Isolated Nouns in the Semitic Languages

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Part A. Role of the Pattern in the Isolated Nouns

In the formation of nouns in the Semitic languages, triconsonantal roots are interleaved with patterns which consist of vowels and slots for root consonants, in some cases with afformatives. Some of the patterns are productive, and some carry with them well-defined meanings. For example, in most Semitic languages, the patterns descended from Proto-Semitic *qatil" indicate the G active participle. But not all nouns are formed in this manner. Nouns not derived from a root and a pattern, called the "isolated" nouns, have distinct characteristics that distinguish them from the majority of Semitic nouns.

An "isolated noun" is defined as a substantive that does not share a consonantal root with another word of similar meaning, whether verb or noun. Therefore, unlike most nouns, the isolated noun is not separable into root and pattern by comparison to other words that have the same root but a different pattern.

Adjectives are excluded from the definition of "isolated noun" because of their close connection to the verb in Semitic: an adjective such as *kabid "heavy," which exists in a number of Semitic languages and so is reconstructed for Proto-Semitic, forms a stative predicative/perfect by the addition of suffixes, as well as a prefixal imperfect/preterite. In all Semitic languages, the adjective meaning "X" has an associated verb "to be X," except for demonstrative adjectives and denominative (relative) adjectives formed by suffixation to a noun (e.g., the Arabic nisba ending *-yy). Since a verb of the same root existing alongside a noun makes the noun non-isolated, the adjectives are here excluded.

Because this definition of isolated nouns is focused on distinguishing those nouns in which root and pattern are not separate elements in the derivation of the word, it excludes those which have another noun from the same root, as well as those which

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2 Q, t, and l are mere place-holders for the three radical consonants, without reference to whether the √qtl root or any given pattern with √qtl exists in any given language. (In Syriac and Hebrew, for example, the root is √qtl.) G₁, G₂ and G₃ are also used, particularly when specific radical positions must be indicated.

3 See Huchnergard 1987b: 221.
have a verb of the same root. There are a very few of reconstructible nouns with a common root, yet with no reconstructible verb from the root, for example, *śim “mother,” alongside *umāt-ān “people, army.” Because the great majority of the non-isolated (derived) nouns have a verb from the same root, the verb is often treated as the cymon from which the nouns are derived.4

There are similar, although not identical, categories of nouns referred to in the literature as isolated,5 primitive,6 unmotivated,7 or primary.8 Definitions of the terms differ slightly, although in practice there is a large overlap between the various categories.

One approach to these nouns, based on the techniques of Indo-European, assumes that most “roots” in the Proto-Indo-European sense – full reconstructed lexemes, not reconstructed abstract triconsonantal units – are verbs, from which most nouns are derived. The few “roots” (in the Indo-Europeanists’ sense) that are nouns, then, are “primitive” nouns by this definition. These nominal “roots” can form denominal nouns and verbs.9

Alternately, the “primitive” noun is often defined as a simple concrete term for a common item,10 such as the nouns on the Swadesh list (Swadesh 1952: 455-57).11 As Proto-Semitic is reconstructed here, the nouns that fit our definition of the isolated noun often have a conceptually simple, concrete meaning, but the overlap is not complete. Still, the semantics of the nouns may help point the way to the isolated nouns, even though their status must be confirmed by an examination of the lexica of the Semitic languages.

The “primitive” nouns may also be defined as the set of all the nouns which can be reconstructed in full – in form and meaning – to the proto-language.12 This

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4 See Broeckelmann’s (VG: 330 [§ 111]) objections to this principle.
5 E.g., “isolirt” (Barth 1894: 1 [§ 1]).
6 E.g., Kautzsch 1910: 225 (§ 82).
7 E.g., “immotivato” (Frenzel 1963: 120). Buccellati (1966: 69-75) discusses the class of “unmotivated” noun, which includes both the “primary” nouns (corresponding to the definition of “isolated” used here) and loanwords. I received Buccellati’s study, with an important investigation of the nature of the unmotivated noun, only after the submission of the present article, and so I was unable to fully incorporate its conclusions.
8 E.g., “Primiti” (BL: 445 [§ 60]).
9 My thanks to Gideon Goldberg, who pointed out the intrusion of such concepts from the study of the Indo-European languages into Semitics (Spring 1995).
10 Some treatments of primitive nouns are associated with discredited theories of a trend in the psychological diachronic development of language from primitive and simple to modern and sophisticated. These theories assume that conceptually “primitive” nouns are the only nouns existing in an earlier stage of human development. Voigts (1988: 47-50) discusses some of the misconceptions about the character of proto-languages, and cites the literature.
11 Swadesh (1952: 455) describes his list of words (which includes various parts of speech, not just nouns) as drawn from the “intimate vocabulary,” as opposed to the “cultural” part of the vocabulary.
12 A formal definition of “primitive” nouns as all those which are reconstructible should not be taken to imply that the linguistic ancestor of the Semitic languages had only those nouns. The formal method of reconstruction used here reconstructs to the proto-language only morphemes
definition of “primitive” nouns does not exactly overlap with the definition used here for Proto-Semitic isolated nouns; if an exclusive criterion of reconstructibility were to be applied, it would include, in the set of “primitive nouns,” such nouns as

*umq “depth,” and *kabid “heavy, liver,” nouns which are reconstructible, and so

“primitive” by this definition; yet these nouns show verbs of the same root, and so

are not “isolated,” by the definition used in the present article. Nonetheless, it is a

remarkable fact of the reconstruction of Proto-Semitic that most of the isolated

nouns are reconstructible while most, although not all, of the nouns derived from

roots cannot be reconstructed as a complete unit of root, pattern, and meaning. This

indicates that the derived nouns have undergone language-specific re-formation by

analogy, applying roots to patterns.

The special nature of Proto-Semitic isolated nouns, as they are understood here, is

that they do not share triconsonantal roots with other reconstructed nouns or verbs.

Thus, they do not participate in this typically Semitic means of word formation. It is

this characteristic of the set of isolated nouns as opposed to the derived nouns that

leads Bergsträsser, for example, to state the “system [of root and pattern] holds

almost without limit in the realm of the verb and those nouns that stand in some

relation to the verb; it does not pertain to the substantives proper, the primary

nouns” (Bergsträsser 1983: 6).

Not only do the consonants of the isolated nouns lack morphemic status, but they

fail to follow the phonological co-occurrence restrictions on root consonants typical

to the Semitic languages (Fronzaroli 1963: 120-21). In most triconsonantal root

morphemes, homorganic consonants are not found in \( C_1 \) and \( C_3 \) nor in \( C_1 \) and \( C_2 \)

(although the latter restriction is less complete). Except for those cases in which \( C_2 \)

and \( C_3 \) are identical, the geminate roots, homorganic consonants are not found in \( C_2 \)

and \( C_3 \). Among the isolated nouns, many violations of the restrictions are found.

There are isolated nouns which have homorganic \( C_1 \) and \( C_3 \) like *ahl “tribe, tent,”

*ahad “one,” and *taday “breast”; there are some isolated nouns with homorganic

\( C_2 \) and \( C_3 \) like *gurn “granary, threshing floor,” *sid “six”; and other isolated

nouns with homorganic \( C_1 \) and \( C_3 \) like *rig “foot,” *rahil “ewe,” and *tis “nine”

or even identical \( C_1 \) and \( C_3 \) like *tul “three.”

This difference between the isolated nouns and other Semitic words indicates

another sense in which the isolated nouns do not have roots. The co-occurrence

restrictions on Semitic roots do not apply to the entire Semitic word. Morphemes

other than the root can have consonants homorganic with the root consonants. For

example, a root with \( t \) or \( d \) in it can take the third person feminine singular verbal

prefix \( n \), while, a root with \( m \) or \( n \) can take an \( m \) participle with \( m \). Therefore, the

co-occurrence restrictions are characteristic of the root, and the failure of the isolated

nouns to follow these restrictions is another difference between the consonants in

the isolated nouns and the ordered sets of consonants that form a root.

which are found in widespread descendant languages, whereas it is quite possible that a morpheme

found in the linguistic ancestor was lost in all but one language, or even that it was completely lost.

Greenberg (1950) discusses the co-occurrence restrictions and the exceptions to them among

the isolated nouns. (See especially pp. 168-69).

Greenberg 1950: 168, 172, 175, and 177.
Even though the isolated nouns are not formally analyzable into roots and patterns, the concept of “pattern” does have relevance to the isolated nouns, if only in the strictly formal sense of an arrangement of vowels and slots for consonants. First, even isolated nouns are analyzed for root and pattern in derivation of denominal words and inflection of broken plurals in all the Semitic languages, and thus also in Proto-Semitic; second, the patterns of the isolated nouns are not scattered at random among all the available patterns, but rather are strongly clustered among a few types.

In a synchronic analysis of any of the Semitic languages, there are almost no truly isolated nouns, that is, nouns which do not share a root with any other word, since the Semitic languages can extract roots from any word and create verbs and nouns on the basis of the new roots. For example, Arabic kalb55 and Syriac kalbā “dog” have associated with them the denominal verb kaliba and klab “to be rabid,” in Arabic and Syriac respectively, as well as the denominal kallab and kalābā “dog-trainer, dog-handler.” It is clear that the denominal nouns are formed directly from “dog,” and not derived from the denominal verbs, because there are no verbs of the root √alb meaning “to raise/train dogs.”

A Proto-Semitic which is reconstructed according to the characteristics of the daughter languages must be reconstructed with this Common Semitic root-extraction ability, and so in this sense, even in Proto-Semitic, all nouns, including isolated nouns, can be analyzed as having a root. Yet many nouns can still be reconstructed as isolated nouns for Proto-Semitic, because these nouns occur in widespread Semitic languages, while no other words of the same root show the same wide distribution. The derivatives of such nouns, when they exist, are language-specific developments.

For this reason, even though the definition of “isolated noun” can in principle apply to nouns of the attested languages, the concept should be understood, for the purposes of this article, as relevant mostly to the reconstructed system (Fronzaroli 1963: 123).

In inflection, too, forms may be developed on the basis of roots analyzed from the isolated nouns. Arabic, some Ethiopic languages, and Modern and Old South

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55 Standard citation forms are used. In Akkadian, the unbound singular is cited, along with of mimation in those forms attested in mimated dialects and time periods. In Arabic, the singular is listed, without case vowel or mimation. In Ge’ez, the nominative singular is given. In Hebrew, the absolute singular is listed only when it is attested. Allomorphs such as the construct state, the form before suffixes, or the plural appear when the absolute singular is unattested or when they contribute to the reconstruction of the pattern. In Me’iri, the singular is given in the citation form. When the word begins with h which is not part of the proto-form (but rather developed from a prefixed article), the h is separated with a hyphen. In Sabaic, the singular is given when attested; otherwise, the attested form is used. In Syriac, the “emphatic state,” along with the absolute state when available, is cited.

Hebrew and Biblical Aramaic are transliterated as follows: a is qâmez, o is piq’ol, u is háleth, m is šúre’a or qëbbûq, i is kireq (with or without yodh), e is szere (with or without yodh), h is gzol, and w and y goes unindicated. Hásup vowels are indicated by superscription. Spirantization is indicated by underlining.

