From ‘flaying’, ‘Ascension’ and ‘red garden-beet’ to ‘wolves’ and ‘sweet dishes’: The Stunning Semantic Variety in the Arabic Root SLQ as a Touchstone for Arabic Etymologists

Abstract The following article can serve as yet another report from the workshop of an Etymological Dictionary of Arabic (EtymArab). Work on a ‘zero version’ of such a dictionary has seen (slow but) steady progress since several years now. Taking the root √SLQ as an example, this contribution gives an idea about the high potential of such a project, but also shows its clear actual limits. The enormous spectrum of semantic values covered by √SLQ—one may distinguish more than thirty meanings that, at first sight, do not seem related to each other—provides a fine illustration of the complex composition of the modern as well as the classical lexicon. The current state of affairs in Arabic etymology allows us, to a certain degree, to ‘sort out things’ and bring some order into this confusing complexity. In many cases, however, research also remains ‘hanging in the air’.

Keywords loanwords, reflexes of protSem *š- causative, root extension, figurative use, semantic expansion

1 The semantic spectrum of √SLQ

1.1 In Modern Standard Arabic (according to Wehr and Cowan [1976])

The vb. I *salaqa*, *u* (*salq*), comes with a number of values that we are treating separately here, for systematic reasons (see below):

- [¹SLQ] ¹*salaqa* ‘to lacerate the skin (*h* of *s.o.*; with a whip)*;
- [²SLQ] ²*salaqa* ‘to remove with boiling water (*s.th.*);
- [³SLQ] ³*salaqa* ‘to boil, cook in boiling water*; unquestionably here belong also the PP *maslūq* ‘cooked, boiled (*meat, egg, vegetable*)’ and the nominalized PP.f *maslūqaẗ* (*pl.* *masālīqᵘ*) ‘bouillon, broth’;
- [⁴SLQ] ⁴*salaqa* ‘to scald (*plants; said of excessive heat*)’;
- [⁵SLQ] ⁵*salaqa* ‘to hurt (*s.o., bi-lisānihī, with one’s tongue, i.e., give *s.o.* a tongue-lashing*), together with *salāqaẗ*, n.f., ‘vicious tongue, violent language’.

Alongside with these values we find also quite a few that—at first sight at least—do not seem to be related to the preceding ones:

- [⁶SLQ] al-*sullāq*, n., ‘Ascension of Christ’; obviously related to this item are the vb. V ¹*tasallaqa* ‘to ascend, mount, climb, scale (*s.th.*); to climb up (*plant*)’ as well as its vn. *tasalluq* ‘climbing; ascent’ and the PA *mutasalliq*, lexicalized in Wehr/Cowan only in the combination *al-nabātāt al-mutasalliqaẗ* ‘climbing plants, creepers’.
- [⁷SLQ] EgAr *salq*, MSA ¹*silq*, n., ‘a variety of chard, the leaves of which are prepared as a salad or vegetable dish’.

Like *salaqa*, also the n.f. *saliqaẗ* (*pl.* *salāʔiqᵘ*) comes with more than one value:

- [⁸SLQ] ¹*saliqaẗ* ‘dish made of grain cooked with sugar, cinnamon and fennel (*SyrAr*)’;
- [⁹SLQ] ²*saliqaẗ* ‘inborn disposition, instinct’.

Finally, unrelated to any of the above we find also:

- [¹⁰SLQ] *salaqūn* and *salāqūn*, n., ‘red lead, minium’, and
1.2 Widening the perspective: pre-MSA values, now obsolete

A quick glance into Badawi and Abdel Haleem’s *Dictionary of Qur’anic Usage* (2008), which for each Qur’anic root gives the spectrum of (genuine, non-borrowed) values attached to it in Classical Arabic, suffices to understand that most of the above meanings found in MSA can be traced back to earlier times; there is, however, at least one that has become obsolete:

- “to throw on the back”, $^{[1]}$‘to flay with a whip’; $^{[5]}$‘to insult’; $^{[4]}$‘to scald’; $^{[3]}$‘to lacerate the skin’; $^{[9]}$‘boiling, cooking lightly by boiling’; $^{[2]}$‘intrinsic nature’.

Interestingly enough, the authors group the extinct value $^{[1]}$‘to throw on the back’ as forming a unit with ‘to flay with a whip’, while Wehr and Cowan grouped the latter together with ‘to lacerate the skin’$^{3}$—a first indication of two obviously different etymological assumptions informing the presentation (resp. omission) of lexicographical data. Another hint at choices evidently motivated by (unexplained) etymological hypotheses is the fact that values $^{6}$SLQ–$^{8}$SLQ and $^{10}$SLQ–$^{11}$SLQ are missing from Badawi and Abdel Haleem’s list; the authors seem to regard these as foreign, not genuine.

As we shall see below, there is a great deal of truth to their views and decisions (though some may be doubted). Before we go into this discussion, however, let us first follow the track of values that have been ‘lost’ in MSA, i.e., become obsolete or extinct, but may provide useful—if perhaps complicating and confusing—additional information as to the semantic history of SLQ items.

Data mining from standard dictionaries of Classical Arabic, such as Hava (1899, for quick reference), Freytag (1838), Kazimirski (1860), Lane (1863–1893), and Wahrmund (²1887) provides indeed ample evidence of the fact that $^{[1]}$‘to throw on the back’ is not the only value that was lost in the course of time, and probably particularly during the period of modernization and reform that Arabic went through all over the ‘long nineteenth century’. Here comes what a consultation of these sources yields.$^{4}$

For some of the modern values, interesting complementary material can be found:

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² Badawi and Abdel Haleem 2008: 449. In square brackets the corresponding value number from our above list.
³ This is why I used $^{1}$SLQa and $^{1}$SLQb for what in Wehr and Cowan (1976) is simply one value $^{1}$SLQ).
⁴ Where no source is indicated, values are given as in Hava (1899) (after cross-checking with Lane etc.). For values not mentioned in Hava (1899), references are provided in parentheses.
Values not covered by Wehr and Cowan (1976) any longer and therefore considered obsolete in MSA include:

†¹²SLQ ‘to prostrate s.o. on the back of his neck, throw s.o. down; to push, repel’: ⁶salaqa, u (salq), and ⁷salqà (vn. silqâ?).
†¹³SLQ ‘to pierce (with a spear)’: ¹⁷salaqa, u (salq).
†¹⁴SLQ ‘to leave prints (on the soil: foot)’: ¹⁸salaqa, u (salq); cf. also ¹⁹silâqi³ (pl., from sg. ¹³silâqi³) ‘marks made by the feet of men and by the hoofs of horses or the like on the road (and to these the marks made by the [plaited thongs called ʔansāʕ upon the belly of the camel are likened)’; also probably belonging here: DaṯAr slq, u, ‘to cultivate, plough, till’, sâliq (pl. sawâliq) ‘sillon (où se trouve déjà la semence du ṭaʕām), silâqa³ ‘cultivation, tillage’ (Landberg 1942).
†¹⁵SLQ ‘to oil, grease (a leathern water-skin, etc.), smear (a camel all over with tar)’: ¹⁹salaqa, u (salq).
†¹⁶SLQ (al-ˤuwâliq³) to insert one of the two loops of the sack called ˤuwâliq into the other’; ‘(al-ˤūd fī l-ʕurwa³) to insert the stick into the loop [of the ˤuwâliq³]’: ¹¹⁰salaqa, u (salq).
†¹⁷SLQ ‘to call out, cry out, shout vehemently (esp. after the death of a person or at a calamity); to slap and scratch one’s face (mourning woman)’: ¹¹¹salaqa, u (salq); cf. also ¹²silqa³ (pl. sulqân, silqân, silq) and ¹²silâqi³ (pl. sawâliq⁴³) ‘weeping loudly (woman), slapping her face; long-tongued and vehemently clamorous, foul, evil, lewd’.
†¹⁸SLQ ‘to run’: ¹¹²salaqa, u (salq); cf. also ¹³saylaq ‘quick, swift (she-camel)’.
†¹⁹SLQ ‘to collect herbs’: sallaqa, vb. II.
†²⁰SLQ ‘to be(come) restless, agitated, in a state of commotion, fret (from grief, anxiety, pain)’: ¹²tasallaqa (vb. V).
†²¹SLQ ‘red garden-beet’: ¹²silq (pl. sulqân).
†²²SLQ ‘wolf’: ¹³silq (pl. sulqân, silqân); f. ¹³silqa³ ‘she-wolf’.
†²³SLQ ‘female lizard; female locust when she has laid her eggs’: ¹²silqa³.
†²⁴SLQ ‘water-course, channel in which water flows, between two tracts of elevated, or elevated and rugged, ground’: ¹⁴silqa³.
†²⁵SLQ ‘even plain, smooth, even tract, of good soil, depressed, even plain in which are no trees; low tract, or portion, of land that produces herbage, meadow’: ¹²salaq (pl. ʔaslâq, sulqân).
†²⁶SLQ ‘pimpls, pustules that come forth upon the root / on the tip of the tongue (Lane 1872); Lösung des Zahnfleischs (Wahrmund 1887); lip-pitude of the eyelids (Hava 1899) | 1 Tumeur qui se forme sur les bords
From ‘flaying’, ‘Ascension’ and ‘red garden-beet’ to ‘wolves’ and ‘sweet dishes’ ...

