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On the Shaping of Andalusi Arabic Lexicon: Semitic and Non-Semitic Borrowing, Phonetic Variation and Lexical Composition (*NAḤT*)

Abstract

The lack of a comprehensive etymological dictionary of the best documented and, in many accounts, main Semitic language, i.e., Arabic, is a serious drawback for progress in our knowledge of the background and evolution of lexical studies of the whole Afrasian phylum. Any serious attempt at achieving that goal would require a team of a number of scholars working hard during several years; however, in the meantime, a modest shortcut could be to consecrate some personal efforts in that direction on a single important Arabic dialect, and this is what we are presently trying to bring about, within the project of a linguistic encyclopaedia of Andalusi Arabic. So far, our endeavours have cast some new lights of lexical borrowing not only from well-known cases of Aramean and Persian origins, but also, e.g., from Akkadian and Old Egyptian, as well as a rather detailed account of phonetic changes and lexical composition scarcely detected or never heretofore suspected and having often prevented the recognition of the true etyma of Semitic and non-Semitic stock, of which the present article is, of course, only a résumé and introduction.

Keywords

Andalusi Arabic, Dictionary, Etymology, Semitic Languages, Lexical Borrowings.

An important lacuna in the field of Semitic studies, so constantly and efficiently tilled by our late friend and colleague A. Zaborski, indeed a very important lacuna, is the absence of an etymological dictionary of Arabic, which we have possessed for decades in the cases of other Semitic languages less pivotal on account of poorer lexicon or peripheral position, like Biblical Hebrew and Ge'ez. It is noteworthy that, while even the authors of the best Hebrew, Akkadian and Ugaritic dictionaries and lexica often provide etymological information on

lexical items, the same is not the case most of the times when the language described is Arabic.

There are, of course, some reasons for this rather peculiar circumstance, such as the huge size of material to survey, being the Semitic language of which there is at hand several times more written material than for any other of its sisters, not to mention dozens of spoken dialects, though minimally represented by recorded witnesses, let alone endowed with the luxury of etymological dictionaries. Besides, Arabic has borrowed through millennia, much before becoming a literary language, as well as afterwards, hundreds of words from every neighbouring Semitic and non-Semitic tongue, which considerably enlarges the scope of this field of research and discourages individual efforts confronted with a nearly impossible and endless task, while the ideal solution, an appropriately staffed and financed international team of lexicologists has never been set up or even seriously looked for, due to the complexity of the issue, which is not just a linguistic matter, but has also some disturbing ideological undertones.¹

In our younger years, we once received the proposal from a distinguished German colleague to enter in a joint venture of this nature, which we could not accept in view of insufficient bibliographical means for that task at hand in our country, requiring long absences abroad incompatible with personal circumstances. Sometime afterwards, on the occasion of an international symposium at Tunis in 1989, consecrated to the project of a much needed Historical Arabic Dictionary, we insisted there on the convenience of taking advantage of the international cooperation and funding eventually available then for this endeavor in order to produce not only a historical, but also an etymological and dialectological reference, without success so far.

¹ It is well-known, for instance, that talk about the foreign origin of some Arabic words, whether found or not in the Qurʾān, is not welcome in some conservative Muslim milieus, in spite of the fact that some Medieval quite orthodox Muslim scholars, like the famous Egyptian writer on so many topics, Assuyūfī, had no qualms at accepting that indisputable truth, which they explained by saying that God, being obviously in command of all languages, could use them at will, whenever He deemed it convenient. On the other hand, fundamentalist Jews and Christians of our days are also very unhappy with the rather obvious fact that Moses' name is, in fact, only a nickname meaning "the knife" in Old Egyptian, and they prefer not to mention the strange likeness of Hebrew *moše* and Egyptian >*mšw*< (see Erman & Grapow 1982: 157), also borrowed by Arabic, in the first case through Hebrew, as *mūsà*, but unhappily having preserved both meanings for the same signifier, "Moses" and "razor". Those of us who dare dealing with such subjects in books and articles, are familiar with the scarce echoes arisen by such publications, if not received with tight silence, as was the case of the entry "Moisés" in our *Diccionario de arabismos y voces afines en iberorromance*, Madrid, Gredos 1999, pp. 394–395 (subsequently enlarged and issued in English under the title *A Dictionary of Arabic and Allied Loanwords. Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, Galician and Kindred Dialects*, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2008, and again, on the neighboring field, in the parallel case of our contribution "Some notes on the Qurʾānic *lisānun mubīn* and its loanwords", in *Sacred Text. Explorations in Lexicography, Studien zur romanischen Sprachwissenschaft und interkulturellen Kommunikation*, 57 (ed. J.P. Monferrer-Sala & Ángel Urbán), Peter Lang, Frankfurt–Berlin–Bern–Bruselas–N. York–Oxford–Viena, 2009, 31–45.

