

Compilation of Leprosy Equivalent Designations ¹

This compendium of designations used to indicate leprosy is presented, in part, because the designations are useful and interesting. However, their choice by society and their meanings also provide some understanding of their societies' concept of the disease, particularly in the more ancient past when the terms were introduced.

It is clear that terms extending far back into the histories of the more ancient cultures are less secure in their translation as "leprosy" the more ancient their use, even if they are in current use as designations for this affliction. It is generally true that in ancient times the diagnosis of leprosy was not as specific as at the present for the disease was not delineated according to present understanding. In all probability other moieties, which are not leprosy, were included in the diagnostic designation. Nevertheless, the fairly even tenor of thought and meaning of the designations chosen by these disparate societies suggests that leprosy was probably the "core" disease in the moiety. It would, indeed, be very remarkable if in so many societies, so widely separate, leprosy was absent and the designations used therefore due to some other undefined entity.

Where scientific, medical descriptive evidence, because of its absence through lack of development, fails to define leprosy as being present, etymologic and sociologic findings must at least be accorded status as evidence for the presence of this disease.

GERMAN: *Aussatz*, Put out or eject; i.e., those afflicted are outcast.
 Maalzej, malade = male aptus (unfit, useless).
 Miselsucht (miser = misery).
 Maselsuht, m^âse (spot).

OLD HIGH GERMAN:
 Hrûf, *rûf*, *hriubi* (scab).
 Uz-sazeo, *uz-setze* = outcast.

MIDDLE HIGH GERMAN:
 Veltsiech, *feldsiech*, *sundersiech* (in the fields, separate outside the wall).
 Gut Lude, *Gutleutmann*, *Gutleutfrau*

FRANKISH: *Horn-giebruoder*, lit. "horn-brother," perhaps from the sometimes associated scabies horn-like masses as illustrated by Danielssen & Boeck in their atlas.

GOTHIC: *Ruts-fill* (painful, ulcerated skin).

OLD ICELANDIC:
 Likthrd (*Lik* = corpse, *thrd* = foul, rotten, tainted; similar to an odorous corpse).

NEW ICELANDIC:
 Holdsv^eiki (flesh sickness).
 Limafallssyki (sickness with limb mutilation or loss).

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- NORWEGIAN: *Spedalskhed* (hospital sickness).²
Radesyge (lit. evil disease). The old designation for tertiary syphilis and therefore applied to leprosy also till the two conditions were differentiated (Hjorts: Norsk Mag. Laegevidensk., 1840).
- DANISH: *Spedalske*
- SWEDISH: *Spetelska*
- DUTCH: *Malaatschheide*, this designation is associated with *malade* (*vide infra*).
Akkersiekte (field disease—again suggesting separation).
- ENGLISH: *Leprosy, Hansen's Disease, Hansenitis, Hanseniasis*. (*Vide*: Skinsnes, O.K., Leprosy Rev. 35 [1964] 175-181, IJL 38 [1970] 294-307; Rotberg, A. Leprosy Rev. 43 [1972] 96-105).
- FRENCH: *Lèpre, ladrerie* (Lazarus = *ladrus, ladrerie, mal ladre* = *mal Saint Lazare*, from which are derived *malade* and *maladrerie*).
Misellerie (chronic, *misellus* = misery).
Cagot (*gafets, capots, caqueux, cacous*, all terms derived from the Spanish *gafó, gafedad* from *gaf* of Latin, meaning "hook, claw") defined as leprosy by Guy de Chauliac, 1383.
- ITALIAN: *Lebbra*
- SPANISH: *Mal de San Lazaro*
- PORTUGUESE: *Gafeira*
- HEBREW: *Tsara'ath, zaraath*. *Tsara* is the stem from which translation into leprosy is derived. *Zaraath* = *sora'at* apparently meant to be stricken (by God), to be outcast and originally referred to moral or spiritual blemish. Leprosy apparently came to personify this spiritual blemish and when the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek as the Septuagint in about 200 B.C. the Greek term *lepra* was used as the nearest equivalent. (Skinsnes, O.K. IJL 38 [1970] 310-312, IJL 38 [1970] 294-307, Leprosy Rev. 35 [1964] 175-181. The latter contains references to dissident interpretations.)
- OLD EGYPTIAN: *Poun, paeni, puni, aap* (Ebers Papyrus).
- PHOENICIAN: *Feu-hu* (robber, thief).
- OLD BABYLONIAN: *Isruba, isrupa*
Li'bu (Codex Hammurapi). Divorce was permitted a man if his wife had this disease, the character of which has not been established. Either men or women could be afflicted.
- ASSYRIAN: *Asakku*, an unidentified disease having to do with uncleanness though not necessarily referring to leprosy, though it may have had this connotation.
- AKKADIAN:³ *Gar(a)bānu*, a severe skin disease given to the care of a special physician. Sometimes used to connote "One who is guilty." Used also in the following sense: "... if a woman (who has *garbānu*) has given birth to a *sehhānu* (malformed) child, either male or female, a sinful man has had intercourse in the street with this woman."