des paupières et fait tomber les cils; 2 déchaussement des dents, maladie des gencives, qui fait que les dents n’étant plus retenues par les gencives tombent; 3 tubercule à la racine de la langue; 4 enflure: †sulāq. – Cf. also †al-ʔasāliq ‘what is next to the lahawāt [pl. used as sg., meaning the ‘uvula’] of the mouth, internally, or the upper parts of the interior of the mouth, those to which the tongue rises’ (BK); also vb. I, pass., †suliqat il-ʔafwāh... the mouths broke out with pimples, or small pustules’; and †insalaqa, vb. VII, […] to be(come) affected with what is termed sulāq’. †[²⁷SLQ] ‘what falls off from trees (leaves, etc.):’ †²saliq.
†[²²SLQ] ‘honey which the bees build up along the length of their hive, or habitation:’ †³saliq.
†[²⁹SLQ] ‘pot herbs | Kücherkräuter’: †⁴saliq.
†[³⁰SLQ] ‘side of a road’: †⁵saliq.
†[³¹SLQ] ‘(a sort of) coat of mail’: †²saliqī.
†[³²SLQ] ‘sitting-place of the rubbān [or captain] of a ship, sitting-place of a pilot:’ †salūqiyyaẗ.
†[³³SLQ] ‘natte de folioles de palmier’: DaṯAr salqaẗ (pl. salaq), Ḥaḍramawt Ar silqaẗ (pl. silaq) (Landberg 1942).
†[³⁴SLQ] ‘ruines’: DaṯAr mislāq (Landberg 1942).
†[³⁵SLQ] ‘solecism, incorrect language’: (kalām) †saliqī (Lane 1872).

2 Analysis/Discussion

How get out of this ‘mess’? Earlier experience with similar cases has shown that the stunning semantic diversity in such highly polysemic roots typically is due to a merger of foreign and intrinsic elements, combined with overlappings with and/or influence of phonologically close lexemes, changes like metatheses, as well as the old age of the genuine elements, an age that allows original values to diversify. Earlier research made on a root or some of its items can then help to form a first idea of the situation.

This is the case here, too. Scattered over a number of dictionaries of Semitic languages and both older and quite recent studies we find fragments of information that allow us to sketch a rather complex map.

Let us start the discussion with the SLQ lexemes for which a foreign origin has been suggested—first those of non-Semitic provenance, then the inner-Semitic borrowings.
2.1 Words of non-Semitic origin

[¹⁰SLQ] *salaqūn*, var. *salāqūn*, ‘red lead, minium’. An indicator of the word’s foreign origin is the fact that it is found in several variants: in addition to the two mentioned in Wehr and Cowan directly *sub radice* SLQ there are also *saliqūn* or *sariqūn* as well as, in EgAr, *salaqōn* and *zalaqōn* (Badawi and Hinds 1986, s.vv.). Given the obvious variability of *R₁* (*s/z*) and *R₂* (*l/r*), a relation to Ar *zarqīn* ‘bright red’ does not seem unlikely. Badawi and Hinds think the EgAr words may be from Tu *süleğen/sülegen* ‘minium’, but the reverse is probably the case, i.e., the Tu words are from Ar (or both from Pers *zargūn* ‘gold-coloured’). In contrast, Nişanyan (s.v. Tu *sülegen*, 1 July 2017) does not exclude an origin in Grk *συρικόν syrikón*, which would suggest an interpretation of minium as ‘the Syrian (mineral), the (red) substance from Syria’, an idea that could be corroborated by the Ru Ukr name for minium, сурік *sūrik*. But Nişanyan adds himself that such an etymology is rather uncertain (the mineral is first mentioned in Tu sources in the anonymous *Câmiʕü'l-Fürs*, 1501, as *sülegen*). – For the time being, we are unable to decide which of the proposed etymologies of *sala/āqūn*—Pers, Tu, Grk?—may be correct; personally, I tend to favour the Pers origin because the Tu word can be suspected to be itself a loan-word, and a Grk origin is unlikely because ‘minium’ in Grk usually is rendered by *κιννάβαρι kinnabari*, itself of oriental origin (cf. Pers *zenāfreh, zenĝefreh* ‘cinnabar, minium’).

Unlike *salaqūn*, for which Pers, Tu or Grk etymologies have been proposed, the items *¹¹salūqī, ²²salūqi*, and *³³salūqiyyaẗ* [¹¹SLQ, ³¹SLQ, ³²SLQ, respectively], which, morphologically, all are *nisba* formations, obviously refer to, and are taken from, names of locations rendered by the Arabs as ‘Salūq’.

[¹¹SLQ] *¹¹salūqi*, var. *salaqi*, ‘saluki, greyhound, hunting dog’. The term for a specific kind of ‘Oriental’ greyhound or hunting dog, which was loaned also into English (*saluki, sloughi*),⁵ is attributed by ClassAr lexicographers to a town they generally locate in Yemen (not far from Taʿizz). But there are also other places (in modern Armenia, Turkey, Iraq, Iran) that may be identified with this *Salūq* or *Salūqi(y)āṯ*, e.g., Silifke or towns close to Antioch or Baghdad; ultimately, there may be a connection with ‘Seleucia’ and the Seleucid Empire (312 BC–65 AD).⁶

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⁵ According to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sloughi, *Saluki* is used (in English) for the *Persian* Greyhound, while the *Sloughi*, the Arabian Greyhound, is a different breed.

From ‘flaying’, ‘Ascension’ and ‘red garden-beet’ to ‘wolves’ and ‘sweet dishes’ ...

†[31]SLQ †2salūqi ‘(a sort of) coat of mail’. Like †salūqi, this †2salūqi may originally be *‘the one/thing from Salūq’, i.e., from a town of uncertain location (see preceding paragraphs). – Cf., however, the Hbr Hiph’îl (Sem *Š-stem) hisîq ‘to hide (arms) in a cache’ and modHbr s’lîq ‘arms cache’, which Klein (1987) regards as belonging to Hbr √SLQ ‘to go up, ascend’ (cf. Ar †tasallaqa ‘to ascend, mount, climb’, i.e., value [6]SLQ; see discussion below in section ‘Inner-Semitic borrowings’), without however elaborating on the exact nature of such an assumed relation.

†[32]SLQ †salūqiyyaẗ ‘sitting-place of the rubbān [or captain] of a ship, sitting-place of a pilot’. Like †salūqi and †2salūqi, †salūqiyyaẗ is obviously either a nisba from *salūq or refers to one of the two salūqs. But details remain obscure: Was this sitting-place associated, for some reason, with the town of ‘Salūq’, or with the saluki-type of dog, or with a coat of mail? Or is there yet another etymology?

†[35]SLQ (kalām) †salīqi ‘natural, or untaught, speech; speech whereof the desinential syntax is not much attended to, but which is chaste and eloquent, in respect of what has been heard, though often tripping, or stumbling, in respect of grammar; speech which the dweller in the desert utters according to his nature and his proper dialect, though his other speech be nobler and better’; †salīqiyyaẗ ‘dialect in which the speaker thereof proceeds loosely, or freely, according to his nature, without paying much attention to desinential syntax, and without avoiding incorrectness’. According to Olivieri (2020), the origin of this term is Grk σολοικισμός soloi-kismós ‘incorrectness in the use of language, solecism’, so called, allegedly, after the people of Soli, Cilicia (modern-day South Turkey), whose language the ancient Athenians considered as grammatically incorrect. Olivieri further assumes that the Arabs followed (Stoic) Grk tradition when they calqued the term ?īṣrāb (*‘to make Arabic’) on the model of Grk hellēnismós (‘to use correct “Hellenic” language’), as the positive normative counter-concept of salīqī, resp. soloikismós.

†[23]SLQ †silqaẗ ‘female lizard; female locust, when she has laid her eggs’. This value can perhaps be connected to Eg šrk.t ‘(the scorpion-goddess) Serket’8 (Selkis), ‘scorpion’. If this etymology is valid, the Ar word salāʔiq is also attested in the positive sense of being able to speak perfectly, without any formal training, like a true Bedouin, cf. Larcher (2005). This shows that the ‘natural’ speech of the Bedouin came to be interpreted ambiguously: ‘raw’ and uneducated on the one hand, and beautiful and eloquent on account of this very same naturalness, on the other.

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would have retained from ancient Egyptian the female character of the denoted animal as well as the idea of relieving something—the Egyptian word is based on Eg šrk ‘to relieve, admit breath to (ḥtyt windpipe)’, while at least one of the meanings found in ClassAr dictionaries for ²silqaī specifies the ‘female locust’ as one that ‘has laid her eggs’ (which she does by relieving’ them through a kind of ‘pipe’!).

