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, luġa, or lahga 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 KaLiMa ‘word, speech,’ or between the Arabs (ʕaRaB), a ‘swift river’ (but also ‘carriage, coach,’ ʕaRaBa), 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

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

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2. For abbreviated book titles, see Bibliography.
gāla
Strangely enough, the SEM root √DBR to which the most common exponents of ‘to say’ belong in HBR and PHOEN³ 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 *kawl-/*kāl- ‘voice,’ *KWL ‘to say,’⁶ which in turn possibly goes back to an hypothetical AFRAS *ka(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, kalimaṯ, 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 kalimaṯ ‘word, speech, saying,’ its derivative takallama ‘to

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³. HBR dābar ‘to speak,’ dābār ‘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 qūl ‘voice,’ BIBLaram qūl ‘voice,’ SYR qūlā ‘voice, sound, noise, clamour,’ SAB qyl ‘to be qayl over,’ qyl ‘member of the leading clan in a šāb [tribe],’ Gz qūl ‘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, aṯ), ‘category’ (maqūl), ‘to fabricate lies, spread rumors’ (taqawwāl), ‘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 kālymma ‘coat, cover,’ from GRK vb. kālyp-t-ō ‘to cover’ – NişanyanSözlük, s.v. ‘kilim’ (30 June 2015).
speak,’ and the key term *kalām* with its broad spectrum of meanings?  

Looking exclusively into the AR lexicon, a connection between *kalm* and *kalimaṭ/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, the meaning ‘to wound’ is not only found in AR, but also in CAN (mostly as ‘to humiliate,’ i.e., *‘wounding with words’*), 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.

**Sībārāt, Šabbara**

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 Šabara)

‘contemplation; lesson’ (Sībraṭ)

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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.


12. Hhr hi-klīm ‘importuner (une femme), insulter par des propos; faire honte,’ *niklām* ‘avoir honte de,’ *kīlimmāḥ* ‘injure, outrage,’ *JUD PAL tāklem* ‘faire honte, humiliier’ – *DRS*, vol. 10 (2012) #KLM-1.
‘expression, to express (a feeling, an opinion, etc.)’ (ʕibārat ̈)
‘to interpret a dream’ (ʕabbara)
‘tear, to shed tears’ (ʕabra ̈)
‘(compound) perfume’ (ʕabīr)
‘Hebrew’ (ʕibrī).

And in CLASS AR we find also

‘great number, crowd’ († ʕubr 13)
‘sturdy, strong’ († ʕVbr 14)
‘ewe or goat one year old’ († ʕabūr, pl. ʕabāʔir u 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, ʕibara ̈ ‘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’ (preserved in MSA in the preposition ʕabr ‘across’ and represented in CLASS AR as † ʕubr ‘shore, bank, margin’). ʕibara ̈ ‘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

13. † ʃ = obsolete, item no longer forming part of MSA lexicon (as in Wehr and Cowan, Dictionary).
14. ʃ = any short AR vowel (a, i, or u).
15. ʃ = 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 ʃNBR and ʃBR?
17. AKK ebēru (var. epēru, ḥabāru) ‘to cross (water); to extend beyond (s.th.),’ UG HBR PHOEN PUN COMARAM SAB ʃBR (G-stem) ‘to cross over (water etc.), pass.’ The verb is absent from ETHSEM.
18. AKK ebertu (var. abartu) ‘the other bank/side,’ HBR ʕēb ̱ār ‘opposite side (of a river, lake etc.); side, edge, bank,’ BIBLARAM ʕ̱bar ‘region across, beyond,’ SAB ʕbr ‘bank, side,’ ʕbr-n (prep.) ‘opposite of,’ ʕbru ‘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 INDÉUR languages, like GRK ἑπειρος 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, ʕābbara in the sense of ‘to interpret a dream’ (no. 4) is probably originally a causative *‘to make cross’ in the specific sense of *‘to 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. šibrāt ‘contemplation; lesson’ (no. 2), too, is believed to depend on the basic *‘crossing,’ 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 ʕibrit, HBR ʕibrit) to the theme of ‘passing by, going beyond, crossing,’ interpreting the BIBLHBR šibrīm either as *‘Bedouins,’ i.e., a group of people who *‘cross, or wander around in, the desert,’ or, more convincingly (paying attention to the nisba form), as *‘those who come from, or inhabit, the other side of the river, the region beyond (HBR šēhār; 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 ḥāpiru) of the Tell El-Amarna tablets or the ḫApiru 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.