Only quite recently, when we decided that our last contribution to Arabic studies should be an *Encyclopédie linguistique andalouse*, in French this time, as a token of our conviction that scholars must handle not only one but all the main languages of our concern, it became obvious that the new dictionary of Andalusi Arabic should also be etymological, for the sake of providing the most complete information on the lexicon of this dialect, to which we have consecrated our best hours for years, and in order to encourage other colleagues to do likewise with other Arabic dialects, or even and ideally, with Standard Arabic and Neo-Arabic as a whole. We were then and are even now well aware that this task was only easier on account of the number of entries, but substantially fraught with the same perils and snares than a general etymological dictionary of Arabic; however, the hope of being perhaps useful once again and probably for the last time in a lifetime makes more bearable for us the certain prospect of committing mistakes and falling short of that purpose, as is the common lot of human beings.

In the course of our research we have come across some expectable data, such as the difficulty to find Semitic cognates for a sizable number of Arabic roots and words, as a consequence of the lexical wealth of this language or of the much meager dictionaries of its sisters, many of them dead for centuries. But other times we have been actually surprised by unexpected facts, such as larger numbers of Old Egyptian, Middle Persian, Aramaic and even Akkadian loanwords than one could imagine, as well as roots generated by phonetic variation² attributable to diverse causes or simply lacking any reasonable explanation, and frequent cases of *naht*, i.e., lexical composition whereby some consonants of a phrase, usually three or four, are drawn from it in order to generate a new root as signifier of the meaning signified by that phrase.

We have classified such unpredictable items into the next headlines.

A) Borrowing from neighbouring languages

The frequency of loanwords in Old and Medieval Arabic and Neo-Arabic is known to every student of this language, thanks to works like Jeffery's and Dozy's and, in the case of Andalusi Arabic, of Corriente 1997,³ so we shall herewith confine ourselves to cases insufficiently dealt with in previous literature,

² Of the kind labeled as "allothesis" and "metathesis" by S.S. Majzel' in his book entitled *Puti rasvitiija kornevogo fonda semitskix yazykov* ("Developing ways of the root stock in the Semitic languages", Moscow, 1983), which we reviewed in *Estudios de dialectología norteafricana y andalusí* 9 (2005) 273-8, and some of whose ideas, often disputable, have nevertheless influenced our thinking in some parts of the present article.

³ Namely, A.F. Jeffery's *The Foreign Vocabulary in the Qur'ān*, Baroda, 1938, R. Dozy's *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, Leiden 1981, and F. Corriente, *A Dictionary of Andalusi Arabic*, Leiden.

such as direct borrowings from Akkadian, and a heretofore not-witnessed though expectable wealth of Aramaic, Old Egyptian and Iranian loanwords, even Berber ones, though these merely affecting Western Neo-Arabic.⁴

1) Akkadian: Only a very old direct borrowing from this language can explain A. *izā'a* “in front of”, obviously from a pan-Semitic root {ḥd̥w}, whence Ar. *ḥazā* «to see», independent from cognate Ak. *izēzum* «to stay». Other unsuspected cases of likewise direct borrowing might or appear to be A. *ḥabarun* “news”, from Ak. *ḥabāru(m)* “to make noise”, Ar. *dīsun* “rush, reed” from Ak. *dīšu(m)* «lush grass», reflecting the pan-Semitic root {d̥t'}, through a South-Arabian phase,⁵ Ar. *zibbun* “penis”, apparently an old euphemism obtained by a metaphorical use of Ak. *zibbatu(m)* “tail”, Ar. *fahḥārun* “potter”, necessarily borrowed from Ak. *pahāru(m)*, and not from its Ar. loanword *pahḥārā*, on account of the faithful transmission of /h/, while a better preservation of vowels would in a similar way prove the direct borrowing of Ar. *furātu* from Ak. *purattu* “Euphrates” and Ar. *quwwatun* “strand of a rope” from Ak. *qū(m)* “rope”, although both items existed also in the North-Semitic branch. All in all, perhaps a meager harvest, but not meaningless nor definitive, because our survey of this realm can lay no claim to exhaustiveness.

2) Aramaic: The number of loanwords of this origin in Old Arabic has always been known to be high, but a detailed survey of A. lexicon yields a considerably longer list of new never heretofore suspected cases, like A. *ḍahīratun* “treasure <ammunition”, in a root apparently isolated from any Semitic cognates, probably reflecting Ar. *dākīrā* «remembered (when the need for it arises)»; otherwise A. *radana* “spin” is no doubt borrowed from Sr. *rədan*, A. *raḥṭun* “family” but Aa. ‘way, manner’ closely reflects Sr. *reḥtā*,⁶ while the whole A. root {rwq} is likely to be borrowed from such items as Rb. *arēq* «to pour» and *rəwwāqā*

⁴ We are using the abbreviations A. = Arabic, Aa. = Andalusi Arabic, Ak. = Akkadian, Ar. = Aramaic, Br. = Berber, Cp. = Coptic, Eg. = Old Egyptian, Esa. = Epigraphic South Arabian, Gz. = Ge'ez, Hb. = Hebrew, Kb. = Kabyle Berber, Ml. = Maltese, Np. = Neo-Persian, Ph. = Pahlavi, Sr. = Syriac, Rb. = Rabbinic Aramaic and Ug. = Ugaritic.

⁵ Suggested by the evolution of /t/ into /s/, detected by G.M. Grande, *Jazyk juzhnoaraviskoj pis'mennosti*, Moscow 1966, p. 40, also witnessed by the A. ordinal number *sādis* “sixth”. Another formerly known case of direct contact between Ak. *biltu(m)* “tribute” and Esa. is >bltn< “gift” in the latter, origin of Gz. *bənnāt* “tribute”, as reported by W. Leslau, *Comparative Dictionary of Ge'ez*, Wiesbaden 1987, p. 99.

