

الأصل السامي للكلمة "سوقة"

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الملخص

إن تعبير "سوقة" الذي ظهر في النصوص المصرية بشكل مستمر اعتباراً من المرحلة المتأخرة للغة المصرية وصولاً للديموطيقية، واستمر مستخدماً في القبطية، يشبه اللفظ العربي "سوقة" بمعنى الطبقة الدنيا في المجتمع. وقد ظهرت كلمة مماثلة في اللغة الأكادية من الفترات البابلية القديمة والآشورية.

وبالتالي يأتي الهدف من الدراسة هو إيجاد ارتباط اشتقاقي بين اللفظ الأكادي ونظيره المصري والعربي. وتكمن مشكلة البحث في ربط الأصل الأكادي للمصطلح بالمصري ثم العربي. وتبرز أهم مشكلة تواجه البحث أن الكلمة لا تظهر في الدراسات المنشورة حالياً للكلمات المستعارة أو التعبيرات المستعارة من اللغات السامية للغة المصرية، وبالتالي فاللغة الجسر الناقلة للفظ تحتاج لبحث ودراسة. فالهدف من الدراسة: هو تكوين تصور عام حول: تطور الكلمة، ونقلها من لغة إلى أخرى.

وفرضية البحث قائمة على أن الكلمة العربية "سوقة" لا يمكن أن تكون من أصل عربي، بل كلمة سامية تم نقلها للغة العربية عبر المصرية. ولإثبات هذا، ستعتمد منهجية الدراسة على التحقيق والاستقصاء في نصوص اللغات الثلاثة وفحص وتحليل مرادفاتهما وفق سياقها لاستنتاج دلالتها وإثبات الفرضية العلمية للبحث.

وفي الختام، كانت أبرز نتائج البحث في أنه يثبت أن لفظ "سوقة" ظهر في النصوص الأكادية بمعنى "شارع"، ثم تم نقله إلى المصرية المتأخرة مع تغير المعنى إلى مفاهيم ترتبط بالحمق والدونية، وهو المعنى الذي انتقلت به للعربية. كما يثبت علاقة التطابق بين الكلمة في الشعر العربي والنصوص المصرية، ولكن بمعنى واضح يدل على مفهوم الطبقة الاجتماعية المتدنية ومفهوم مرتبط بالغطرسة والتفوق الطبقي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: سوقة، كلمات مستعارة، نصوص أكادية، الطبقة الدنيا، نصوص مصرية.

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The Semitic Origins of the Term "*Sūqa*" (*)

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Abstract

The term "*sūqa*", which appeared continuously in ancient Egyptian texts from the Late Egyptian to demotic and continued to be used in Coptic, is similar to the Arabic word "souqa" meaning the lower class of society. A comparable word has attested in the Akkadian texts from the Old Babylonian and Assyrian periods.

Thus, the aim of the study is to find an etymological link between the Akkadian word and its Egyptian and Arabic counterpart. The problem of the research and its hypothesis lie in linking the Akkadian origins of this term to the Egyptian ones and then the Arabic ones. The most important problem facing this study is that the word does not appear in the currently published studies of borrowed words or expressions borrowed from the Semitic languages to the Ancient Egyptian language, and therefore the bridge language that transports the word needs research and study. The aim of the study is to form a general perception about the development of the word and its transfer from one language to another.

The hypothesis of the study is based on the fact that the Arabic word "*sūqa*" cannot be of Arabic origins; rather, it is a semitic word that has been transferred to the Arabic language through the Egyptian language. To prove this hypothesis, the methodology of the study will rely on analyzing texts of the three languages and the examination and analysis of this word "*sūqa*" and its synonyms in each language, according to their context to deduce their significance and to verify the scientific hypothesis of the study.

In conclusion, one main finding of the study is that it has demonstrated that the word "*sūqa*" appeared in Akkadian texts to mean "street", and then it was transferred to the Late Egyptian with a change of meaning to be associated with "foolishness" and "inferiority", which is the same change of meaning with which it was transferred to Arabic. It also shows the congruence between the word in Arabic poetry and that in ancient Egyptian texts, but with a clear meaning associated with low social class and another associated with arrogance and class superiority.

Keywords: *sūqa*, loan words, Akkadian texts, lower class, Egyptian texts.

