

R e v i e w

Halayqa, Issam. *Traditional Agricultural and Domestic Tools in Palestinian Arabic: An Ethnographic and Lexical Study.*

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Pre-industrial agricultural tools in Palestinian Arabic (PA) are fairly well attested and have been described in several ethnographic studies, some of which were published whilst traditional agriculture was still predominant and widely practiced. Surely the most well-known treatise on the subject is Gustaf Dalman's monumental *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina* (Dalman 1928–1942)—a detailed, systematic study that, due to its impact and scope, may be justly described as the 'bible' of Palestinian ethnographic studies.

In reviving research on traditional Palestinian agricultural vocabulary, the book under review joins other recent comprehensive studies, such as al-Hroub's *Atlas of Palestinian Rural Heritage* (Al-Hroub 2015). The data Halayqa mentions in his book has been gathered from previous research as well as from the author's own fieldwork (p. 2). The book is extensive and offers etymological discussion of some 618 lexical entries, which could be a very helpful resource for Arabic dialectologists and researchers interested in Middle Eastern pre-industrial agricultural realia.

At the beginning of the book (pp. 1–8), Halayqa presents a short introduction and methodological guidelines, including the various criteria he uses to 'determine the origin of the lexemes' (pp. 3–4). The second chapter constitutes the main body of the book (pp. 9–194). It includes the author's discussion of the entries, arranged according to three primary semantic fields: agricultural tools (§2.1), animals (§2.2), and house (§2.3). The sec-

tion dealing with agricultural tools is particularly extensive. Among the various sub-fields, we find: sowing, tilling, the plough and its harness (§2.1.1); farming and gardening (§2.1.2); pruning, weeding and chopping (§2.1.3); watering (§2.1.6); threshing, winnowing and sifting (§2.1.8); and olive pressing (§2.1.11).

Each of the entries discussed in this book is numbered, transcribed in both singular and plural forms, and followed by an English translation and explanation. Furthermore, the author adds short references to select previous research (primarily Dalman's *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina*). Each entry is then followed by an etymological analysis that lists corresponding words from other Semitic (and, where applicable, non-Semitic) languages.

The entries in the book are listed in alphabetical order within each semantic sub-field. This structure has many advantages. However, the author does not provide an alphabetical list of all the entries discussed. The book may therefore be less accessible for a reader who is interested in Semitic linguistics more generally or in investigating a certain Semitic root. The book does not include any pictorial supplements or illustrations, which would have been helpful for a reader who is less acquainted with traditional agriculture.

In many entries, the author includes data on the exact geographical area(s) in which he attested the entry in question—a welcome addition to the extant published sources. Some of the updated meanings the author attests help us to trace recent semantic developments of several traditional agricultural terms: for example, the term *zanbil(e)* ~ *zambil(e)*, ‘a small sack made of palm fibres for storing grain, rice, raisins or dried figs’, which Dalman attested (Dalman 1928–1942: III, 194, 205; VII, 125, 237), nowadays ‘refers to a sack made of nylon which measures 20–30 kg in capacity and is used to store rice in Hebron’ (pp. 75–76).

Since the book addresses agricultural vocabulary, it is not surprising that the author mentions previously unidentified, potential substrate words throughout the book. In some cases, he is the first to attest and identify these words, as in the case of (p. 181) *qazmūl* ‘a cooking pot, a drinking cup or a pitcher’, attested in Niſlin village, west of Ramallah; and *qazmūt* ‘a small ceramic jug with handles’. Halayqa (p. 196) attributes an Aramaic origin to both *qazmūl* and *qazmūt*, based on the Syriac *qzmwl?* ‘jug with narrow neck and unobstructed opening’ and the Syriac *qzmt?* (presumably *qazmatā* and not *qazmūta*, as Halayqa has transcribed it) ‘small jug’. One should note that these Syriac cognates are only attested in Syriac medieval dictionaries (Duval 1901: II, 1758, lines 18 and 23) and are not reaffirmed in other Syriac texts. In my opinion, the Syriac *qzmwl?* is most probably a variation of the Syriac diminutive suffix *-on*, in which a common shift (*n* > *t*) occurred, namely **qazmonā* > *qazmolā* (rather than *qazmūlā*, the vocalization suggested in Payne Smith 1879–1901: II, 3569).

Halayqa's monograph aims to address two main issues in its third and final 'Conclusions' chapter: a) the linguistic strata of the names of the tools he discusses, and b) the 'factors that have created these names', as the author puts it (p. 195)—that is, lexical enrichment via semantic shifts and morphological word-formation. With regard to the first issue, on pp. 195–214, the author attempts 'to show the influences of ancient Semitic and non-Semitic languages by defining the linguistic strata of these names and focusing on the names which originated in Canaanite or Aramaic' (p. 195). He sifts most of the vocabulary he has discussed into two origin-related language groups: Semitic languages (Akk, Can-Ug, Aram, Eth, CAr, CS [Central Semitic?], and 'Uncertain Semitic') and non-Semitic languages (Eg, Per, Turk, Gr, Lat, Fr, It, Eng, and 'Unknown'). The author offers a summary table (p. 201), according to which he presents 'the percentage of Near-Eastern language's [sic] contribution to the names of tools and objects' discussed in the book. Halayqa claims that nearly 73% of the vocabulary he presents in the book is of Semitic origin, whilst the rest of the words are either of non-Semitic or of unknown origin. Within the Semitic-origin language group, he sifts 78 words (12.6%) into the Aramaic-origin group and attributes a Canaano-Ugaritic origin to some 29 words (4.7%). I shall return to this conclusion below.