⁶ Semantically closer to the Aa. item, which can be explained as a consequence of the linguistic impact of the Syrian settlements in Al-Andalus, to which we consecrated an article, “Los sirismos del árabe andalusí”, in *Estudios de dialectología norteafricana y andalusí* 4 (1999) [2000] 55–63, as a counterpoint to our previous paper “South Arabian features in Andalusi Arabic”, in *Studia linguística et orientalia memoriae Haim Blanc dedicata* (Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1989), 94–103. Curiously enough, Aa. *raddāna* “spindle”, an overhauled variant of A. *mirdan*, has survived in the Castilian dialect of La Palma, one of the Canary Islands, as **redina**, registered by Corriente 2008: 418, paralleled by Ml. *raddiena* “spinning wheel”, after J. Aquilina, *Maltese-English Dictionary*, Valletta 1990, p. 1173.

«percolator»; cf. also >zaraba< “to pen (cattle)” < Sr. *zərab* «to press» and Rb. «to surround», >zināqun< “horse collar” < Sr. *zənaq* “to tie up (a beast)”, >zāwiyatun< «corner, angle» < Rb. and Sr. *zāwītā*, >zayyun< “costume, habit” < Rb. >zīw(ā)< «beautiful outlook», >sabara< “to probe or sound” < Rb. *səbēr* «to pierce», Aa. >sannaḥ< «to slice» < Sr. *sannef* «to tuck up», A. >ṭamara< “to bury or hide” < Rb. and Sr. *ṭamar*, >ṭīnun< “mud” < Rb. *ṭīn(ā)*, >aḡnana< “to knead” < Rb. *‘aḡan* and Sr. *‘aḡa/en* «presser», >ašā< “to disobey” < Rb. *‘ašā/ē* «to oppress; to withhold payment», and Sr. *‘ašā* «to resist», >‘anita< «perish» < Rb. *‘antā* «oppressor», and >qama< “to subdue” < Rb. *qāma* ‘ «to press» and Sr. *qəma* ‘ «to tie».⁷

3) Persian: the rather impressive number of Iranian loanwords in A., above all Old, Middle and Modern Persian (i.e., Pahlavi and Neo-Persian or Farsi), is generally acknowledged,⁸ but its real extent is far from having been established in a comprehensive statement. Amidst a host of heretofore ignored items, hard to etymologize in any other way and detected by our recent research on Aa., we could excerpt, e.g., A. *barada* “to file” prob. < Ph. *burdan* or np. *bordan* «to take away, to remove»,⁹ *tubbān* “breeches” < Np. *tobban* < *tan ban* “body protector”, *ḡawḡdar* “calf” < Ph. **ḡaw dar* “kind of cow”, *ḡirbaqun* «hellebore» < Np. *ḡar bok*, lit. «donkey face» *ḡardal* “mustard” < Ph. *ḡar dil*, lit. “donkey tongue”, *ḡuršūf* “artichoke” < Ph. *ḡar čōb*, lit. «spiny stick», *ḡarr/nūbun* “carobs” < Np. *ḡar lup* “donkey jaw”, *ḡamma* «to think or reckon» < Np. *ḡamana* ‘i “likeness”, *ḡanḡarun* “dagger” < Np. *ḡa/enḡir* “sharp”, *ḡandarīs* “exquisite wine” < Ph. **ḡand+i rēš* «laughter from the beard», *ḡunzuwānah* “pride” < Ph. **ḡōn uzwān* «proud language», *duḡhān* “smoke” < Ph. **dūd ḡān(ag)*, represented by Np. *dud ḡane* “fireplace”, *daydān* “habit” < Np. *dide dane* “seen and learnt”, *dardārun* “ash-tree” < Ph. **dard dār* «tree of pain» or *dard ār* «inflicting pain», because its branches were used as scourges, *durnuk* «kind of rug» < Ph. *dō rang*, “of two colours”, *dahr* «time; fate» < Ph. *dagr zamān* “long time”, *ramakatun* “mare” < Ph. *ramkē*, *rawnaqun* «splendor» < Ph. *rōy nēk* “beautiful shape”, >zi‘birun “down, fuzz” < Ph. *az abar* “from above”, *sābiḡ* “long garment” < Ph. *šabig* “ritual shirt in Zoroastrian ceremonies”, whence Np. *šabi* «night gown», *sarābun* «mirage» < Ph. **sar āb*, «head water, i.e., only imagined», Aa.

⁷ For which the North Semitic cognates Hb. *qāmaš* «to hold» and Ug. >qmš< «to scare» pose a pan-Semitic root {qmd}, which would have been preserved by A., if this item were not borrowed from Ar.

⁸ E.g., in such classical references as A. Shir, *Mu‘ḡamu l’alfāzi l’fārisiyyati lmu’arrabah*, Beirut, 1990, to be used with caution, and W. Eilers’ article “Iranisches Sprachgut im Arabischen”, in *Actas do IV Congresso de Estudos árabes e islâmicos*, Coimbra-Lisboa 1968, 581-550, not to speak of Jeffery’s above mentioned work.