\(^{19}\) Cf. HBR ʕābɾāʰ ‘overflow, excess outburst; arrogance; overflowing rage, fury,’ (*Št-stem, denom.) hiṯʕabbar ‘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. AR lisān and its SEM cognates go back to SEM *lišān ‘tongue.’ While all SEM cognates show a final (vowel +) -n, evidence in non-SEM branches of the AFR AS macro-family makes it highly probable that SEM *-ān- is only a suffix, and it is quite safe to assume that the ultimate etymon is AFRAS *les- ‘tongue,’ without -n.

In ClassAr, lisān often meant ‘(foreign) language,’ a value that today usually is rendered by luğaṭ (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 ʔalsan ‘eloquent,’ lasina ‘to be eloquent’), or the contrary (malsūn ‘liar,’ lit. ‘equipped with a sharp tongue’), or the D-stem verb lassana ‘to point, taper, sharpen’ (* ‘to give s.th. the shape of a tongue, make look like a tongue’).

luğaṭ

The word that replaced lisān in the meaning ‘language’ in CLASSAR times, luğaṭ, is believed by many to be a contraction of *luḡ(a)waṭ

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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 lsn, HBr ṭāšōn, SYR leššānā, SAB lsn’n, Gz lassān, Jib ʾelšin, Mhr ʾwsēn, SOQ lešin.
23. Cf. BER *lV’s-, EG ns, COPT *les, WCAD *ha-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 *licker, the licking one.’ For possible extensions from this root nucleus *LS- ‘tongue, to lick, bite, sting,’ etc. cf. ʾlasaba ‘to sting (bee, scorpion),’ ʾlasada i (lasad) ~ lasida a (lasad) ‘to lick (honey, a vessel),’ ʾlasaʾa ‘to sting (scorpion etc.),’ ʾlasama u (lasm) ‘to taste s.th.,’ ʾlasā u (lasw) ‘to eat greedily,’ as well as √LHS and √LHS ‘to lick.’
25. Tamás Iványi, “Luğa”, in EALL.
26. Cf. WKAS, lugāṭ : ‘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. luğāt, from a masc. *luğaw/yun or from lağw(at),27 and thus based on the root √LGW (or LGY),28 where the main vb. is lağā, ā (lağw, lağun, lağwā) ‘to chatter away, prattle away, talk nonsense or drivel, to blether, prate, be noisy; to say s.th. idly, without thinking,’ alongside with lağâ, ā (lağun) ‘to prattle, about s.th.’ and lağiya, ā (lağan) ‘to say s.th. about s.o. without thinking.’29 For the lexicographers, this explains that luğat originally, and until the end of the 2nd/8th century, signified a ‘way people [not in our tribe] speak,’ i.e., similar to laḥgat ‘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 Sibawayh (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 incorrect31 expression in terms of their speech, it comes as no surprise to find that the word luğat 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 luğat, lağw ‘inconsistent, incomplete construction, lapsus’.32 Here, luğat 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, luğat “was essentially

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 luğat can be explained as a reflex of the third radical w “qui a influencé la prononciation” – Glossaire, iii: 2800.
29. Ibid., lağā/lagā/lagīya.
30. Iványi, “Luğa,” in EALL.
31. My emphasis – S.G.
32. A. Hadj-Salah, “Lughâ”, in EF.
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’ (ʔadillat) and meanings ‘things signified’ (madlūlāt).”34 – de Saussure would have been delighted!