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The term *swqa*, *swga* or *sūqa* appeared in Late Egyptian texts as early as the New Kingdom, continued in the Demotic texts and survived in the Coptic language. Specialized dictionaries have traditionally translated the term as "childish" or "stupid".⁽¹⁾ This word was not mostly of Egyptian origins because its late appearance in the Egyptian documentation i.e., the New Kingdom and its continuous usage in our actual Arabic describing a certain lower class in the society.

The lexical borrowing from the Semitic language was generally a research field for the specialists in Egyptology since the beginning of the 20th century. Nevertheless, the studies of Helck⁽²⁾ and Hoch⁽³⁾ represented the main references for the research in this topic. Even with the punctual revision of Görg⁽⁴⁾, Meeks⁽⁵⁾ and Ward⁽⁶⁾, the study of Hoch is still considered basic and principal.⁽⁷⁾


The Semitic word can usually be identified as a loanword in the Egyptian language by certain characters, such as the use of syllabic writing⁽⁸⁾, its appearance during the New Kingdom, the non-existence of Egyptian etymology, and the Semitic cognition which is estimated by the morpho-phonological analysis.⁽⁹⁾ Because some of the characteristics are not present in the studied word, all the previous studies and literature about the Semitic loanword *sūga* specialized in Egyptian language skipped it and did not point it out.

The second stage for the evaluation and the itinerary of *sūga* throughout languages was the transformation from the Egyptian to the Arabic one. The academic studies in this domain are insufficient. Although Georgy Sobhy⁽¹⁰⁾ and Abdel Hamid Youssef⁽¹¹⁾ offered a considerable effort, we still need more specialized studies.

Therefore, a profound research on the origins of term *sūga* from social, linguistic, and political aspects will be valuable for several reasons: first, this term does not appear in currently published studies of the loanwords that borrowed from the Semitic languages⁽¹²⁾; second, it does not carry one of the loanwords' criterion which is the syllabic writings; third, the dictionaries in the Egyptian language translated it as a personal description characterizing the stupidity or foolishness. Nevertheless, this article will try to prove its closest meaning and social aspects according to the Egyptian language⁽¹³⁾ throughout an assemblage of the word in a chronological order according to its appearance in the ancient texts.

The first attestation for the word was in the Babylon texts (Middle Bronze Age) which is written in Akkadian, the reason why these texts come in the first place (I). Then the Egyptian attestations (II) will be presented with the intention to offer insight into the evolution of this term regarding its etymology in Late Egyptian and Demotic. The Aramaic synonym will be cited in the third place (III) because they were dated to the fifth century. The Coptic attestations will be exposed in the fourth part (IV) finally; the

with their blood I dyed their houses red.

The term  "streets" in the plural form is confirming that the Assyrian king conquered the city, killed his enemies, and dumped their corpses in the streets.⁽¹⁹⁾

Rodwell, suggested the translation "with vigorous assault the city I besieged and took; 800 of their fighting men I destroyed them by my weapons, and I filled the streets of their city with their corpses".⁽²⁰⁾

Doc. I.III

The Akkadian term *sūqu* appeared 15 times in the annals of Sennacherib (c. 704–681 B.C.): Sennacherib 1, 68; 1, 91; 2, 39; 2, 68; 3, 39; 3, 61; 4, 66; 4, 89; 7, 3; 15, v 28; 16, v 51; 17, v 34; 18, vii 49'; 38, 13b; 136.⁽²¹⁾

In all these attestations, *sūqu* always means "street" or "streets". For example, some of them are engraved with a text recording the creation of a royal road by means of widening existing streets and by erecting stelæ as boundary markers on both sides of the streets,

uš-rab-bi su-qí-šu me-ti-iq ger-ri LUGAL
I broadened its streets for the course of a royal road.⁽²²⁾

Doc. I.IV

From Erech dated to a Neo-Babylonian Period (c. 626-539 B.C.), a text (no. 168) mentioned the word studied in a context that clearly indicates its signification as "market":⁽²³⁾

ša ū-mu 12 qa qîmi(ZID-DA) š aul-tu su-ū-qu šu-bu-ul-lu a-na-šâbê^{meš} ša dul-lu
ina bît a-ki-tum ip-pu-šū

Daily 12 qa of flour, out of the flour which from *sūqa* has been brought to the soldiers who perform work in the feast house.

Finally, it looks interesting to notice that the word "s w q" appeared in the same form in its common sense known in Arabic, which is the meaning of "marketplace" in some of the texts of Neo Babylonian.⁽²⁴⁾ The association of the word "s w q", which means "market" with "*sūqa*" as "roads" or "streets" seems logical as markets are always held on their sides.