⁹ Cf. the parallel case of Br. *ttakkəs afuhri* «whetstone, lit. she takes away the excess», in Dozy’s *Supplément* I:139, s.v. >tkšāfhr<, explained in our “Marginalia on Dozy’s *Supplément*” in *Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik* 29 (1995) 23–50, esp. 28, n° 52.

>barham< “ointment” < Np. *bar ham* “together”, >ḥafağ< «horse radish» < Np. *ḥafanğ*, “delicious”, >ḥunnār< “beloved” < Ph. *ḥwān* “table”, >ḥankarah< “carousal” < Ph. **ḥwān kār* “(eating) table work”, with an agentive suffix, Aa. >zintār< “strong and brave man” < Np. *zende dar* «watching», >ḡunbāz< “kind of doublet or jacket” < Np. **gom baz*< “without arms”, and a long etc.

4) Old Egyptian: The presence in A. of this kind of borrowings follows a similar pattern to that of Iranian loanwords, having been traditionally acknowledged, but never thoroughly investigated.¹⁰ Among the items attributable to this origin in A., our research points to previously unsuspected cases like A. *aṭāt* “furniture” < *ʕt*< «bed», *asās* “foundation, basement” (cf. Cp. *eṣēt*), *anām* “men” < *inn* «who?» (cf. Cp. *nim* «somebody»), the very name of Al-Andalus, from Cp. **ament e-rēs* “the West by the South”,¹¹ *bān* “ben tree” < Cp. *p+an* «the perfume», *bardī* “reed-mace” < Cp. *pi+roti* “undergrowth”, *burr* «wheat» < >brt< «cereal», >baṣalatun< “onion” < Cp. (*e*)*mčōl*, >būmun< «owl» < Cp. *bom*, >tuḥfatun< “gift” < >ḥtp< «grace, favour», >iṭmidun< “antimony” < >smt<, >ṭaman< “price” < >śmn<, >ḡubbatun< “jubba” < *db'yt* “kind of garment”, >ḥida'atun< “kite” < >ḥ't< “a certain bird”, >ḥaṭṭa< “to put down (a load)” < >ḥtp< “to be put down” (with loss of the final consonant by metanalysis of the Semitic preposition *bv+*), >ḥuqqatun< “little box” < >ḥ'ḥt< «wooden box», >ḥanūṭun< “embalming ointment” < >ḥnt.t< «ointment», >ḥaraḡa< “to go out” < >ḥrj< “to be or become far away”, >ḥaṣṣa< “to be bad or mean” < >ḥsj.t< «to do evil», >riḥun< “cultivated land” < *r'pr* (or shapes closer to Cp. *erphei* “temple and surrounding farms”), >si'r< “price” < Eg., cf. Cp. *ša(a)* *r*, >sāqa< “to drive” < Eg., cf. Cp. *sōk*, *iṣā'un* “evening” < >wš3w<, *ḡadan* “tomorrow” < *ḥd t3* «morning», >qaṭara< “to distill” < >kdr< “frankincense”, Aa. >'wḍim<¹² “cornelian” < *idbw*, >b/faysārah< “dish of cooked beans” < Cp. *pise arō* “coction of beans”, >daqquṣah< “oil cruet” < Cp. *t+kounčou*, etc.

5) Berber: We shall not repeat here the results of our survey of loanwords from this origin in Aa., to which we consecrated some articles,¹³ nor is this

¹⁰ Not even in the five volumes of Erman & Grapow's magnificent *Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache*, Berlin, 1982, our main reference for this survey, which includes a list (V 242) of merely three dozens of Arabic cognates of Eg. words, not necessarily borrowed from these.

¹¹ About which, see Corriente 2008: 179 and our paper “The Coptic loanwords of Egyptian Arabic in comparison with the parallel case of Romance loanwords in Andalusī Arabic. The true Egyptian etymon of Al-Andalus”, en *Collectanea Christiana Orientalia* 5 (2008) 59–123.

¹² Mere transcription in the Leiden Glossary of Hb. *ōdem*, about which see our paper “The names of the gems in the ephod as reflected in the *Leiden Glossary* and their reflexes in the Islamic mystical jargon”, in *Graeco-Latina et Orientalia. Studia in honorem Angeli Urbani* (ed. S.Kh. Samir & J.P. Monferrer-Sala), Córdoba, CNERU-CEDRAC, 2013, 87–99.

¹³ E.g., “Notas de lexicología hispano-árabe: II. Nuevos berberismos del hispanoárabe”, in *Awrāq* 4 (1981) 27–30, et “Le berbère à Al-Andalus”, in *Études et Documents Berbères* 15–16 (1998) [2000] 269–275. Another important contribution to this realm is J. Bustamante & M. Tilmatine, “El léxico amazigo contenido en la ‘Umdat aṭ-ṭabīb’”, in *Al-Andalus-Magreb* (Cadix) 7 (1999) 43–64.

the place to tackle the parallel case of other Western Arabic dialects. However, even in the former case, we have come across some new heretofore undetected items, e.g., Aa. *ḥammāl* “to clear the way”, cf. Kb. *ḥammāl*.

