The Etymology of Some Language- and Translation-Related Terms in Arabic

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Introduction

This contribution deals with the etymology of some Arabic nouns and verbs that have been central to the main fields of academic specialisation of the researcher honoured by this *Festschrift*: language, speaking, and translation. It tries to follow words like *lisān*, *luġaẗ*, or *lahǧaẗ* as far back in semantic history as possible, often reaching a Semitic dimension and sometimes even advancing into deeper and older layers. In the course of 'digging,' questions like the relation (or non-relation?) between 'to interpret' (*taRǦaMa*), 'to stone' (but also 'to curse,' *RaǦaMa*), and 'meteorites' (*RuǦuM*), between *KaLM* 'wound, cut, slash,' and *KaLiMaẗ* 'word, speech,' or between the Arabs (*ʕaRaB*), a 'swift river' (but also 'carriage, coach,' *ʕaRaBaẗ*), a 'godfather, sponsor' (*ʕaRRāB*) and the 'desinential inflection' (*ʔiʕRāB*) will also be discussed. The present contribution tries to bring together the interest of my dear colleague Gunvor Mejdell in Arabic linguistics and translatology with what I have increasingly devoted myself to in recent years – the etymology of Arabic.[1] I should however not start before making two disclaimers.

First, a look into the etymology of some language- and translation-related terminology will not necessarily enhance a linguist's or translatologist's understanding of the phenomena s/he is dealing with. Etymological research does not yield 'essential' meanings of

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1.   For the first fruits of my efforts to lay the foundations of an etymological dictionary of Arabic, see *EtymArab* in the Bibliography.

words but only leads us back in semantic history to the earliest knowable, often only assumable, value from which it embarked on a centuries-long journey, at the end of which this 'traveller through the times' may have changed both its outward appearance and its meaning quite considerably.

Second, while there *do* exist myriad studies on individual lexical items or groups of words, vast areas of the Arabic vocabulary have remained, and probably will remain, largely obscure because etymological research finds its limits where evidence from outside Arabic is lacking. And even then, due to a lack of dateable sources, an explanation of the accessible linguistic data is difficult and runs the risk of becoming highly speculative.

My study starts with some common verbs designating different kinds of speech acts, then moves on, via the organ with which speech is produced, to words for 'language,' 'dialect,' etc., and the classification of linguistic registers, to conclude with two terms for 'translation.'

Abbreviations of Language Names[2]

AFRAS	Afroasia|n, ~tic	FR	French	PERS	Persian
AKK	Akkadian	GE	German	PHOEN	Phoenician
AMH	Amharic	GRK	Greek	PUN	Punic
AR	Arab, ~ic, ~ian	GUR	Gurage	QAT	Qatabanic
ARAM	Aramaic	GZ	Gəʕəz	S	south(ern)
BERB	Berber	HBR	Hebrew	SAB	Sabaic
BIBL	Biblical	ḤRṢ	Ḥarsūsi	SAR	South Arabian
C	Central	INDEUR	Indo-European	SEM	Semitic
CAN	Canaanite	JIB	Jibbāli	SOQ	Soqoṭri
CHAD	Chadic	JUD	Jewish, Judeo-	SUM	Sumerian
CLASSAR	Classical Arabic	l	late	SWED	Swedish
COMARAM	common Aramaic	LAT	Latin	SYR	Syriac
COPT	Copt	LEV	Levantine	TE	Tigre
DU	Dutch	m	middle	TÑA	Tigriña
e	early	MHR	Mehri	TU	Turkish
E	east(ern)	mod	modern	UG	Ugaritic
EG	Egyptian	MSA	Modern Standard Arabic	W	west(ern)
ENGL	English	N	north(ern)	YEM	Yemini(tic)
ETH	Ethio-, Ethiopic	PAL	Palestinian		

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2. For abbreviated book titles, see Bibliography.

qāla

Strangely enough, the SEM root √DBR to which the most common exponents of 'to say' belong in HBR and PHOEN[3] does not seem to have direct reflexes in AR.[4] Instead, AR uses *qāla* (√QWL). Judging from the many cognates this 'hollow' verb has in other SEM languages,[5] it is quite safe to assume that it is based on SEM *ḳawl-/*ḳāl- 'voice,' *ḲWL 'to say,'[6] which in turn possibly goes back to an hypothetical AFRAS *ḳa(wa)l- 'to speak.'[7] Reconstruction does not pose problems here because neither the phonological nor the semantic evidence within SEM give reason to doubt.[8]

takallama, kalimaẗ, kalām

The root √KLM shows three basic values in AR, one of which – 'carpet, rug, kilim' (*kalīm*) – is without doubt of foreign origin;[9] with regard to the topic of this study it is without further interest for us. But what about *kalm* 'wound, cut, slash'? Is this word related in any way to *kalimaẗ* 'word, speech, saying,' its derivative *takallama* 'to

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3. HBR *dāḇar* 'to speak,' *dāḇār* 'word, matter,' PHOEN *dbr* 'to speak,' *dbr* 'word.' Attested also in UG (*dbr* 'to say'), but less frequent there.

4. As Kogan, *Genealogical Classification*, 288 #23, rightly observes, "There is hardly any direct relationship between [proto-CAN] *dbr* 'to speak' and AR *dabbara* 'to consider, forecast the results of the affair; to meditate upon' and 'to relate the tradition received from another person' [Lane], as both meanings look like internal AR developments from 'to follow' (which is the basic meaning of *dbr* in that language) [< AR *dubr* 'backside, back, last part']."

5. UG PHOEN *ql* 'voice, shout, cry,' HBR *qōl* 'voice,' BIBLARAM *qāl* 'voice,' SYR *qālā* 'voice, sound, noise, clamour,' SAB *qwl* 'to be *qayl* over,' *qyl* 'member of the leading clan in a *šʕb* [tribe],' GZ *qāl* 'voice, word,' TE TÑA AMH *qal* 'word,' GUR *qal* 'voice.'

6. Kogan, *Genealogical Classification*, 119 #5.

7. Militarev, *Semitic Etymology*, #594.

8. The meanings 'treatise, article' (*maqāl, aẗ*) , 'category' (*maqūl*), 'to fabricate lies, spread rumors' (*taqawwala*), 'garrulous, talkative; itinerant singer and musician' (*qawwāl*), 'contractor, entrepreneur' (*muqāwil*) can all be explained convincingly as derived from 'to say.' Limitation of space unfortunately does not allow further elaboration here.