Syriac is transliterated with the vowels a, o, u, i, e, and e, indicating the distinctions of vowels preserved in the Eastern tradition.
Arabian languages form broken plurals from almost all substantives, whether isolated or not. Occasional broken plurals are also formed in other languages, even for isolated nouns: Hebrew *āhim < *āḥāhim- “brothers” as the plural of *āḥ, and Babylonian *aḥba, Assyrian *ahbašu “fathers” as the plural of *ahuš “father.” Northwest Semitic, too, has a regular broken plural, formed by the addition of an *-a- infix to the pattern of *qattal, *qittel, and *qittel nouns; this infix occurs together with the regular plural suffix, *-āt or *-ôm (Huehnergard 1991: 284; Ginserg 1970: 102). This infix is seen in the -ā- prefixed after C1 in the absolute plural of Hebrew nouns (e.g., kāḏāḇim “dogs” as the plural of kāḏāḇ; also, the since-lost *a is evident in the spirantization of C1 in the plurals of monovocalic16 Aramaic nouns such as kāḇeš (or kāḇṣwya) “dogs” and in the construct plurals of monovocalic Hebrew nouns, such as kāḇeš “dogs of.” Ugaritic shows a similar formation through its alphs, as for example ṣāḇm /ašvāmat “heads,” the plural of ṣāḇ /ašā “head,” and also in syllabic transcription, as for example ḫa-ha-li-ma ḥabālāmat “ropes, lots,” and na-ba-ki-ma ḥabālāmat (beside syncopated na-ab-ki-ma ḥabālāmat) “springs” (Huehnergard 1987c: 282, 304).17

The Northwest Semitic *-a- infix has important consequences for the significance of the pattern as a component of the isolated nouns. Because this plural-formation procedure applies only to *qattl nouns, the pattern, even the pattern of isolated nouns, has a role in the inflectional system as a conditioning factor for a morphological rule. If we can reconstruct the broken plural to Proto-Semitic, then the pluralization of nouns is yet another type of analysis of isolated nouns into root and pattern in Proto-Semitic, since the broken plural preserves the root, but replaces the pattern (sometimes choosing a plural pattern on the basis of the singular). And in fact, there is ample evidence from throughout the Semitic family for the broken plural. Not only do Arabic, some of the Ethiopic family, the Modern South Arabian family, and the Old South Arabian family include productive broken plurals, but Northwest Semitic has the productive *qattl → *qittel+wa plural. Remnants of the broken plural in Akkadian include the reflexes of *qattl, found also in Arabic (Huehnergard 1987a: 181-88), as well as *aḥba “fathers,” *aḥbašu “brothers,” and ḫašu “trees,” which show a doubling of the second consonant. Languages in which the broken plural is not productive have some plural nouns whose pattern has no relation to that of the singular, as for example Hebrew ḫašu “horsemen,” and Syriac ḫaš “town,” plural ḫuruš, and ḫuruš “donkey,” plural ḥiwaš.18

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16 *Qattl patterns should not properly be termed “monosyllabic,” since they are bisyllabic in the reconstruction *qāṭṭal with ease vowel and mination. A syllabic division of the qattal pattern, by itself, is impossible. But the qattal pattern has only one vowel, and so should be termed monosyllabic. Likewise, qittel patterns should be termed bisyllabic.

17 Thus, for the plural of qattl nouns, Ugaritic has both qattlām and qattlām. The latter is formed with an optional syncope role (Huehnergard 1987c: 280-82).

18 These Syriac plurals are marked with šāmm, indicating that they were considered plurals by the scribes.
Even though patterns are not defined for the isolated nouns as units of meaning, the distribution of formal patterns is not random: some patterns have no isolated nouns, while others have a large number.

In order to examine this distribution, a count was conducted of the formal patterns of the isolated nouns, as reconstructed in the list below. Some uncertainty will necessarily remain, but clear trends are evident in the distribution of the patterns. Most of the nouns are monovocalic patterns, i.e., *qvatl (60% of the isolated nouns), and most of the monovocals are *qatt nouns (63% of the monovocalic isolated nouns and 29% of all the isolated nouns are *qatt). Among the *qvatl nouns, next in frequency after *qatt is *qatt (25% of the monovocalic isolated nouns) and then *qatt (12% of the monovocalic isolated nouns).

Among the bivocals, the *qatt nouns are in the majority (70% of the bivocalic isolated nouns with ungeminated C). By far the largest group of bivocals is the set of *qatt isolated nouns (75% of the *qatt isolated nouns). Some *qatt nouns with a collective sense may owe their second *a vowel to back-formations from the plural, if they are based on a *qatt form with the *-a- plural infix seen regularly in *qvatl nouns in Northwest Semitic and in some Arabic and Ethiopic broken plurals (Huehnergard 1995: 16). If so, however, the plural or collective semantics are no longer consistently apparent. There is a smaller group of isolated *qatt nouns (23% of the *qatt isolated nouns). Among these, a semantic group that stands out is a group of nouns for body parts, a pattern seen most clearly in Hebrew and Aramaic, and to some extent in Akkadian. These nouns are *qatt “belly,” Akkadian râmâ, Arabic râbî, Hebrew râbî (“belly,” Akkadian râbî, pārûq, Hebrew râbûq, Syriac râbûq; *kassî “belly,” Akkadian kâršûm, Arabic kârshû, Hebrew karrîš, Syriac karrû; and *wârîk “thigh,” Akkadian warkatûm, Arabic wârîk (beside wark, wârk, wâr), Hebrew yârâq (construct yârâq). In this group may also be *râhûm “womb” (if this is an isolated noun and not related to a verb from *râhûm “love, have mercy”), Akkadian rânu, Arabic râhu, Hebrew râhûm, but Syriac râhûm (following the synchronic pattern for *qatt noun from strong roots; there is also râhûm, the expected form for a LL-guttural *qatt). In addition, *kâbîd “liver” is reconstructible to Proto-Semitic, although it is not an isolated noun, since it coincides with *kâbîd “heavy.” Nouns from *kâbîd “liver” include Akkadian kâbîtu, Arabic kâbîd (beside kâbîd and kâbîd), Gô’oz kâbîd, Hebrew kâbîd, and Syriac kâbîd. A correlation between the *qatt pattern and the semantic category of body parts constitutes evidence for a role of patterns, albeit a small one, in the semantics of the Proto-Semitic isolated noun.

In Ethiopic, the *i is lost. In Aramaic, the *i is lost in the emphatic state, and the anaptyctic *i in *qvatl nouns means that *qatil is indistinguishable from *qatil in the absolute and construct states. In Akkadian, the *i should be visible after C in forms without vocalic endings, but the available forms do not provide unequivocal evidence. Since the body-part nouns are substantives, and Akkadian consistently distinguishes underlying qatil from qatil stems for substantives and adjectives respectively (Kienast 1989: 279-80, 286), it is quite likely that the *qatil patterns of body-part nouns merged fully into the *qatil pattern.
Many of the *qatil body-part nouns have *qitl or *qatl biforms in both Hebrew and Arabic, and so this alternation is reconstructed for Proto-Central-Semitic. In Hebrew, the construct state often shows a proto-pattern different from that of the absolute state (e.g., kāṭep - kēṭep and yārēk - yērēk), and in Arabic, the nouns often appear in several different patterns with no semantic distinction, possibly on a dialectal basis (e.g., kāṭîf - kēṭîf and wārîk - wārîk - wērîkh). There are no **qatul's among the isolated nouns, except perhaps for *ṣabūt "hyena." Arabic dabūt (with the biform dabî) and Hebrew yāḥoâ ṣ suggest Proto-Semitic *qatul. Syriac ṣapṭâ 22 and Akkadian hāsum (if from *hâšas) 24 could come from *qatul among other patterns. Thus, the reconstruction *qatul is the only Proto-Semitic pattern supported by all the languages. 25 The Hebrew, Gāzâ, and Akkadian forms could also come from *qatul, and the analogical re-shuffling of Aramaic patterns could produce the Syriac form from *qatul as well. The metatheses in this word – the consonants appear in the orders *ṣb, *bṣ, and *sb – suggest that this may be a Proto-Semitic taboo word. Its precise reconstruction is therefore difficult.

The order of frequency of the vowels seen in the *qatul monovocalics, *a, *i, and *u, is also present here in the *qatul bivocalics. In the West Semitic perfect based on the Proto-Semitic predicative form of the verbal adjective *qatul, the same order of frequency of internal patterns occurs. Arabic, Hebrew, and Aramaic have the order of frequency *a, *i, and *u, and in Gāzâ, qatula verbs (*u theme vowel) outnumber qattâ (*i or *u theme vowel). Thus, the distribution of the vowels of the West Semitic perfect stem – the Proto-Semitic verbal adjective – is like that of the isolated noun patterns. In Akkadian, on the other hand, the most common vowel for the verbal adjective is *i, with *u and *a far less common. Akkadian *qatul- and West Semitic *qatal- as the bases of the suffixed conjugations probably spread through leveling in the respective sub-families of Semitic.

*Qatul and *qatul patterns are the main triconsonantal forms for the isolated nouns. There are also quite a few Proto-Semitic biconsonantal *qitl nouns 26 (11% of the Proto-Semitic isolated nouns). 27 Again, the order of frequency of the vowels of the

21 According to Lane (1766) these biforms have origins in different dialects, dabû' from Qays and dabus from the Taimim.
22 The initial " < ṣ dissimulates to under the influence of the following *, as in Syriac urdâ "frog" (compare Hebrew sparâads', Arabic ṣādâ, Mehri ṣafîlâč, and Biblical Aramaic ṣādâ "tree, wood" from the root ṣârâ). The proto-pattern of ṣapṭâ could be *qatul or *qatul. 23 The development *qatul to *qatul by a rule of assimilation around gutturals is possible for this word, but a reconstruction of ṣaḥb as proto-*qitl, *qitl, or *qatul is equally possible.
24 Hausum could be from *qitl as well as *qatul.
25 See Brockelmann VG: 337 [§ 120].
26 According to Voigt (1938: 61-64, 209-10), only among the isolated nouns are truly biradical roots found (other than, perhaps, among the geminate roots).
27 Noldke (1910) discusses these in detail; many of the nouns mentioned there are particular to Arabic or to Central Semitic and not reconstructible to Proto-Semitic.
*Peqepm "mouth," may be a monoconsonantal. There is also Ugaritic g "voice," although this is not reconstructible.
biconsonantal isolated nouns, like the order of frequency of the vowels of the *gvi* and *gvtl* isolated nouns, is *a, *i, *u.*

The definition of the isolated nouns implies that all *gvi* nouns are isolated nouns. The non-isolated nouns are those derived from a verbal root, and the biconsonantal structure *gvi* does not allow for derivation from a triconsonantal root. There are some derived *gvi* nouns (e.g., *tham “garlic”), and some *yqvi* “hollow” forms of the *yqvi* form, but these are synchronically analyzed by the languages as triconsonantal, with a glide as C2.

The quadricosonantal patterns constitute 11% of the Proto-Semitic patterns. These include a variety of pattern types, including a number of *C1C2C3* patterns, with no formal consistency.

There are a few isolated Proto-Semitic nouns scattered among other triconsonantal patterns. The *gvtl* patterns constitute only 3% of the Proto-Semitic patterns. However, to the extent that so few data may be relied on, the picture is similar to that of the *gvtl* nouns: these too show main vowels in the order of frequency *a, *i, and *u.* There are also a few *qital, *qittal, and *qutal* patterns (3% of the isolated nouns), again with no significant consistency of form.28

The great rarity of *u* among the isolated nouns is partially the result of the assumption of labialization used here for nouns with a labial consonant and with evidence for proto-*u* in some languages and *i or *a in others. (See below, p. 12)

The fact that most apparent reflexes of *u* are attributable to labial consonants lends support to Diakonoff’s thesis (1975: 134) that the vowels commonly reconstructed as *i* and *u* come from a common source, which he denotes a. Still, *i* and *u* are well-distinguished in the systems of verbs and derived nouns, so their separate reconstruction is required.