B) Phonetic variation

Medieval native linguists were already cognizant of the fact that some Arabic roots could adopt several close but not identical shapes by dropping, displacing or replacing one of their three consonants, which might or not correlate with semantic modifications. They tried to explain these rather irregular and unpredictable phenomena, called *qalb* and *ibdāl*,¹⁴ with more or less success in the likelihood of their hypothesis, a task inherited from them by some Western Semitic scholars, better equipped with the tools of comparative Semitic studies and modern linguistic methodology. But it would be honest to acknowledge that some of those processes and the ultimate reasons for their occurrence and connection with semantic change are far from being completely and satisfactorily elucidated.

Our survey of (Andalusi) Arabic lexicon from an etymological viewpoint has confirmed the presence of traditionally attested phenomena, though not necessarily advanced towards their coherent explanation. Nevertheless, it may be useful to recapitulate and classify them, pointing whenever possible to eventual ways to attain that goal, at least partially. To begin with, is methodologically convenient to classify the types of root variation into:

I) Changes in the quality or position of the root consonants, without apparent semantic correlations¹⁵

a) Voicing and devoicing, generally triggered by contact assimilation in some paradigms, e.g., A. *ḥariza* “to be in the watch” vs. *ḥarasa* “to watch over”, and *ḥazaba* “to divide into sections” vs. *ḥasiba* “to calculate”.¹⁶

b) Exchange of semi-consonants and other sonorants, triggered by their articulatory weakness and assimilatory trends in certain positions, e.g.: A. *ʿadā* “to transmit or pay” < *yadun* “hand”, from {ydw}, *ʿahhaba* “to prepare” < *wahaba* “to give”, *ḥaniqa* “to enrage” < *ḥaraqa* “to scorch”, Aa. *ḥannāk* “to blacken” < A. *ḥalika* “to become intensively black”, or even *ʿalaqa* “to flash” vs. *taraqraqa* “to flicker”, with adoption of a duplicate pattern {1212}. We could also include under this heading the frequent cases of insertion or addition

¹⁴ I.e., “inversion” and “substitution”; see, as a mere introduction to this subject, H. Fleisch, *Traité de philologie arabe*, Beirut 1961, pp. 239–244.

¹⁵ Not excluding, however, contamination by phonetically and semantically akin words, always possible.

¹⁶ Incidentally, also a borrowing from Eg., after Erman & Grapow V: 242.

of /h/, as a compensation for a lost /ʔ/, vocalic length or germination, e.g., *'ahlun* “family, folks” < *ālun*,¹⁷ *badaha* “to overtake” < *badā* “to appear”, *ḡahuma* “to have a stern look” < *ḡammama* “to cram”, *dalima* “to be intensely black” < *idlahamma* “to be intensely dark”,¹⁸ *idhamma* “to be black” < *adima* “to be brown”.

c) Exchange of labials, generally triggered by dialectal articulatory weakness, e.g., loss of a nasal formant or another feature,¹⁹ e.g., A. *miḥrāb* “niche in a mosque” < *ḥarima* “to be forbidden”, *ḥawkun* < *ḥabkun* “weaving”.

d) Exchange of dentals, possibly triggered also by dialectal weakness of certain articulatory features, e.g., A. *badanun* “body” vs. *baṭnun* “belly”, *dawrun* “turn” vs. *ṭawrun* “time”, *dabiqa* “to stick” vs. *ṭabiqa* “to be stuck”. As for interdentalals, there is at least one case of substitution of /f/ for /t/, namely, *taḥannaṭa* “to worship God”.²⁰

e) Exchange of laterals, relatively frequent on account of the widespread almost universal labiality of such phonemes of difficult double articulation, e.g., *rakaḍa* “to run” vs. *rakala* “to kick”, and *ḍ/laḡḡatun* “confused voices”.²¹

f) Lambdacism and rhotacism, relatively frequent in some linguistic areas, as a consequence of the articulatory proximity of /r/ and /l/,²² e.g., A. *baḍara* “to dissiminate” vs. *baḍala* “to spend freely”, *ḡalama* = *ḡarama* “to cut off”, *razama* “to hold tightly” < *lazima* “to cling; to make prisoner”, *l/rakaza* “to beat”, Aa. *ḍal* < A. *ḍar* “udder”, Aa. *raṭṭām* “to knead” < A. *laṭama* “to slap”, Aa. *arqá* “to put” < A. *alqá* “to throw”.

g) Exchange of velars, mostly by voicing or devoicing, generated through contact assimilation and next propagated to every position, e.g., A. *ḡawà*

¹⁷ In fact, a substantivized old pan-Semitic demonstrative and relative pl. pronoun, cf. A. *'ulū*, Hb. *'ēlle*, Gz. *əllu*, etc.

¹⁸ Obviously, a phonetic variant of an XI derived verbal measure *idlāmma*, recorded by some dictionaries like the *Tāḡu l'arūs*.

¹⁹ Already known to Medieval native grammarians, who mentioned “the /b/ which is like the /ff/”, i.e., its continuant allophone in some old and modern dialects; see J. Cantineau, *Études de linguistique arabe*, Paris 1960, p. 28.