9. According to Nişanyan, it is from TU *kilim* < PERS *gilīm* 'cover, blanket, bed cover,' akin to ARAM *galīm(t)ā*, from GRK *kálymma* 'coat, cover,' from GRK vb. *kalýpt-ō* 'to cover' – *NişanyanSözlük*, s.v. 'kilim' (30 June 2015).

speak,' and the key term *kalām* with its broad spectrum of meanings?[10]

Looking exclusively into the AR lexicon, a connection between *kalm* and *kalimaẗ*/*kalām* does not seem very likely. However, as soon as we consider the AR evidence in the light of the situation in SEM as a whole, the picture starts to change. While the value 'speech, to speak' seems to be an exclusively SSEM development,[11] the meaning 'to wound' is not only found in AR, but also in CAN (mostly as 'to humiliate,' i.e., *'wounding with words'!),[12] and there is also an AKK (i.e., ESEM) *kullumu*, meaning 'to show, point out, indicate, produce evidence; to expose, reveal, exhibit.' This evidence would allow us to imagine a development from an original value *'to show, indicate' to the meanings (1) 'to humiliate (by showing s.th. disgraceful, making humiliating statements or proposals) > (by extension) to wound,' and (2) 'speech, to speak,' i.e., a generalisation of the more specific 'to put forward, show, indicate, produce evidence.' One could also think of a line *'to show, point out, expose, reveal, exhibit > to speak (i.e., to show, reveal *verbally*) > to humiliate (by words, improper speech) > to wound (in general).' Another semantic chain could be: *'to show, point out, expose, reveal, exhibit > to humiliate, wound (by pointing to s.th.) > to make a humiliating utterance > to utter, express > to speak.' Which of these, if any, is the right one is impossible to decide.

ʕibāraẗ, *ʕabbara*

While the AR root √KLM only showed two main values, √ʕBR is more complex. MSA alone has at least seven themes:

'the other/opposite side; to cross, traverse, pass over' (*EtymArab* lemma *ʕabara*)
'contemplation; lesson' (*ʕibraẗ*)

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10. Wehr/Cowan gives: 'talking, speaking; mode of expression, style; conversation, discussion; debate, dispute, controversy, *hence also*: Isl. theology; aphorism, maxim, phrase, idiom, figure of speech; (gram.) sentence, clause.' Cf. Wehr/Cowan, *Dictionary*, 982.

11. Cf., besides AR, SAB *klm* 'word, speech, discourse, message, utterance,' TE *kälam* (< AR *kalām* ?) 'discourse, voice' – *DRS*, vol. 10 (2012) #KLM-3; Zammit, *Comparative Lexical Study*, s.v.

12. HBR *hi-klīm* 'importuner (une femme), insulter par des propos; faire honte,' *niklam* 'avoir honte de,' *kelimmāh* 'injure, outrage,' JUDPAL *ʔaklem* 'faire honte, humilier' – *DRS*, vol. 10 (2012) #KLM-1.

'expression, to express (a feeling, an opinion, etc.)' (ʕibāraẗ)
'to interpret a dream' (ʕabbara)
'tear, to shed tears' (ʕabraẗ)
'(compound) perfume' (ʕabīr)
'Hebrew' (ʕibrī).

And in CLASSAR we find also

'great number, crowd' (†ʕubr)[13]
'sturdy, strong' (†ʕVbr)[14]
'ewe or goat one year old' (†ʕabūr, pl. ʕabāʔirᵘ)[15]
'thick-woolled (sheep)' (†muʕbar).

While the etymologies of nos. 8–11 remain unclear (for the time being at least), and while also ʕabīr '(compound) perfume' is rather enigmatic,[16] "our" ʕibāraẗ 'expression' (no. 3) and the corresponding form II verb, ʕabbara 'to express,' are with all likelihood, as also some of the remaining values, dependent on the theme of 'crossing' that tops the above list. 'To cross, pass over, pass by' seems to be the basic meaning of a SEM G-stem verb *ʕVbVr-[17] which, according to Dolgopolsky, probably is denominative from SEM *ʕib(V)r- 'region beyond/across a body of water (river, lake, sea), distant bank, shore'[18] (preserved in MSA in the preposition ʕabrᵃ 'across' and represented in CLASSAR as †ʕubr 'shore, bank, margin'). ʕibāraẗ 'expression' can be explained as a passing ('crossing') of ideas, opinions, etc. from the tongue of the speaker to the ear of the hearer, or from the inner world of emotions and thinking to the outer world of words. If this

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13. †x = obsolete, item no longer forming part of MSA lexicon (as in Wehr and Cowan, *Dictionary*).
14. *V* = any short AR vowel (*a*, *i*, or *u*).
15. *xᵘ* = item showing diptosis.
16. It does not seem to have any cognates in SEM. Is it perhaps akin to ʕanbar 'ambergris,' listed by Lane both under √ʕNBR *and* √ʕBR ?
17. AKK ebēru (var. *epēru*, *ḫabāru*) 'to cross (water); to extend beyond (s.th.),' UG HBR PHOEN PUN comARAM SAB √ʕBR (G-stem) 'to cross over (water etc.), pass.' The verb is absent from ETHSEM.
18. AKK ebertu (var. *abartu*) 'the other bank/side,' HBR ʕēḇär 'opposite side (of a river, lake etc.); side, edge, bank,' BIBLARAM ʕᵃbar 'region across, beyond,' SAB ʕbr 'bank, side,' ʕbr-n (prep.) 'opposite of,' ʕbrt 'littoral (of a wadi).' – According to Dolgopolsky (*Nostratic Dictionary*), the SEM item may even be related to words for 'shore, river bank; mainland' in some INDEUR languages, like GRK ēpeiros or GE Ufer.

etymology is correct, then the idea of an articulation 'inside→out' would be similar to the imagery we meet in ENGL *expression*, which goes back to LAT *ex-primere* and is a figurative use of the literal meaning, 'to squeeze, make come out.'

In a similar way, *ʕabbara* in the sense of 'to interpret a dream' (no. 4) is probably originally a causative *ʼto make cross' in the specific sense of *ʼto transfer/translate the symbolic meaning of a dream into a concrete meaning.' Yet another form of 'ex-pression' may be the shedding of tears (no. 5): here, emotion, piled up inside a person, reaches a brim, then flows over[19] and thus 'expresses' itself. *ʕibraŧ* 'contemplation; lesson' (no. 2), too, is believed to depend on the basic *ʼcrossing,' interpreted as a *mental* crossing over to other shores, i.e., a pondering about, or wandering through, a world of ideas or possibilities, hence 'to contemplate' (then also 'to draw a lesson' from these contemplations).