10 – With the notion of relieving, letting go, getting rid of, this value comes close to other SLQ values, discussed below, all of which share the basic idea of *‘scraping, scratching, lacerating (and, hence, leaving marks, on s.th., or leaving it bare/barren)’.

2.2 Inner-Semitic borrowings

[⁶SLQ] ¹tasallaqa ‘to ascend, mount, climb, scale’. The common opinion is that Ar ¹tasallaqa is denominative from sullāq ‘Ascension (of Christ)’, itself with all likelihood¹¹ loaned into Ar from Aram sūlqā ‘id., slaq ‘to ascend’ (so already Fraenkel 1886: 277). – There is also Hbr *sālaq ‘to ascend’, but this is very rare (a hapax in the Bible, only 1sg.impf.) and probably itself borrowed from Aram (so BDB 2010, Kogan 2015 and others), a fact that would appear to make protAram *slk ‘to go up, come up’ (> BiblAram *slēq, Palm slq, Syr sleq) as an isolated item within Semitic.¹² Furthermore, the BiblHbr hapax shows a ‘highly peculiar morphological behavior, viz. the unexpected assimilation *-sl- > -ss- [ʔāssaq (‘if I ascend’) instead of *ʔāslaq]’ (Kogan 2015: 386, #15). According to Kogan (ibid.), this behaviour probably betrays the secondary origin of -l- so that the initial sl- in protAram *slk can be suspected to be the result of a splitting of an original

¹⁰ A variant with initial š-(silqaī) documented, among others, by Hava (1899), is said to mean ‘lizard’s eggs’. ¹¹ As Kogan (2015: 386) remarks, the isolated position of Ar tasallaqa ‘to ascend, mount, climb, scale’ (as also of ClassAr ‘salāqa ‘do.’) within Ar ‘makes one wonder about a possible Aramaic origin’ of these items. ¹² Dolgopol’sky (2012: #300) obviously does not treat the Hbr and Ar vb.s as loans from Aram but regards them as genuine cognates, which allows him to reconstruct a (C)Sem ²vSLK ‘to ascend, climb’. In his view, the latter is ancestor not only of Ar tasallaqa ‘id., but also of [¹⁸SLQ] ‘salāqa ‘to run’ and perhaps—degllottalization?—even salaka ‘to travel, go along’, to which the author then juxtaposes IndEur (NaIE) *slenk (~ *sleng) ‘to creep, crawl, trudge, amble’ (which gave, among others, AngSax slincan ‘to creep’ > nEngl ‘to slink’, oHGe slango, nHGe Schlange ‘snake’; oHGe zuo-slingan ‘to slide away’, mHGe slingen ‘to crawl along’, etc.), all ultimately from a hypothetical Nostr *c’oLK’ (~ *c’oLK’) ‘to advance with effort (to creep, crawl, climb etc.). Personally, I am reluctant to accept the author’s hypotheses; in my opinion, they are based on too many unlikely correspondences and sound shifts.
lateral *š into the combination s-l at an early stage. If this hypothesis is valid, the Aram forms (as well as the Hbr and Ar ones that are borrowed from Aram) can perhaps be seen together with Akk šaku ‘to grow high, rise, ascend’ and Ar √ŠQY ‘to grow’, šāqiⁿ ‘high, inaccessible’, etc. (a view put forward already by Haupt 1910: 712-3).  

[⁷SLQ] EgAr salāq, also salqāyāt (Badawi/Hinds 1986), ClassAr ¹silq. The word for ‘a variety of chard’ seems to be identical with †[²¹SLQ] †²silq ‘red garden-beet’, as both are varieties of the same plant, *Beta vulgaris. According to Fraenkel, †²silq (pl. sulqān) for ‘red garden-beet’ is from Aram Syr silqā ‘id.’, itself of unknown origin. Some have argued that it might be a borrowing from Grk σικέλως ‘Sicilian’, and the remark, made in the Arabic Wikipedia entry on ¹silq ‘chard’, that the plant, popular all over the Mediterranean, originally came from Sicily, makes it tempting indeed to assume a relation to this island. However, such an etymology is not unproblematic—not because it assumes a metathesis *q-l > l-q (which would be a rather common phenomenon) but because it fails to explain the transformation of the Grk relational adj. σικέλως into a Sem faʕl/fiʕl pattern. The specifications silq al-barr ‘Rumex, sour-dock’ and silq al-māʔ ‘Potamogeton, pond-weed’ (Lane, Hava) do not provide additional insight. Nevertheless, the foreign origin of [⁷SLQ] ‘chard’ / [²¹SLQ] ‘red garden-beet’ is hardly questionable, as the words cannot reasonably be connected to any of the other SLQ values. The closest (to ‘chard’, as a type of ‘leaves’) might be †[²⁷SLQ] †²saliq ‘what falls off from trees (leaves, etc.)’, †[⁴SLQ] †²salīq ‘pot herbs’ and †[¹⁹SLQ] †⁴sallaqa ‘to collect herbs’; but while all the latter may belong together (see below), none of them displays semantic features that would be sufficient to establish a convincing etymological link to ‘chard’ (and even less to ‘red garden-beet’). – However, while we probably can exclude a relation with the latter, shouldn’t


14 Yet another view is put forward in BDB (2010) where the authors interpret values [⁷SLQ] ‘to ascend’ and [⁴SLQ] ‘to scald, burn’ as interdependent, associating Hbr *šālaq ‘to kindle, burn’, (*Š-stem) hissîq ~ hiśśîq ‘to make a fire, burn’ with Aram slaq ‘to ascend’, (*Š-stem) ‘to cause to go up (in flame), offer sacrifice’.

15 See, e.g., Fraenkel (1886: 143), as also Dozy (1881, s.v.), where the author remarks that already ‘Théopraste dit que la variété blanche de la Beta vulgaris s’appelle sicilienne’.


17 Some scholars even seem to assume a direct borrowing from Grk into Ar. But this would pose the additional problem that silq shows initial /s/ while the Ar name for Sicilia, σικίλια(γ)ατ, usually has emphatic /š/. This problem does not arise with the Aram hypothesis; here, silq (with /s/) is from Aram, while σικίλια(γ)ατ (with /š/) is from Grk (with Grk s > Ar š under the influence of following q).
Stephan Guth

one consider Pers šalğam ‘turnip, rape’ as a possible source—at least for ‡silq in the meaning of ‡[²¹SLQ] ‘red garden-beet’? It is right that Pers šalğam also has a more direct (or perh. via Tu šalğam?) reflex in Ar salğam ‘turnip’, EgAr ‘rape’, but it could well be the origin of Aram Syr silqā and only from there have passed into Ar. One and the same Pers word, šalğam, may thus have been borrowed into Ar twice: once via Aram, and once via Tu (or directly from Pers). This may have been caused by independent local factors, or because the garden-beets had temporarily become unpopular and been forgotten, for whatever reason. – Ultimately, we may thus even have to distinguish the two items that, at first sight, looked identical (and, botanically, also are more or less the same), i.e., ‘chard’ and ‘red garden-beet’; one of them may have a background in the Mediterranean (Sicily), the other in Iran. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient evidence to corroborate or exclude any of these speculations.

2.3 Major semantic complexes derived from Semitic roots

While many values in √SLQ have, as we saw above, their origin outside Semitic and some are very likely borrowings from Aram (or via Aram from non-Sem languages), the largest group can be traced back to ‘genuinely’ Sem roots. With an imperfect in u (yasluqᵘ) and a vn. salq, the vb. ‡⁶salaqa ‡[¹²SLQ] looks as if it were not different from the other salaqa-s listed at the beginning of this article. But the meaning ‘to prostrate s.o. on the back of his neck, throw s.o. down; to push, repel’ can hardly be connected to any of these. Strangely enough, Lane (1872) and Badawi and AbdelHaleem (2008) mention this meaning as the first value of salaqa, as though it were the primary one. However, unlike many lexemes with primary values, this one does not seem to have cognates in Sem or outside. A clue to its