II. The Term *sūqa* in the Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom (doc. 1a to doc. 1h)

Doc. II.I.

pChester Beatty VII. Vs. 2, 2 pBritish Museum 10687⁽²⁵⁾, dated to the reign of Ramesses

II (1279–1213 B.C.), XIXth Dynasty); pTurin T, rt. 6



[...] *sb3 pw swg3 t3 mtwt rdyt r hmt n p3 ntr*

[...]. *Is it a sūga seed/poison that has been placed in the wife of the god?*⁽²⁶⁾

In pChester Beatty VII, Gardiner translated *swg3* as: "[Is it not?] a childish punishment, (for?) the seed-poison that was given to the wife of the god". Thus, he suggested a negative form of interrogation as opposed to the direct genitive *sb3 swg3* form as a predicate to the demonstrative pronoun *pw*. The philologist also proposed the meaning "childish" as a translation of the word *swg3*.⁽²⁷⁾

In the translation of Roccati, a non-verbal sentence with *pw* as its subject is used. According to him, the meaning of *sūqa* in this document is "punishment", but this meaning is not attested in dictionaries.⁽²⁸⁾

The predicate of the demonstrative pronoun *pw* is a name whose epithet is *swg3*. In this case, the translation will be more like, "Is it a punishment? This seed/poison that has been given to the wife of the god is unworthy". Therefore, the vocal *sb3* in this context can be considered a nominal predicate and *sūqa* as an epithet adjective.

Doc. II.II.

pSallier IV, vs. 5. 7 - pBritish Museum10184⁽²⁹⁾, dated to the reign of Ramesses II, (1279–1213 B.C.), XIXth Dynasty



mk b3k n pth p3 swg3

Behold, Ptah's servant is sūqa

In this text, Gardiner uses "senseless" as a translation for *swg3*; however, the term can describe a social class, especially a less affluent one, which can be then translated by "populace/people" or "crowds" in plural.

The meaning is probably pejorative because the writer drew the attention that one of the *sūga* is a priest of Ptah. Otherwise, *B3k-n-Pth* could be a proper name attested in Ranke's *Personennamen*.⁽³⁰⁾ Another possibility for *p3 swg3* is to form a contradiction with the high rank of the priest of Ptah.

Doc. II.III.

Karnak 52.17 The inscription dated to Merneptah (1213-1203 B.C. - 19th Dynasty) in Karnak⁽³¹⁾



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obvious in the comparison with Kesa, a low-class individual in the social hierarchy, as he was a foreigner and working as cattle's reckoner.

This sentence is a direct speech introduced by the compound pronoun *tw.k* using a comparison to express irony and sarcasm. The meaning of the word *swg3* is probably pejorative, i.e., where the translation as "stupid" comes from; however, it could also mean deterioration or social inferiority.

Doc. II.V.

In the hieratic Papyrus of Deir El-Medina from Ramesside Period (1292–1075 B.C.) (pDeM XI - rt 4)⁽⁴²⁾

The term *swg3* is mentioned in a context within a speech of the goddess Meretseger, mistress of Western Thebes.



iy iḥ p3y=k [... s]wg3 [tw.k] in.tw [...] pr

Hey, what does your [... s]wga for having brought the [...] House.

In his publication of the text, Černý translated the term *swg3* which is preceded by the possessive pronoun *p3y=k* as "your madness".

Doc. II.VI.

In the story of Wenamun dated to the end of New Kingdom and the early beginning of XXIst Dynasty, probably during the reign of the High priest of Amun Herihor (1080–1074 B.C.) and Smendes (1077/1076–1052 B.C.) written on pMoscow (1202. 22-23)⁽⁴³⁾

The term *sūqa* is mentioned in a question of disapproval posed by Zakar-Baal, the Prince of Byblos. The question was addressed to Wenamun and comes back again in the answer:



iḥ n3 mš^c swg3 i.diw iry.k iw.i (ḥr) ḡd n=f^c ḡd3

bn mš^c swg3 iwn3 nty tw=i im=w

What are these sūqa expeditions they allow you to do?" I said to him: "Wrong!

These are not sūqa expeditions that I am involved in.