Earlier research has also linked the ethnonym 'Hebrew' (AR *ʕibrī*, HBR *ʕiḇrī*) to the theme of 'passing by, going beyond, crossing,' interpreting the BIBLHBR *ʕiḇrīm* either as *ʼBedouins,' i.e., a group of people who *ʼcross, or wander around in, the desert,' or, more convincingly (paying attention to the *nisba* form), as *ʼthose who come from, or inhabit, the other side of the river, the region beyond (HBR *ʕēḇär*; sc. either the Jordan or the Euphrates).' This etymology, however, is no longer generally accepted. More recent theories identify the 'Hebrews' with the *ḥabiru* (AKK *ḫāpiru*) of the Tell El-Amarna tablets or the *ʕApiru* appearing in EG texts. These terms are of unknown origin. What can be said, however, is that the textual evidence indicates that they were applied to "communities generally living outside of the established authorities of cities and kingdoms […]. They raided cities and towns, but on occasion also sold their services (esp. military) to the established powers, and took up residence in urban centres"[20] (for a similar idea, see also below, s.v. *ʕarab*). Thus, originally, 'Hebrew' seems to have had a primarily *social* connotation, while its use as an ethnonym is post-exilic.

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19. Cf. HBR *ʕäḇrā^h* 'overflow, excess outburst; arrogance; overflowing rage, fury,' (*Št-stem, denom.) *hitʕabbar* 'to be arrogant, infuriate o.s.' (BDB), SYR *ʕbar* '[...]; to surpass, exceed, be beyond, overcome; to inundate, invade.'

20. Hoch, *Semitic Words*, 62, n. 26. For a comprehensive discussion, see Loretz, *Habiru-Hebräer*.

lisān

In the word that today means 'tongue; language; mouthpiece (*fig.*), organ (*esp.*, of a newspaper),' we meet the first exponent (in the current contribution) of words that all have something to do with the *tongue* and show initial *l-*, which probably is somehow onomatopoetic.[21] Ar *lisān* and its Sem cognates[22] go back to Sem **lišān* 'tongue.' While all Sem cognates show a final (vowel +) *-n*, evidence in non-Sem branches of the AfrAs macro-family makes it highly probable that Sem **-ān-* is only a suffix,[23] and it is quite safe to assume that the ultimate etymon is AfrAs **les-* 'tongue,' without *-n*.[24]

In ClassAr, *lisān* often meant '(foreign) language,' a value that today usually is rendered by *luġaẗ* [25] (see below).

All other items to be found in Wehr's *Dictionary* under √LSN are derived from *lisān*, cf., e.g., the *nisba* adj. *lisānī* 'oral, verbal' and, coined from it, the abstract formation *lisāniyyāt* 'linguistics,' or the semantic complex where being equipped with a tongue has taken a positive meaning (*lasan* 'eloquence,' *lasin* and *ʔalsanᵘ* 'eloquent,' *lasina* 'to be eloquent'), or the contrary (*malsūn* 'liar,' lit. **ʿequipped with a sharp tongue'), or the D-stem verb *lassana* 'to point, taper, sharpen' (**ʿto give s.th. the shape of a tongue, make look like a tongue').

luġaẗ

The word that replaced *lisān* in the meaning 'language' in ClassAr times, *luġaẗ*,[26] is believed by many to be a contraction of **luġ(a)waẗ*

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21. Cf., in other languages, for instance Lat *lingua* 'tongue,' Engl *lullaby* (from 14th c. *lullen* 'to calm or hush to sleep,' probably imitative of *lu-lu*, sound used to **lull** a child to sleep, cf. Swed *lulla* 'to hum a lullaby,' Ge *lullen* 'to rock,' mDu *lollen* 'to mutter') – *EtymOnline*.

22. Akk *lišānu*, Ug *lšn*, Hbr *lāšōn*, Syr *leššānā*, Sab *lsⁱn*, Gz *ləssān*, Jib *ɛls̃éʾn*, Mhr *ɛwšēn*, Soq *lešin*.

23. Cf. Berb **lVs-*, Eg *ns*, Copt **les*, WChad **ḥa-lis-um-*, etc.

24. Brockelmann, *Grundriss*, §133a, interpreted *lisān* as a n.instr. formed from a verbal basis *lsn*, while Bittner ("Zunge") regarded it as a *nomen agentis* from a base **ls* 'to lick,' i.e., properly **ʿlicker, the licking one.' For possible extensions from this root nucleus **LS-* 'tongue, to lick, bite, sting, etc.' cf. †*lasaba* 'to sting (bee, scorpion),' †*lasada i* (*lasd*) ~ *lasida a* (*lasad*) 'to lick (honey, a vessel),' *lasaʕa* 'to sting (scorpion etc.),' †*lasama u* (*lasm*) 'to taste s.th.,' †*lasā u* (*lasw*) 'to eat greedily,' as well as √LHS and √LḤS 'to lick.'

25. Tamás Iványi, "Luġa", in *EALL*.

26. Cf. *WKAS*, *luġaẗ* : 'language; *esp.*, language of a people, of a country; language of an ethnic group, of a clan; dialect; (synonymous) linguistic variant, word variant, root variant, dialect expression; technical term,

or a secondary formation, via the pl. *luġāt*, from a masc. **luġaw/y^{un}* or from *laġw(aĭ)*,[27] and thus based on the root √LĠW (or LĠY),[28] where the main vb. is *laġā, ū* (*laġw, laġ^{an}, laġwà*) 'to chatter away, prattle away, talk nonsense or drivel, to blether, prate, be noisy; to say s.th. idly, without thinking,' alongside with *laġà, ā* (*laġ^{an}*) 'to prattle, about s.th.' and *laġiya, ā* (*laġan*) 'to say s.th. about s.o. without thinking.'[29] For the lexicographers, this explains that *luġaĭ* originally, and until the end of the 2nd/8th century, signified a 'way people [not in our tribe] speak,' i.e., similar to *lahğaĭ* 'way of speaking' (see below).[30] From this "very specialised sense of 'manner of realising an element of language' particular to an ethnic group, a tribe or a locality", the word could then take the meaning with which Sībawayh (d. 180/795) uses it, namely "regional or tribal 'variant of realisation.' […] In view of the fact that a 'regional or tribal variant' is always regarded, by those whose own speech does not include this variant, as a *deviation* and often also as an *incorrect*[31] expression in terms of their speech, it comes as no surprise to find that the word *luġa[ĭ]* is derived from a root *l-ġ-w* of which the essential meaning is precisely the idea of digression from a certain norm of expression, whence the very strong sense of a co-derivative of *luġa[ĭ]*, *laġw* 'inconsistent, incomplete construction, *lapsus*'."[32] Here, *luġaĭ* is almost interchangeable with *laḥn* (see below). It was only later, "probably in the period of the great controversies of the *ʿilm al-kalām*," that the word "[came] to designate the entire speech of an ethnic group and even to be identified with […] *lisān* which signifies 'tongue' and 'language.' […] The sense of 'regional variant' applied to a single linguistic element or item [was], however, retained until a very late period."[33] In CLASSAR linguistics, *luġaĭ* "was essentially

jargon, cant, secret language; individual mode, manner, of speaking; speech habit; vocabulary, the study of the words of a language, lexicology, lexicography.'