²⁰ Symptomatic of dialects older but akin to the mainstream of Neo-Arabic, where interdentalals have become merely dental in most urban areas, but most particularly identical to the case of some Mesopotamian dialects substituting labiovelars for interdentalals; see H. Blanc, *Communal dialects in Baghdad*, Harvard 1964, p. 19. See other examples in Fleisch 1961: 75.

²¹ Plus a host of other cases signaled in our paper “/ḍ - /l/ doublets in Classical Arabic as evidence of the process of de-lateralization of *ḍād* and development of its standard reflex”, in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 23 (1978) 50–55.

²² Cf. the cases of Chinese, lacking the phoneme /r/ in most dialects, vs. Japanese, on the contrary lacking an /l/, as was the case of Old Eg., although this phoneme reappeared again in the younger phases of this language. In other instances, both phenomena are characteristic of syllable closing, e.g., in some Andalusian dialects of Castilian, **arcarde** < **alcalde** “mayor”, unlike the opposite case in some of its South American dialects, e.g., Cuban **amol** < **amor** “love”.

“to be hopeless” < *ḥawà* “to be ruined”, *ġ/ḥaraza* “to sew”, and A. *ġahada* vs. Hb. and Gz. {kḥd} “to deny”.²³

h) Exchange of pharyngeals, in the same cases as for the velars, e.g., A. *ḥ/‘azama* “to be resolute”, *ḥ/‘arada* “to wish intensely”, *ḥ/‘aqiba* “to withhold”, and Aa. *nahfú* < A. *nahfū* “I / we forgive”.

j) Exchange of vibrants, usually from dental to velar, e.g., A. *r/ġamaza* “to make a sign” and *r/ġāyatun* “banner”,²⁴ but sometimes also the other way around in dialects under South Arabian interference,²⁵ like Aa. *ġa ‘rafiyya* “geography” and *mustafrá* “fainted”.

k) Pharyngealization of /ʔ/: likely to have been a dialectal reaction to the articulatory weakness and frequent loss of /ʔ/, which was labeled as ‘*an‘anah*’ by native grammarians,²⁶ e.g., A. *bada‘a* “to invent” < *bada‘a* “to start”.

l) Metathesis: quite frequent and generated by personal mistakes, sometimes accepted for several reasons, among which, an easier articulation, e.g., A. *ba‘ada* = *baḍa‘a* “to cut”, *‘atlaḥa* “to ruin” vs. *laḥata* “to mistreat”, *ġahara* = *‘aḥġara* “to hide”, *‘abġada* “to hate” vs. *ġaḍiba* “to get angry”, *ġamaza* “to quit” vs. *ġazama* “to interrupt”, *ḥaġila* “to become embarrassed” vs. *ḥalaġa* “to tremble”, *raḍi‘a* “to suck” vs. *ḍar‘un* “udder”, *rukbatun* “knee” vs. pan-Semitic {brk},²⁷ *ḍi‘fun* “double” vs. pan-Semitic {‘dp},²⁸ *ḍaġina* “to hate” vs. *ġaḍḍana* “to frown”, and Aa. *yazḥú* < A. *yahza‘u* “he mocks”. A particular case of this kind is the metathesis of sonorants, with or without the exchanges considered under b), e.g., A. *‘ayyada* “to help” < *yadun* “hand”, from {ydw}, and *bāla* “to urine” < pan-Semitic {wbl}.²⁹

m) Dissimilation: a universal aesthetic principle of dislike for the iteration of equal phonetic sequences, which has altered many A. roots,³⁰ e.g., *iḥtaṣara*

²³ Where the A. item is phonemically more conservative than its sisters from the Northern and Southern branches of Semitic respectively.

²⁴ This is a dialectal feature, also present in some Mesopotamian and Moroccan dialects; see H. Blanc 1964: 21 and Cantineau 1960: 49.

²⁵ Always in the presence of an /r/, as a clear case of dissimilation; cf. the classical Esa. example of Bauer 1966: 37–38, >*m‘rb*<, instead of A. *maġribun* “West”. There are, however, other hints at a merger of /g/ into /ʔ/ in Esa., which is standard in Gz. and general in Semitic, except in Arabic and Ugaritic.

²⁶ See Cantineau 1960:77.

²⁷ Cf. Hb. *berek*, Ak. *birku(m)* and Gz. *bərk*, even A. *baraka* “to kneel (a camel)”.

²⁸ Cf. cf. Ak. *eṣēpu(m)* and Gz. *‘aṣāfā* «to double; to fold», while the metathetical variant is witnessed by Hb. *šā‘if* «veil».

²⁹ Probably a euphemism obtained from this very common pan-Semitic root with connotations turning around the idea of «bringing forth», cf. Hb. (*yə*)*bul* «product», Sr. *awbel* et Ac. (*w*)*abālu(m)* «to bring or carry», and even A. *ibil* and Esa. >*‘bl*< «camels».

³⁰ Particularly, those resulting from gemination of the second consonant of a tri-consonantal root, as can be seen in the examples following. However, instances of the opposite trend, i.e., assimilation in order to generate sound iteration is also at work often, on psychological principles of a different sign.

