking about)’, etc. In our glosses, an implied meaning is overtly expressed between square brackets. The *nota accusativi* is here functioning as a deictic element, such that the most felicitous rendering in English would simply be ‘that’ or ‘those’. See Wilmsen (2013b) for a discussion of its deictic qualities.

Nor is Arabic the only language amongst its sisters to retain an emphatic quality in its *nota accusativi*; ‘in Old Aramaic, as in Akkadian, Ugaritic, Ethiopic and Arabic, the *nota accusativi* + suffix lent added emphasis to the direct object pronoun’ (Garr 1985: 170).

It thus becomes possible to propose that the oblique pronouns began to, or always did, convey an emphatic meaning, much in the same way redundant pronouns in modern Arabic vernaculars can, for example:

- (12) di muškilt-ak inta miš muškilt-i ana
 this problem-your you not problem-my I
 ‘That’s your problem, not mine’

As they acquired increasing grammatical function, that of emphasis, they could at the same time begin losing semantic reference, undergoing ‘bleaching’, as it were, and, as such things go, experiencing phonological erosion. In this case, the phonological process is a familiar Semitic one: a change from /h/ > /ʔ/ (Khan 1984: 491, n. 47) and the alternation between /ʔ/ and /w/ (as in, for example, the Arabic *ʾaḥad/wāḥad*⁸ ‘one’) or /y/ (Lipiński 2001: 156–7).

The missing element of the sequence may now be envisioned:

*(š)(h)uwat (š)(h)uwa ≈ ‘he himself’ > *huwat-hu > wat-hu > ʔ- > t-

Forms with *y*, such as *ʔt*, *yt*, and *ʔyyā*-, may have derived from the feminine pronouns *šiya* or *hiya*, having lost their gender reference as they became more grammatical than referential, the sequence being *hiyat-ha > ʔyat-ha > ʔyyāt-. Or, they may simply have arisen according to the principle whereby, as Lipiński states it, ‘an initial ʔ may alternate with *w* (or *y*) without being the result of a change of *wa*- into *ʔa*, or in the contrary (2001: 156). In that case, a unified sequence would be *huwat-hu > wat-hu > ʔyyāt-.⁹

Discussion

Beginning the sequence with the alternate *š/h* is meant to indicate that these derivations may, as Testen (1997/1998: 215) suggests, ‘be reconstructed for a very early stage of West Semitic, if not of Proto-Semitic’.¹⁰ That they date to West Semitic should not be in doubt, for an analogue is present in the West Semitic modern South Arabian (MSA) Languages which mark objects

⁸ The variant *wāḥad* being a vernacular form.

⁹ The gemination and vowel lengthening would have come about by secondary phonological processes, with which we shall not concern ourselves.

¹⁰ Rubin (2005: 103) proposes that *ʔt* (vocalized as *ʔyyāt*) was inherited from Proto-Northwest Semitic.

with /t-/ alone affixed to a pronominal suffix, with such object marking attested for Soqotri, Harūsi, and Mehri (Rubin 2005: 127). Figure 2 displays the full paradigm for Mehri (from 2010: 41):

Figure 2: Object pronouns with /t-/ in Mehri

	sing.	dual	plural
1s	tay	táki	tīn
2ms	tīk		tīkəm
2fs	tayš/tīs		tīkən
3ms	təh	táhi	tīhəm
3fs	tīs		tīsən

Unlike Arabic, which generally differentiates between the pronominal direct object (patient) and the indirect object (beneficiary or recipient), Mehri marks both with /t-/ (Rubin 2010: 41—2):

- (13) a wəzəm-k t-əh
 gave-I t-him
 ‘I gave it’
- b wəzəm-k t-īn t-īhəm lā
 gave-you t-us t-them not
 ‘You haven’t given us them’

Although Rubin is reluctant to attribute this modern South Arabian /t/ to an analogue in the *notae accusativi* of other Semitic languages, arguing that we do not know enough about the history of MSA grammars (true) and that /t/ is a but a single element, common in Semitic morphology to boot (also true), nevertheless, positing the oblique pronouns as the origin of the *notae accusativi* gives reason to suppose that the MSA object marker derives from the same origin. If it does, the implication is clear that this manner of marking the object is older than the Central Semitic Arabic and the Northwest Semitic Canaanite languages. It thus becomes possible to posit that an oblique pronominal object marker originated or survived in West Semitic and its descendent languages, with Arabic, generally losing the /t/, retaining it only in some relict pronominal forms, themselves surely survivals from Proto-Semitic, dating to an era when the Proto-Semitic oblique ‘non-subject’ pronouns were functional.¹¹