27. So F. Praetorius, "Über einige Pluralformen des Semitischen," in *ZDMG* 56 (1902): 685–96, 691, as referred to by Landberg, *Glossaire*, 2800, and also Ullmann in *WKAS*.

28. For Landberg the *u* in *luġaĭ* can be explained as a reflex of the third radical *w* "qui a influencé la prononciation" – *Glossaire*, iii: 2800.

29. Ibid., *laġā/laġà/laġiya*.

30. Iványi, "Luġa," in *EALL*.

31. My emphasis – S.G.

32. A. Hadj-Salah, "Lugha", in *EI²*.

33. Ibid.

a code made up of patterned vocal sounds or vocables (ʔalfāẓ) [see below, *lafẓ*] and their meanings (maʕānī). This code was understood to have emerged out of a primordial establishment of the vocables *for* their meanings. […] Considered from the semiotic point of view, vocables were considered to be 'signs' (ʔadillaʈ) and meanings 'things signified' (madlūlāt)"[34] – de Saussure would have been delighted!

Turning from semantic history to etymology proper, the derivation of *luġaʈ* from √LĠW is not as clear as AR lexicographers and also much of traditional Western research assume. A certain nebulosity regarding internal dependencies notwithstanding, it does however not seem doubtful that both go back (perh. the one via the other) to SEM *luġ(ġ)-* 'throat.'[35] If this is correct, a likely line of semantic development may have been: *'throat > sound(s) produced by/coming from the throat (then also: the mouth[36]) > to talk wildly[37] > to stammer, stutter[38] > to chatter, babble, prattle[39] > digression from normal speech > to talk like people not in our tribe > regional or tribal variant > dialect > language.' Although there may be some overlapping between derivatives of SEM *luġ(ġ)-* 'throat' and reflexes of the homonymous SEM *lVġ-* 'jaw,'[40] Militarev & Kogan think "it seems safe to separate" the two, "for semantic reasons."[41] – Another theory was put forward by Landberg: in his *Glossaire daṯinois* he

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34. B.G. Weiss, "Waḍʕ al-Lug̱ha," in *EI²*.

35. Cf. Akk *luʔu*, *luḫḫu*, Hbr *lōᵃʕ* 'throat,' *lûᵃʕ*, *lāʕaʕ* 'to swallow, swallow down,' Syr *laʕ*, *lāʕ* 'to lap, lick up.'

36. Any 'sound coming from the mouths of a living being' is the basic meaning of Ar √LĠW as assumed by Gabal, *Muʕǧam*, vol. 4: 2037.

37. Realized as such in Hbr *lûʕ*, *lāʕaʕ* or Te *laʕläʕa*.

38. As in Gz *talāʕleʕa*.

39. As in Ar *laġā* and *laġà*. – Cf. also *laġw* 'foolish talk; nonsense; null, nugatory, ineffectual; mistake, blunder, ungrammatical language' and *laġā ū* 'to be null,' whence the caus. ʔ (<*Š) stem, IV *ʔalġà* 'to render ineffectual; to declare null and void or invalid, invalidate, nullify, annul, abolish, abrogate, eliminate, do away with; to cancel (a project), [etc.].'

40. modHbr *lōᵃʕ*, Aram Syr *lōʕā* 'jaw, cheek.' – Cf. also Sem *liḥ(a)y(-at)-* 'cheek, jaw' (*SED*, I, #178) > Akk *lētu*, *lītu* 'cheek; side,' Ug *lḥ-m* (du.), *lḥ-t* (pl.), Hbr *ləḥī* 'chin, jawbone, cheek,' JudAram *lōḥā* 'jaw, cheek; the cheek-piece of a bridle,' Ar *laḥᵃⁿ*, *-à* 'any side of the face where a beard grows,' *liḥyaʈ* 'beard (on chin and cheeks),' *laḥy* 'jaw, jawbone, jowl,' Gz *maltāḥt* 'cheek, jaw,' Te *ləḥe* 'jaw, molar tooth,' Tña *mätaləḥ* 'tempia' (metathetic from the stem with infixed *-t-*, cf. Gz and Te); Mhr *lēḥī* 'jaw,' *məlḥāw* 'jaw, molar tooth,' Ḥrs *leḥyīt* 'beard, chin,' *meleḥáw* 'side of the jaw,' Jib *məẑ́ḥeṭ* 'jaw' (ẑ < *l), Soq *malaḥi* 'joue.'

41. *SED*, I, #176–177.

treats *luġaȟ* not under √LĠW but under √NĠṬ! This is because, in his opinion, *luġaȟ* and *laġā* are based on a bi-consonantal "racine onomatopéique" *LĠ* 'to gibber, smatter,' which in turn developed from *NĠ* 'to make a dull sound,' which, according to the authors, is a mutation of *Nʕ*,[42] which again ultimately is from *Nʔ*.[43] Although also *LĠ* generated a number of extensions (the authors mention *lġlġ, lġb, lġz, lġṭ, lġf, lġm, mlġ, mrġ*), *NĠ* is still believed to be primary, "à cause des dérivés multiples de √NĠ."[44] – With such a theory we are already very close to the Bohasian type of etymology, where *laġā, laġiya*, etc., but also *zalaġa, lataġa, ladaġa, laġaba, wala/iġa*, etc. are explained from an "etymon" {l,ġ}.[45]

lah̆ğaȟ

The AR root √LHĞ displays a startling variety of meanings. In MSA we find

'to be devoted, dedicated, attached (to s.th.), very fond (of s.th.), mad (about s.th.), to apply o.s. assiduously (to s.th.)' (*lahiğa*)
'to curdle, coagulate' (*ĭlhāğğa*)
'(tip of) tongue; manner of speaking, tone; dialect, language' (*lahğaȟ*)
'appetizer, hors d'œuvre' (*luhğaȟ*).

In addition to this, YEMAR also knows

'small window, skylight' (*lahğ*)

and CLASSAR adds to the picture two other values of the form XI verb *ĭlhāğğa*, namely

†'to be intricate (affair)' and
†'to close from drowsiness (eyes), be overcome by sleep.'

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42. Cf. AR *naʕaba* 'to croak, caw (raven, cock),' *naʕara* 'to grunt, snort (animal); (LEVAR) to roar, bellow'; *naʕam* 'yes'; *naʕà* 'to lament, wail, deplore.'
43. Cf. *naʔnaʔ* '(LEVAR) to talk with difficulty, blub, snivel,' *naʔama* 'to groan, moan (lion, owl, frog).'
44. Landberg, *Glossaire*, vol. 3: 2790–804.
45. Bohas and Saguer, "Annex", 82.