“to abridge” vs. *ħinširun* “little finger”, Aa. *ba‘bár* “to coo” < A. *ba‘ba‘un* “gurgling”, Aa. *ħarbál* “to stir” < A. *ħawwala* “to give a new shape”, Aa. *dargál* “to make lazy” < A. *dagila* “to slip in”, etc.

n) Alternance of a sonorant affix with bare {122} or duplicate {1212} structures in the case of old bi-consonantal roots, e.g., A. *'akkada* “to assert” vs. *kadda* “to exert oneself”, *'wakkafa* “to put a packsaddle” < *kifāfun* “rim, circle”, *'amadun* “extreme point” vs. *madda* “to stretch”, *rağğa* “to hinder” vs. *'arğa'a* “to put off” and *rağrağa* “to be tired”, *tađāffa* “to throng” vs. *đafā* “to overflow”, *ta'ta'a* “to lower or stoop” < *wa'tta'a* “to level”, *ğaza'a* “to take a part” vs. *ğazza* “to shear or crop”, *ğaffa* “to be dried” vs. *ğafā* “to be coarse”, *qafqafa* “to shiver” < *waqafa* “to stand up or still”, Neo-A. *daldal* “to dangle” < A. *dalā* “to let down (a bucket)”, and Aa. *>muđāddah* = *muđāyadah* < “opposition”.³¹

o) Metanalytical change: e.g., /t/ instead of {w/y/'23} or inserted, as a consequence of metanalysis of that infix as a root consonant, as in A. *ħatfun* “death”, a probable euphemism drawn from *ħaffa* “to become dry”, *rağğa* “to be confuse (speech)” vs. *ratiğa* “to be impeded in speech”, *tābalun* “spices” < pan-Semitic {wbl} “to carry”, *'atala* “to carry” < *'alā* “to become high”, *'atamatun* “darkness of night” < *'amin* “dark (night)”.³²

C) Lexical composition

Unlike the cases comprehended under the preceding heading, there are many others in which the alteration underwent by a given root cannot be defined as merely phonetic, but is the outcome of a process of lexical composition, i.e., integration of two previous lexemes into a new word or, at least, of agglutination by the first one of a functional, in both cases with left semantic traces of the matched elements. In this survey, we have registered the following kinds of compounded items:³³

a) Root + a semantic complement, also called a determinative by former researchers of this topic,³⁴ at times providing an identified nuance, e.g., diminutive {+vl}, as in *đabbala* “to wither” < *đabba* “to be dry”, but often difficult to

³¹ There are also some morphologically akin cases of {1213} structures, e.g., Aa. *ħarīq* “to knock at the door”, from {trq}.

³² There are cases of /t/ instead of /t/, e.g., *taqaba* < *naqaba* “to pierce”, *taqafa* “to straighten” < *'awqafa* “to set up”, *tafila* “to become drunk” < *mala'a* “to fill”, and *tawa* “to stay” < *'awiya* “to take shelter”, probably resulting from hypercorrections in dialects in which interdental were beginning to merge with dentals.

³³ In most such cases, the compound item has no cognate in the Semitic sister languages, while the composition offers a more or less cogent and acceptable etymological explanation.

³⁴ E.g., S. Hurwitz, *Root-determination in Semitic speech*, N. York, 1913.

be semantically assigned in any way, in the lack of sufficient research on this realm, e.g., {+vs} in *ḥamasa* "to fry" < *ḥamma* "to heat" and *ṭamasa* "to erase" < *aṭmasa* "to cover", {+vr} in {*aḍḡara*} < {*aḍaḡḡa*} "to upset" and {*daḥḥa*} "to hide" < {*daḥara*} "to put away", {+v} in *ḥari'a* "to be weak" < *ḥarra* "to fall" and {*ḡada'a*} < {*ḡadda*} "to cut", {+vq} in *ḥafaqa* "to hit softly" < {*ḥaffa*} "to be light" and *zalaqa* < *zalla* "to slip", etc.

b) Root + {*vm/n*}, perhaps being cases of agglutination of the noun morphemes of mimation and nunation, e.g., *ḡadama* "to maim" < *ḡadda* "to cut off", *ḥadama* "to work" < *ḥadda* "to furrow", *ḥarama* < *ḥarra* "to rip", *'alwana* "to entitle" < *'alā* "to be high", *ḡabana* "to cheat" < *ḡabiya* "to be ignorant", *'aqdana* "to have many flaws" < *qadiya* "to have a speck in an eye", and *ḥazana* "to sadden" < *ḥazza* "to wound or hurt".

c) Relatively frequent agglutination by a root of an old causative prefix, e.g., A. *saḡana* "to jail" < *ḡanna* "to hide", *sa'ā* "to toil" < *'ayya* "to be too weak", *s/ḥafffun* "light", *sadala* = *'adlā* "to drop", *zaḡara* = *'aḡrā* "to make go or run", *zaḡala* "to throw" < *'aḡlā* "to make leave".³⁵

d) Agglutination of a preposition by a root, e.g., A. *ḡarraba* "to experience" < *ḡarā* "to run or happen" + *bi*, *ḡalaba* "to bring (from afar)" < *'aḡlā* "to force to emigrate" + *bi*, *darraba* "to train" < *'adrā* "to instruct" + *bi*, *raqaba* "to watch" < *raqā* "to rise over" + *bi*, *ḡaraba* "to hit" < *ḡarra* "to hurt" + *bi*,³⁶ *ḡama'a* "to add" < *ḡamma* "to abound" + *'alā*, *rafa'a* "to raise" < *raffa* "to surround" + *'alā*, *ṭala'a* "to rise or climb" < *'aṭalla* "to overlook" + *'alā*, *ḥadafa* "to remove" < *ḥadda* "to cut off" + *fī*, *dāfa* "to be somebody's guest" < *dawā* "to take shelter" + *fī*, *aḍ'ana* "to obey" < *aḍina* 'an "to listen from", even a young looking *ṭafiqa* "to begin or set out to do" < *tāfa* "to go about" + *fawqa*.

