

Romanic Etymologies

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'MYSTÈRE D'ADAM,' l. 482.

It is, I think, clear from internal evidence, that *Cele te sachera le ras* renders the Vulgate *ipsa conteret caput tuum*. Förster's emendation *escachera* is probably correct; cf. 'Et dist ainsi que qui vouloit tuer premier le serpent, il li devoit *esquachier le chief*' (Joinville, ed. Wailly, p. 64). That leaves *ras*, of which this line contains the only O.F. record, unexplained. I do not know whether anyone has thought of the Arabic *rās*, head, which is cognate with the Hebrew *rōsh*, used in the original (*Genesis*, iii. 15). The solitary occurrence of an Arabic word in an Anglo-Norman text would certainly be a startling phenomenon; but it seems to be agreed (Studer, *Introd.*, p. xxxiv) that the writer of the Tours MS. was a southerner, and this southerner may have included Moorish Spain in his wanderings.

[The above was in type before I had seen Mr Raamsdonk's note (*M.L.R.*, July—October, 1921). Without expressing an opinion on his solution, I am inclined to offer my own as an alternative.]

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ROMANIC ETYMOLOGIES.

Galician *axexar*, Spanish *acechar*.

These verbs, which have the sense of French *guetter*, seem to be based on Arabic *aš-šīṣ* 'the thief,' meaning one who lies in wait, looking for a chance to steal something. Direct assimilation produced the Galician stem *axex-* (*ašēš*). In Spanish the reverted quality of *s*¹ caused *ts* (with non-reverted *s*), written *z* finally and *ç* otherwise, to be used for the Arabic *s*-sounds. We should expect an early Spanish verb **axeçar* (*ašetsar*): the form *acechar* shows blending with *asechar* 'waylay,' derived from **assectare* for *assectari*.

Spanish *acetre*, *cetree*, *celtre*.

Arabic *saṭl* 'pail,' derived from Latin *situla* or *situlus*, corresponding to French *seille*, Italian *secchia* and *secchio*, has a remarkable *a* instead of *i*. Probably *saṭl* is an alteration of **siṭl*, with *a* due to the influence of the similar word *saṭlah* 'drunkenness'; **siṭl* would explain the Spanish forms and Portuguese *acéter*, *acetre*. Spanish stressed *e* does not commonly represent an Arabic short *a*, though it may correspond to long *a*, as *alfaqeeque* < *al-fakāk*, *alférez* < *al-fāris*, *alfiler* < *al-ḫilāl*, in accor-

¹ T. Navarro Tomás, *Pronunciación española*, Madrid, 1918, § 108.

dance with the change of \bar{a} to \bar{e} in modern Tunisian Arabic¹. The form *celtre* shows a treatment of the emphatic lingual having parallels in other words, as *aldea* < *aḏ-dai'ah*, *alcalde* < *al-qādī* (not from *qa'di*, as given by Meyer-Lübke: the root is *q-d-y-* 'decide,' not *q'-d-* 'abide').

Portuguese *alcançar*, Spanish *alcanzar*.

Meyer-Lübke tells us in his Romanic dictionary, under *incalciare*, that a connexion of Spanish *alcanzar* with Arabic *qanaṣ* is 'wenig wahrscheinlich, da das Wort erst im 12. Jahrh. erscheint und da an die Stelle von *encalzar* tritt.' If the source had *lc*, the early Spanish form must have had *lç*, not *lz* as given by Meyer-Lübke. His objection is pointless. The Arabs entered Spain before the twelfth century, and we can reasonably assume borrowing to explain an Arabic-like word used at that time, whether recorded earlier or not. The noun *alcanz* or *alcance* may have been adopted, in speech, as early as many other words of Arabic origin. The meaning happened to resemble that of *encalçar*; and (after perhaps two or three centuries of use) the noun developed the verb *alcançar*, which became confused with *encalçar* and finally displaced it. One sense of *alcanzar* is 'grasp' or 'seize': 'coger alargando la mano' says the Academy's *Diccionario*. This is closer to the Arabic verb, meaning 'hunt, catch or kill in hunting,' than to the Romanic verb 'follow' (at one's heels).

Meyer-Lübke fails to discuss the form of *alcance*. He follows Körting and Diez in mentioning only Arabic *qanaṣ* 'what is taken in hunting.' A noun more directly related to the Arabic verb is *qanaṣ*, the so-called infinitive. *Al-qanaṣ* would have given **alcánaz*; the source of *alcance* is *al-qanaṣ*. Though the Hispanic verb is formally based on *alcance*, its senses presumably include those of *encalçar*. There is no ground for supposing (as Meyer-Lübke does) that Portuguese *alcançar* was taken from Spanish.

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ZUM 'WIENER HUNDESEGEN.'

In einer kurzen Notiz in der *Academy*, No. 1255 (1896), S. 428 hatte ich auf eine, wie mir schien, bedeutsame Übereinstimmung zwischen der Eingangszeile des *Wiener Hundesegens* und dem Anfang einer altenglischen Besegnung aufmerksam gemacht und darin eine Stütze für die Ansicht gesehen, dass der *Wiener Hundesegegn*—oder lieber die hinter

¹ C. Brockelmann, *Semitische Sprachwissenschaft*, Leipzig, 1906, § 87.