Gemination is nearly or completely non-existent in the reconstruction of the isolated nouns. Nouns with gemination (see the list below) include *kammùn “cumin” and *ruumàn “pomegranate,” although these words may be voces peregrinates, culture-words which were borrowed from one Semitic language to another, or even from outside the Semitic language family. *Ayyāl “ibex” may be isolated, if not related to the root *swl “strong, first.” Hebrew *pēhām “coal” comes from *qittal, but Arabic has *qal, and other languages do not allow the determination concerning the presence of gemination. Hebrew *pēhām* may be the product of semantic analogy with *gēłāq (*qittal) “coal,” (plural *gēłālm). *Ilmar “sheep,” found in Akkadian, Aramaic, and Ugaritic, is another isolated noun apparently reconstructible with geminate C2, although the evidence for gemination is only clear in Akkadian.

Another important constraint on the distribution of the patterns of the isolated nouns is that *a* is by far the most common vowel for the first syllable of the triconsonantal bivocales, *qvitl (*qvitl nouns, 73% have *a in the first syllable.)

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28 There may be another pattern for isolated nouns, *qutal, suggested by Hebrew (e.g., *bkr “first-born” and *bhlm “dream”), but these are exceedingly rare. In any case, it is impossible to reconstruct a Proto-Semitic *qutal isolated pattern, since the other languages contradict Hebrew (e.g., Arabic *bkr, Biblical Aramaic *hēlom, Arabic *hlm. Gēlāz *hlm could be *qutal, *qitl, or *qutl).
The near absence of afformative patterns is an important pattern-based restriction on the isolated nouns.

There are a number of isolated nouns with sufformative *-at, a morpheme analyzable\(^{29}\) as a marker of the feminine and nomen unitatis. For example, *hāl-lat “bride, daughter-in-law”\(^{30}\) has the feminine sufformative *-at (which is productive on feminine attributive adjectives and occurs on many other words as well), but this noun does not share a trinaudical root such as *\(\sqrt{kl}\) with reconstrucuible nouns or verbs of similar semantics, and it may be termed isolated.

Interestingly, Proto-Semitic isolated nouns are not otherwise reconstructible with afformatives, even though by the definition applied here, a noun with afformatives could be an isolated noun. For example, if there were a reconstrucuible noun in the semantic category of “location” beginning in *\(\nu\)–, with the pattern *m\(\nu\)q\(\nu\)l, but not sharing the last three consonants with another word of related meaning, then that would be an isolated noun with an afformative.\(^{31}\)

With isolated nouns ending in *-\(\nu\)n, it can be difficult to determine if the *-\(\nu\)n is to be considered an afformative. *\(\nu\)šām\(^{22}\) “tongue” is isolated within Semitic, but the *-\(\nu\)n suffix/sufformative is recognized on other words within Semitic. Despite the likelihood that at the Proto-Afroasiatic stage of reconstrucuion “tongue” lacks the *-\(\nu\)n suffix,\(^{33}\) there is no reason, given the Semitic evidence, not to consider *\(\nu\)šām an afformativeless Proto-Semitic isolated noun with pattern *q\(\nu\)tal. *\(\nu\)yān “jenny” presents a similar problem. On the other hand, in Hebrew *\(\nu\)dôn “lord,” and Uguritic *\(\nu\)dān (UT 351-52; Huehnergard 1987c: 104), besides *\(\nu\)dôn “lord, father,” the evidence of the Uguritic *\(\nu\)dô may permit the separation of the *-\(\nu\)n suffix.\(^{34}\)

Another possible isolated noun with *-\(\nu\)n is “oak.” Hebrew *\(\nu\)lln and *\(\nu\)ll, Uguritic *\(\nu\)lln (Huehnergard 1987c: 107), Akkadian *\(\nu\)lln, since the existence of Hebrew *\(\nu\)ll (a hapax legomenon), without *-\(\nu\)n, may allow the analysis of the sufformative as a separate element.

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\(^{29}\) This morpheme is analyzable in the sense that there are other pairs of words distinguished only by their presence or absence, even though in the isolated nouns with *-at it follows from the definition that there is no noun with similar meaning and form, but lacking *-at. See Aronoff 1976: 10-11.

\(^{30}\) Some other examples are *\(\nu\)m-\(\nu\)n “female slave,” *\(\nu\)dâ-l “door,” *\(\nu\)m-\(\nu\) “hundred,” *\(\nu\)dîm-\(\nu\) “tear,” *\(\nu\)hîm-\(\nu\) “curds, butter,” and perhaps *\(\nu\)wâl-lat “word, speech” (Huehnergard 1987c: 302, n. 25). See the list of isolated nouns below.

\(^{31}\) An alternate definition of an isolated noun, not used here, may impose the additional condition that an isolated noun be monomorphemic. In that case, the isolated noun would have to be without analyzable afformatives, besides being without root and pattern in the sense defined above.

\(^{22}\) Hebrew and Uguritic (Huehnergard 1987c: 145) have *\(\nu\)šām, while Akkadian, Ethiopic, and Arabic have *\(\nu\)šām. Aramaic has *\(\nu\)šēm, represented by Syriac *\(\nu\)šēm, Biblical Aramaic *\(\nu\)šēm. The first vowel may be shifted from *\(\nu\) under the influence of the subjacent * (Nöldeke 1904a: 32). The doubling of the * seems to be a regular phonological rule in Syriac, *\(\nu\)č\(\nu\) > *\(\nu\)č\(\nu\). Other examples are *\(\nu\)šēm “women,” *\(\nu\)šēm “fever” (from *\(\nu\)š “fire”), *\(\nu\)šēd “dark.” (J. Huehnergard, personal communication, Spring 1996). There is also the absolute/construct state *\(\nu\)šēm “bow,” with doubled *\(\nu\), compared to the emphatic *\(\nu\)šēm with *\(\nu\)šēd on the t.

\(^{33}\) Skinner (1987: 79-83) suggests *\(\nu\)šām for Proto-Afroasiatic, and says that *\(\nu\)l is possible for a stage immediately preceding Semitic.

\(^{34}\) *\(\nu\)dān may, however, be a loanword from Hurrian.
Some afformatives have been proposed on comparative Afroasiatic grounds for isolated nouns, but they are not analyzable within the Semitic languages or Proto-Semitic, and so such nouns should be regarded as afformativeless Proto-Semitic isolated nouns. The nouns with the proposed *-b suffixative for wild animals or *-f for domesticated animals (Diakonoff 1988: 570) fall into this category.

Most isolated nouns show an important characteristic that differentiates them from most derived nouns—they may be reconstructed in whole. In derived nouns, the patterns may be reconstructed, and the roots may be reconstructed, but the root, pattern, and meaning that make up an internally-formed Semitic word generally do not show enough consistency among the Semitic languages to allow reconstruction of the whole word. There are exceptions, of course, in both categories; there are isolated nouns whose patterns are difficult to reconstruct (see items marked with a minus sign in the list below), and derived nouns which show consistency among the Semitic languages (like the aforementioned *kabid “heavy, liver,” and *umq “depth”).

The isolated nouns are a self-contained group of Proto-Semitic words which do not interact with the remainder of the linguistic system through the medium of a root. They show several notable features: their meanings tend to be simple and concrete; their consonants, formal vowel patterns, and meanings show far more consistency throughout the Semitic languages than other nouns. Thus, the isolated nouns give us a glimpse into a Proto-Semitic that is uninfluenced by the analogizing tendencies of the root and pattern system.

Part B. Reconstruction of the Isolated Nouns

The following is a list of Proto-Semitic isolated nouns. The inclusion or exclusion of items from this list can never be certain: when languages have verbs of the same root as a noun, there is no way of determining whether the verbs are denominal. Occasionally, especially in the South Semitic Go'az and Mehri, only an m-preformative noun exists beside a verb (e.g., Go'az mabraq “lightning”), suggesting that the m-preformative noun is derived from a root, but in these cases, the evidence of other, widely-spread Semitic languages, prevails. When the formal roots and meanings are cognate, but patterns are not, more than one proto-pattern is listed. Since this list is primarily intended to collate the patterns of the isolated nouns, not all biforms and allomorphs are listed, although the ones with significance in reconstruction are. Because of the special developments that they undergo, proper nouns are almost entirely excluded, even when they are the only available cognate of an isolated noun found in other languages.

We can never know the full lexicon of the language spoken by the linguistic ancestors of the Semites. The reconstruction here uses a formal convention for Proto-Semitic: a word that occurs in two of the three groups East, Central, and South Semitic is included in the list. A word that is found in only one subgroup is

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35 The classification adopted here follows the system of Heitzron (1974; 1976: 101-6) as modified by Huehnergard (1991: 283; 1992). The place of the Old South Arabian languages in the
excluded according to this convention. A word found in only Central and South Semitic is included, even though only a reconstruction to Proto-West-Semitic is allowed by attestation in these groups. This convention does not exclude the possibility that an isolated noun was lost in most of the Semitic languages but that it was preserved in one language, or in a few closely related languages. But words found in widespread languages are less likely to be the result of independent language-internal developments, unless borrowing can be shown, and so the exclusion of nouns found only in one language group brings consistency to the process of reconstruction. When loanwords are listed, a notation is made that they are loanwords.

An unequivocal reconstruction (marked with + in the list below) is made when at least two widely separated Semitic languages agree on a proto-pattern, and no languages contradict; or, when a language contradicts, there is an explanation for the change in pattern that allows the reconstruction, such as analogy and borrowing.

Often, not all of the Semitic words are perfect cognates in root and pattern, and sometimes more than one Proto-Semitic pattern is given (marked with 0 below). This does not mean that the proto-language is reconstructed with biforms, but rather that two possible patterns present themselves for reconstruction. In these cases, the pattern that appears in more than one language, preferably in widely distributed languages, is listed first, if there is such a pattern. Usually, however, when there are alternate patterns, none of them appears more likely than the others, and then *qal is listed first, followed by *qit, *qit, *qatal, *quatil, and so on.

When the languages suggest quite different proto-patterns, all are listed, but these reconstructed patterns (marked with –) are not included in the counts. It is assumed in these cases that some of the words may have undergone a complete morphological pattern replacement, rather than just a phonological development, and no reconstruction is possible. In these cases, one pattern is arbitrarily chosen to head the entry, but that pattern has no priority over the others. Even when a few alternate patterns are listed, the minus sign indicates that no clear reconstruction of a pattern can be made.

In the statistical count, all quadriradical patterns are treated together.

In order to take into account both the nouns for which only one pattern (+) and those for which more than one pattern (−) is reconstructed, while not giving each of the latter type of pattern as much weight as the former, calculations of the relative frequency of the patterns in Proto-Semitic in this analysis use a “pattern value” equal to the sum of the number of words for which a given pattern is reconstructed exclusively (marked with +) plus half the number of words for which the pattern is reconstructed alongside others (marked with 0). For example, for 08 of the isolated nouns, only *qal is reconstructed (marked with +), while for 29 other nouns, some languages attest to *qal and other languages attest to other patterns, with no simple explanation for the alternate pattern such as borrowing or semantic analogy (these

classification scheme has not yet been definitely fixed. There is a strong basis, however, for classifying them in Central Semitic, along with Arabic and Northwest Semitic (Voigt 1987: 13-14; Nebes 1994: 78).
cases are marked with $^\circ). The pattern value, then, is $68 + \frac{1}{2} \times 29 = 82.5$. Nouns marked with a minus sign are not counted in this calculation.

If we were to use only those nouns for which a unique pattern may be reconstructed (+), the results would not be very different. For the larger groups of patterns, the result gained by the latter method shows a relative fraction of the group of patterns (out of the set of isolated nouns) that varies by only 5% or less from the result gained by the “pattern value” method. All the statements made about the relative frequency of various groups of patterns remain the same regardless of which method is used.

An approximate gloss is listed for the Proto-Semitic words. When the reflex in one of the languages has an exceptional meaning that diverges greatly, it is provided after the entry for that language. For reasons of space, the debates that often surround the glosses of the nouns and the relations between the glosses in the languages are not summarized, since the primary interest of this list is the forms of the isolated nouns.