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18 If (as discussed above) [⁶SLQ] ¹tasallaqa ‘to ascend, mount, climb, scale’ is denom. from sullaq ‘Ascension’ and the latter is from Aram sülqā ‘do.’, slaq ‘to ascend’, and if the underlying protAram *slk ‘to go up, come up’ goes back, as suggested by Kogan (2015: 386, #15), via dissociation, to protSem *šk (> Akk šaku ‘to grow high, rise, ascend’, Ar šaqīt ‘high, inaccessible’), then also this item could, of course, be counted among the ones based on ‘genuinely’ Sem roots.
etymology may be the fact that the vb. appears with this meaning also in the variant *salqà (vn. silqäʔ²⁰), which can hardly be analysed as belonging to a quadrilateral √*SLQY or as a strange *FatLà form from √SLQ. Much more likely is the assumption that we are dealing with the reflex of an archaic *Š-stem, a causative from √LQY, giving more or less the same meaning as the common vb. IV, ṭalqà (vn. ṭilqäʔ?) ‘to throw’, from laqiya ‘to find’. Cf. also the corresponding intr. vb.s, as rare and unusual as *salqà itself: ClassAr ḏislànqà (traditionally interpreted as formed along an iFʕanLà pattern) ‘to lie, or sleep, prostrate on one’s back’, with the var. ḏistalqà, which latter can be analysed as a t-stem of both *salqà and ṭalqà (< *šalqà). In conclusion, we may assume that *šalaqa is a variant of *salqà, probably from *ša-lqà, archaic *š-stem of laqiya ‘to find’. The meaning ‘to prostrate, throw down’ is thus originally a causative *‘to make to be found (lying on earth)’. With this, *šalaqa can serve as a further example of ‘traces of a non-weakened causative prefix s’²⁰ in Ar, i.e., reflexes of Sem *š-stems, the best-known of which is probably sabaqa ‘to precede, do previously’, from *sa-bqà, same as ṭa-bqà ‘to cause to stay (behind)’, caus. of baqiya ‘to stay, remain’.²¹

In [⁵SLQ] ⁵šalaqa ‘to hurt (s.o., bi-lisānih with one’s tongue), insult’ (esp. Qurʔān 33:19), we possibly have the result of a metathesis: Zammit (2002) and Leslau (2006) tend to regard this item (and its Gz ‘sister’, tasālaqa ‘to joke, scoff at, deride, mock, ridicule, make fun of s.o./one another’)²² as cognate, via metathesis, to NWSem *QLS (> Ug qlṣ ‘verhöhnen’, Hbr qilles ‘to jeer at’, Aram qallāsā ‘shouting, derision’). However, while the semantic parallels may be rather convincing in this view, the assumed twisting *QLS > SLQ is not very probable (though not inconceivable), especially in the light of the fact that there are ‘easier’ solutions to the question of this item’s etymology. One of these would regard ⁵šalaqa

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²⁰ Edzard 2011.
²¹ Mentioned already in Lipiński (1997: 389 [§41.10]). The author rightly adds that ‘the preformative š-/s- is not productive’ in Arabic (nor in Aramaic which, like Arabic, shows some traces, too). It cannot be inherited directly from Protosemantic (because the protSem caus. *š- became h-, then ṭ- in Arabic), so how can we explain the phenomenon? Two explanations are possible: either they are due to some inner-Semitic borrowing (as may be the case in Aramaic, for which Lipiński assumes ‘Assyro-Babylonian influence’, *ibid.; but which language could it be in the case of Arabic?), or it could be a back-formation based on ḏistalqà, i.e., a form X where Sem *š- is retained regularly in combination with the self-referential -t- infix. If that is the case, the language may have (mis-)interpreted ḏistalqà as a form VIII *šis-t-alqà (instead of form X, ḏst-alqà), then produced salqà as a corresponding form I (not IV), then ‘corrected’ the strange salqà into a more regular-looking salaqa.
²² Leslau (2006) remarks that Margoliouth (1939: 61) would even derive the Qur’anic ⁵šalaqa from this Gz (ta)sālaqa.
‘to hurt, insult’ as a variant (with metaphorical meaning) of ṭ̣šalaqa (with emphatic ṣ-) ‘to attack (a tribe); to smite s.o. (sun); to strike’. This theory can find some support from the existence of a few SLQ~ṢLQ parallels, such as ṭ̣mislaq~ṭ̣miṣlaq and ṭ̣mislaq~ṭ̣miṣlaq ‘eloquent (speaker); sharp (tongue)’ (Lane 1872; Hava 1899). Phonologically, though, a dissimilation *ṢLQ>SLQ is less likely than a partly assimilation (velarization) *s > ṣ (under the influence of following q), so that ṭ̣šalaqa is more likely to be secondary than ᵅšalaqa. And even if we assume the variant with ṣ to be primary, this ṭ̣šalaqa would still remain without cognates in Sem. – Yet another (and more plausible?) explanation is given by ClassAr lexicographers. They would interpret ᵅšalaqa ‘to insult’ as figurative use of ṭ̣‘[¹³SLQ] ᵗšalaqa ‘to pierce (with a spear)’ (see below). But why go as far as that and not simply assume it to be figurative use of [¹SLQ] ᵒšalaqa ‘to lacerate the skin (with a whip)’ (⇒ ‘to hurt’ ⇒ ‘to insult’)?

For the discussion of most of the remaining values that are likely to be traceable to Sem ancestors, the three values given first in the above list are the most relevant. Among these, we have two ‘extremes’—[¹SLQ] ᵒšalaqa ‘to lacerate the skin (with a whip)’ and [³SLQ] ᵗšalaqa ‘to boil, cook in boiling water’—and one that could represent a ‘middle value’, a semantic bridge between the two: [²SLQ] ᵒšalaqa ‘to remove (s.th., e.g., hair, skin, etc.) with boiling water’. Unfortunately, a widening of the perspective into Semitic does not bring much light to the question whether we are dealing with two distinct values or whether one of them—and if so which—may be dependent on the other. With opening the Sem ‘box’, the problem is only taken to the next-earlier stage.

To start with [³SLQ] ᵗšalaqa ‘to boil, cook in boiling water’, this item has rather obvious cognates in Akk salāku, JudAram (> postBiblHbr) šīk, Syr šīk, all ‘id.’; with some likelihood one should also include DaṭAr salaq ‘griller de façon que la viande ne soit ni crue ni à point, mais entre les deux; donner au pain une caisson légère’ (Landberg 1942), and probably also Tña šālākā ‘to be burned; to simmer’ (Kogan 2011). The etymon of the fairly widely attested vb. is reconstructed by Kogan (2011) (as ‘prot-Sem’) and Dolgopolosky (2012) (as ‘CSem’) *šḷk ‘to boil, cook’.23 If the

23 According to Dolgopolosky (2012: #2053), this CSem *ŠḶK ‘to cook, broil, boil’ is akin to (and an extension in *-k from?) WSem *.clf (*-clay-) ‘to roast’ which gave Ar šalā ‘to roast, broil, fry’, šaliya ‘to burn, be exposed to the blaze of s.th.’, BiblHbr càlā (√clf), JudPalAram, JEA càlè (√c̣ḷw|y) ‘to roast (meat)’, SamAram √sìl ‘to roast’, and also has cognates in Berb (Kab asli ‘cuire rapidement’) and ECush (Brj sal- ‘to cook by boiling, bake’, Kmb sōl-, Hd sar ‘id.; to fry, roast’; Sa sōl- ‘braten, rösten auf dem brennenden Feuer’, sọ̄lā ‘Fleisch auf heißen Steinen gebraten; Feuerbrand’, Af sola ‘campfire for roasting meat’, Som sōl- ‘to grill, toast, roast’; Som šīl- ‘to fry’, Or sī-awu ‘affumigarsi, arruginirsi, ossidarsi’, ultimately from a hypothetical Nostratic *šīʔ.L’ ‘to roast, fry, cook’.
DaṭAr and Tña evidence are to be taken into account, the original value may have oscillated between *‘to boil, cook’ and *‘to roast’, an aspect that could give some more substance to Dolgopolsky’s hypothesis of a relation to the basic notion of ‘roasting’ (see preceding footnote).

However, in spite of the fairly reliable deeper Sem dimension and, thus, a rather old age of value [³SLQ] ‘to boil, cook in boiling water’, ³salaqa does not seem to have generated more than a very few semantic extensions. The above-mentioned [²SLQ] ²salaqa ‘to remove (hair, etc.) with boiling water’ may be one of them (but it could also be from ¹salaqa ‘to peel, skin, loosen flesh from the bones’, see below). Another one is probably [⁴SLQ] ⁴salaqa ‘to scald (plants; said of excessive heat)’; this value is with all likelihood a special use of [³SLQ], perh. in its earlier/alternative meaning of *‘to roast, burn’ (see above, with fn. 23). Either from [³SLQ] ‘to boil, cook in boiling water’ or from [²SLQ] ‘to remove (hair, etc.) with boiling water’ is [⁸SLQ] (SyrAr) ¹salīqat ‘dish made of grain cooked with sugar, cinnamon and fennel’, as the preparation of this dish involves both cooking/boiling and peeling. Morphologically, the word (as well as its m. variant, registered in Wahrmund (1887) as †¹saliq ‘geschälte Gerste u. Speise daraus’) is a quasi-PP, i.e., originally probably *‘boiled food (herbs, leguminous plants, and the like); what is cooked with hot water (and then peeled)’. However, the more specific usage is attested already in ClassAr; e.g., in addition to the general meaning, Lane (1872) also mentions ‘millet bruised and dressed by being cooked with milk; a preparation of dried curd with which are mixed certain plants’.

As for [¹SLQ] ¹salaqa ‘to lacerate the skin (with a whip)’, the picture is rather confusing, esp. in the light of the absence of undisputable Sem cognates. Several suggestions have to be discussed.