A quick glance at this list would suggest that the word that interests us most, *lahğaĭ* (no. 3), can hardly be seen together with any of the other values. But is this first impression correct? – It seems that we, in a first step, and with some certitude, can exclude as potential relatives no. 5 on the list, YemAr *lahğ* 'small window, skylight': it is likely that this word, a very local phenomenon, originates in a Sab word with the same meaning.[46] – For *luhğaĭ* (no. 4), Kazimirski compares *lumğaĭ* '(BK) déjeuner, goûter, un peu de nourriture que l'on prend avant le dîner, (Wehr/Cowan) appetizer, hors d'œuvre, relish, snack,' in this way drawing our attention to a striking semantic overlapping between the two similarly sounding words. Does this imply that *luhğaĭ* is nothing but a phonetic variant of *lumğaĭ*? Not necessarily, given that it also can be related to *lahiğa* (no. 1) as the 'little something' that makes one keen to eat/drink more or that incites passion and/or makes one long assiduously for the main course. It is here that we also may find a connection to *lahğaĭ*: if we take 'tip of the tongue' as the word's original meaning, the notion of 'to be very keen, intent on, crazy about s.th.' of *lahiğa* can be imagined as figurative use of a denominative *'to drool over, lust for (with one's tongue hanging out, thirsting for s.th.).' If this should be correct then we could continue along this line and in turn see the 'coagulation' (no. 2) of *ĭlhāğğa* as a transfer of meaning from *'to thirst for, make one's mouth water' via the contraction of the shriveling skin inside the mouth to the curdling of milk, and from there values no. 6 and 7 may derive, again via a transfer of meaning, from the original 'coagulation.'

All this, however, is highly speculative. A look into Sem does not make things clearer. The only older LHG item that is around, lHbr *lahag*, is already rather late and of uncertain meaning: according to BDB it means 'study' (i.e., 'devotion' to books, cf. Ar *lahiğa*); according to Klein, however, it is a hapax in the Bible and, following another reading, may also mean 'prattle, idle talk' (which is the value the root then also shows in modHbr, cf. Ar *lahğaĭ*).

Our above assumption that *lahiğa* is akin to, or even dependent on, *lahğaĭ*, may only be corroborated by the fact that quite a number of other verbs with initial *LH*- display a similar combination of 'tongue' (or 'throat') and 'longing, lust, greed.' Although Ar √LHĞ does not figure in Ehret's enumeration of extensions of what he

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46. Attested only in the pl., *ʔlhg* 'small windows, skylights,' Müller, *Sabäische Inschriften*, #LHG.

reconstructs as pre-proto-Sem *LH 'to swallow,' it could make sense to add it to the list:[47] *lahab* 'to suffer from intense thirst,' *laht* 'to loll one's tongue with thirst or fatigue; (*hence:*) to pant, gasp, be out of breath,' *lahs* 'to lick; to throw o.s. greedily upon the food,' *laht* 'to swallow greedily,' *lahaʕ* 'to draw out the corners of the mouth in speaking,' *lahm* 'to devour, gobble, swallow at one gulp.'[48]

As already mentioned above (s.v. *luġaĭ*), the meaning of *lahġaĭ* overlapped for some time with that of *luġaĭ*. While the latter today means 'language,' *lahġaĭ* 'way of speaking' is now mostly used as equivalent of Engl 'dialect.'

lafẓ

Like √LHĞ, √LFẒ too is without parallels in Sem so that etymology cannot go further beyond this level. Researchers agree nevertheless that the original meaning of *lafaẓa* is 'to spit, spew out, eject, expel (through the mouth).'[49] The values attached to *lafẓ* in ClassAr grammar are thus all secondary. Carter summarizes them as follows: *lafẓ* "denotes primarily the actual expression of a sound or series of sounds, hence 'articulation' and, more broadly, the resulting 'linguistic form.' […] In morphological contexts, *lafẓ* will typically contrast with *maʕnā*, i.e. opposing the phonological to the semantic properties of an element. […] At the syntactical level, the opposition is usually between the formal realisation (*lafẓ*) versus the implied, *muḳaddar* ([…], where *lafẓ* is translated 'literal'), i.e. the surface realisation is contrasted with some equivalent word or words assumed to underlie the forms actually expressed."[50]

nuṭq

Gabal thinks that the two main themes that are attached to Ar √NṬQ – (1) 'to articulate, talk, speak, utter, pronounce (*naṭaqa*); logic (*manṭiq*)' and (2) 'belt, girdle, waist (*niṭāq*); zone, sphere, area (*minṭaqaĭ*)' – both derive from an essential meaning of *'to hold together and bring (back) into form/limits what has spread or flown

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47. Ehret, "Origin", #51. – Ehret prefers to quote the verbs by their verbal nouns.
48. Should we also compare Bohas and Seguer, "Annex", #{*l,h*}?
49. So M. Carter, "Lafẓ", in *EI²*, referring to *WKAS*; congruent with Gabal's opinion in his *Muʕǧam ištiqāqī*.
50. Carter, *ibid.*

out.'[51] No direct cognates in SEM being in sight, the etymology of √NṬQ has to remain, for now, as obscure as that of √LHǦ or √LFẒ (cf. above). An idea that could be worth following is that ṭ got its velarisation from adjacent "dull" q (partial anticipatory assimilation). In this case, √NṬQ would be from *√NTQ, which *does* have several SEM cognates. There is, however, also an AR √NTQ 'to pull off, draw out, shake' (obsolete in MSA) which matches the other SEM NTQ cognates much better, so it is difficult to explain why AR √NṬQ should have developed alongside √NTQ.[52] And even if AR √NṬQ < *√NTQ, it is hardly plausible to link value (2) to it.

However that may be, in CLASSAR literature man is defined as *ḥayāwān nāṭiq*, implying that "the articulate language of man distinguishes him from all other animals."[53] Therefore, *ḥayāwān nāṭiq* is not only the 'speaking' but also the 'reasonable animal.' The correlation of articulate speech and reason explains why the medieval translators should have drawn on √NṬQ to translate GRK *lógos* 'word, reason' and *logikós* 'reasonable.'[54] A translation of *manṭiq* that pays attention to semantic history is therefore 'expression of ideas in language.'[55]

laḥn

The word that in MSA carries two main meanings – 'grammatical mistake, solecism, barbarism' and 'air, tune, melody' – could in CLASSAR also refer to 'coded speech' or a 'veiled hint, insinuation, allusion' and furthermore to some kind of 'inclination.' Attached to the same root was, and is still, also the value of 'intelligence, understanding.' Do all these have the same etymon, and, if so, how do we have to imagine dependencies and developments inside the semantic field? To approach this question, we have to rely exclusively on the AR evidence since, unfortunately, and strangely enough, AR √LḤN does not have any cognates in other SEM languages.[56] In his seminal

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51. *Muʕǧam*, vol. 4: 2280 (my translation, SG). – Landberg (*Glossaire*, 2782) thinks that "[l]e sens primitif semble être 'rejeter par la bouche'", but this may refer to value (1) only.