Some developments are given less weight in reconstruction than others. When languages are known to change patterns without phonological regularity, these possibilities are taken into account in reconstruction. Thus, for example, Arabic often has dialectal biforms like *qattîl ~ *gîlî, as for example râhil ~ rîhl “ewe,” so these biforms are given less weight than forms from other languages.

Aramaic has frequent alternations and allomorphic biforms among the reflexes of *qâl and *qâlîl, because of anaptyxis and analogy, and so the Aramaic evidence is given less weight in this regard. If Aramaic disagrees with the other languages on which of the *qâîl or *qâîlî patterns is to be reconstructed, the pattern suggested by the other languages is reconstructed unequivocally. Also, because the historical phonology of Modern South Arabian is understood less than that of other languages, the Modern South Arabian evidence is allowed to influence the reconstructions only when the proto-pattern of the Modern South Arabian word is evident.

When the vowel *u appears in the vicinity of a labial consonant in some languages, while *i, or less commonly *a, appears in other languages, the *u is assumed to be the result of labialization, even if the development is not phonologically regular. For example, Semitic “mother” is reconstructed as Proto-Semitic *iîm, on the assumption that the *i shifted to *u in the vicinity of the *m in some of the languages, such as Akkadian, Arabic, and Ugaritic (and perhaps Gēz). Other examples are *bîlîm, *bîm-ât, perhaps *âbn, *ålîp, *îmûm, *barr, *gâmîn, *karm, *māâmîn, *sâmîm, *bîr, *bîř, *libb, *rî’m, *râmî, and *êfîpr. (See the list below for glosses and reflexes.) The variant vowel *u appears in some cases in many Semitic languages and in some cases in a few, but in all cases in which labialization is possible, the variants with *a or *i have been preferred in reconstruction to the variant with *u.

Sources used are Barth 1894: 1-9 (§§ 1-3); BLe 445-506 (§§ 60-61); Diakonoff 1970; LaSor 1990 (the data in this article are to be treated with caution); Leslau 1958; Nödelke 1910; and Rabin 1975 as well as the dictionaries AHw, BDB, BGRM, Brockelmann-Lex Syr, Dillmann 1865, the glossary of UT (alphabetical

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Forms from a representative sample of the Semitic languages, Akkadian, Arabic, Ge'ez, Hebrew, Mehri, Sabaic, Syriac, and Ugaritic, are given. Modern South Arabian languages other than Mehri, Ethiopic languages other than Ge'ez, and dialects of Aramaic other than Syriac are adduced only when they make an important contribution to the reconstruction not made by the primary dialect. Hebrew citations are mostly drawn from Massoretic Biblical Hebrew, with some references to Mishnaic and Hexaplaric Hebrew, and Arabic citations are mostly from the Classical form of the language, with some references to modern spoken dialects. References to Akkadian are primarily to Old Babylonian, but evidence from other dialects is adduced when it can contribute to the reconstruction. The reconstructions to Proto-Semitic are by the author of the present article.

The forms are sorted in the list by pattern, using the following characteristics of the pattern in this order of precedence: number of radicals,\(^{37}\) mono- or bivocalic (for triradical nouns); quality of first vowel; quality of second vowel if any; quantity of first vowel; quantity of second vowel if any; \(C_2\) ungeminated or geminated. Within each pattern, nouns with +, *, and – are gathered together (as mentioned above, the sorting of nouns in the latter two classes may be arbitrary). Within each of these classes, nouns are sorted by Proto-Semitic root, with the consonants taken in this order (based on the Latin order): \(*\), \#*, \#b, *\#d, *\#q, *\#s, *\#t, *\#x, *\#h, *\#j, *\#k, *\#l, *\#m, *\#n, *\#p, *\#r, *\#s, *\#t, *\#x, *\#w, *\#y, *\#z.

List of Reconstructible Isolated Nouns\(^{38}\)

\[\ast y\nu; \ast p\nu, \text{const.} \ast p\nu; \text{"mouth"; Akk} p\nu m, \text{OAk} p\ddot{a}\nu m, p\nu m; \text{Arab} f\nu m, \text{const.} f\ddot{a} f\nu m; \text{Ge'ez}, \ast a f, \text{with suffix } a f\nu; \text{Heb} p e, \text{const.} p e, \text{pl.} p i y o t, p i y o t; \text{Syr} \text{pumum} ; \text{Ug} p \]

\[\ast q\nu l, \ast a b, \text{const.} \ast a b \nu; \text{"father"; Akk} a b u m, \text{const.} a b i; \text{Arab} a b, \text{const.} a b \nu; \text{Ge'ez} a b, \text{with suffix } a b \nu; \text{Heb} a b, \text{const.} a b i i ; \text{Meh} h - a b, \text{const. } h - a b i i ; \text{Heb} h - a b, \text{const.} a b i i ; \text{Meh} b - a b, \text{const.} b - a b i i ; \text{Syr} b - a b i i ; \text{Ug} a b \]

\(^{37}\) Of course, the “radicals” are part of a formal root, not a derivational root. Isolated nouns with repeated elements, \(C_2C_3C_4C_5\), are presented among the quadriradical roots below, alongside the few quadriradical nouns with no repeated consonants.

\(^{38}\) Abbreviations (and in addition to those listed in ZAH \(1988 \) 2-16) are as follows. Languages and dialects are Akkadian, Arabic (e.g., Aramaic), Ugaritic, Hebrew, Mehri, Modern South Arabian, Old (Idumean), Aramaic, Modern (e.g., Nwew, Stonard) Assyrian, (K)adian, Babylonian, Sabaitic, Syriac. PS = Proto-Semitic. Grammatical terminology: Pl. = plural, sg. = singular, const. = construct, nom. un. = nonea unitatis. Special symbols (see above, pp. 11 ff. for further explanation): \(\ast\) = definitely reconstructible, \(\dagger\) = more than one possible reconstruction, \(\times\) = no reconstruction is possible by the methods used here.


\(^{40}\) See Nöldeke 1904b on the semantic analogy between \(*a b\) and \(*a m m\) that makes their forms converge.
*gal; *ah, const. *aḥā; pl. *aḥā; Arab *aḥā, const. *aḥā, pl. *aḥā; Heb *aḥā, with suffix *aḥā-; Syr *aḥā, pl. *aḥā; Meb gā; Sab *aḥā; Ug aḥā

*gal-at; *am-at; “female slave”; Akk amānum; Arab amān; Gaʾaz amān; Heb amān; Sab amān; Syr tamān; Ug amān

gal-t; *daš-t; “door”; Akk datum; Galilean Aram datād; Heb dāša, with suffix dāša, also const. dāl (from absolute dāl); Syr pl. dāšatā, dēšatā (Perhaps an Akkadian loanword, related to edēṭum “to lock,” or the result of prothesis from *dāšatā?); Ug dīt

gal; *dam; “blood”; Akk damum; Arab dam; Gaʾaz dam; Heb dām; Sab dam; Syr dmālīm; Ug damu

gal; *ham, const. *ham; “husband’s father”; Akk emum; Arab ħām, const. ħām; “husband’s male relation”; Gaʾaz ḥām, with suffix ħām; Heb with suffix ḥāmišā; Meb ḥām; Syr ḥām

gal; *ma, “water”; Akk mā; OAḳ mā; Arab mā; Gaʾaz mā; Heb mā; pl. mem; Meb ma-mā; Sab mā; Syr mā; Ug mā, mām

gal-t; *qāt-t; “bow”; Akk qaṭṭum; Arab qaṭṭa; Gaʾaz qaṭṭ; Heb qaṭṭ, with suffix qaṭṭ; Syr qaṭṭal qaṭṭal; Ug qaṭṭu

gal-at; *sāp-at; “lip”; Akk sāpum; Arab sāfāt; Heb sāfā; Syr sāfāsū; Ug sīpt

gal; *šaw, “sheep” (collective); Akk šum MA, NA šūbu (šu-ū-šum-); SB šu-ū; thus Proto-Akk *šu-ū-šum-, 43 Arab šū; Galilean Aram šū; Heb še, with suffix še- oven and šo-; Sab dual šū; Ug šū

gal; *yād, “arm, hand”; Akk idām “side”; Arab yād; Gaʾaz yād; Heb yād; Meb ḫāy; Sab yād; Syr ʾēdāy; Ug yād

gal-gūlī; *gūlī; “people”; Akk niša “people”; Arab niša, nišar “women”; Biblical Aram nēḥon; Heb nāšim “women”; Syr nišē “women”; Ug nišāna “people”
gal-at; *raḥ-at; “palm of hand”; Akk ratum; Arab raḥāt; Gaʾaz raḥā; Heb raḥāt; “winnowing shovel”; Syr laḥāt (irregular consonant correspondence)
gil; *ti, “god”; Akk ilum; Arab ḫilāt; Heb ʾel; ḫilāh; Sab ʾel; Syr aḥāṭa; Ug ḫilā

41 *ṭāḇ “bud, fruit” may be reconstructed to Proto-Northwest Semitic. Note also Hebrew ḥāḇ “ripe wheat” and Amharic ṣāḇa “flower,” with the same root and similar meaning. Yet the semantic difference between *ṭāḇ and “father” is significant, and *ṭāḇ may be related to Arabic ṣāḇab “intermedial joint of a cane or reed” and Biblical Aramaic with suffix *ṭāḇ “fruit” (Hebrew pl. construct ṣāḇa, Syriac ʾēḇā).
42 ṣāḇ is the usual writing, but there also appear a nominative singular construct state ṣāḇ ṣāḇā, and a genitive singular with suffix ṣāḇ ṣāḇā. The Ugaritic rule of vowel assimilation around gutturals sometimes operates across the morphological boundaries between the word base and the case vowel; sometimes, however, paradigm leveling causes the vowel of this noun to remain a, since the internal pattern does not otherwise vary with case (Huehnergard 1987c: 272-73, including nn. 29, 30).
43 J. Huehnergard, personal communication, Fall 1995.
44 Compare also nouns with the consonants *n̄aṭ; Arab ṣāʾa “mankind,” ṣāʾa “people”; Heb *nāš “man, mankind,” *nāš “people”; Meb *nāš “mankind” (collective, loanword?); Syr *nāš “man, mankind,” Biblical Aram *nāš, *nāš; also, with *yāṯ; *ṭāḇ; Heb ʾēṯ “man,” ʾēṯ “woman” (const.), pre-suffixal form ʾēṯ; Sab ʾyāṯ.
Isolated Nouns in the Semitic Languages

+ *gil-* (דיל); 45 *îš-* (דיל); "fire"; Akk šātum; Ga 'az 'asār; Heb 'es, with suffix 'iššo, 'išša, 46 Syr 'issātā 'išver; Ug 'istāi

+ *gil; *îš-*; "tree, wood"; Akk šūm; pl. šūt; Arab 'idr; Biblical Aram 'ād; Ga 'az 'ad; Heb 'es, pl. 'èsim; Sab 'd; Ug 'y, pl. 'îššāna

+ *q(i)'; *b(i)n; pl. *b(i)n; "son"; Akk (rare) bunum, bunum; Arab (i)b, sound pl. banum; Heb ben, pl. pānām, with suffix bn; Mech bār, baber; Sab bn-n; Syr bār/bār, pl. bnin; Ug bn

+ *gil- (א); *mî-* (א); "hundred"; Akk me'mat, me'mum, mētām; Arab mē'at; Ga 'az ma't; Heb me'mā, const. ma'ma, pl. me'mat, dual mā-ta'sāyim; Sab m'av; Syr mā-ta; Ug m'at