²The words *spedalskhed, spild, spilsygen* are variant pronunciations of words indicating diseases requiring hospitalization.

³These "Fertile Crescent" terms have, for the most part, been translated as representing leprosy though there is as yet inadequate clinical characterization associated with their use to make such translation secure (Skinsnes, O.K. Leprosy Rev. 35 [1964] 106-122).

Garābu, a disease characterized by a white spot or pustule as a first sign.
Epqu, an odious skin disease. Children may be born with it.

Epqennu, literally means "epqu-like."

Sennītu, also *sernītu*, a skin disease. Entymologically related to Hebrew
tsara'ath. One feature of the disease was an eruption on, or discharge
 from, the nose.

Šihḫat-šeri, often refers to "consumption" but the word means "slough-
 ing of flesh."

Šaharšubbū, a Sumerian loan word in Akkadian, literally meaning "cov-
 ered with dust" or "scaly." Sufferers with this disease were expelled
 from the city and the word has odious connotations as used in curses.

Isrubaa = *sāḫaršubbū*

Saharsuppaa = *sāḫaršubbū*

SANSKRIT: *Kustham*, *maha-kustha* (large, round spots).

Śvitram, *śvaitram* (white spots).

Mandalakam, skin disease with round spots or macules.

Galatkustham, *galitakustham* (*galita* = degenerated, decayed, loss of flesh;
 thus advanced leprosy).

Ślīpada, *ślīlipada* (elephantiasis).

HINDUSTANI: *Carak*, *god* (elephantiasis).

Rukta kasta

Rapta-pīti, *mahabyadhi* (great sickness).

PERSIAN: *Pēs*, *pēségi*, *dschezam*

ARAMIC: *Garbha*

SYRIAN: *Arjaja* (lion-like), *arjajuta*

TURKISH: *Pis*; *dschūsam*, *miskin*

ARABIC: *Gudām* (disease in which the limbs shrink or waste away = mutilation).

Baras (white), *bahaq* and *wadah* (the white one).

Sau (evil disease).

Mubtali (sorely tried).

Gatama and *magdum* (mutilated).

Qawābī (according to Ali-Habbas [great Persian physician, c. 994 A.D.],
 benumbed and cracked lesions).

NEW ARABIC: *Bala* (affliction).

ALGERIAN: *Baras*

MOROCCAN: *Djdem*

GREEK: *λεπρά* (lepra) derivative of *λεπιζ* (crust) is associated with the Indo-
 European word *lap* (to peel off).

Leuke (white).

Satyriasis, from the redness of the cheeks and the "irresistable and shame-
 less impulse *ad coitum*." (Aristotle, Aretaeus, Ebstein).

Leontiasis, prominent, thick, bald eyebrows hanging downward and re-
 tracted eyelids to give the appearance of an enraged lion (Aretaeus—
 Ebstein). Ali-Habbas also compared to the great, white eyes as of
 lions.

Ophiasis, alopecia as in the form of a snake.

Παδοζ ηραχλειζ (Herclean, unconquerable disease).

Morbus phōnicicus, Phoenician sickness (Hippocrates).

Elephantiasis Graecorum (the skin of leprosy is similar to that of an ele-
 phant). The meaning of this term has been confusing; it does not
 mean that the limbs or ears are likened to those of an elephant.

NEW GREEK: *Lova*, *lovía* (outcast).