52. For extensions from a hypothetical 2-rad. "pre-proto-SEM" nuclear root *√NT 'to draw out, bring forth' cf. Ehret, "Origin", 182 (#56): *natʔ, nitāǧ, natḥ, natḫ, natr, natš, nutūḏ, nutūʕ, natf, natq, natk, natl*.

53. R. Arnaldez, "Manṭiḳ", in *EI²*.

54. *Ibid.*

55. As given by Hava, *Arabic-English Dictionary*, s.v. "NṬQ".

56. The meaning of UG *lḥn* is uncertain (either 'to be understanding, intelligent'

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study on the ʕArabiyya, Johann Fück has suggested that all LḤN values derive from 'inclination, leaning towards s.th.' as the basic meaning.[57] On this *'deviation from, or modification of, the normal (position, situation),' Fück makes dependent the adj. *laḥin* 'clever, intelligent, perspicacious' (and the corresponding n. [†]*laḥan*) via a hypothetical *'flexible, mobile, agile' (< 'inclining, leaning'). Further following Fück, in another line of development, the basic *'inclination > deviation' is extended into the realm of language, forming a new sub-basis *'abnormal way of speaking,' from which things developed in various directions: positively connoted deviations from the normal way of speaking are 'eloquence' and a 'melodious way of reciting;' a deviation that is not easy to understand is the 'talking in riddles, attaching hidden meaning (hints, allusions, insinuations)'; and on the more negative side we get 'delusive expression,' and, finally, the value that, apart from 'melody, tune,' in the course of time became the predominating one and is also the most interesting in the context of the present contribution, namely 'grammatical mistake, blunder.'[58] – The overall plausibility of Fück's theory notwithstanding, one should however be aware that the 'inclination' Fück postulates as the basic value is not a general inclination but a rather specific 'leaning *towards s.o.,*' and *laḥana li-* is explained by the lexicographers as 'to (lean toward s.o. and) talk to him/her in a way that only s/he understands (it remains unintelligible to others).'[59] Thus it seems that 'inclination' is secondary, based on a primary *'deviation, modulation, modification.' – For Landberg, the meaning 'melody, tune' is still too far removed from both 'intelligence' and *'abnormal speech' to stem from the same source. Modifying an idea first put forward by Günzburg, Landberg therefore derives *laḥn* in the sense of 'air, tune, melody' from GRK *liχanós* 'forefinger; (hence also:) the string struck with the forefinger,

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or 'to be closely related to s.o.'), cf. Tropper, *Kleines Wörterbuch*, 64.

57. Fück, *Arabiya*, 128–33.
58. G. Ayoub ("Laḥn", in *EALL*) thinks the positive connotations are earlier than the negative ones.
59. Cf. *WKAS* which, though referring to Fück's study, does not have his 'inclination' as a basic value.

and its note.'[60] Though not without some plausibility semantically, phonologically this etymology may be difficult to maintain.

ʕarabī, ʕarraba, ʔaʕraba/ʔiʕrāb

Jan Retsö has written a whole book about the question of who the Arabs actually were. His thorough investigation into the pre-Islamic sources concludes with the finding that the ʕarab started out as "a group of initiates of a fellowship of warriors or guards around a divinity."[61] Consequently, Retsö tends to interpret the n.gent. ʕarab as related to ʕRB in the sense of *'to enter,' which many consider to be the very basic value of the root in SEM.[62] With this, the n.gent. would be close to the idea of a 'pledge' and of 'giving as guarantee, standing surety or bail, stepping in for s.o.' that may be dependent on the basic 'to enter' and of which MSA ʕarraba 'to give earnest money,' ʕarabūn 'pledge, token' and ʕarrāb 'godfather' are reflexes. Earlier theories, all dismissed by Retsö as little convincing, would connect the ethnonym with the ʕArabaï region, or with the notion of *'mixing' [cf. †ʕarib 'bad, corrupt, disordered (stomach)'], the Arabs in this view becoming a *'mixed company' or, more negatively, a 'swarm' (cf. HBR ʕārōb̲ 'swarm of wild bees or flies – the fourth plague of Egypt'); or with its opposite, the *'purity and nobility of descent' [cf. †ʕarab ~ ʕarib 'clear, limpid, clean; pure, genuine, *hence:* noble (horse etc., race)'], or with *'vehemence, excess' [†ʕarraba 'to incite with lust, arouse (a partner's) sexual appetite; to copulate, have sex;' †ʕaraba 'to eat a lot, devour'], or (by metathesis) with the 'Hebrews' (HBR ʕib̲rīm), by which the Arabs like the Hebrews are essentially seen as *'the nomads, those who traverse, cross, wander around' (√ʕBR 'to cross') or *'those who come from, or inhabit, the other side of the river, the region beyond' (SEM *ʕib(V)r- 'region beyond,' see above s.v. ʕibāraï, ʕabbara).

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60. Landberg, *Glossaire*, iii, s.v. *lḥn.* – In contrast, Günzburg had assumed the same (probably SEM) source for the AR *as well as* the GRK term. Cf. David <Baron> Gincburg, *Osnovy arabskogo stichosloženija* [Introduction into Arabic Prosody], St Petersburg 1892, reviewed by Barthold, "Russische Arbeiten", 152–3.
61. Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity*, 596.
62. Hence perh. also, with *ʕ > ġ, AR √ĠRB: *'to enter > to enter behind the horizon > sunset, evening > west.' – Original ʕ continued perh. in the pre-Islamic name for 'Friday,' ʕarūbaï, acc. to Rotter probably the 'Venus day' (cf. LAT *Veneris dies* > Fr *vendredi*, It *venerdì*, etc.), i.e., the day of the goddess of the evening (< sunset) star, the planet Venus.

It seems clear that *ʕarabī* is a *nisba* of *ʕarab* and that the *ʕarabiy-yaẗ* is the language spoken by this group. In the meaning 'to make Arabic, Arabicize, translate into Arabic' also the D-stem *ʕarraba* is with all likelihood denominative from *ʕarab*. In the *ʔ*-stem, *ʔaʕraba*, the notions of 'Arabicity,' 'expression' (< *vehemence) and 'clarity, purity' often overlap, particularly when *ʔaʕraba* takes the specific meaning of 'pronouncing the final accents of a word, using desinential inflection (*ʔiʕrāb*).' In these cases, the verb has been interpreted as denominative from 'Arab(ic)' in the sense of *'to make (one's language obey the rules of correct) Arabic.' This interpretation is, however, likely to be secondary, added to the more original 'expression' and 'purity.'[63]

faṣīḥ, faṣāḥaẗ, (al-luġaẗ al-) fuṣḥà
In the multivalent root AR √FṢḤ the notion of 'clarity, purity' and (clarity, correctness in speech =) 'eloquence' [*faṣuḥa, u,* vn. *faṣāḥaẗ,* 'to be clear, good, pure (Arabic); to be eloquent,' adj. *faṣīḥ,* elat. *ʔafṣaḥᵘ,* f. *fuṣḥà*] probably goes back to that of 'milk divested of the froth' ([†]*fiṣḥ*) or the 'breaking of the dawn light' ([†]*faṣḥ*), all of which with all likelihood are akin to each other (sharing the idea of clarity, brightness, and/or purity). The SEM (AKK, ARAM) evidence points to a primary meaning of *'to be white, pale, clear, bright, dazzling,'[64] the only direct reflex of which in MSA is the active participle *mufṣiḥ* (form IV), in the meaning 'cloudless, sunny, bright (day).' According to Ehret,[65] the root is an extension in iterative *-ḥ from a 2-rad. pre-proto-SEM *√PṢ 'to take out'; Ar *√FṢḤ thus originally is 'to break forth and shine in full splendor.'