+ *gil-; *pl-* (א); "corner, forehead, temple (of head)"; Amharic fit "face"; Akk NB, Assyrian pātum "edge," pūtum "forehead" (corner/edge of head); Arab pā'; Ga 'az fit; Heb pe'ā "corner, temple (of head)," const. p'āt; Soqotri pio "front"; Syr p'ā-tā; Ug pi'tu

+ *gil-*; *rî-* (א); "lung"; Akk irtum "chest" (with metathesis); Arab rî'at; Heb, Mishnaic re'd; Mech ray'e; Syr rāt, rā-tā, rā'tā; Ug irtu (with metathesis)

+ *q(i)'; *š(i)m; "name"; Akk šūmum; Arab š(i)m; Ga 'az šum; Heb šām, const. šām; Šem, with suffix šm, šmā; Mech šam; Sab š'm; Syr šmāštum; Ug šm

+ *q(i)'; *š(i)c; "buttocks"; Akk šīdum (relation to *š(i)c uncertain); Arab (i)c; Heb šit; Mech šit; Syr šat; ešād, masc. šet

+ *q(i)'; *š(i)c; "two"; Akk šān; Arab (i)hām; Ga 'az sānay "Monday," sānay "the next day"; Heb šānayim, fem. šānayim; 49 Mech sān; Sab hāy; Syr šen, fem. šet; ten; Ug hāy(m)

+ *qâd; *mut; "man, husband"; Akk mutum; 50 Ga 'az mut; Heb pl. mutim; Ug mt

+ *qâl; *'abn; "stone"; Akk abnum; Ga 'az 'abn; Heb 'âb; with suffix 'âbno; Sab 'bn; Syr 'ašmā

+ *qâl; *'ah; "tribe, tent"; Akk alûm "city"; Arab 'ahl, 'āl "family"; Heb 'āhal "tent"; 51 Sab 'lh; Syr yahāl "(a tribe of Arabs);" Ug ahl "tent"

+ *qâl-ān; *'âl-ān; Akk allûnum; Heb 'allon "oak," allâ "oak"; Ug allânu

+ *qâl; *'alp; "ox, thousand"; Akk allûnum "ox"; Arab 'alp; Ga 'az 'alp "thousand"; Heb 'alp, const. pl. 'alpe "ox, thousand, clan"; Mech 'al "thousand"; Sab 'lf "thousand"; Syr alp/âlpe "thousand"; Ug alp "ox, thousand"

48 This and other nouns listed here as *q(i)i may in fact be better designated *gil; a word-initial consonantal cluster with a consonantal or semi-vocalic second element (Tetsen 1985).
49 For this transliteration of šāyim and šāyiim, see Hoberman 1989.
50 Akkadian shows u, which may be the product of the labial m. The forms from languages other than Akkadian could have proto-*u or *u. Because there is no definite *gil form, the reconstruction is left here as *qâl. As the only *qâl form, this word is exceptional. Yet, as mentioned above (p. 12), *u is generally the rarest of the vowels among the isolated nouns.
51 This may represent *ahl, shifting to *'al before the Canaanite Shift, then developing to [əl], which is pointed by the Massoretic with consonantal h (Huchnergerd 1995: 12). Compare also mōhar (*mahr) and yēkār (*yēhā) below.
+qatl-at; *amm-at; “cubit”; Akk annatunum; Gaʾaz ʾammat; Heb ʾammā; Sab ʾmi; Sryʾ ʾammā; Ug ant
+p qatl; *aŋp; “face, nose”; Akk appum; Arab ʾanf; Gaʾaz ʾanf; Heb ʾap, with suffix *aŋp; Sryʾ appā; Ug ʾappu
+p qatl; *arš; “earth”; Akk eresatum; Arab ʾarš; Heb ʾēreṣ, with suffix *arš; Sab ʾarš; Sryʾ ʾarš; Ug ʾarsu
+p qatl; *arxy; “wild animal”; Akk arumum; Arab ʾurwiyum “mountain goat”; Heb ʾārwe “wild beast”; Sab ʾtaw-n “mountain goat”; Sryʾ ʾārwa “lion”
+p qatl; *arš; “cedar”; Arab ʾarz; Gaʾaz ʾarz; Heb ʾēreṣ, const. pl. ʾarz; Sryʾ aršt; Ug ʾarzu
+p qatl; *aŋyu; “nothing”; Akk yaʾmu, yāmu (metathesis); Arab ʾayna interrogative; Gaʾaz ʾaŋyu “refuse”; Heb ʾayin; Ug in
+p qatl; *amm; “clan, army, paternal kinsman”; Akk umnum; Arab ʾumnum; “paternal uncle”; Heb ʾam, ʾām; Sab ʾm “uncle, male agnate”; Sēṭṭi ʿumni “maternal uncle”; Sryʾ umnā; Ug ʾm
+p qatl; *arš; “bed, couch”; Akk eršum; Arab ʾarš “throne”; Heb ʾēreš, with suffix *arš; Ug ʾrš
+p qatl; *ašī-ayin; “one”; Akk iššānum, fem. iššat, iššer; Heb ʾašte (only as part of “eleven”); Ug ʾš (only as part of “eleven”)
+p qatl; *aḥm; “bone”; Akk ešmunum; Arab ʾazm; Gaʾaz ʾadmon; Heb ʾēṣem; Meh ʾaḥā; Sryʾ atmā “thigh”; Ug ʾzm
+p qatl; *ayim; “eye, source”; Akk inum; Assyrian ēnum; Arab ʾayim; Gaʾaz ʾayim; Heb ʾayim; Meh ʾayim; Sab ʾyn; Sryʾ ēnum; Ug ʾēnu
+p qatl; *baʾl; “lord, husband”; Akk bēlum; Arab baʾl; Gaʾaz baʾl; Heb baʾal, with suffix baʾal; Meh baʾal; Jībīlī baʾal; Sab baʾal; Sryʾ baʾal; Ug baʾal
+p qatl; *bagq; “gnat”; Akk baqqum, baqbaqqu; Arab baqq “bedbug”; Galilean Aram baqqā; Sryʾ baqqā
+p qatl; *barr; “grain”; Akk Mari burrum (loanword?); Arab barr “wheat”; Heb barr, barr; Sab br, Meh br
+p qatl-at; *bay(t)-at; “egg”; Arab bayt; Heb pl. bešim; Meh biyāyr; Sryʾ beʾyā
+p qatl; *bayt; “bouse”; Akk bitum, Assyrian bētum; Arab bayt “tent”; Gaʾaz bet; Heb biyāt; Meh bayt; Sab bitt; Sryʾ bayt; Ug bi
+p qatl; *dašu; “grass, spring”; Akk ḏūsum, OAkk ḏāšum; Arab ḏāʾ “moisture, moist soil, ḏāʾ “moisture, moist soil”; ḏāʾ “monsoon”; Galilean Aram ḏāʾ; Heb ḏāʾ; Jībīlī ḏāʾ; Sab ḏāʾ; Sryʾ ḏāʾ; Ug ḏāʾ
+p qatl; *gabbī/gabbi; “beak, side”; Arab gabb; Gaʾaz gabbo; Heb gab, with suffix gabbi; Sryʾ gabbbā
+p qatl; *gady; “kid”; Akk gudā; Arab gady; Heb gadī, pausal gādī; Sryʾ gadyā; Ug gady

52 See Faber 1991: 414.
53 Rather than *ʿumnum, this may be related to Hebrew ʾammā, Arabic ṣammāt, Syrian ʾummta “tribe, people.”
54 For the Akkadian shift *št > ššt compare ʾaštar > Bišar “(name of a goddess)” (J. Huehnergard, personal communication, Spring 1996).
+*qatt-(at); *gann-(at); “garden”; Arab gannat; Gəz gannat; Heb gann, with suffix gann, also gannad, const. gannat; Sab gny-“(garden) crop”; Syr gannjat; Ug gn

+*qatt; *gapm; “grape vine”; Akk gapnum, gapnum; Arab gapn; Heb gapeh; Syr gapn, gapet; Ug gpm

+*qatt; *gawz; “nuts, walnuts”; Arab gawz; Gəz gawz; Heb *gizia; Syr gawz(u)

+*qatt; *habt; “rope, field”; Akk eblam; Arab habl “rope”; Gəz habt; Heb hēbēl, with suffix habēl; Sab ḫbl “course of stones,” ḫblt “terrace field”; Syr hēbēl/hēbal; Ug pl. hēbalāma

+*qatt; *harr; “excrement”; Amharic ar; Arab har, harr; Heb const. pl. hēre, pl. with suffix harēhen, hēhem; Syr herā

+*qatt; *ḥayl; “force”; Arab ḥawl, ḥayl “horses, cavalry”; Gəz ḥayl; Heb ḥayil; Syr ḥaylā

+*qatt-ar; *kall-ar; “bride, daughter-in-law”; Akk kallatum; Arab kammāt (irregular consonant correspondence); Heb kallā; Syr kallā

+*qatt; *kā’s; “cup”; Akk kāsum; Arab kās, kā’s; Heb kās; Syr kās; Ug ks

+*qatt; *kabē; “lamb, ram”; Arab kabē “ram”; Heb kēbē, kēsēh (with metathesis); Meh kābē; Syr keḥšē (irregular consonant correspondence)

+*qatt; *kalb; “dog”; Akk kalbum; Arab kalby; Gəz az kalb; Heb kēlēb, const. pl. kelēbe; Meh καλβ; Syr kallā; Ug kalbē

+*qatt; *kapp (See also *kanap, p. 24); ”hand”; Akk kappum; Arab kaff; Heb kap, pl. kappot; Meh kaf; Syr kappā

+*qatt; *karim; “vineyard, vīne”; Arab kārm; Gəz az kārm; Heb kērzn, with suffix karmi; Syr kārmā; Ug krm

+*qatt; *kasp; “silver”; Akk kaspum; Heb kāsep, with suffix kāspī; Syr kęspā; Ug kaspē

+*qatt; *laḥm; “food”; Arab laḥm “meat”; Heb lēḥem “bread”; Soq lēḥem “large fish”; Syr laḥma “bread” Ug lām “bread”

+*qatt; *laḥy; “cheek”; Akk lētum; ”back side” (irregular consonant correspondence); Heb lēḥ; Arab laḥ “jowl, jaw”; Meh ληθ “chin,” melāth “jaw”; Tigre ḫāhe “jaw”

+*qatt; *lavh; “tablet”; Akk lēʿum; Heb ləḥ; Syr lēhā; Arab lavh; Gəz az lavh; Ug ləh

+*qatt; *mahār; “brideprice”; Arab māhr; Heb mōhar; Meh mēhar; Syr mahrā; Ug mhr

55 Or *kās with no *, the Arabic kās being a hypercorrect form, in which case *cup* should go under *qatal.


57 *Kapp and *kanap are semantically similar, and the languages with the assimilation rule AC > CC allow the reconstruction of the two with the common root √knap. If this reconstruction is correct, then, *kanap and *kapp may be non-isolated. However, Arabic kaff and Mehri kaf do not show **, as would be expected if *kapp came from **kapp.

58 AHw (vol. 1: 546) relates this to Hebrew lōd, Syriac lōrd “jaw.”

59 Tropper (1995: 61-66) gives examples of Akkadian lāhū to West Semitic *lāhū, thus relating Akkadian lāhū to West Semitic *lāhū.