Turning from semantic history to etymology proper, the derivation of luġat 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 *luģ(ḡ)- ‘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) > to talk wildly > to stammer, stutter > to chatter, babble, prattle > 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 *luģ(ḡ)- ‘throat’ and reflexes of the homonymous SEM *lVġ- ‘jaw,’ Militarev & Kogan think “it seems safe to separate” the two, “for semantic reasons.” – Another theory was put forward by Landberg: in his Glossaire daṯinois he

35. Cf. Akk luʔu, luḫḫu, Hbr lō˒˒ ‘throat,’ lū˒˒, lā˒˒af ‘to swallow, swallow down,’ Syr la˒˒, lä˒˒ ‘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 lū˒˒, lā˒˒af or Te lašlā˒˒a.
38. As in Gz talā˒˒le˒˒a.
39. As in Ar Ṽa˒˒a and la˒˒a. – Cf. also Ṽa˒˒ ‘foolish talk; nonsense; null, nugatory, ineffectual; mistake, blunder, ungrammatical language’ and la˒˒a ʔ ‘to be null,’ whence the caus. ? (<*Š) stem, IV Ṽa˒˒a ‘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. mod Hbr lō˒˒, ArAma Syr lō˒˒ ‘jaw, cheek.’ – Cf. also SEM *liḥ(a)y(-at)- ‘cheek, jaw’ (SED, I, #178) > Akk lētu, litu ‘cheek; side,’ Ug lh-m (du.), lh-t (pl.), Hbr lēḥi ‘chin, jawbone, cheek,’ JuD ArAma lō˒˒ ‘jaw, cheek; the cheek-piece of a bridle,’ Ar lab˒˒m, -à ‘any side of the face where a beard grows,’ liḥyaf ‘beard (on chin and cheeks),’ lahy ‘jaw, jawbone, jowl,’ Gz mallā˒˒t ‘cheek, jaw,’ Te lh-e ‘jaw, molar tooth,’ TNA mātalb ‘tempia’ (metathetic from the stem with infixed -t, cf. Gz and Te); MHR lēẖi ‘jaw,’ mallā˒˒w ‘jaw, molar tooth,’ Hrs lehyiṯ ‘beard, chin,’ melleẖaw ‘side of the jaw,’ Jib məzhet ‘jaw’ (ʔ < *f), Soq malaḥi ‘joue.’
41. SED, I, #176–177.
treats *luġaʔi* not under √LGW but under √NGT! This is because, in his opinion, *luġaʔi* and *laġa* are based on a bi-consonantal “racine onomatopéique” *LG* ‘to gibber, smatter,’ which in turn developed from *NG* ‘to make a dull sound,’ which, according to the authors, is a mutation of *NG*42 which again ultimately is from *Nʔ*.43 Although also *LG* generated a number of extensions (the authors mention *lġlġ*, *lġb*, *lģz*, *lġt*, *lġf*, *lģm*, *mlģ*, *mrġ*), *NG* is still believed to be primary, “à cause des dérivés multiples de √NG.”44 – With such a theory we are already very close to the Bohasian type of etymology, where *laġa*, *laġiya*, etc., but also *zalaġa*, *lataġa*, *ladaġa*, *laġaba*, *wala/iġa*, etc. are explained from an “etymon” {l,ğ}.45

**lahģaʔi**

The Ar root √LHĠ 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.)’ (*lahiġa*)

‘to curdle, coagulate’ (*ilhāġğa*)

‘(tip of) tongue; manner of speaking, tone; dialect, language’ (*lahģaʔi*)

‘appetizer, hors d’œuvre’ (*luhģaʔ*).

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 *ilhâġğa*, namely

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

42. Cf. Ar naʕaba ‘to croak, caw (raven, cock),’ naʕara ‘to grunt, snort (animal);’ (Levir) to roar, bellow’; naʕam ‘yes’; naʕâ ‘to lament, wail, deplore.’