Sūqa was repeated twice in this dialogue: in the speech of Zakar-Baal when he denounced these expeditions because they are made up of *sūga*, which showed that he was wondering how a wise country like Egypt could send an important messenger in a *sūga* voyage; the second use of the term in Wenamun's response saying that it

was not *sūga* mission.⁽⁴⁴⁾

In most cases, the specialists translated *swg3* by “foolish” and “childish”, such as Erman “What are these childish journeys that they have caused thee to make!”.⁽⁴⁵⁾ While Breasted translated it as “miserable”: “What (then) are these miserable journeys that they have had thee make”.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Lefebvre preferred the word “frivolous”, a complete translation for the paragraph: “Alors, quelles sont ces démarches futiles qu’on te fait effectuer ? je lui répondis : C’est faux ! Ce ne sont pas de démarches futiles, dans lesquelles je suis engagé”.⁽⁴⁷⁾ In addition, Lichtheim⁽⁴⁸⁾ considers that it could be translated as “senseless”: “What are these foolish travels they made you do?”. Garndet presented a logical translation : “ Que signifie don ce folles démarches qu’on te fait faire. Je lui répondis : “Ce n’est pas vrai ! ce ne sont en rien de folles démarches, celles où je suis engagé”.⁽⁴⁹⁾

Furthermore, di Biase-Dyson used the expression “foolish journeys”⁽⁵⁰⁾ and Wentz translated it by “What’s (the point of) these foolish journeys that you have had to make? But I said to him, “That’s wrong! They are not foolish journeys that I’m involved in”.⁽⁵¹⁾ Similarly, Schipper⁽⁵²⁾ gave the same meaning “törichten” for *swga* : Da sagte zu ihm : “Falsch” Es sind keine törichten Reise, auf denen ich mich befinde!”. Finally, Winand⁽⁵³⁾ quoted this question *ih n3 mšc swg3 i.di.w iry.k* “What are these childish enterprises that they made you do?” In reference to the word “puerile”. Similarly, in his commentary on the word *swg3* “childish, foolish”, he stated that it is a rare form.⁽⁵⁴⁾



Doc. II.VII.

For the first time in a demotic papyrus from el-Hibeh (N. IX 10/21 : 11/4), dated to the reign of Darius I (522 – 486 B.C.), XXVIIth Dynasty

Hr-wz [m-r] ty stm=s ny w^cbw nt ty rm swgw

Heroaz said: " (Do not) let these priests who are here know because they are *swgw* *hn.w n hyn n hl.w rm swgw*

They loaded/brought some young, sūqa.

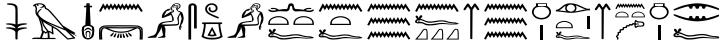
Griffith transcribed  appeared in the demotic texts using the hieroglyphic  and translated it in these two testimonies “rascals” and “rascally fellow?”.⁽⁵⁵⁾

However, it is about a privilege that should not be known by ordinary priests and the meaning of the word in the second part could be “aggressive” or “wild young men”.

Johnson⁽⁵⁶⁾ translated the verb *swky*⁽⁵⁷⁾ as “to be stupid” and its noun as “stupid”, “idiot”, or “adolescent” while the term *n3-swk* would mean “to be bad”.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Doc. II.VIII.

In Metternich Stela (Spell. IV, M 169-170), dated to the reign of Nectanebo II, XXXth Dynasty (358–340 B.C.) ⁽⁵⁹⁾



nsw Hr nfr n nbw swg3 iwt-t-f n it mw nfk (?) nw irt=f ntt nw spty=f

The perfect King, the golden Horus, swga without father, had

moistened the eyelids⁽⁶⁰⁾ of his eye with tears and had wet his lips.

The translation for the word *sūga* as "child" has been suggested by Klasens although a more precise meaning is highly probable. The expression *iwt-t-f n it*, "fatherless" (i.e. orphan), and the description of the king's sadness and misery - the king never ceases to cry - confirm the translation.⁽⁶¹⁾

III. Sūqa in the Aramaic Texts

The collection of ancient Aramaic papyri discovered in Elephantine (Egypt) dating to the fifth century B.C. onwards, written by members of the Aramaic community. These manuscripts include texts which contained the word שוקא *šūqā*, retaining the original meaning attested in the Akkadian texts which is "street" with only one change in pronunciation: the sound *s* has been replaced by the sound *š* (sh).⁽⁶²⁾ This is a regular case with loan words from the Western Semitic languages.⁽⁶³⁾

The survival and continuity of the original meaning of the word and its lack of a social concept, unlike the Egyptian texts, indicate that the transmission to Arabic with its social connotation did not pass through Aramaic, but mostly through Egyptian.