The first has already been mentioned: One could think of a development along the line *³[SLQ] > [²SLQ] > [¹SLQ]’, i.e., *‘to boil, cook in boiling water > to cook/boil in order to remove skin, hair, husk, etc. > to peel > to scrape off, lacerate the skin’, perhaps under the influence of salaḥa ‘to skin, flay, etc.’ (see below). Given the absence of immediately obvious Sem cognates meaning ‘to lacerate, skin, etc.’, such a semantic development is not inconceivable. However, an argument against the validity of such a hypothesis could be the existence of quite a few items that seem to be dependent on the notion of ‘scraping, peeling’ rather than on that of ‘boiling, cooking’;²⁴ the high degree of diversification would point to a relatively

²⁴ Such as [⁹SLQ] salīqaṭ ‘inborn disposition, instinct’, ¹⁴[SLQ] ¹²salaqa ‘to leave (foot\hoof) prints (on the soil)’, ²⁸[SLQ] ¹¹salq ‘even, plain, smooth, even tract of good soil, depressed land, meadow’, ²⁹[SLQ] ¹⁰saliq ‘what falls off from trees (leaves, etc.)’—see below.
old age, an aspect that could make a secondary origin of ‘scraping, peeling, lacerating’ appear quite unlikely (though not impossible).

Another suggestion was made by Leslau (2006). He would see Ar ¹salaqa ‘to peel off (flesh) from (the bone)’ as cognate to Akk šalāqu ‘to cut open, split, cut’ and Gz šalaqa~salaqa ‘to grind fine, crush, peel, husk’ (as well as evidence from other EthSem languages25). If ¹salaqa indeed belonged here, one might reconstruct protSem *ŠLḲ ‘to cut, crush, peel off’, which, however, would be homonymous with the above-mentioned (and quite reliably reconstructed) protSem *ṢLḲ ‘to boil, cook’—rather unlikely, esp. so in light of the semantic distance between ‘cutting, splitting’ and ‘scraping, peeling’. Therefore, it would probably make more sense to see the Akk and EthSem items together with Ar šalaqa (ṣ, šalq) ‘to split lengthwise’ (< protSem *ṢLQ?) rather than with ¹salaqa ‘to lacerate, flay, etc.’.

A third view is presented by Ehret (1989: #21). In this theory, ¹salaqa has the basic meaning ‘to loosen the flesh from the bones’ and is analyzed as the result of an extension in *-ḳ from a biconsonantal ‘pre-protSem’ *√SL26 ‘to draw out or off’ (> Ar salla ‘to draw out slowly’),27 adding a notion of intensity (with regard to the action’s effect). According to the author, there are many more such extensions:

\[+ \text{‘concisive’ *-ʔ} \rightarrow \text{salaʔa (salʔ)} \text{‘to purify butter, press sesame oil’}\]
\[+ \text{‘finitive fortative’ *-b} \rightarrow \text{salaba (salb)} \text{‘to take from with violence, rob, plunder, steal’}\]

25 Tña sālāqā, Amh sāllāqā, Gur sālāqā ‘to grind fine’, Amh šālāqqāqā ‘husk, shell, hull’, etc.
26 Perhaps better *√SL/ŠL—see the following two footnotes.
27 Perhaps akin to Ar salīl ‘male foetus, embryo; descendant, scion, son’, sulālaï ‘progeny, offspring; family; race’, as well as items showing final *-Y, which go back to protSem *ša/ily(-at)- / *sa/ily(-at)- ‘afterbirth, fetal membrane’ (Militarev and Kogan 2000 #246; Fronzaroli 1964: 246 and 262-263, had *šily(-at)- ‘placenta’, *šalīl ‘embrione’). If such a relation is valid, the ‘placenta, afterbirth’ may be interpreted as *“(s.th.) drawn out slowly’, and the corresponding vb. (Orel and Stolbova 1994 #2274: protSem *šul-< AfrAs *sol- ‘to pull’) could be assigned the more general basic meaning of *‘to (make) pass gently through a narrow opening’ (as in fact posited by Gabal [2012] for the Ar root nucleus *SL-). The n. is widely attested throughout Sem [Akk sīlītu, šēlītu, šalītu ‘afterbirth; womb (poet.)’, Hbr šīlā ‘afterbirth’, postBibHbr šallī ‘embryo’, JudAram šīlotā, šīłyā; šīlytā, šīlotā ‘afterbirth’; šīlūlā ‘embryo, birth’, Syr šēlitā ‘secundina; membrana foetum tegens’, Mnd šūlīta, Ar sala” ‘membrane enveloping the foetus’, Gz sayl ‘foetus, embryo’ (metathesis *-ly > -yl)), Te sālīt ‘placenta, afterbirth’, Tña šəlāt ‘placenta o seconda delle bestie’; šol ‘feto ancora nel ventre della madre’, Amh šol ‘foetus, embryo, conception’, etc.], where some of the Akk and JudAram forms show unexpected s- instead of regular ṣ- (Militarev and Kogan 2005: *ibid.*), so that the reconstructed protSem forms oscillate between initial 26ṣ- and 26s-. Accordingly, Ehret’s reconstruction of an underlying biconsonantal nuclear root √*SL should perhaps be modified into √*SL/ŠL.
From ‘flaying’, ‘Ascension’ and ‘red garden-beet’ to ‘wolves’ and ‘sweet dishes’... 63

+ ‘durative’ *-t
  → salata (sallt) ‘to draw one thing from another’

+ ‘iterative’ *-ḥ
  → salāḥa (sallḥ) ‘to drop excrement’

+ ‘extendative fortative’ *-ḥ
  → salāḥa (sallḥ) ‘to skin, flay, throw off the slough; to undress’

+ ‘sunderative’ *-ʕ
  → saliʕa (salaʕ) ‘to split, cleave’

+ ‘iterative’ *-p
  → salafa (salf) ‘to harrow, level, plane, make even, prepare for sowing (land)’

The semantic proximity among these values is indeed striking and gives strong support to Ehret’s argumentation.28

In conclusion we may perhaps say that Leslau’s idea (from *‘to cut, split’) as well as a derivation from ‘to boil, cook’ probably should be discarded while a development along the lines sketched by Ehret seems to be very well conceivable. If the true origin should be ‘cooking, boiling’, the semantics may have been influenced by salāḥa (sallḥ) ‘to skin, flay, throw off’.

However that may be, [¹SLQ] ¹salaqa ‘to loosen the flesh from the bones; (hence also) to lacerate the skin (with a whip)’ appears to have generated a number of new values. In these, several aspects inherent in, or accompanying, this type of action, such as ‘scratching, scraping off, carving’, ‘making plain, bare, clean’, ‘hurting’ and others, including the above-mentioned ‘peeling, removing skin/husk’, are foregrounded.

We have already mentioned [⁵SLQ] ⁵salaqa ‘to hurt (with words), insult’ and the possibility that this item is neither from Gz tasālaqa (as assumed by Margoliouth [1939]), nor (with metathesis) from NWSem *QLS (Zammit’s and Leslau’s suggestion), nor a dissimilating variant of ¹salaqa (with velarized ṣ-), but simply the result of a semantic development from ¹salaqa ‘to lacerate the skin (with a whip)’ > ‘to hurt’ > ‘to insult’. ClassAr lexicographers often make ⁵salaqa ‘to hurt, insult’ dependent on ¹[¹³SLQ] ⁷salaqa ‘to pierce (with a spear)’, but this may itself be specialized use of ¹salaqa, though perhaps under the influence of (or even by contamination with) ¹salaqa (ṣ-) ‘to attack (a tribe); to smite s.o. (sun); to strike s.o. (bi- with a stick)’. ²⁸

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²⁸ One should perhaps add here items showing initial š- rather than s-, such as šalāḥa (a, šalḥ) ‘to take off (giŷábahū one’s clothes), undress; to shed the cloth (-ḥ), renounce the ministry, apostatize (monk, priest)’ (Wehr and Cowan 1976); *(pre-MSA, according to Hava [1899], also:) ‘to change feathers (bird)’; *(LevAr) ‘to throw off, reject s.th.’, as well as ¹šalāḥa (a, u, šalḥ) ‘to split s.th.’ (Hava 1899). These may be Aramaisms, but if not, the regular reconstruction of the corresponding protSem roots should start with Š-, not S-, which would provide another good reason for complementing Ehret’s √*SL with an alternative √*ŠL (see the preceding two footnotes).
[³SLQ] ²saliqāt ‘inborn disposition, instinct’ may at first sight seem to be completely unrelated to any of the other SLQ items.²⁹ Yet, taking into account morphology and the fact that ²saliqāt is a quasi-PP, formed on the FaʕīL-aẗ pattern, it is not difficult to imagine that ‘instinct, inner nature, essence’ is properly *‘what remains, or becomes visible, after “skinning”, “peeling or scraping off” the outer layers of s.th.’, thus a semantic modification of an original [¹SLQ] ‘to loosen the flesh from the bones, scrape/peel off the skin/husk’ or from [²SLQ] ‘to remove (hair, etc.) with boiling water / through boiling in water’ (the semantic ‘bridge’ between [¹SLQ] and [³SLQ] ‘to boil, cook in boiling water’—see above).