43. Cf. naʔmaʔ (Levir) to talk with difficulty, blub, snivel,’ naʔama ‘to groan, moan (lion, owl, frog).’


A quick glance at this list would suggest that the word that interests us most, *laḥgat* (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* laḥg ‘small window, skylight’: it is likely that this word, a very local phenomenon, originates in a SAB word with the same meaning.\(^{46}\) – For *luḥgat* (no. 4), Kazimirski compares *lumḡat* ‘(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 *luḥgat* is nothing but a phonetic variant of *lumḡat*? Not necessarily, given that it also can be related to *lahiḡa* (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 *laḥga*: 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 *lahiḡa* 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 *ĭlhāḡa* 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* lahiḡa); 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* laḥga). Our above assumption that *lahiḡa* is akin to, or even dependent on, *laḥga*, 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* \(\sqrt{\text{LHG}}\) does not figure in Ehret’s enumeration of extensions of what he

\(^{46}\) Attested only in the pl., \(\varpi lh\)g ‘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,’ *lahṭ ‘to loll one’s tongue with thirst or fatigue; (hence:) to pant, gasp, be out of breath,’ *lahṣ ‘to lick; to throw o.s. greedily upon the food,’ *lahṭ ‘to swallow greedily,’ *lahaf ‘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. luğaţ), the meaning of lahgaţ overlapped for some time with that of luğaţ. While the latter today means ‘language,’ lahgaţ ‘way of speaking’ is now mostly used as equivalent of Engl ‘dialect.’

**lafẓ**

Like √LhǦ, √LFẒ too is without parallels in Sem so that etymology cannot go further beyond this level. Researchers agree nevertheless that the original meaning of lafaţa 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 maṣnā, 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 (minṭaqaţ)’ – both derive from an essential meaning of *‘to hold together and bring (back) into form/limits what has spread or flown

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 *EF*, referring to *WKAS*; congruent with Gabal’s opinion in his *Muṣğam ištiqāqī*.
out.' No direct cognates in Sem being in sight, the etymology of √nṬQ has to remain, for now, as obscure as that of √LHG or √LFZ (cf. above). An idea that could be worth following is that t 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 √nṬQ ‘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 maṭiq 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, soleciism, 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

51. Muʿğam, 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.


53. R. Arnaldez, “Manṭiḳ”, in EI².

54. Ibid.

55. As given by Hava, Arabic-English Dictionary, s.v. “NṬQ”.

56. The meaning of UG laḥn is uncertain (either ‘to be understanding, intelligent’
study on the ʕArabiyya, Johann Fück has suggested that all LḤn values derive from ‘inclination, leaning towards s.th.’ as the basic meaning. On this ‘deviation from, or modification of, the normal (position, situation),’ Fück makes dependent the adj. laḥin ‘clever, intelligent, perspicacious’ (and the corresponding n. ʕlaḥan) 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.’ – 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).’ 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 lĳanós ‘forefinger; (hence also:) the string struck with the forefinger,

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. 

Though not without some plausibility semantically, phonologically this etymology may be difficult to maintain.

∗Saʿrabī, ʿArraba, ʔaˈsrabaʔiˈsrāb

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 ʿarab started out as “a group of initiates of a fellowship of warriors or guards around a divinity.” Consequently, Retsö tends to interpret the n.gent. ʿarab as related to ʿRB in the sense of *‘to enter,’ which many consider to be the very basic value of the root in SEM. 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 ʿarraba ‘to give earnest money,’ ʿarabūn ‘pledge, token’ and ʿarrāb ‘godfather’ are reflexes. Earlier theories, all dismissed by Retsö as little convincing, would connect the ethnonym with the ʿArabāṭ region, or with the notion of *‘mixing’ [cf. †ʿariḥ ‘bad, corrupt, disordered (stomach)’], the Arabs in this view becoming a *‘mixed company’ or, more negatively, a ‘swarm’ (cf. Hbr ŋārāḥ ‘swarm of wild bees or flies – the fourth plague of Egypt’); or with its opposite, the *‘purity and nobility of descent’ [cf. †ʿarab ~ ʿariḥ ‘clear, limpid, clean; pure, genuine, hence: noble (horse etc., race)’], or with *‘vehemence, excess’ [†ʿarraba ‘to incite with lust, arouse (a partner’s) sexual appetite; to copulate, have sex; †ʿaraba ‘to eat a lot, devour’], or (by metathesis) with the ‘Hebrews’ (Hbr ʿibrīm), by which the Arabs like the Hebrews are essentially seen as *‘the nomads, those who traverse, cross, wander around’ (√ʿBR ‘to cross’) or *‘those who come from, or inhabit, the other side of the river, the region beyond’ (SEM *ʿiḥ(V)r- ‘region beyond,’ see above s.v. ʿiḥārāt, ʿabbāra).

