

## Silver from the Souk: Semitic Words in English

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1. Eng. *foot*, German *Fuss*, Danish *fod* < Proto-Germanic \**fōt* < Proto-Indo-European \**pōd-*; Latin *ped-* (*pedestrian*), Greek *pod-* (*podiatrist*)
2. French *le weekend*, *le workshop*
3. Eng. *they*, *them*, *give*, *get* < Old Norse
4. food words from Semitic: *albacore*, *artichoke*, *borage*, *carob*, *cider*, *cumin*, *semolina*, *sesame*, *sherbet*, *soda*, *syrup*, *mallow*, *coffee*
5. other borrowed cultural terms: *carrafe*, *harem*, *klezmer*, *rabbi*
6. prestige terms: *algebra*
7. early loans: *abbot*, *manna*, *messiah*, *myrrh*, *sabbath*, *sabbatical*  
Aramaic ʾ**abbā**
8. Arabic loans in Middle Ages: *sequin*, *lute*, *cotton*, *albatross*  
scientific, technical terms: *alcohol*, *zenith*; *cipher*, *zero* (both < *ṣifr* ‘empty’)  
religious, social terms: *mosque*, *caliph*
9. more recent Arabic loans: *henna*, *loofa*, *mohair*, *moussaka*; *minaret*, *mulla*, *sheikh*
10. Hebrew > Yiddish > English: *kosher* (1875), *meshugga* (1885), *chutzpah* (1895), *schmooze* (1900), *maven* (1955), *tush* (1965)
11. modern Hebrew: *kibbutz*, *aliyah*
12. less common, specialized terms: *alfilaría*, *alizerin*, *dourine*, *galbanum*
13. *average* < Middle Eng. *averay* < Old Italian *avaría* ‘duty’ < Arabic ʿ**awārīya** ‘damaged goods’ (cf. ʿ**awar** ‘blemish, one-eyed’, Hebrew ʿ**iwwēr** ‘blind’)
14. other common words: *alcove*, *barrio*, *ghoul*, *hazard*, *jacket*, *jar*, *jubilee*, *jumper*, *magazine*, *map*, *massage*, *mat*, *mattress*, *monsoon*, *racket*, *ream*, *silver*, *sofa*, *sumac*, *alkali*
15. animal names: *abacore*, *albatross*, *camel*, *gazelle*, *giraffe* < Arabic; *behemoth* < Hebrew (< Phoenician?)
16. business terms: *average*, *tariff* < Arabic; *abacus* < Hebrew  
*broker* < Spanish *alboroque* < Arabic *al-baraka* ‘the blessing’
17. more technical terms from Arabic: *nadir*, *zenith*, *azimuth*  
star names: *Aldebaran*, *Altair*, *Vega*, *Deneb*, *Betelgeuse*
18. *chutzpah*, *knesset*, *hanukkah*
19. *racket* < French *raquette* < medieval Fr. or Latin < Arabic *rāha* ‘hand’
20. Arabic definite article *al-*: *alcohol*, *alcove*, *albacore*, *albatross*, *algebra*, *alkali*, *alchemy*, *Altair*, *Aldebaran*  
*lute* < *al-ʿūd*
21. Semitic root *d-r-s/š*: Arabic *darasa* ‘he studied’, *madrasa* ‘school’; Hebrew *dāraš* ‘he studied’, *midraš* ‘commentary’
22. other pairs of loans  
Semitic root *m-s/š-h* ‘anoint’: Hebrew *māšīaḥ* or Aramaic *māšīḥā* ‘anointed’ > *messiah*; Arabic *masaḥa* ‘he anointed’ > French *masser* > Eng. *massage*
23. *hashish* < Arabic *ḥašīš*; *assassin* < *ḥašīšīyīn* ‘hashish-ites’
24. Arabic root *ṭ-r-ḥ* ‘to throw (down)’: *ṭarḥ* ‘deduction’ > *tare*; *maṭraḥ* ‘what is thrown down’ > *mattress*
25. Arabic root *š-r-b* ‘to drink’: > *sherbet*, *sorbet*, *syrup*
26. Arabic ʾ**ab**, Hebrew ʾ**āb** ‘father’:  
*baobab* < Arabic ʾ**abū ḥibāb** ‘father of (many) seeds’  
*borage* < Arabic ʾ**abū ʿaraq** ‘father of sweat’  
*bwana* < Arabic ʾ**abūna** ‘our father’  
*Abraham*, *Abigail*, *Abner*, *Ahab*