In the same 'Conclusions' chapter, the second issue Halayqa discusses is lexical enrichment via semantic shifts and morphological word formation. The author mentions some examples of universal semantic shifts, for example: 'parts of the body' > 'tools of same shape': *iğir/rığıl* 'leg, foot' > 'leg of any compound tool, such as a forked wooden pole used to support vines'; *ğanah* 'wing' > 'each of the two edges of the plough-share'. A long list of names appears under the so-called 'names according to the functions that the tools perform' rubric. The author approaches these names solely from the semantic point of view. However, one should note that most of the names of these tools were created via morphological word formation, and that the patterns *faffäl*, *fäfäl* ~ *faſūl*, *maffal(a)* ~ *miffäl(a)*, and *miffäl(a)* ~ *muffäl(a)* were particularly productive in this respect, as one can see in the terms *hammälé* 'carrier', *maſğane* ~ *miſğane* 'kneading trough', *ğarıše* 'roller, cylindrical stone for grinding', and *miſkar* 'shutter', respectively.

The book contains numerous typos and grammatical mistakes, and would have benefitted from more careful language editing. In addition, there are some inaccuracies in the citations and abbreviations of the sources: for example, the abbreviation CS (Central Semitic?) is mentioned neither in the *sigla* nor in the introductory chapter; various Mishnaic and Talmudic Hebrew sources are dubbed 'Middle Hebrew' and are abbreviated as MH—a rather obscure term that does not clearly indicate which

of the Hebrew sources are implied. Furthermore, the author has rather ambiguously abbreviated the Rabbinic Hebrew and the Aramaic sources. Some abbreviations (pp. XV–XXVI) lack one-to-one correlation to the sources—such as on p. XXIV, where the abbreviation ‘Sot’ [sic] stands for ‘Soṭah (*Talmud*)’, and ‘Soṭ’ stands for both ‘Soṭa (sources I)’ and ‘Soṭa (source IV)’. The author does not explain the difference between sources I and IV, either at this juncture or elsewhere in the book.

The book’s main weak point is its etymological analysis and consequently the suggested etymologies of many of the terms the author discusses. In general, the analysis suffers from a lack of accuracy in both phonology (consonant correspondence) and semantics. Since space does not permit me to provide a full list of the etymological inaccuracies in the book, in what follows I shall concentrate on a few representative examples.

The author mentions the various criteria he used to ‘determine the origin of the lexemes’ (pp. 3–4). One of these is that ‘the north of Jerusalem, to a large extent, displays more Aramaic influences, but the south of Jerusalem displays more Canaanite influences’ (p. 4). This is the author’s own impression and is not a criterion for establishing etymology. Moreover, nowhere in the book is this point further explained or developed, and the material presented does not clarify how the author reached this conclusion.

Another of the author’s criteria for determining a word’s origin is ‘phonetics like pronunciation, changing of sibilants and emphatics, etc.’ Nonetheless, the author frequently ignores consonant correspondence: for example, in PA šafra ‘sharp metal blade’ (p. 117), the š reflects a regular consonant correspondence in comparison to the š in Classical Arabic (CA) šafra ‘sharp broad knife’ (Lane 1863–1893: IV, 1570). This word is widely attested (with š) in other Arabic dialects, including Moroccan, Egyptian, Syrian, Saudi-Arabian, and Omani Arabic (Behnstedt and Woidich 2012: 128). Halayqa considers the word šafra ‘sharp metal blade’ to be of Aramaic origin (p. 196), based on the Aramaic cognate root *√spr* ‘trim, cut hair’. Whilst a cognate connection between Aramaic *√spr* ‘trim, cut hair’ and Arabic *√sfr* ‘cut’ has been suggested (Fraenkel 1886: 247; Brockelmann 1928: 492), if these roots are indeed cognate, then they exhibit a regular Arabic /š/ vs. an Aramaic /s/ consonant correspondence. Consequently, an analysis of PA šafra ‘sharp metal blade’ would instead suggest that the PA entry in question is an inherited Arabic word—a conclusion which is further supported by the wide geographical distribution of the word in various Arabic dialects. More careful consideration of the existing attestation in CA, the word’s distribution in Arabic dialects, and consonant correspondence would have rendered this a relatively secure example of an inherited Arabic word.