60 See Steiner 1987: 121.
Joshua Fox

+qut; *malk; “king”; Akk malkum, Mari mālikum “prince”; Arab malik (probably an Aram loanword). 62 Ga az. amālik (pl. form) “God”; Heb mēleq, with suffix malki; Sab mēkh; Syr malk; Ug malku

+qut; *mar; “son, lord, man”; Akk marum, OA marum, mar’um “son”; Arab mar “man”; Sab mar “man, lord”; Syr marāmārē (? “the Lord”)

+qut; *mat; “hip”; Akk matu “sinew”; Arab mat “back”; Heb mēton; Meh mēton; Syr pl. mātātā

+qut; *nād; “waterskin”; Akk nāдум; Heb nā<=>d; Meh ha-nād; Ug nādū 65

+qut; *nāḥ; “stream, wadi”; Akk nāḥum, nāḥīlam; Heb nāḥal, const. pl. nāḥéh; Syr nāḥal; Ug nāḥīlu

+qut; *nāp; “soul, breath, neck, self”; Akk nāpišum, OAk, Assyrian nāpāšum, later nāmusu; Arab nāf “self;” nāfas “soul, breath;” Ga az nāf; Heb nāpāš; with suffix nāf; Meh ha-nāf; Sab nīf “dispute, risk of life;” Syr nāfīša; Ug nīf

+qut; *pāḥ; “leg, foot”; Akk pāum; Heb pā’am, const. pl. pā“me;” Meh ūm, Jbhwli fa’m; Ug pā’n.

+qut; *qamḥ; “flour”; Akk qēmum; Arab qamḥ “wheat”; Čaha qamh; Ga az qamḥ “produce”; Heb qēnah; Syr qamha; Ug qamh

+qut; *qara (non-Semitic loanword?); “horn”; Akk qarrum; Arab qarn; Ga az qarn; Heb qēzou, with suffix qarni; Meh qon; Syr qamna; Ug qon

+qut; *qaww; “thread, line”; Akk qāw; Arab qawwāt; Heb qaw; Soq qā; Syr qwe

+qut; *ra; “head”; Akk rašum; Arab ra’s; Ga az ra’s; Meh ha-roh; Heb ro<=>š, pl. ra<=>š; Syr rašā

+qut; *raḥ; “watercourse”; Akk rāṭum; Heb rāḥat; Syr rāḥā

+qut; *ramḥ; “lance”; Arab ramḥ; Ga az ramḥ; Heb rōmah; Meh ramḥat; Sab ramaḥ; Syr ramḥaḥ; Ug mrah (with metathesis)

+qut; *salm; “image”; Akk salnum; Arab xanum (irregular consonant correspondence, loanword?); Heb selem, with suffix salom; Sab šem, zim; Syr salmāšem

+qut; *sāb; “seven”; Akk xēbām, absolute state xebā (irregular consonant correspondence);  67 Arab sāb; Ga az sab; Heb xēba, with suffix sīb; Meh hašba, xebba; Sab s’b; Syr xabādīšba

+qut; *samm (some of these may be loanwords); “grass, incense, drug”; Akk sumrum; Arab summ; summ; Heb pl. summim; Meh sacram; Syr summ

+qut; *samm; “fat, oil”; Akk summum; Arab summ; Heb pl. summim; Meh sacram; Syr summā

+qut; *swf; “whip”; Arab swf; Ga az swf; Heb šof; Syr swafā

62 This may represent *mahr. See n. 51 above.

63 J. Huchnerberg, personal communication, Fall 1995.

64 With the article, the form is al-mar’. When undetermined, the vowel of the noun varies with the case: (h)mara, (h)mara, (h)mārī.

65 The emphatic state can be māryā (used only for God) or mārā (also used for humans rulers).


67 Sumerian ga is probably a loanword from the Semitic.

68 A change s > s may be conditioned by the labial β. See Faber 1985: 106, n. 34.
*qatl; *śaːn; “sheep” (collective); Akk šēmum; Arab dāʾn; Heb ֵשׁוֹמ; Sab ֵדָן; Syr ֵדָּן; Ug śin

*qatl; *ṣanur; “wool”; Go ʾaz ṣanur; Heb šēmār, with suffix ʾamār; Syr ʾamār mar; Ug ʾamār
table 168 (irregular consonant correspondence)

*qatl; *tays; “male goat”; Akk di-taššu (SB, LB, MA, NA); Arab taš; Heb tayyish; Syr tašši; Tigr tašši “young bull accustomed to yoke”

*qatl; *ʾtam; “judgement, taste”; Akk ūnunum; Arab taʾm; Go ʾaz ʾtam; Heb ʾām, with suffix ʾāʾem; Syr ʾāʾāʾem

*qatl; *ṭall; “dew”; Arab ṣall; Heb ṣal, with suffix ʾallām; Syr ʾallāṭal

*qatl; *ṭayr; “gape”; Arab ṣayr; “gap, front teeth, frontier way of access”; Heb šāʿar, const. pl. šāʿer; Syr šāʾāʾer (with metathesis); Ug pl. ʾāʾāʾāʾer

*qatl; *ṭalq; “snow”; Akk šalqum; Arab ṣalq; Heb šaql; Meh šulq (irregular consonant correspondence)

*qatl; *ṭawr; “bull”; Akk šurum; Arab šawr; Heb šor; with suffix šor; pl. šawrīm; Meh šawr; Sab šawr; Syr šawrā; Ug šśr

*qatl; *ṭabya; “gazelle”; Akk šabitaum; Arab ṣabī; Heb šḥi; Sab ṣḥyr; Syr ṣabī; Ug ṣḥy

*qatl; *ṭawr; “top, noon”; Akk šūrum “back”; Arab zahr “top,” zuhr “noon”; Heb šōḥar, roof, dual form šāḥrāʾim “noon”; Meh ʾāʾār “noon,” ʾāʾ “on”; Sab b-ṭhr (on the) back (of); Ug ʾṭhr

*qatl; *ṭawr; “wine” (non-Semitic loanword?); Arab wayn; Go ʾaz wayn; Heb wayn; Sab wym, wym “vineyard”; Ug ʾym

*qatl; *yawan; “day”; Akk ūnum; Arab ūwm; Go ʾaz ūm “today”; Heb ūm, pl. ūmīm (*qal-ūma); Meh ʾāʾwm; Sab ūm, ūm; Syr ūwma, ūmā; Ug ūmū

*qatl; *zayt; “oil, olive”; Arab zayt “oil,” zaytān “olives”; Go ʾaz zāyr; Heb zāʾī; Meh zayt “oil,” zaytān “olives” (loanword?); Syr zaya; Ug ʾzāʾī

*qālquat; *ʾāʾlīš; “testicle”; Akk ʾskum; Arab ʾiskat “labium”; Go ʾaz ʾaskat; Heb ʾesek; Syr ʾesγa

*qāl-aṭqāt-ai; *ʾanš-āt; “woman”; Akk ʾāšatum “wife”; Akk ʾāšum “woman”; Arab ʾāntki “female”; Go ʾaz ʾānast “woman, women” (*qatt-); Heb ʾissā; Sab ʾṭḥ, ʾṭḥ “woman”; Syr ṣaːṭ ʾṭṭā “woman”, Ug aṭ “woman”

*qāltqit; *ʾāṭilʾāṭ; “tamarisk”; Akk ʾāšum; Arab ʾṭḥl; Heb ʾṭšṣl; Sab ʾṭḥl

*qāltqitt; *ʾanšʾān “she-goat”; Akk enzum; Arab ʾanz; ʾṣahāʾ ʾan, ʾnz; Heb ʾez, pl. ēṣim; Sab ʾez “goats” (collective); Syr ʾezāʾāʾāʾāʾer

*qat(t); *ʾāšr; “ten”; Akk ešrum; Arab ʾāʾr, fem. ʾāšrat, but ʾāšara, fem. ʾāʾrata in “eleven” through “nineteen”; Go ʾaz ʾāʾr, ʾāšrīm; Heb ʾēʾzr; masc. šārā, as component of “ten” through “nineteen” ʾāʾrā; Meh ʾāʾsr; Sab ʾ ṣr; Syr ʾęsrāʾ; Ug ʾṣr
Several of the *qatì*lvariants occur with 11-s roots, suggesting an early palatalization of a
> i before syllable-final i (J. Huchnergärd, personal communication, Spring 1996).
73 See Steiner 1977: 151.
74 CDG: 230. The Uguric *maqolu* "(pair of) tongues" (Huchnergärd 1987c: 143), which shares the
m- preformative with this Hebrew word, may indicate that *maqohây comes from *qârâ take, receive."
isolated nouns in the semitic languages

\(+qit\), \(+igl\); "calf"; Akk \(agulum\) "donkey"; Arab \(i\#\); G\(\#\)az \(\#g\l\) (irregular consonant correspondences) "young (of animal)"; Heb \(\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\#\##
+qitious, *šīnū; "tooth"; Akk šīnum; Arab šīm; Heb šen, dual šinnāyim; Ug šan; Sab tātir; "front teeth" (collective); Syr šīmū
+qitious, *tūr-us; *tūr-áh; *digi; *tūr-ā, *tīmū; Arab ṭūr-ā; Heb ṭēr; Syr ṭīnā; Ug ṭīnu
+qitious, *tiš; "straw"; Akk ṭiṣum; Arab ṭīm; Heb ṭēr; Syr ṭīnu; Ug ṭīmidd
+qitious, *til; "mound, hill"; Akk ṭilum, ṭila; Arab taš; Heb tel, with suffix tillūm; Syr tellā
+qitious, *tiš; *neš; *nineh; Akk tiṣum; Arab tiš; Gāʾ az ṭiš; Heb téš; Meh ša; Sab šī; Syr tiš; Ug tiš
+qitious, *tiš; "mud, clay"; Akk tišum, tišu, tišatu, tišatu (*tištum); Arab ṭin; Heb ṭiš (Akkadian loanword?); Syr tiš; Ug tiš
+qitious, *tīr; "flesh"; Akk šīrum; Arab ṭīr; "blood-revenge"; Heb šē’re; Sab ṭēr; Ug ṭīru, šī
tā
+qitious, *tīr; *qūr; "fingernail, claw"; Akk šuṣrūm; Arab ṭiš; Gāʾ az ṭśr; Heb sippārin; Meh gēr; Syr trār
+qitious, *qūr; "pith"; Arab ṭiš; Gāʾ az ṭśr; Heb zēqę
+qitious, *qūr; "breast"; Akk qīzum; Heb zīz; Ug ṭīz
+qitious, *un; "ear"; Akk umum; "ear, authority"; Arab ṭūn; Gāʾ az ṭūn; Heb ṭēn; Meh h-ayyēn; Sab ṭōn; "permission, authority"; Syr ṭūn; Galilean Aram ṭūn; Ug ṭūn
+qitious, *aṭa-; *ummu-āt-ā; "tribe, nation"; Akk ummānum; Arab ṭummat; Heb ṭuṭām; Syr ṭemmat; Ug ṭummatu
+qitious, *ur; "way"; Akk urhum; Heb ṭuḥār; Syr urḥā
+qitious, *ur; "manger"; Akk arūm, urū; MA urū; Arab ṭūr; ṭīr; Heb ṭūrā; urā; Syr urī
+qitious, *butum, "pistachio"; Akk butum; Arab butum; Heb bētor, Syr butmā
+gabb; "pit"; Akk NA; NB gabbu (loanword?); Arab gabb; Gāʾ az gabb (with no labialization, possibly *qitious); Heb gōb; Syr gūbā
+qitious, "gūn; "granary, threshing floor"; Arab gūn, gūm; Gāʾ az gūn; gūm; Heb gōn; Sab grān; Ug grān
+qitious, "hup, "hollow of hand"; Akk ummānum; Arab hāfant; ḥāfant; Gāʾ az ḥāfant; Heb dual ḥāfantūm; Syr ḥūpā; Ug ḥūp
+qitious, *kull; "all"; Akk kullum; OAk, OA const. kalu; Arab kull; Gāʾ az kull; Heb kol, with suffix kullū; Meh kal; Sab kl; Syr kullā; Ug kl
+qitious, *mulhā; "brain, top"; Akk mulhānum; Arab mulhā; Heb mah; Meh mēmā (*ma)mā, irregular consonant correspondence); Syr mulhā; Ug mā