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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.


62. Hence perh. also, with *ʕ > ġ, AR √GRB: *‘to enter > to enter behind the horizon > sunset, evening > west.’ – Original √ continued perh. in the pre-Islamic name for ‘Friday, ʿarībāḥ, 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 (.sex sunset) star, the planet Venus.
It seems clear that \( \text{ʕarabī} \) is a nisba of \( \text{ʕarab} \) and that the \( \text{ʕarabiy-yāʾ} \) is the language spoken by this group. In the meaning ‘to make Arabic, Arabicize, translate into Arabic’ also the D-stem \( \text{ʕarraba} \) is with all likelihood denominative from \( \text{ʕarab} \). In the \( \dot{\gamma} \)-stem, \( \text{ʔašraba} \), the notions of ‘Arabicity,’ ‘expression’ (< *vehemence) and ‘clarity, purity’ often overlap, particularly when \( \text{ʔašraba} \) takes the specific meaning of ‘pronouncing the final accents of a word, using desinential inflection (\( \text{ʔiʕrāb} \)).’ 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.’

\textit{faṣīḥ, faṣāḥa, (al-luġa al-) fuṣḥā}

In the multivalent root \( \text{AR} \; \sqrt{FṣḤ} \) the notion of ‘clarity, purity’ and (clarity, correctness in speech =) ‘eloquence’ [\( \text{faṣuha, u, vn. faṣāḥaī} \), ‘to be clear, good, pure (Arabic); to be eloquent,’ adj. \( \text{faṣīh} \), elat. \( \text{ʔaʃaḥ} \), f. \( \text{fuṣḥā} \)] probably goes back to that of ‘milk divested of the froth’ (\( \text{fiʃḥ} \)) or the ‘breaking of the dawn light’ (\( \text{faʃḥ} \)), 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.’* According to Ehret,\(^65\) the root is an extension in iterative \(*-\text{ḥ} \) from a 2-rad. preproto-SEM \( \sqrt{PṢ} \) ‘to take out’; \( \text{Ar} \; \sqrt{FṢḤ} \) thus originally is ‘to break forth and shine in full splendor.’

In contrast, the word for the Jewish ‘Passover’ and Christian ‘Easter,’ \( (\text{ʔīd al-}) \text{fiʃḥ} \), seems to be the result of anticipatory assimilation (\( s < *s \) before \( \text{ḥ} \)) after borrowing from HBR, either directly or via SYR \( \text{peʃḥā} \), so that, etymologically, \( \text{fiʃḥ} \) should be arranged sub \( \sqrt{FSḤ} \) rather than \( \sqrt{FṢḤ} \).\(^66\) The confusion was probably

\(^{63}\) Both SEM \( \sqrt{RB} \) and, more specifically, AR \( \sqrt{RB} \) are among the most complex roots to disentangle. For more details, see EtymArab, in BP.

\(^{64}\) Cf. Zammit, Comparative Lexical Study, and CAD: AKK \( \text{peʃū} \) (\( \text{paʃiū, paʃū} \) ‘white, pale, bleached; cleared, emptied (of vegetation, obstructions, etc., said of plots of land),’ \( \text{peʃū, paʃū} \) ‘to become white, to pale,’ ARAM \( \text{p′sah} \) ‘to sparkle, be bright,’ SYR \( \text{p′sah} \) ‘to rejoice,’ (af.) ‘to make bright, serene, [...] glad, happy, (etp.) to be happy.’


\(^{66}\) Due to its origin in HBR \( \text{pāsaḥ} \) ‘to pass over, spring over,’ it is, properly
facilitated by popular etymology which of course associated the feast with ritual and spiritual purity.