As a further example, we can consider the PA word *mdaqqa* [sic] ‘a stone hammer or a pestle made either of wood or basalt with which one crushes dry herbs or small quantities of grain, or for crushing green olives for pickling’ (p. 65). Dalman has attested this word as *mdaqqa* ‘Holzschlägel’ (Dalman 1928–1942: II, 271), *mdaqqa* in Nāblus ‘ein hammerförmiger hölzerner Schlegel mit langem Griff’ (Dalman 1928–1942: III, 213), *medaqqa* ‘Holzstößel’ (Dalman 1928–1942: III, 264, 272), *medaqqa* in Jerusalem ‘Schlägel zum Zermalmen’ (Dalman 1928–1942: IV, 197), and *mdaqqa* ‘Holzhammer’ (Dalman 1928–1942: IV, 274). The root of this word is \sqrt{dqq} , a Semitic root that basically means ‘crush’. A similar word is attested in CA: *midaqq*, *midaqqa*, or *muduqq*, ‘a thing with which one breaks or crushes in any manner, or with which one bruises, brays, or pounds, i.e. beats so as to break or crush’ (Lane 1863–1893: III, 897). As cognates, the author suggests the Akkadian *madakku* ‘pestle’, the Biblical Hebrew מְדֻקָּה *mədōkā* ‘mortar’ (Num. 11:8), the Jewish Palestinian Aramaic *mdwk* ‘pestle’, and other Aramaic cognates deriving from the Semitic root \sqrt{dwk} , which has nothing to do with the PA *mdaqqa* (\sqrt{dqq}). This presumed similarity in meaning does not justify a systematic /q/ – /k/ nonconformity in consonant correspondence.

The closest possible similarity in meaning in the proposed source language would be a highly important consideration in the process of determining a word’s origin, as the author rightly argues (p. 4). Nevertheless, the author frequently ignores this key principle throughout the book. For example, the word *bay(y)ūr* ‘a wooden peg or pin placed in a slit at the lower end of a plough’s steering pole and the shank’ (p. 11), as well as its attested phonological doublet *fayyūr* in the dialect of Sadad (Mubarakha 1998: 70), very probably originates from the Greek ἐπίουρος ‘wooden peg, pin’ (Liddell et al. 1996: 649 s.v. ἐπίουρος II). This Greek loanword most likely found its way into Western and Eastern Aramaic dialects and then remained in Syro-Palestinian Arabic dialects as one of many substrate words. The only attestation of this word in Aramaic is the Syriac *py-wr?* (Payne Smith 1879–1901: II, 3101; Brockelmann 1928: 567; Sokoloff 2009: 1185). The above-mentioned Greek etymology has already been suggested in research on Syriac (Payne Smith 1879–1901: II, 3101) and Arabic (Mubarakha 1998: 70–71). The PA *bay(y)ūr* is connected neither to the suggested Akkadian *burû* ‘reed mats’ nor to the Persian *būru* ‘trumpet, hunting horn, tube, canal’ (p. 11). The other semantically distinct cognate suggestions Halayqa mentions should also be dismissed.

Halayqa suggests that 29 of the entries in his study are of Canaanite and Ugaritic (abbreviated as ‘Can-Ug’) origin (p. 196). His decision to combine Canaanite and Ugaritic as a joint origin group for the identification of etymology and linguistic strata requires further explanation.

Moreover, he seems to have determined the entries in the so-called ‘Canaanite’ sub-group (p. 4) primarily based on suggested cognate words in Biblical and Rabbinic **Hebrew** sources, which makes the use of the term ‘Canaanite’ inadequate from both practical and chronological perspectives.

The etymological analysis also suffers from the lack of a clear distinction between substrate words and loanwords, between direct and indirect loans, and finally between mutual loans among various Semitic languages and shared Proto-Semitic vocabulary. This is also evident in the author’s chosen terminology, since he uses the terms ‘loanword’, ‘loan’, and ‘borrowing’ as general terms for any type of word in PA that had its origins in a foreign language at any stage.

In the opening part of his third ‘Conclusions’ chapter, the author states that what follows is an attempt ‘to show the influences of ancient Semitic and non-Semitic languages by defining the linguistic strata of these names and focusing on the names which originated in Canaanite or Aramaic’ (p. 195). However, based on his classifications of the words into various languages (pp. 196–201) and his summary table (p. 201), it is essentially unclear whether Halayqa intended to identify the linguistic strata of the words (i.e., to map their period of entry/inheritance into what eventually came to be known as PA) or simply to identify their ultimate etymon. As I understand this chapter, it seems that Halayqa ultimately attempted to do the latter. Regardless of which of these options captures Halayqa’s intention, the conclusions presented in this chapter are not fully reliable, either in terms of etymology or in the suggested stratification of PA vocabulary.

In sum, Halayqa’s book is extensive and will surely constitute a helpful resource for Arabic dialectologists and researchers interested in Middle Eastern pre-industrial agricultural realia. When it comes to matters related to etymology in general and to Semitic comparative etymology in particular, the reader is advised to approach the material cautiously.

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