27. *Ashkelon* < Canaanite <sup>ʿ</sup>*aθqalōn*; root *θ-q-l* ‘to weigh’ (> Hebrew *šéqel* > *shekel*)  
> *scallion*
28. *Tel Aviv*: Hebrew <sup>ʿ</sup>*ābīb* ‘young ears of grain’; root <sup>ʿ</sup>*-b-b* ‘to blossom’  
<sup>ʿ</sup>*-b-b* also in *Addis Abeba* ‘new flower’  
*Addis* < root *ḥ-d-θ/š* (cf. Arabic *ḥadīθ* = *Hadith*; Hebrew *ḥādāš* ‘new’) also in Phoenician *qart-ḥadašt* ‘new town’, *Carthage*
29. Eng. < Arabic < Persian: *aubergine*, *azure*, *borax*, *jasmine*, *julep*, *lemon*, *lime*, *mummy*, *spinach*, *tambourine*, *alfalfa*  
Eng. < Arabic < Persian < Indic: *candy*, *lilac*, *orange*, *sugar*, *falafel* (Arabic *falāfil*, plural of *filfil* ‘pepper’ < Indic *pippalī*, also > Eng. *pepper*)
30. from farther afield: *cassia*, *cassis* (cf. Hebrew *qāšī‘ā*) < ... < Chinese
31. *elixir* < Arabic *al-‘iksīr* < Greek *xērion* ‘dry’  
*alchemy* < Arabic *al-kīmīyā* < Greek
32. *garble*: Latin *cribellum*, diminutive of *cribrum* ‘sieve’; *cribellum* > Arabic *ḡirbāl*, ‘sieve’; new Arabic verb *ḡarbala* ‘to sieve’ or ‘to select’; Arabic *ḡarbala* > Medieval Latin *garbellāre* > Norman French *garbeler* > Middle Eng. *garble* ‘to sort out, cull’ > ‘to mix’ > ‘to garble’
33. Egyptian > Semitic > ... Eng.: *adobe* < Spanish < Arabic *aṭ-ṭūba* ‘the brick’ < Coptic *tō(ō)be* < Egyptian  *db.t* ‘brick’  
also *sash*, *oasis*; *natron*, *niter*, *nitrogen* < Egyptian *ntr* ‘god’
34. Sumerian > Semitic > ... Eng.: *chiton*, *tunic*, *shofar*
35. Eng. < Arabic < Aramaic: *Islam*, *mosque*, *sultan*
36. Greek letter names < Phoenician letter names; Gr. *iota* < Ph. *yod* ‘hand’; Gr. *delta* < Ph. *dalt* ‘door’; Gr. *pi* < Ph. *pe* ‘mouth’; *alphabet* < Ph. <sup>ʿ</sup>*alp*, *bêt* ‘ox, house’
37. Semitic \**qanaw-* ‘reed’ > Phoenician > Greek *kanna* ‘small reed’, *kanōn* ‘rod, rule’ > *canon*, *channel*, *canal*, *cane*, *cannon*, *canyon*, *cannoli*, *cannelloni*, *canister*, *canasta*
38. Semitic \**šaqq-* ‘sack, bag’ > Phoenician > Greek > *sack*, *sachet*, *satchel*, *sackcloth*, *haversack*, *knapsack*, *rucksack*, *cul-de-sac*
39. *Hannibal* = Phoenician *ḥannī-ba‘l* ‘Baal is my grace’; cf. *Hanna*, *Anna*, *Ann* < Hebrew *ḥannā* ‘grace’; *John* < Hebrew *yōḥānān* ‘god has been gracious’
40. Latin *ave* < Punic *ḥawo* ‘live!’ (cf. Arabic *ḥayya*, Hebrew *ḥāyā* ‘to live’)
41. *mat* < Old Eng. < Latin *matta* < Punic ... < root *n-ṭ-y* ‘to stretch out, recline’ (cf. Hebrew *miṭṭā* ‘bed, couch’)
42. similarly *map* < Latin *mappa* ‘tablecloth, napkin’ (*mappa mundi* ‘cloth of the world’) < ?Punic ... < root *n-p-y* ‘to sift’?  
Latin *mappa* also > *mop*, *nappe*, *napkin*, *apron*
43. loans from Semitic, language uncertain:  
*myrrh* < Semitic \**murr-* ‘bitterness’  
*chrysalis*, *chrysanthemum* < Greek *khrysos* < Semitic \**ḥarūš-* ‘gold’ (cf. Hebrew *ḥārūš*, Akkadian *ḥurāšu*)  
*hyssop*, *cumin*; *cider* < Semitic \**sikar-* ‘strong drink’ (cf. Hebrew *šēkār*, Akkadian *šikaru*)  
*naphtha* < Greek; Arabic *naft*, Aramaic *neptā*, Akkadian *napṭu*  
*camisole*, *chemise* < Greek *kamision*; Arabic *qamīš* ‘shirt’; Ugaritic *qmš* ‘(a garment)’
44. *souk* < Arabic *sūq* < Aramaic *šūqā* < Akkadian (Assyrian dialect) *šūqu*
45. *silver* < Old Eng. *siolfor* < ...; cf. Russian *serebró*, Old Slavonic *širebro*; < ... < Akkadian *šarpu* ‘refined metal, silver’
46. *kebab* < Turkish *kebab* < Arabic *kabāb* < Aramaic *kabbāb* ‘charring, burning’ < ?Akkadian *kabābu* ‘to burn, char’
47. Akkadian *šuppu* ‘solid, compacted’ > Aramaic *šuppā*, *šippā* ‘carded wool’ and *šippatā* ‘mat’ > Arabic *šuffa* > Eng. *sofa*
48. *salām* > *so long*