ʕāmmiyyaʕ In contrast to (al-)luɠāt al-fuʂhā, the ‘very clear, good, pure (language)’ or the ‘H(igh)’ variety of Arabic, the (luɠāt) ʕāmmiyyaʕ is the ‘popular, colloquial (language),’ by Arabs themselves often considered as inferior, incorrect, the ‘L(ow)’ variety. ʕāmmiyyaʕ is the fem. form of the adj. ʕāmмāʕ, a nisba formation from the noun ʕāmмāʕ ‘the common people, broad mass of the people.’ ʕāmмāʕ itself is a nominalization of the fem. of the adj. ʕāmм ‘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 ʕimāmaʕ ‘turban.’

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

tarɡama All sources agree that AR turɡumān ‘interpreter’ and the (probably denominative) verb tarɡama ‘to interpret’ go back to AKK targarμannu ‘interpreter, dragoman.’ Previous research tended to connect spoken, closer to AR fushaʕ ‘walk, promenade, stroll, ride, drive, outing, excursion’ than to the idea of purity (FSH) 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 umмatu is said to stem from a SUM source.
68. ENGL FR GE (etc.) dragoman are borrowed (via various paths) from AR turğumān.
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 tarğama 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 targumanni 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 tarğama 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.’”\(^74\)

\(^{69}\) Huehnergard, “Proto-Semitic.”
\(^{71}\) We do not have to consider Ar riğım ‘diet,’ which is borrowed into Ar from Fr régime, nor ruğum ‘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.”
\(^{73}\) 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,’ MÌN 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 ‘to 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 ‘to 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,’ ṵnaqil ‘rocky (ground, terrain),’ and YÈMAR naqîl, SAB mnqil ‘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 ‘to (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-naqliyyāt (or just al-naqliyyāt) ‘the traditional sciences’ is a term that came to stand in opposition to al-ʕulūm al-ʕaqliyyāt ‘the rational sciences.’ – 2) In the noun ṵnaqqāl ‘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 modSA r(MÌR , JÌB , SÌQ ) √nql ‘to choose’ into this picture.

77. Cf. esp. ṵnaq(q)ala ‘to mend (clothes), patch (shoes),’ ṵnaqil, ṵniql, ṵnaqal ‘worn out, patched (shoes)’ (**to remove > to clear > to repair?’); mnqil ‘candied or salted nuts and almonds; dried fruits; candy, sweets; dessert’ (from ‘to shift,’ as **what is served with the wine so that one may eat a bit between drinking?’); maŋal 'brazier' (mostly explained as **the portable,’ but perh. of foreign origin, cf. Landberg, Glossaire, s.v. √NQL, with further references).
means ‘story-teller’ (i.e., the same as AR ḥakawāṭī), but then also ‘mimic, actor, player.’

3) Very interesting, particularly from a modern translatologist’s perspective, is also the fact that in CLASS AR the passive participle manqūl not only could mean ‘translated,’ but also ‘having lost its original meaning’!

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 lahgaṯ the same “ancestor” as ‘devotion’ (lahg), ‘appetizer’ (luḥgaṯ), and ‘coagulation’ (ilḥiyaṯ)? Can we connect tarḡamaṯ 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,’ šibāraṯ < Sem *ṣiBR ‘to cross, pass over,’ luḥaṯ < Sem *luḏ(ḡ)- ‘throat,’ 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 (laẓ < *‘to spit’; šuẓinizyaṯ related to šamm ‘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 faṣāḥaṯ 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

78. Steingass, Persian-English Dictionary.
79. Orig. French: ‘qui a perdu sa signification primitive (mot),’ Kazimirski, Dictionnaire, s.v. “NQL”.
roots (*fašāhaḥ* NOT related to *fish* ‘Passover; East’), but also of “seeing together” what at first sight is difficult to understand as stemming from one and the same idea (*šībāraḥ* ‘expression,’ *šībraḥ* ‘lesson, morale,’ *šabraḥ* ‘tear,’ all from *‘to cross, pass over’; *šāmmiyāraḥ* probably a relative of *šimālaḥ* ‘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., *raǧama* ‘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 *liχανός* ‘forefinger,’ or traditional AR *ištiqāq*, deriving, e.g., *ʔiʕrāb* from *ʕarab*, *luğaḥ* from *laγāḥ*, or also popular etymology, where *fish* is seen together with *fašāhaḥ*, 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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