e) Preposition attached at the onset of a root, e.g., *baḡala* "to be prosperous" < *bi* + *ḡalla* "to be big or thick", *baḡasa* "to diminish or lessen" < *bi* + *ḡassa* "to be mean; to decrease", *bakima* "to be dumb" < *bi* + *kimāmin* "with a muzzle", *baydamā* "but for the fact that" < **bv+yadi+mā* "(hand) with hand, i.e., next to that", and *'aḡifa* "to be thin or meager" < *'alā* + *ḡaffa* "to be dry".³⁷

f) Combination of two full-fledged roots, verbal or nominal, other than functionals, a phenomenon known to the Medieval native grammarians and called by them *naḥt*, i.e., "sculpturing". As Semitic morphology does not allow for roots containing more than four consonants, such compounds must drop some of theirs, except in the case of bi-consonantal or even mono-consonantal roots, in order to be tailored to that measure, which made difficult to recognize

³⁵ In the two last instances with the phenomenon of voicing described above.

³⁶ The most conspicuous case of this structure being Neo-A. *ḡāb* < A. *ḡā* 'a *bi*+ "to bring", sufficiently late, however, to be very scarcely witnessed in Aa. and ignored by ML, which clearly points to the effects of propagation back home by the returning pilgrims to Mecca.

³⁷ Obviously, in the original phrases, those prepositions did not precede verbs, but their verbal or other derivate nouns, or some primitive nouns, as can be seen in some of these examples.

the constituents and explain why grammarians, both native and Western, have generally downplayed this kind of root formation. However, an unhurried examination of A. roots seemingly without Semitic cognates, would in this manner offer quite acceptable etyma to many of them, above all presumable compounds with very common and short lexemes, e.g., with *yad* “hand”, like *ḡasida* “to stick” < *ḡassa* “to touch or feel”, *qaṣada* “to intend or aim” < **qaṣā (y)adan* “to stretch one’s hand”, *ʾafāda* “to benefit” < **ʾawfā yadan* “to pay in hand”, or with *fū* “mouth”, like *ḥalafa* “to swear” < *ḥalla* “to be lawful (in his word)”, *raṣafa* “to sip” < **raṣša fā+hu* “to water one’s mouth”, *safiha* “to be impudent” < **sāʾa fū+hu* “to have a foul mouth”, or with *ʾaḥun* “brother”, like *ḥidnun* “close friend” < **ʾaḥun dān(in)*, and *ḥuntā* “hermaphrodite” < *ʾaḥū + ʾuntā*, lit. “the female’s brother”. In the cases of longer lexemes, their phonetic abbreviation can cast many doubts on the accuracy of any reconstruction of the constituents, although one might take that risk, at least in some cases, like *armalatum* “widow” < **al+lā+marʾa+lahā*, lit. “the one having no man”,³⁸ *sarmadun* “eternal” < **sāʾirun madd+uh*, lit. “his extension goes on”, *balāga* “to reach” < *bāʾa ilā ḡaraḍihi* “to attain one-s goal”, *darā* “to know” < *qad + raʾā* “to have seen”, *rāga* “to swerve” < **rāḥa ḡayyan*, lit. “to go astray”, *saʾima* “to loath” < **sāʾa mā (kāna)*, lit. “to be bad (whatever)”, *dirḡam* “lion” < **dārr raḡḡām* “harmful and tyrannical”, *iḍmaḥalla* “to disappear” < **ḍamma ḥāla+hu* “to withdraw”, *uṣfūrun* “small bird” < *ʾawfun ṣaffār*, “whistling bird”, *ḡabaqa* “to drink in the evening” < **ḡabba ṣafaqan* “to sip at sunset”, *ḡaḍanfar* “lion; brute” < **ḡāḍibun nāfirun*, lit. “angry and rejecting”, *ḡāfaṣa* < **istaḡfala ʾlfurṣah* “to take advantage from the occasion”, and *iqṣaʾarra* “to shudder” < **qaffa ṣaʾar+uh*, “to stand on end (his hair)”.

D) Semantic evolution

It is beyond the scope of the present paper to undertake a study of the semantic modifications generally accompanying the phonetic differentiation of newly created roots and their lexemes, indeed very necessary in order to obtain a complete description of this chapter of Arabic and Semitic linguistics. Such an endeavor would unnecessarily enlarge the reasonable limits of this occasion and must wait for a next one.

³⁸ Cf. the parallel cases of Hb. *almānāh*, Sr. *armaltā*, Ak. *almattu* et Gz. *mābällāt* < **man+ʾi(n)+baʾl+latti*, all of them reproducing the formula: relative pronoun + negation + «man, husband» + to her.