In a similar vein, also the pl. n. †¹⁴SLQ †salāʔiqᵘ (from a less common sg. †³saliqāt) ‘marks made by the feet of men and by the hoofs of horses or the like on the road, or marks made by thongs upon the belly of a camel etc.’ and the corresponding vb. †⁸salaqa ‘to leave prints (on the soil, or road; said of human feet, or animals’ hoofs), leave marks upon the belly of a camel etc. (thongs, etc.)’, are with all likelihood developments from [¹SLQ]—a transfer of meaning from the human body on which flaying leaves its marks to the body of a camel, or a road, etc.³⁰ To the same complex of *‘scratching, scraping, etc.’ belong quite certainly also DaṯAr salaq, u, ‘to sow; cultivate, plough, till’, sāliq (pl. sawāliq) ‘furrow (where the seed of the food is already found)’, and silāqaẗ ‘cultivation, tillage’ (Landberg 1942), as all these can easily be derived from the notion of *‘to make furrows in the soil, “scratch, lacerate” the ground’.

Perhaps also †²⁴SLQ †⁴silqāt ‘water-course, channel in which water flows, between two tracts of elevated, or elevated and rugged, ground’ and †²⁵SLQ †salaq ‘even, plain, smooth, even tract of good soil, depressed land, meadow’ are related to the above complex: †⁴silqāt ‘water-course, channel, etc.’ could well be, originally, a *‘furrow carved in the earth/soil (by the running water)’, and †salaq may be a *‘tract of land from which most vegetation on the surface has been “scraped off”, “lacerated” region’. However, both these etymologies cannot be taken for granted. For silqāt, one may also think of a relation with †¹⁸SLQ †¹²salaqa ‘to run’, †saylaq ‘quick, swift (she-camel)’ (see below), in which case the ‘water course, channel, etc.’ would be *‘the running one, the quick, swift one’.

²⁹ Is modHbr salqāh ‘natural (music)’ (Klein 1987) related, or even a cognate?

³⁰ Cf. the fact that one detailed explanation of the meaning of *‘salaqa connects it directly to ‘leaving traces’: ‘to peel off (flesh from the bone), remove its hair or fur (with hot water, leaving the traces thereof remaining [!])’—Lane (1872: IV, 1410). The old n. *‘salq ‘mark/scar (of a gall), sore, on the back of a camel, when it has healed, and the place thereof has become white; mark made by the [plaited thong called] nisʕ upon the side of the camel, or upon its belly, from which the fur becomes worn off’ (ibid.) matches very well here, too.
And 'salaq ‘even plain, low tract that produces herbage, meadow’ (Lane 1872) is perhaps not from SLQ but a variant of, or contaminated by, (a more original?) 'šalaq (with initial š-) ‘id.’, itself of obscure etymology. For the latter, compare also 'šalaq ‘even, smooth’ and the n.f. (nominalized adj.?) 'šalīqaẗ (pl. 'šalaʔīqaẗ) ‘thin bread; slice of roasted meat’ (Hava 1899), both displaying a notion of plainness and evenness that is similar to that of 'salaq~šalaq.

Another lexeme that should perhaps be connected to the complex of *‘scraping, scratching, lacerating, etc.’ is †[³⁰SLQ] †⁵salīq ‘side of a road’. In the absence of reliable attestations for this item,31 any statement will, of course, remain highly speculative; but if we are allowed to speculate a little bit we may assume that, originally, with ‘side of the road’ may have been meant the *‘bare slopes’ or the *‘furrows’ along a road. In a similar vein, the DaṭAr item †[³⁴SLQ] mislāq ‘ruins’, listed by Landberg (1942), is perhaps actually simply *‘barren land(scape), “lacerated” place’.

The quasi-PP salīq(aẗ) which comes with a broad variety of meanings, some of which already discussed above,32 is registered in the dictionaries with yet another value that may equally well be related to *‘scraping, scratching, lacerating (and, hence, leaving marks on s.th., or leaving it bare/barren)’, namely †[²⁷SLQ] †²salīq ‘what falls off from trees (leaves, etc.’. It is not unlikely that this value developed from a basic *‘what has been “scratched off” (from a tree, and left it bare, like lacerated skin)’. In contrast, Tāḡ al-ʕarūs explains it as dependent not on †[¹SLQ] ‘scraping, scratching, lacerating’ but on †[⁴SLQ] ‘burning, scalding (said of excessive heat, or cold)’—which I think is equally convincing. – Perhaps also †[³³SLQ] DaṭAr salqaẗ ‘natte de folioles de palmier’ (Landberg 1942) belongs here (< *‘palm leaves having fallen down and left the tree bare’?). – †[²⁹SLQ] †⁴salīq ‘pot herbs’ may be pertinent, too, unless it is akin to the loanword †[⁷SLQ] ¹silq, EgAr salq ‘variety of chard’ (see above), or simply a quasi-PP meaning *‘what is going to be cooked in hot water’ (from ³salaqa ‘to boil, cook in boiling water’). – The vb. II †[¹⁹SLQ] †sallaqa in the sense of ‘to

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31 It features in the ClassAr dictionaries I consulted, but a search in DHDA yielded no result. That means that a modern revision of the ClassAr lexicon either does not confirm the existence of the value at all, or only for the period covered by the project so far (up to the end of the 3rd century AH—as of May 2022).

32 See above †[⁸SLQ] †¹salīq ‘peeled barley and dish made from it’, SyrAr †salīqaqt ‘dish made of grain cooked with sugar, cinnamon and fennel’; †[⁹SLQ] †²salīqaqt ‘inborn disposition, instinct’; †[¹SLQ] †salāʔīqaṯ (sg. †³salīqaqt) ‘marks made by the feet/hoofs etc. on the road, marks made by thongs upon the belly of a camel etc.’; †[³⁰SLQ] †⁵salīq ‘side of a road’.
Stephan Guth

collect herbs’ is probably denominative, either from \([²⁷SLQ]\) \(²²slaq\) ‘what falls off from trees (leaves, etc.)’ or from \([²⁹SLQ]\) \(⁴slaq\) ‘pot herbs’.33

Another word related to the idea of ‘falling out/off and leaving “bare”’ seems to be \([²⁶SLQ]\) \(⁴slaq\) ‘tumor/swelling/pustule on the edges of the eyelids or on the gum, causing eyelashes or teeth to fall out’.34 Like in the preceding item, the focus here is less on ‘scraping, scratching, peeling, etc.’ but on the effect of such an activity, i.e., the bareness resulting from the act of \(slaq\).

Given the high degree of variagation among the items expressing an essential ‘bareness, barrenness, evenness, plainness’—a variagation that needs time to evolve and thus points to a very old age of this basic notion—and given that the above-mentioned \([²⁵SLQ]\) \(³slaq\) ‘even, plain, smooth, even tract of good soil, depressed land, meadow’ is perhaps the only genuine Ar noun in the root that, apart from the vb. I, shows a basic structure, without morphematic additions,35 one may even be tempted to posit this notion as the one that should be assigned etymological primacy within the complex of related items, including \(³slaq\) ‘to loosen the flesh from the bones, to skin, peel, lacerate, scratch, scrape off, etc.’. But such an assumption would, of course, have to compete with Ehret’s (rather convincing) idea of deriving \(³slaq\) via extension in *\(k\) from an earlier bi-consonantal *\(sl\) ‘to draw out or off’, as well with the oscillation between \(slaq\) and \(³slaq\).

33 Orel and Stolbova (1994: #380) think they found ‘cognates’ of Ar \(s\)\(l\)q ‘to gather’ in Eg \(s\)\(k\) \(*\(l\) > -\(s\)* ‘do.’ and CCh \(cakal\) (metathesis) ‘to gather, collect’; therefore, they venture to posit a Sem \(*s\)\(s\)\(l\)\(k\) ‘to gather’ and even reconstruct an AfrAs vb. \(*calak\) ‘to gather’. Highly speculative—the basis for such a reconstruction is too weak.

34 The most comprehensive description of this items is probably the one in BK (1860): ‘1 tumeur qui se forme sur les bords des paupières et fait tomber les cils [tumor that forms on the edges of the eyelids and causes the eyelashes to fall out; (Hava 1899:) lippitude of the eyelids]; 2 déchaussement des dents, maladie des gencives, qui fait que les dents n’étant plus retenues par les gencives tombent [loosening of teeth, gum disease, which causes teeth no longer held by the gums to fall out; (Wahrmund 1887:) Lösung des Zahnfleischs]; 3 tubercule à la racine de la langue [tubercle at the root of the tongue; (Lane 1872, Hava 1899:) pimples, pustules that come forth upon the root \(\backslash\) on the tip of the tongue]; 4 enflure [swelling; cf. also \(al-\)\(tas\)\(al\)\(iq\) ‘what is next to the lahawāt (pl. used as sg., meaning the ‘uvula’) of the mouth, internally, or the upper parts of the interior of the mouth, those to which the tongue rises’ (Lane 1872)].