¹¹ That being so, the presence of the extended pronouns in some Arabic dialects would serve as indicators of the great age of those dialects retaining them, or at least of that feature of

Correll (1994), too, identifies them as the source; but he goes astray when he attempts to derive the *notae accusativi* from their final syllable *-ti* (i.e., *šiāti*, etc.), obliging himself to posit an unmotivated move of the vowel from behind the /t/ to before it, from *tV* to *'Vt*. Although this is not impossible—but see Testen's (1997/1998: 216—7) objections—the presence of a simpler explanation vitiates the need to adopt it. As for the loss of /t/ in Arabic, it cannot be, as Testen (1997/1998: 217—18), calling it 'the fugitive *-t-', proposes, that the *ā* of the Arabic is a feminine marker (as in m. *'aḥad*/f. *'iḥdā* 'one' and many others), that the /t/ of the other *notae accusativi* is a 'new feminine marker', and that 'the ending of the stem of Arabic *'īyyā-* has remained a close formal counterpart to the original shape.' Instead, the matter is quite the other way round: the /t/ is the original West Semitic feature that Arabic has lost. It is not the familiar Semitic feminine marker *-at*. The long [ā] in *īyyā-* is likely phonologically conditioned in the environment of its prefixed pronoun and is not an original feature. To Rubin's objections can be added that Testen's 'several very hypothetical steps' (Rubin 2005: 120) come perilously close to appearing *ad hoc*.

Conclusion

Rubin (2005: 103, n. 52) argues astutely that an original **'īyyāt* must have functioned as more than an object marker alone, as it would have operated in an environment in which an overt accusative case remained in use. Many of those functions survive in Arabic, not all of them involving objects. When Garr (1985: 170) observes that the Arabic *nota accusativi* lends added emphasis to the direct object pronoun, he overlooks that its emphatic functions in Arabic do not direct attention onto an object alone. Instead, it acts as something of a demonstrative, emphasising whatever noun it happens to modify, be it the subject, object, or the complement of a preposition: *aṣḥāb-uh īyyā-hum 'āl-l-uh* 'Those *friends* of his told him', *ḥa-n-ḥill il-mušmila īyyā-ha* 'we'll solve that *problem*', *ma' il-banāt īyyā-hum* 'with those *girls*' (cf. Wilmsen 2013b: 335, n. 7 & 346, n. 23).

Its original emphatic function was likely reflexive deixis, as Saydon has perspicaciously surmised. As we are reconstructing it, the parent form **huwat-hu*, meaning something like 'he himself', is formally and functionally analogous to the extant Arabic phrase *dāt-hu* 'himself/itself', found in written Arabic and in some Arabic vernaculars. The same reflexivity is documented for the *nota accusativi* from medieval and modern writings and in living and extinct vernacular varieties of Arabic. Classical writers Ibn Rushd, Ibn Jinni, and al-Ghazali have employed it: respectively *'aqlunā īyyāhu* 'our intellect itself', *dālik al-sawt īyyāhu* 'that sound itself', *ahl al-dunyā īyyāhum* 'the people of the world

them, giving the lie to the assumption that the dialects are in every respect later developments of Classical Arabic.

themselves' (Wilmsen 2103b: 351—2). A grammar of modern written Arabic (Buckley 2004: 898) defines it as a 'particle of emphatic identification with the sense of "[the thing] itself", "[the] very [man]"', adducing five examples of such usage from modern literature. Wilmsen (2013b: 343—6) discusses its use as such in modern literary writing, producing five more examples, elsewhere citing an example of usage from journalistic Arabic: *assasahu Līnīn iyyāhu* 'Lenin himself founded it' (2010: 110). Corriente (1991: 5 & 35) finds it in the *Glossarium Latino-Arabicum* of the University of Leiden, a reference work documenting medieval vernacular Arabic usage from al-Andalus,¹² giving its meaning as 'el mismo (the same one)'. Spiro (1923: 24) suggests the same usage in modern spoken Egyptian Arabic in his example, *en nās iyyā-hum*, which he glosses, 'the same people'.

Thus is borne out Saydon's observation, 'If emphasis is considered to be the original meaning of the particle ... many of its special uses are easily explained' (1964: 193), by augmenting considerations of the origins of the particle with observations from Arabic, where its 'special' uses survive intact, as do its precursors, now rare, in the Arabic relics of the old Semitic oblique pronouns.

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¹² Corriente comments on the Andalusi Arabic content of the *Glossarium*: "The author aimed at providing a lexicon of the high registers of Arabic but, because of his limited knowledge of this language, he missed the mark so often that this book contains many Aa [Andalusi Arabic] items" (1997: xvi).

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