In contrast, the word for the Jewish 'Passover' and Christian 'Easter,' *(ʕīd al-) fiṣḥ,* seems to be the result of anticipatory assimilation (*ṣ* < *s before *ḥ*) after borrowing from HBR, either directly or via SYR *peṣḥā,* so that, etymologically, *fiṣḥ* should be arranged sub √FSḤ rather than √FṢḤ.[66] The confusion was probably

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63. Both SEM √ʕRB and, more specifically, AR √ʕRB are among the most complex roots to disentangle. For more details, see *EtymArab*, in BP.

64. Cf. Zammit, *Comparative Lexical Study,* and *CAD*: AKK *peṣû* (*paṣiu, paṣû*) 'white, pale, bleached; cleared, emptied (of vegetation, obstructions, etc., said of plots of land),' *peṣû, paṣû* 'to become white, to pale,' ARAM *pᵉṣaḥ* 'to sparkle, be bright,' SYR *pᵉṣaḥ* 'to rejoice,' (af.) 'to make bright, serene, [...] glad, happy, (etp.) to be happy.'

65. Ehret, "Origin", 177.

66. Due to its origin in HBR *pāsaḥ* 'to pass over, spring over,' it is, properly

facilitated by popular etymology which of course associated the feast with ritual and spiritual purity.

ʕāmmiyyaẗ

In contrast to *(al-luġaẗ) al-fuṣḥà*, the 'very clear, good, pure (language)' or the 'H(igh)' variety of Arabic, the *(luġaẗ) ʕāmmiyyaẗ* is the 'popular, colloquial (language),' by Arabs themselves often considered as inferior, incorrect, the 'L(ow)' variety. *ʕāmmiyyaẗ* is the fem. form of the adj. *ʕāmmī*, a nisba formation from the noun *ʕāmmaẗ* 'the common people, broad mass of the people.' *ʕāmmaẗ* itself is a nominalization of the fem. of the adj. *ʕāmm* 'public, general, common, universal,' which can be traced back to a CSEM **ʕamm* 'people, nation,' probably a semantic extension of WSEM **ʕamm-* 'kinsman, grandfather, ancestor' (cf. AR *ʕamm* 'paternal uncle'). All these words seem to belong to the general idea of **'connecting, binding together, uniting, encompassing'* (cf. vb. I, *ʕamma* 'to comprise, include, embrace, encompass, etc.'), a reflex of which is also to be found, e.g., in *ʕimāmaẗ* 'turban.'

Not from CSEM **ʕamm* 'people, nation' (= **'those united, connected, related'), but ultimately from the same source may also be AR *ʔummaẗ* 'nation, people, community' – despite the difference between initial *ʕ* and *ʔ*! How could that be? According to Huehnergard, AR *ʔummaẗ* is borrowed from ARAM *ʔummᵊtā* 'id.,' which in turn probably is from AKK *ummatu* 'troop,' and it is here that the original SEM **ʕ* may have been lost (a regular loss in AKK): If Huehnergard is right, AKK *ummatu* probably is from an earlier **ʕammatum*, from SEM **ʕamm* 'paternal kinsman.'[67]

tarǧama

All sources agree that AR *turǧumān* 'interpreter'[68] and the (probably denominative) verb *tarǧama* 'to interpret' go back to AKK *targu-mannu* 'interpreter, dragoman.' Previous research tended to connect

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spoken, closer to AR *fusḥaẗ* 'walk, promenade, stroll, ride, drive, outing, excursion' than to the idea of purity (FSḤ) with which it obviously became associated, given the homonymy of the roots after the shift **s > ṣ*.

67. Huehnergard, "Proto-Semitic," s.v. "ʕMM." – Cf., however, Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary*, 69 (confirmed by Pennacchio, *Les emprunts*, 158), where AKK *ummatu* is said to stem from a SUM source.

68. ENGL FR GE (etc.) *dragoman* are borrowed (via various paths) from AR *turǧumān.*

the latter, as a noun based on a t-stem, to Akk √RGM 'to speak, call, contest;' Huehnergard would even not exclude the possibility that such a *t-RGM with the meaning of 'to speak to one another, translate' existed already in proto-Sem times.[69] In contrast, Wellhausen thought that the value 'to explain, interpret' was a generalisation of a more specific type of 'explaining,' namely the interpretation of the stones/pebbles that used to be thrown (in the sand) as a heathen mantic practice, the notion of 'interpreting' thus being dependent on 'to throw stones (with the aim of foretelling the future or getting advice).'[70] Such an argument was possible because the semantics in the Sem root √RGM oscillate between 'to shout, etc.,' 'to curse,' 'to stone,' and 'to cover with stones,'[71] and in order to know the etymology of Ar *tarǧama* it seemed that one had a) to find out which was first, and b) explain the change of meaning to 'to interpret, translate'. More recent research, however, seems to indicate that Akk *targumannu* has, in reality, nothing to do with √RGM at all but is a borrowing from Luwian.[72] If this is correct then all previous attempts to connect the notion of 'interpreting, translating' with Sem √RGM have been to no purpose. For the etymology of Ar *tarǧama* we would then no longer need to know, for instance, that the value 'to stone' which Can (Hbr, Aram) and Ar have in common probably is secondary, based on a proto-Sem 'to speak (emphatically), to curse,' as Kogan assumes,[73] nor that Leslau had argued that, "In view of the various meanings within Sem, the development seems to be: 'to speak, say > to speak against, bring legal action against > to abuse, curse > to cast stones.'"[74]

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69. Huehnergard, "Proto-Semitic."

70. *Reste*, vol. 2, 111-2, 207.

71. We do not have to consider Ar *riǧīm* 'diet,' which is borrowed into Ar from Fr *régime*, nor *ruǧum* 'shooting stars, meteorites,' which seems to be the result of a transfer of meaning from the stones that are cast at s.o. as a punishment, or at the Devil to curse him, to the "stones" that "are cast through the sky."