35 Other such words would only be \(s\)\(l\)q ‘a variety of chard’ and \(²²s\)\(l\)q ‘red garden-beet’ ([\(⁷SLQ\) and \(²²SLQ\)], which, as we saw above, are very likely non-Ar borrowings; \(²²silq\) ‘female lizard; female locust when she has laid her eggs’ \([²²SLQ]\), of obscure origin, but probably a borrowing, too; and \(³s\)\(l\)q ‘wolf’ \([²²SLQ]\) ...
2.4 Less prominent values of probably Semitic/Arabic origin

There remain a few items that seem to be of Semitic or at least genuine Arabic origin but can hardly be connected to the above main values (though perhaps to some other, non-SLQ roots).

†[¹⁷SLQ] †¹¹salaqa ‘to call out, cry out, shout vehemently (esp. after the death of a person or at a calamity); to slap and scratch one’s face (mourning woman)’. ClassAr lexicographers often interpret the meaning ‘to slap…’ as secondary, dependent on ‘to call out…’; yet it might be just the other way round, so that also the corresponding nouns, †³silqaẗ (pl. sulqān, silqān, silq) and sāliqaẗ (pl. sawāliq”) for ‘weeping loudly (woman), slapping her face’ would in the first place have denoted *(woman) scratching (her face)*, given that mourning is accompanied, in many parts of the world, and so also in the Middle East and North Africa, by a ritualistic scratching of the face, typically performed by professional female mourners. There could thus be a connection of [¹⁷SLQ] ‘to call out, cry’ to [¹SLQ] ‘to lacerate (the skin, etc.)’ and, more specifically, the derived †[¹⁴SLQ] ‘to make marks/leave prints on the road/soil/belly/body’, DaṭAr ‘furrow’ etc. With the additional notion of ‘long-tongued and vehemently clamorous, foul, evil, lewd’, †silqaẗ comes close also to [¹⁹SLQ] ‘to hurt (with one’s tongue), insult’. While the latter, too, may depend on [¹SLQ] ‘to lacerate (the skin, etc.)’, it may also be influenced by †šalaq (pl. šaslāq) ‘shriek of distress’ (> denom. †tasallaqa ‘to scream in child-birth’) and šalaqa (i, šalq) ‘to call out, cry out, shout vehemently; to raise one’s voice on the occasion of a calamity, and of a death’ (Lane 1872).

†[²⁰SLQ] †²tasallaqa ‘to be(come) restless, agitated, in a state of commotion, fret (from grief, anxiety, pain)’ is perhaps due to confusion with †tasallaqa (with -ṣ-) ‘id., unless the reverse is the case. The latter is probably denominative from šalaq ‘shriek of distress’, mentioned in the preceding paragraph and without proper etymology either.

†[²²SLQ]: The terms †³silq (pl. sulqān, silqān) for ‘wolf’ and †³silqaẗ for ‘she-wolf’ look as if they were very basic words. However, the common Sem term for ‘wolf’ is protSem *ḏiʔb (> Ar ḏiʔb), so that †³silq, f. †³silqaẗ, can be suspected to be figurative use of some other SLQ item, pointing to a characteristic feature of the animal. From among the value spectrum covered by √SLQ, two values could be promising candidates: a ‘wolf’ may either be *‘the mangy one’, from [¹SLQ] ‘to lacerate the skin’ (see also †salq ‘mark/scar, sore, on the back of a camel, when it has healed; mark left on the skin by a thong making the fur looking worn off’, cf. [¹⁴SLQ]), or *‘the howling one’, akin to †[¹⁷SLQ] ‘to call out, cry out, shout vehemently’. The latter seems to be more likely, as ClassAr has the proverbial expression ?aslatu min silqat ‘more clamorous than a she-wolf’ where
‘shouting, howling’ is regarded as a characteristic, ‘proverbial’ feature; moreover, some ClassAr lexicographers would regard *siqaṭ in the sense of ‘clamorous (woman), shouting vehemently, long-tongued, foul, evil, lewd’ as dependent on ‘she-wolf’ (Lane 1872: ‘she-wolf… hence [!] a woman…’).36 – However, if none of these assumptions should be valid, a foreign origin of *silq is not unlikely, given that there are no Sem cognates and no immediately evident relation to other SLQ values. If foreign and non-Sem, what could it be? The only option that comes to my mind would be Grk λύκος lýkos ‘wolf’. Like most of the other etymologies, this option, too, is unprovable; but if one does not exclude a metathesis *sḳl > slq in the case of [²⁷SLQ] EgAr salq, MSA ¹silq ‘(variety of) chard’, allegedly from Grk sikelós ‘Sicilian’ (see above), well, then one could also dare to suggest *‘Grk lýkos > Ar silq’, with a metathesis *lks/lḳs > slq…

2.5 Of obscure etymology

†[¹⁵SLQ] ⁴⁹salaqa ‘to oil, grease (a leathern water-skin, etc.), to smear (a camel all over with tar)’. Unless akin to, or dependent on, †[²⁵SLQ] †salaq ‘even plain, smooth, even tract, of good soil’ (which does not seem very likely), the item could be a misreading for ‘salafa (u, salaf)’ ‘to grease (a skin)’. – Or should one consider Hbr ²šālaq ‘to make smooth, trim’ (Klein 1987) as a cognate? According to Klein, the item is of uncertain origin, perhaps a šiphʕel formation from ḥālaq ‘to be smooth’.

†[¹⁶SLQ] ¹⁰salaqa ‘(al-ġuwāliqᵃ) to insert one of the two loops of the sack called ġuwāliq into the other’; ‘(al-ʕūd fī l-ʕurwaẗ) to insert the stick into the loop [of the ġuwāliq]’. Etymology obscure.

†[¹⁸SLQ] ¹²salīq ‘honey which the bees build up along the length of their hive, or habitation’. Etymology obscure. – Any relation with †[¹⁴SLQ] ⁸salaqa ‘to leave prints (†salāʔiqᵃ, sg. ¹³silqai) (on the soil/road; said of feet, hoofs, etc.), leave marks upon the belly of a camel etc. (thongs, etc.)’, DaṯAr sāliq ‘furrow (where the seed of the food is already found)’, salaq ‘to sow; cultivate, plough, till’?

36 Unfortunately, Ullmann’s seminal study Das Gespräch mit dem Wolf has no data that would help bring light to the †³silq question.
3 Conclusion

As the above discussion hopefully was able to show, earlier etymological research provides many approaches, inspiring ideas and individual suggestions that can help a modern etymologist bring some light even into Arabic roots that show as broad and diverse a spectrum of semantic values as that assembled under the ‘roof’ of √SLQ. At the same time, it is evident that there are clear limits to what can be said with some plausibility, limits beyond which we enter the realm of unfounded and hardly tenable speculation.

An attempt to come with a short summary of our findings should perhaps start with the items that still are in use in MSA (according to Wehr and Cowan 1976). Already here, we meet a coexistence of oldest Semitic layers, several semantic developments from these (direct derivatives as well as figurative use), and borrowings, both inner-Semitic and others:

¹salaqa ‘to lacerate the skin (with a whip)’: According to Ehret (1989), the vb. with the primary value ‘to loosen the flesh from the bones’ is the result of an extension in *-k from a ‘pre-protSem’ *√SL[√ŚL] (Orel and Stolbova 1994: protSem *šul- < AfrAs *sol) ‘to draw out or off’, preserved in Ar salla ‘to draw out slowly’ and with all likelihood related to items such as salīl ‘male foetus, embryo; descendant, scion, son’, sulālāt ‘progeny, offspring; family; race’, as well as Ar salaⁿ ‘membrane enveloping the foetus’ etc., reflecting protSem *ša/ily(-at)/*sa/ily(-at) ‘afterbirth, fetal membrane, placenta’ < *(s.th.) drawn out slowly’, prob. from a more general *to (make) pass gently through a narrow opening’ (Gabal 2012). The value ‘to lacerate (the skin)’ may have developed under the influence of another extension of protSem *√SL[√ŚL], namely salaḥa ‘to skin, flay’ < protSem *ŚLḤ ‘skin, hide’.