84 See n. 76 above.
85 J. Huehnergard, personal communication, Spring 1996.
86 See n. 76 above. The Ugarit evidence suggests two words.
87 Syriac shifts u > % in some cases, such as *ednā, šērā, bēmā, and debba (J. Huehnergard, personal communication, Spring 1996).
88 See *imm “mother” above (p. 21) which may render this non-isolated.
89 May be related to *am-n. (See *am-n above, p. 16.)
90 Von Soden (AHw, vol. 1: 427; GAG: 51, 83) gives a 311-weak base, but a biradical base for the Akkadian word is more probable. (See Huehnergard 1987a: 190, n. 51; Gelb 1955: 105.)
Isolated Nouns in the Semitic Languages

+*qull; nuwn; “fish”; Akk nīnum; Syr ninā
+*qull; *šurš; “root”; Akk šuršum; Arab šir “thorn-bush,” šīr “marrow, origin”; Gā az šurw “sinew, root, origin, tribe,” šurwe “beam of wood”; Heb šōër; Syr šerā; Ug širā

+*qull; *tawn; “garlic”; Akk šumum; Arab ṭām; Ga oz sum; Mech lōmē; Jibbali tām; Heb pl. šumim; Syr tumā

+*qull/qagt; *dubbādy; “bear”; Akk dabā, OAkk dābi; Arab dubb; Ga oz dab; Heb dob; Syr dēbbā; Targ Aram dābā

-+*qull; *dubbs; “fly”93; Akk subbum; Amharic zamb; Arab dūbāb94; Heb zubb; Syr dubbābā, debbābā95

-+*qull; *hurl; “chickpea”; Akk hallūrum, ḥullāru, hallāru; Heb hārāl, plural l’hullūlim; Syr hurāl

-+*qull; *qut(u); “smoke”; Akk qurrum; Arab qart; Ga oz qatār; Heb qōreq “incense”; Sab muṭr “incense altar”; Ug qtr

+*qatāl; *āha; “one”; Akk wēdam; Arab āhad, wāhid; Ga oz aḥad; Heb ʾāhad (*qatāl); Sab ḫad; Syr had; Ug aḥadu

+*qatāl; *aṭār; “place, footstep”; Akk ašrum, ašrum; Arab aṭār; Ga oz aṭār (irregular consonant correspondence);96 Heb ʾašer (relative pronoun); Syr aṭār, atār

+*qatāl; *apar; “dust”; Akk epum, eperum; Amharic afār; Arab ʾafār; Heb āpār, const. āpar, with suffix ʾpārō; Syr ʾaprā; Ug ʾpr

+*qatāl; *barad; “hall”; Arab barad; Ga az barad; Heb bārād; Meh barēd; Sab brā; Syr barād

+*qatāl; *basāl; (“onion(s)”) (collective); Arab basal; Ga az basāl; Heb bāsāl; Meh bāsal; Jibbali bēssāl; Sab bṣl; Syr bāṣāl

+*qatāl; *basar; “leaves”; Akk bāṣrum; Arab baṣar; Ga az basor (loanword?); Harari bāṣar; Heb bāṣār, with suffix bāṣri; Meh bāṣarēt “skin”; Syr bāṣrā; Sab bṣr; Ug bṣr

+*qatāl; *bawah; “door”; Akk bāwum; Arab bāb; Meh bōb; Syr bābū (The West Semitic nouns may be loanwords from Akkadian).

+*qatāl; *bawam-at; “high place”; Akk bāmtum; Heb bāmā; Ug bmt “back (of an animal or person)”}

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91 This may come from a reduplicated root. The radicals of some of the words are not fully cognate, but Akkadian, Hebrew, Syriac, and Ugaritic all have the root *ṣrš. See Faber 1984: 213-15; CDG: 535.
92 See n. 87 above.
94 It is likely that the Arabic pattern is formed on semantic analogy to a group of names for animals, birds, and insects in the pattern qatāl, and with the vowel melody a – d in general.
95 See n. 87 above.
96 Assimilation or dissimilation of the emphatic feature of C2 to that of C1 has led to t and r for C2 in various languages.
97 Beside āhad, there is a variant with initial *w. In addition to the forms for “one” listed here for Akkadian and Arabic, there are Arabic wawdā, Hebrew wāḥēd, Syriac ʾḥēḏ “only” and Ugaritic and Hebrew yḥd “together.”
98 Voigt (1994: 105, 111) attributes the ḫ to the influence of the r.
+qatal; *qahab; “gold”; Arab ẓahab; Heb zāḥēb, with suffix zāḥēb; Meh ẓāheb; Sab ẓāheb; Syr zāhēb
+qatal; *qakar; “male”; Akk zīkram, zikaram; Arab ẓakar; Heb zāḵār; Sab ẓër; Syr dezrā
+qatal; *qanāb; “tail”; Akk zibbatum; Arab ẓanāb; Gē az zanāb; Heb zānāh, with suffix zanāb; Meh ẓonōb; Syr dunbā; Ug ŏnōb
+qatal; *qaqan; “beard”; Akk ziqnum; Arab qaqan; Heb zāqān, const. zqan, with suffix zqan; Syr ḍqan, ḍaqān
+qatal; *qamal; “camel”; Akk gammalu (loanword?); Arab ẓamal, ẓamā; Gē az gamal; Heb ẓōmāl, pl. ẓōmālim; Sab ẓmāl; Syr ẓamāl
+qatal; *qalab; “milk”; Arab halab, ḥalab; Gē az halab “sour milk,” halab “milk”; Heb ḥalāb; Meh ḥalēb “milking” (action noun); Syr ḥalēb; Ug ḥēb
+qatal; *qatan; “son-in-law, bridegroom”; Akk ṣatum, ṣatum; Arab ḥatan, ḥaṭān; Heb ḥāṭān, with suffix ḥṭān; Syr ḥaṭmā
+qatal; *kānap (See also *kapp, p. 17); “wing”; Akk kappa; Arab kanaf; Gē az kafa; Heb kānap, const. knap, with suffix knāp; Sab knāp “border, side”; Syr knapā; Ug kanapu
+qatal; *maṭar; “rain”; Akk mitrum “watercourse”; Arab maʻar; Heb maṭār, const. mtār, const. pl. mitār; Sab mtr “(rain-watered) field”; Syr mētra; Ug mtr
+qatal; *numal, nom. un. namal-at; “ant(s)”; Akk SB lamattu (with metathesis, loanword?); Arab namāl; Heb namāl, Amarna Canaanite namīr, Meh nāmel; Syr namīl
- qatal; *nawāy; “steppe”; Akk nawāy; Heb nawa; Sab nw “environs”
+qatal; *parsa; “horse”; Arab faras; Gē az faras; Heb pāras; Sab fr
+qatal; *qanay; “reed”; Akk qanā; Arab qanā, qanāt “spear”; Gē az qanāt “spear”; Heb qānā; Meh qanēr; Syr qanēy; Ug qn
+qatal; *sana; “thornbush”; Akk sinā; Arab sanī; Heb sna; Syr sanī
+qatal; *ṣādāw; “field, mountain”; Akk šadām, OAkk šadām; Heb šāḏāw, šāḏay; Sab sдуш “mountain, irrigated field”; Ug šāḏa
+qatal; *ṣama; “sky”; Akk šamā, OAkk šamām; Arab samā; Gē az samāy; Heb šāmāyim; Meh ṣēmāyim; Syr ṣmāyim; Ug ẓamūma
+qatal; *ṣawāq; “leg”; Arab sāq “lower leg”; Heb sōq “leg”; Syr sāq “leg”; Tigre sōq “bone”
+qatal; *tawa; “chamber”; Akk tāwā; Heb tā (loanword?); Syr ẓawwānā (irregular consonant correspondence); Targ Arum tawā
+qatal; *talāq; “kid, goat”; Arab jala; Gē az jala; Heb jālē; Sab jhr; Syr jēlā
+qatal; *tekay; “breast”; Arab ẓekā, ẓekā, ṣekā; Heb dual šāḏāyim, rare śōq; Meh fālā; Syr fālā; Ug ṣālā
0 qatalqati; *baraqq/baraq “lightning”; Akk MB, SB, NA berqu, birq; Arab barq; Heb bārāq; Meh būrak; Gē az mabraq, mabraq; Sab ṣr “rainy season, monsoonal storm”; Syr barqā
0 qatalqati; *laṣaškaša “cream”; Akk SB litlu; Gē az lasd; Heb lašād
0 qatalqati; *naharinah, “river”; Akk nārum; Arab nahr, nahar; Heb nāhār; Sab nhr; Syr nahrā; Ug nhr

Isolated Nouns in the Semitic Languages

*qattâl/qattâl; *tamar/tamr; “palm-tree”; Arab *tamar “dates”; Ga’az *tamar, tamart; Heb *tâmar; Meh *tômar; Syr *tmarà

+*qattal; *ayyal; “ibex, mountain goat”; Akk ayyâlum; Arab *iyal; Ga’az hayyal; Heb *ayyal, *ayil; Sab *yil; Syr *ayylà

+*qattûl/qattûl; *paḫhmû/paḥmû; “coal”; Akk pêtum; Arab *faḥm; Ga’az *faḥm, or perhaps faḥmû (the orthography is indeterminate); Heb paḥm (*paḥham); Syr paḥmû or perhaps paḥmû (the orthography is indeterminate); Ug phû

+*qatil; *arûm; “chest” (i.e., box); Akk arûnum; Arab *irûn; Heb *îrûn; Syr *îrinà, Targ Aram *atâhû, *îrînà; Ug arûn

+*qatîl; *talûd; “three”; Akk šalâšum; Arab *talûd; Ga’az šalâs; Heb šalâs; Meh šalûd, šalûd; Sab šûd (earlier period), šûd (middle and later period); Syr šûtûd; Ug šûd

+*qatîl, *dûl; “world”; Arab dûl; Ga’az dûl; Heb dûl; Sab šûm; Syr šûmd; Ug šûm

+*qatîl; *aqîb; “heel”; Akk eqûtim; Arab *aqîb; Heb *eqeb, const. “eqb; const. pl. *iqebh, *iqeb, *iqeb; Syr eqeb, eqeb; Tigr eqeb “leg”

+*qatîl; *haṭîr; “court”; Arab ḥazrat “pen, pound”; Ga’az ḥasr; Heb pl. ḥesrim, const. pl. ḥesre; Sab ḥesr; Ug ḥûr

+*qatîl; *hamîš; “five”; Akk *hamûšum, absolute hamûš; Arab ūmis; Ga’az ūmis; Heb hamûsh, masc. hamûšû; Meh ūmîmeh, ūmmûh; Sab ūmûs; Syr hamûms; Ug ūmûs

+*qatîl; *karîs; “belly”; Akk karûšum, later karûšû; Arab karîs, kîs; Ga’az karî; Heb with suffix keres; Meh kersî; Syr karûs

+*qatîl; *katîf “shoulder”; Akk katûmum; Arab katîf; kif; kataf; Ga’az matqafû (with metathesis); Heb kîfep, const. kîfep; Meh katîf; Syr katûf; Tigrî matqaf

+*qatîl; *šalîr (with metatheses); “ewe”; Akk šalûnum; Arab šalîł, rîfû; Heb riḥîl; Syr rûlah

+*qatîl; *wa’il; “antelope”; Arab wa’il, wâ’il; Ga’az wa’alâ, wa’alâ; Heb pl. *yîlîm; const. pl. ya’ilî; Sab w’il; Meh w’il

+*qatîl; *warik; “thigh, hip”; Akk warkatum; Amharic wârîc “front leg of animal”; Arab warik, warik, warak, wirk; Heb yerek, const. yerek, with suffix yelek; Meh wérerîk; Sab wrîk; Targ Aram yûrûk