72. Smelik, *Rabbis, Language and Translation*, 141 [referring to C. Rahim, "Hittite Words in Hebrew," *Orientalia*, 32 (1963), 113-39; Wolfram von Soden, *Aus Sprache, Geschichte und Religion Babyloniens: Gesammelte Aufsätze*, edited by L. Cagni & H.-P. Müller, Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1989, 351-57; and F. Starke, "Zur Herkunft von akkad. *ta/urgumannu(m)* 'Dolmetscher'," *WO*, 24 (1993), 20-38].

73. *Genealogical Classification*, 218 #28.

74. *Comparative Dictionary*, 465.

naqala

A look into the SEM root √NQL, where the meaning 'to translate' that the AR verb *naqala* can take is unknown, suggests that this value is one of several specializations of the AR basic meaning 'to (re)move, carry away, transport, transfer, shift.'[75] The etymology of the latter, however, is less obvious. Kogan sees it together with SYR *nqal* 'to make plain or smooth, clear (a road); to clear away, throw aside (e.g., stones), reject; to cross (a bridge etc.),' SAB *nql* 'to quarry stone,' MIN *nql* 'to transport, move,' QAT *nql* 'to dig out, excavate,' GZ *naqala* 'to uproot, eradicate, pull up' (with cognates throughout ETHSEM).[76] From this ensemble of cognates it would appear that the basic meaning of the corresponding proto-SEM verb was something like *ʿto take out, pick up' and that we thus could assume, for the value that interests us most in the present context, a development along the line *ʿto take out, pick up > to remove > to move > to transfer > to translate.' However, the close association of the verb with 'stones' and 'road, path, trail, pass' in SYR and SAB may tempt us to see it together also with AR *naqal* 'rubble, debris,' †*naqil* 'rocky (ground, terrain),' and YEMAR *naqīl*, SAB *mnql* 'mountain trail, defile, pass.' A connection with other items of AR √NQL can probably be excluded.[77]

Three notes on the margin that highlight the semantic diversity even within the derivations from *ʿto (re)move, transfer, shift': 1) A meaning of *naql* that has become central in medieval Islam is that of the 'transmission' (see note 76, above) of tradition, and *al-ʕulūm al-naqliyyaẗ* (or just *al-naqliyyāt*) 'the traditional sciences' is a term that came to stand in opposition to *al-ʕulūm al-ʕaqliyyaẗ* 'the rational sciences.' – 2) In the noun †*naqqāl* 'story-teller,' the original 'transfer' has taken the specific meaning of '(oral) transmission of stories.' The word has become obsolete in MSA but lives on in PERS where it

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75. Other modifications of the basic meaning are 'to transmit, pass on, hand over,' 'to report, relate' and 'to copy.'
76. Kogan, *Genealogical Classification*, 565 #78. Kogan hesitates to include modSAR (MHR, JIB, SOQ) √*nql* 'to choose' into this picture.
77. Cf. esp. †*naq(q)ala* 'to mend (clothes), patch (shoes),' †*naql*, †*niql*, †*naqal* 'worn out, patched (shoes)' (*ʿto remove > to clear > to repair'?); *nuql* 'candied or salted nuts and almonds; dried fruits; candy, sweets; dessert' (from 'to shift,' as *ʿwhat is served with the wine so that one may eat a bit between drinking'?); *manqal* 'brazier' (mostly explained as *ʿthe portable,' but perh. of foreign origin, cf. Landberg, *Glossaire*, s.v. √NQL, with further references).

means 'story-teller' (i.e., the same as Ar *ḥakawātī*), but then also 'mimic, actor, player.'[78] – 3) Very interesting, particularly from a modern translatologist's perspective, is also the fact that in ClassAr the passive participle *manqūl* not only could mean 'translated,' but also 'having lost its original meaning'![79]

In lieu of a conclusion

The two reservations with which I began my little excursion into the "archaeology" of some language- and translation-related terms have certainly not been invalidated by the preceding pages. The samples above rather confirmed that (a) for the time being, the "ultimate origins" of many Arabic lexical items remain largely obscure: Is *kalām* akin to 'wounding' (*kalm*)? Has *lahǧaŧ* the same "ancestor" as 'devotion' (*lahǧ*), 'appetizer' (*luhǧaŧ*), and 'coagulation' (*ĭlhiǧāǧ*)? Can we connect *tarǧamaŧ* to 'cursing' and 'stoning'? We still do not have definitive answers to these questions; (b) even in those cases where we *are* able to reconstruct highly probable etymologies (*qāla* < Sem *ḲWL 'to say,' *ʕibāraŧ* < Sem *ʕBR 'to cross, pass over,,'*luġaŧ* < Sem *luġ(ġ)- 'throut,' etc.), they do not provide "essential" meanings that would be of direct benefit for a socio-linguist or translatologist.

Yet, the above considerations also show that

- etymology often provides interesting information about the earliest semantic history of key concepts (*lafẓ* < *'to spit'; *ʕāmmiyyaŧ* related to *ʕamm* 'paternal uncle'; etc.);
- we often have enough material to be able to at least *attempt* a reconstruction (both *kalām* and *kalm* 'wound' from *'to show, indicate'), which also allows us to imagine transfers of meaning, e.g., to think of *faṣāḥaŧ* as speech *'as clear as milk divested of froth' or *'as bright and dazzling as the first daylight';
- both contribute to satisfy a basic "human desire" to go "back to the roots" and often also *do* provide useful insights, especially some principles of distinction inside polyvalent homonymous

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78. Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary*.

79. Orig. French: 'qui a perdu sa signification primitive (mot),' Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire*, s.v. "NQL".

roots (*faṣāḥaĭ* NOT related to *fiṣḥ* 'Passover; East'), but also of "seeing together" what at first sight is difficult to understand as stemming from one and the same idea (*ʕibāraĭ* 'expression,' *ʕibraĭ* 'lesson, morale,' *ʕabraĭ* 'tear,' all from *'to cross, pass over'; *ʕāmmiyyaĭ* probably a relative of *ʕimāmaĭ* 'turban');

- this "seeing together" often opens our eyes for the *cultural* dimensions of Arabic linguistics (language as a system of interconnected signs, cf., e.g., *raġama* 'to curse' *and* 'to stone');
- but also the *history* of Ar etymology itself is worth studying – as an expression of both Arab and Western researchers' view on the Ar language-cum-culture (particularly interesting here is *speculation* about, or *assertion* without substance, of etymologies, such as 'Arab' = 'Hebrew,' *laḥn* < Grk *liχanós* 'forefinger,' or traditional Ar *ištiqāq*, deriving, e.g., *ʔiʕrāb* from *ʕarab*, *luġaĭ* from *laġā*, or also popular etymology, where *fiṣḥ* is seen together with *faṣāḥaĭ* , etc.).

I conclude with the hope that in all this there may be some value for the kind reader, and in particular my dear *emerita* colleague.

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