Fig.: ⁵salaqa ‘to hurt (bi-lisānihī with one’s tongue)’, salāqaṭ ‘vicious tongue, violent language’ [interpreted by others as a borrowing, with metathesis, from NWSem *QLS ‘to deride, jeer at, shout at’, by yet others as a variant, with fig. meaning, of †ṣalaqa (ṣ!) ‘to attack (a tribe); to smite s.o. (sun); to strike’]

Deriv.: ²saliqaṭ ‘inborn disposition, instinct’: prob. a quasi-PP of ³salaqa in the sense of ‘to strip’, thus orig. *‘what remains after stripping off the outer layers, inner kernel, nucleus’

²salaqa ‘to remove with boiling water’: seems to be the result of a merger of ¹salaqa ‘to remove (the skin)’ and ³salaqa ‘to boil, cook in boiling water’
Deriv.: ¹saliqaẗ ‘dish made of [peeled] grain cooked with sugar, cinnamon and fennel (SyrAr)’
³salaqa ‘to boil, cook in boiling water’: from protSem/CSem *ślḳ ‘to boil, cook; (?)to roast’
Deriv.: maslūq ‘cooked, boiled’, maslūqaẗ ‘bouillon, broth’
Fig.: ⁴salaqa ‘to scald (plants; said of excessive heat)’
al-sullāq ‘Ascension of Christ’: from Aram sūlqā ‘id.’, slaq ‘to ascend’ (prot-Aram *sḷḳ), accord. to Kogan (2015) perh. result of a splitting *ś- > s-L, thus possibly related to Akk šakū ‘to grow high, rise, ascend’, Ar śāqi’n ‘high, inaccessible’, etc.
Deriv.: ¹tasallaqa ‘to ascend, mount, climb, scale (s.th.); to climb up (plant)’; tasalluq ‘climbing; ascent’; mutasalliq in al-nabātāt al-mutasalliqāt ‘climbing plants, creepers’.
EgAr salīq, MSA ¹silq ‘a variety of chard’: perh. same as ²silq ‘red garden-beet’ (botanically, both are beta vulgaris); accord. to Fraenkel (1886), the latter is from Aram Syr silqā ‘id.’ (from Grk sikeloś ‘Sicilian’?); but perh. also Pers šalqam ‘turnip, rape’ played a role.
salaqūn–salāqūn ‘red lead, minium’: prob. (via Tu?) from Pers zargūn ‘gold-coloured’; others: from Grk syrikón, thus *‘the Syrian (mineral), the (red) substance from Syria’

Among the lexemes that have become obsolete in MSA the most interesting, from an etymological perspective, is probably ¹⁶salaqa ‘to prostrate s.o. on the back of his neck, throw s.o. down; to push, repel’: this item may reflect an old Sem caus. in *ṣ- from √LQY ‘to find’, preserved in the variant ¹⁷salqā, which is perh. a back-formation based on īstalqā ‘to throw o.s. on the ground, lie down, prostrate’.
As for the remaining values, some are clearly borrowings, some perhaps phonetic variants of roots with initial š, and some of completely obscure origin; the majority, however, seems to consist of developments from ‘to loosen the flesh from the bones [Ehret] > to lacerate the skin’. In contrast, the item with the clearest etymology, ³salaqa ‘to boil, cook in boiling water’ (< Sem *ślḳ ‘id.’), seems to have remained rather unproductive: apart from salīqaẗ ‘dish made from cooked grain’ (see above) it has, apparently, not generated many new meanings, perh. only ⁴silq ‘pot herbs’, which perh. is from *‘what is (going to be) cooked in hot water’.

Unlike ³salaqa ‘to boil, cook’, ¹salaqa ‘to loosen the flesh from the bones; (hence also) to lacerate the skin (with a whip)’ (see above, MSA values) appears to have produced a variety of new values, all of which build on partial aspects of the basic notion:
From ‘flaying’, ‘Ascension’ and ‘red garden-beet’ to ‘wolves’ and ‘sweet dishes’...

• to scratch, carve, leave traces/prints, make furrows in the soil:

†salāʔiqᵘ (sg. †³salīqaẗ) ‘foot/hoof prints; marks made by thongs upon the belly of a camel etc.’, †⁸salaqa ‘to leave (foot/hoof) prints (on the soil, or road, etc.), leave marks upon the belly of a camel etc. (thongs, etc.)’

DaṯAr salaq ‘to sow; cultivate, plough, till’, sāliq (pl. sawāliq) ‘furrow (where the seed of the food is already found)’, and silāqaẗ ‘cultivation, tillage’

Perh. also †⁴silqaẗ ‘water-course, channel in which water flows, between two tracts of elevated, or elevated and rugged, ground’ (? *‘furrow carved in the earth/soil by the running water’), and †⁵saliq ‘side of a road’ (? *‘furrows’ along a road)

• to scratch one’s face (mourner) > to cry, shout, howl:

†¹¹salaqa ‘to call out, cry out, shout vehemently (esp. after the death of a person or at a calamity); to slap and scratch one’s face (mourning woman)’; hence †¹silqai and sāliqaẗ ‘weeping loudly (woman), slapping her face’ (cf., however, †ṣalaq (ṣ-!) ‘shriek of distress’, †ṣalaqa ‘to call out, cry out, shout vehemently; to raise one’s voice on the occasion of a calamity, and of a death’)

†³silq ‘wolf’, †³silqaẗ ‘she-wolf’: (unless lw., ? < Grk lýkos ‘wolf’) perh. *‘the howling one’

• to lay bare, bareness, barrenness; to make clean, smooth, even, plain:

†salaq ‘even, plain, smooth, even tract of good soil, depressed land, meadow’: < *‘tract of land from which most vegetation on the surface has been “scraped off”, “lacerated” region’? But perh. simply a var. of †ṣalaq (ṣ-!) ‘id.’

†²saliq ‘what falls off from trees (leaves, etc.)’: perh. *‘what has been “scratched off” (from a tree, and left it bare, like lacerated skin)’; (hence?, denom.) †sallaqa ‘to collect herbs’; perh. also DaṯAr salqai ‘natte de folioles de palmier’: < *‘palm leaves having fallen down and left the tree bare’?

†sulāq ‘tumor/swelling/pustule on the edges of the eyelids or on the gum, causing eyelashes or teeth to fall out’

²saliqaẗ ‘inborn disposition, instinct’: prob. *‘what remains, or becomes visible, after “skinning”, “peeling or scraping off” the outer layers of s.th.’

DaṯAr mislāq ‘ruins’: perh. *‘barren land(scape), “lacerated” place’

• to insult, hurt:

⁵salaqa ‘to hurt (with words), insult’: see above (MSA values)
†⁷ salaqa ‘to pierce (with a spear)’: may be specialized use of ¹salaqa, though perhaps under the influence of (or even by contamination with) †salaqa (s-) ‘to attack (a tribe); to smite s.o. (sun); to strike s.o. (bi- with a stick)

Among the borrowings we find (in addition to sullāq ‘Ascension’, salq / ¹silq ‘variety of chard’, salaqūn~salāqūn ‘red lead, minium’, and ¹salūqī~salaqī ‘greyhound, hunting dog’, which are still in use in MSA):

†² salūqī ‘(a sort of) coat of mail’, ¹salūqiyyaẗ ‘sitting-place of the captain/pilot’: both prob. from city name Salūq < Grk Seleukia

†² sil qaẗ ‘female lizard; female locust, when she has laid her eggs’: perh. related to (or from?) Eg ṣrḳ.t ‘goddess Serket (Selkis), scorpion’, based on Eg ṣrḳ ‘to relieve, admit breath to’.

(kalām) ¹saliqī ‘incorrectness in the use of language, solecism’ (counter-concept of ʔiʕrāb): from Grk soloikismós ‘id. (conter-concept of hellēnismós)’.

The result of phonological confusion with ŠLQ may be:

†² tasallaqa ‘to be(come) restless, agitated, in a state of commotion, fret’: perh. var. of †taṣallaqa ‘id.’

†² salaq ‘even, plain, smooth, even tract of good soil, depressed land, meadow’: see above, but perh. simply a var. of †ṣalaq ‘id.’

The values for which I was unable to find convincing hints in earlier research on which to build own suggestions are:

†⁹ salaqa ‘to oil, grease (a leathern water-skin, etc.), smear (a camel all over with tar)’

†¹⁰ salaqa ‘(al-ǧuwāliq) to insert one of the two loops of the sack called ǧuwāliq into the other’; ‘(al-ʃūd fi l-ʃurwaẗ) to insert the stick into the loop [of the ǧuwāliq]’

†¹² salaqa ‘to run’, ³saylaq ‘quick, swift (she-camel)’

‡³ saliq ‘honey which the bees build up along the length of their hive, or habitation’

Abbreviations

* reconstructed, hypothetical form/value
† obsolete, no longer in use in MSA (as in Wehr/Cowan)
√ root
~ variant

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>item no. …</td>
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<td>Akk</td>
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<td>Amh</td>
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<td>AngSax</td>
<td>MSA Modern Standard Arabic</td>
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<td>Ar</td>
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<td>n. noun</td>
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<td>BK</td>
<td>NaIE Natural Indo-European</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Nostr Nostratic</td>
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<td>Can</td>
<td>o old…</td>
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<td>Canaanite</td>
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<td>Pal Palestinian</td>
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<td>deriv.</td>
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References


From ‘flaying’, ‘Ascension’ and ‘red garden-beet’ to ‘wolves’ and ‘sweet dishes’...


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