- LATIN: *Elephantiasis graecorum, lepra arabum, morbus phoenicicus* (Galen), *leontiasis*.
Morphaea (like $\mu\rho\rho\psi\eta$ = form or $\mu\rho\rho\psi\omicron\zeta$ = black).
- CROATIAN: *Guba, skerljevo*
- HUNGARIAN: *Poklossag* (hellish affliction).
- CHINESE: *Li-feng* (*li* = severe, oppress; *feng* = paralysis). Perhaps the oldest Chinese term, being used in the *Nei Ching* which is attributed to Huang Ti (trad. B.C. 2698-2598) but probably compiled about 500 B.C.
Lai-ping (*lai* = scab, eruption, *ping* = sickness). Term used by Ko Hung, 281-341 A.D.
Ta-ma-feng (*ta* = great, *ma* = numbness, paralysis, *feng* = paralysis). Also, *Ma-feng*.
Tien Ying (*Tien* = Heaven, *ying* = response, punishment). Implies that the disease is a punishment from Heaven for moral dereliction, usually sexual.
Tsui-kuo (*tsui* = sin, retribution, *kuo* = transgression, to pass by). Also used for venereal disease.
Hung-i'ou-feng (*hung* = red, ruddy, *i'ou* = head, *feng* = paralysis).
- JAPANESE: *Raihyo* (same as Chinese *lai-ping*).
Nari katai (beggar; probably only in Kyushu).
Tenkei-byō (*ten* = from Heaven, *kei* = as punishment, *byō* = sickness).
Kessetsurai (elephantiasis).
Akushitu (evil disease).
Iho-rai (warty eruption).
Famushi-rai (dry scab eruption).
Shirahitokokumi (*shira* = white, *hito* = person, *kokumi* = ?). A very old designation.
Gobyō (*go* = punishment for family misdeeds or misdeeds of a prior incarnation, *byō* = sickness). The term usually refers to leprosy but may also refer to venereal disease and even to other very severe illness.
- THAI: *Ki-ruen*
- TIBETAN: *Asi-asi-dzō-la*
- SAMOAN: *Tute* or *puga* (elephantiasis of groin).
Lasomimi (elephantiasis of scrotum).
Tofi
- BALINESE: *Gudugam*
- MALAYAN: *Panau, kaddl, sakit besaar*
- JAVANESE: *Kuku ênin, tiekadirsa, gudók, udó*
- BURMESE: *Kutta* (from Indian *kushta*) *nu nar* (miserable skin disease).
Anar gyi yaw gar (ulcerative big disease).
- PALAUAN: *Chambedes* (spotted leprosy).
Gemkom (nodular and mutilating leprosy).
- NEW ZEALANDIC: *Ngerengere, twuhenna*
- HAWAIIAN: *Mai-pake* (Chinese evil).
Mai-alii (disease of the chief which came from a Chinese cook).
- AFRICAN BANTU: *Lehata*
- CONGOLESE: *Usudi*
- It is evident that these representative designations from African languages are so limited as to be simplistic. Accordingly, a broader effort has been initiated which already encompasses 22 designations from 23 languages, as well as variants of these. Their etymologic derivations are difficult to determine. When generous collaborators have had opportunity to provide sufficient material with which to initiate a more meaningful compilation, it is hoped that a significant listing can be published.

- ETHIOPIAN: *Qomātā* (Amharic, the Semitic language which is the official language of Ethiopia).
Qurċi (Galla, a Cushitic language of the Afro-Asian family, used by nomadic, pastoral people of Ethiopia).
- CAMEROON: *Mulongo* (in language of Douala, seaport in W. Cameroon).
Kuturo (in Hausa, an Afro-Asiatic language used by Negroid people of the Sudan).
Sam (in Yaoundé city area).
- GUYANAIAN: *Cucubay*, *cocobay* or *cocobé* (the name is derived either from an island in the Bahamas where leprosy is very common, or from the "coco" fish which was regarded as the cause of leprosy).
Mal rosso (red sickness).
Boasi or *baasi*
- ESTHONIAN: *Pidali-tōbi* (hospital disease as in *spedal*, above).
- RUSSIAN: *Skorb* (sorrow).