+*qattîl, *namir/nimûr; “leopard”; Akk namûnum; Arab namîr; Ga’az namûr; Heb namêr; Sab namûm; Syr namûr

+*qatîl; *bûrû “beasts”; Akk bûrû, bûrû “young bull,” also bûrûm “calf”; Arab bûrû “camel stallion”; Ga’az bûrû; Heb with suffix bûrî; Meh bûrû; Sab bûrû; Syr bûrû


101 The reconstruction of this noun is very difficult. See Jenni 1952: 199-221 for possible etymologies, and a comparative discussion of the the word in Northwest Semitic, Arabic, and Ga’az.
-qattâl/qattî; *harîlp̄harhp̄; “winter”; Akk ḥarrûmû, ḥarrûpûmû; Arab ḥarrîf “fall”; Heb ḥôreph; Ga ‘az ḥôreph “current year”; Sab ḥrêf
-qattî; *ṭâqîdî; “almond”; Ga ‘az ʂog(û)dî; Heb šâqîdî; Syr šqâqîdî (irregular consonant correspondence, loanword?); Ug ṣgûdî
+qatîl; ḥarîb; “raven”; Amharic qura; Akk ərîbu, ərîbumû; Arab ərîbû.102; Heb əreb; Meh ərəbû; Syr ərûbû
+qatîl; *sâbî “(with metatheses) “hyena”; Akk bâṣûmû; Arab dabû; Ga ‘az ʂɔ’bîb “hyena”; Heb pl. ʂo’imî; Syr ʂa’îā
+qatîl; *aṭã “(wild sheep); Akk əṭûdûm, əṭûdûmû; Arab əṭûdî; Heb pl. əṭûdûmû
+qatîl-ut; ḥatîl-ut; “virgin, young woman”; Akk batûlîm “young man,” batûlûm “young woman”; Arab batûlî; Heb bûlû; Syr bûlû; Ug bît
+qatîl; *kammûn “cumin”; Akk kammuûnumû; Arab kammûnû; Heb kammôn (loanword?); Ga ‘az kammûn (loanword?); Syr kammûnû; Ug kêm
+qatîl; *inûb “fruit, grapes”; Akk inûmû; Arab ɪnûb; Heb ɪnûbî; Sab ɪnbû; Syr ɪnûbû; Ug yûb (irregular consonant correspondence)
+qatîl; *ṣikar “intoxicating drink”; Akk ṣikûrumû, ṣikûrumû; Arab sakûr; Ga ‘az sakûr; Heb ṣékûr
+qatîl; *ṣîlû “(reed);” Akk ṣûlû, ṣîlûmû; Arab dîlû; Heb ṣelû, const. ṣelî (qatîl); Meh ṣalû; Ug ʂî; Syr ʂelî.104
+qatîl; *dîbî “date honey”; Akk dîpî (with metathesis); Arab dîbû; Gafât dabsû; Heb ḏbâsî (loanword?), with suffix dâbî; Meh dabhû; Sab dîbû; Syr deləbî
-qatîl/qatîl; *sârûsû “hair”; Akk šûrûmû; Arab šûrû; Ga ‘az šûrû “hair”; Heb šê ṣû, const. šû and šû, also šû “rû;” Syr šû ṣû; Ug šû ṣû (wool)
+qatîl; *inmûn “sheep”; Akk inmûnumû, Assyrian enmmûnumû; Syr enmûnû; Ug imû
+qatîl; *kinnûm “louse”; Heb pl./collective kînnûmû, kînnûmû; Soq konem
+qatîl; *dîrû “arm”; Arab dîrû; Ga ‘az mazrû “arm”; Heb zōrû, “ezrû;” Syr dîrû “arm”}

102 It is likely that this pattern is formed on semantic analogy to a group of names for birds in quat.
103 Greek _pieces is probably a loanword from Phoenician.
104 With dissimilation ʂ > ṣ (thus Biblical Aramaic > ṣ).
105 But see also * 걉 “barley” (p. 27).
106 According to the regular sound rules, this may also be reconstructed as *qatîl.
*qutāl; *unās, “mankind”; Arab īnās “mankind,” ānas “people”; Heb *nōš “man, mankind.” *nāšim “people”; Meh āns “humans” (collective, loanword?); Sab *nuš, *s; Syr <<nāsā “man, mankind,” Biblical Aramaic *nāš, *nōš. (Compare also the possibly related *išā; “man”; Heb *iš “man,” *īšēg “woman” (const.); 109 pre-suffixal form *išā “woman”; Sab *‘ēs.)

*qutāl; *burāš, “juniper”; Akk burāšum; Heb *broš, also pl. *brotim (irregular consonant correspondence, loanword?); Syr *brogā (loanword from a dialect with *a > *א and *b > *ב?)

*qutāl; *kanāt, “emmer”; Akk kanāšum; Syr kanātā

*qutāl; *rūmān (*-ān may be a suffix); “pomegranate”; Akk nurrum, nurrumū, Nuzu nūrūnu (with metathesis), lurrānu, lurrānu, MA lurrānu, lurrānu (with dissimilation); Arab rumān (loanword); Ga’az romān (loanword); Heb rimmon; Syr rūmānu

*qutāl; *bukān and other patterns, with metatheses; “thumb, finger”; Akk abānum “finger”; Arab ḫibānum “thumbs”; Heb bōhen, also pl. bhnōt (*quttul [Kogut 1969-70] or *qūṭl) “thumb”

*qutāl(); *nuḥāš; “bronze”; Arab nuḥās; Heb nuḥēš (*nuḥēš); νυχαί (*nuχάι); Ga’az naḥā; Syr nḥāšā

*qutuliquallīqutul; *bakur/biker/bakur; “firstborn”; Akk bukurum; Arab biker; Ga’az bakur; Heb boker, with suffix boker, pl. bokerim; Meh biker; Sab biker; Syr bukrē; Ug bīr

*quttulissqutul; *susur/sipur; “bird”; Akk issūrum, ishārum; Arab isfūr; Heb sippur; Syr isṣurūn, špur

+qatat; *alman-ah;108 “widow”; Akk almatum; Arab armālāt; Heb ḥalāmāh; Meh šermār; Syr armālāt; Ug almut

+qatat; *qā’ay, “viper”; Arab qā’ā; Ga’az qaf’; Heb qē’ē

+qatat; *arba;111 “four”; Akk erbau, QA kurbaun; Arab arba; Ga’az arba; Heb arba; Meh ārba, ḥarba; Sab ’rb; Syr ’arba’; Ug arbi

+qatat; *arba’y, “locusts”; Akk erbau, Heb ḥarba; Meh karbyē; Ug hrby

+qatat; *ārāb; “hare”; Akk arnabum, annabum; Arab rnb; Heb arnhēṯ; Meh harnūb; Gaḥal: Wolane arônīnu (with metathesis); Syr arnhā; Ug annāb (UT 361)112

+qatat; *agrab; “scorpion”; Akk agrabum; Arab agrab; Heb ḥerāb; Tigre āqrāb

+qatat; *ṭē’alab; “fox”; Akk šēlbum; Arab ṭē’alab, ṭē’al, ṭē’al; Heb šē’āl; Meh yāyāl; Jibbali iyē’el; Syr tā’āl

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107 See also *sī’arāš’r “hair” (p. 26).
108 The form with ḍ is likely a borrowing from Hebrew.
109 *Ēēg is adopted for the absolute state as well in a few cases. *Ēēg may be from *iēḏ (i.e., the feminine of *iḏ), with shortening of the vowel in a closed syllable (Huehnergard 1995: 11).
110 Not isolated if related to the roots of Akkadian lemmēnum “be bad, poor,” Amharic lämmēnā “beg” (although the latter is probably denominative; J. Huehnergard, personal communication, Spring 1996).
111 The languages, in analyzing this word, extract the trilliteral root */rb/.
112 The consonants are not proper cognates, however. WUS (27), interprets this as “perfume,” or an animal which produces a perfume, cognate to Ga’az mnhb “bee.”

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111 This may be an Akkadian *qanu|a|d diminutive formation, borrowed directly or indirectly by other languages, including Hebrew and dialects of Aramaic (Von Soden 1991: 1488).
114 There is also qippaz, with the expected correspondences, glossed “arrow-snake” (BBG: 891), but this seems to be related to Arabic dfjijaz, PS *qippaz(-at).


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Among the Semitic nouns, the isolated nouns are distinct in that they are not built on the usual root-and-pattern structure. This article reviews the definition of the isolated nouns and related categories, and examines the distribution of (phonological) patterns among such nouns. *qetl nouns predominate, while *quitl and *qatl nouns also occur in significant numbers. In each of these categories, the vowels occur in the order of frequency *a, *i, *u. Few isolated nouns have other patterns; nonetheless, some have patterns, such as *qatil, which are rare in Semitic derived nouns.
Most of the article is devoted to a list of reconstructed nouns in which isolated nouns attested in wide-spread Semitic languages are compared, demonstrating the regularity of correspondence of isolated nouns as compared to the derived nouns.

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Palmyrene Aramaic Inscriptions and the Bible

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The Aramaic inscriptions from Palmyra are a sizable corpus of ancient texts which have at times been employed with profit for the interpretation and illumination of biblical texts, and which continue to constitute a valuable resource. A more detailed exposition of this assertion is given in this author's "Palmyrene Aramaic Inscriptions and the Bible, especially Amos 2:8," which may be consulted as the introduction to this article, a series of three notes continuing this general topic, touching: (A) the name yhwh 'Ilym in Genesis 2-3; (B) Abraham's purchase of tomb property, and (C) the biblical Hebrew terms for 'goddess.'

A. Genesis 2-3 "The god Yahweh and the Naked Couple"

Since its beginning Pentateuchal criticism, with its abandonment of the idea of authorship by Moses in favor of a discrimination of various sources (of later date), has depended heavily on the pattern of the names for the deity in the first five books of the canon. A small, but troublesome anomaly in the more or less clear pattern of divine names that can be observed is the combination of two names usually kept apart, yhwh and 'Ilym. This dual title yhwh 'Ilym is prominent in the first narrative portion, the creation and paradise story of Genesis 2 and 3. There is good reason to think that this is a passage that comes from the "Yahwist," one of the principal sources distinguished by critics. So scholars have had to seek some kind of explanation for the unusual combination, since elsewhere the "Yahwist" uses just the so-called Tetragrammaton.

The problem remains unresolved in the sense that after more than a century of Pentateuchal source-criticism, there is no agreed-on explanation. For a delineation of

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2 Abbreviations used: BS III = C. Dunant, Le sanctuaire de Balshamin à Palmyre: Vol. III Les inscriptions, Bibliotheca Helvetica Romana (Rome: Institut Suisse de Rome, 1971); CIS always refers to one part of Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum: Pars secunda, Tomus III: Inscriptiones palmyrenae; Inv = Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre, (Fascicules 1-12, various editors and publishers, since 1993); NRSV = New Revised Standard Version; NJV = New Jewish Version, i.e. Tanakh = The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1988); PAT = D. Hillers and E. Cusin, Palmyrene Aramaic Texts (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1966); RSP = M. Gawlikowski, Recueil d'inscriptions palmyrénienes provenant de fouilles syriennes et paléstiniennes récentes à Palmyre (Paris: Imprimerie nationale and C. Klineksteck, 1974); RTP = H. Ingholt, H. Seyrig, and J. Starcky, Recueil des tessères de Palmyre, Institut Français d'Archéologie de Beyrouth, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique (Paris: Geuthner, 1955). This article is derived principally from lectures and seminars held in 1995 at the Università degli Studi di Firenze; I wish to express my thanks to Prof. P. Fronzaroli, and Dr. F. Lelli, and especially to Prof. Ida Zuttoli, for cordial hospitality and stimulating discussion.