IV. sūqa in the Coptic texts⁽⁶⁴⁾**Doc. IV.I. (Gospel of Matthew, 5: 22)**

Gospel of Matthew, the first book of the New Testament is one of the three synoptic Gospels, in the chapter known by "sermon of the mount", whose gathering sayings and teachings attributed to Jesus Christ,⁽⁶⁵⁾

ΣΗ ΔΕ ΕΘΝΑΧΟΣ ΜΠΕΥCON ΔΕ ΠΙ COXΕΥ ΕΥΕΩΩΠΙ ΕΥΟΙ
ΝΕΝΟΧΟΣ ΕΤΓΕΕΝΝΑ ΝΤΕ ΠΙ ΧΠΩΜ

And whosoever shall say to his brother, ΠΙ COXΕ, shall be in danger of hell fire

The term ΠΙ COXΕ has been translated by the Coptic Bible translators as "the fool"; however, the pejorative nature of the term must always be taken into consideration

without specifying a particular synonym.

Doc. IV.II. (Gospel of Matthew, 25:2-3)

In the chapter predicating the actions and events of the Judgement Day, within the Parables of the Ten Virgins and Talents,

Ne οΥΟΝ Ε ΔΕ ΝΟΧ ΝΩΗΤΟΥΙ ΝΕΜ Ε ΝΟΑΒΗ
And five of them were n-so` and five were wise. ⁽⁶⁶⁾

The term ΝΟΧ has been translated as "stupid" or "foolish" basing on the contradiction between ΝΟΧΕ and wise.

Doc. IV.III. (Gospel of Matthew, 25: 8)

The same context as the precedent attestation

ΠΕΧΕ ΝΙΟΧ ΔΕ ΝΝΙΟΑΒΕΥΙ ΧΕ ΜΟΙ ΝΑΝ ΕΒΟΛΩΕΝ
 ΠΕΤΕΝΝΕΩΧΕ ΝΕΝΑΔΜΠΑ ΝΑΩΕΝΟ
And the foolish said to the wise, give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

Doc. IV.IV. (Epistle to the Romans, 1: 22)

The sixth book in the New Testament, perhaps it was composed by Paul the Apostle to explain that salvation is delivered through the gospel of Jesus-Christ. The studied term is mentioned in the first chapter, specifically, in the section which is devoted to the universal corruption of Gentiles and Jews.⁽⁶⁷⁾

ΕΥΧΩ ΜΜΟC ΧΕ ΩΑΝΟΑΒΕΥ ΝΕ ΔΥΕΡΟΧ
As they claimed to be wise, in fact they were growing so ΔΥΕΡΟ`

The term ΔΥΕΡΟ` has been translated as "idiots". The contradiction that was found between wise and ΔΥΕΡΟ` in a rhetorical form does not prevent us from proposing a social meaning.

Doc. IV.V. (The Acts of Martyrdom of St. Isidore)

The Acts of Martyrdom of St. Isidore were discovered in the Hamoli monastery (Egypt). The text that was written in Sahidic dialect contains the Acts of the Martyrdom of Saint Isidore.

The word *sūga* was mentioned in the speech of lady that gave birth to a young child who no longer accepted breastfeeding and his father put on an evil spirit as he became blind and made (*sūga*), So, she thought about going to Saint Isidore to heal both:⁽⁶⁸⁾

ΠΕΚΚΕΙΩΤ ΔΥΠΝΑ ΜΠΟΝΗΡΟΝ ΟΟΕΥ
His father, also an evil spirit made him ΟΟΕΥ

The term s-o23 has been translated as "senseless" because of the context concerning how to behave and react when his father had an evil mind.

Doc. IV.VI (Corinthians 1: 18)

The first Epistle to the Corinthians that is attributed to Paul the Apostle and a co-author named Sosthenes. It is addressed to the Christian church in Corinth. The biblical context for the word *sūga* is "*for the message of the cross and it is not for foolishness for those who are perishing, but for us we are being saved is the power of God*"⁽⁶⁹⁾

ΠΙΨΥΧΙΚΟΣ ΔΕ ΝΡΩΜΙ ΜΠΑΨΩΕΠ ΝΑ ΠΙΝΕΥΜΑ ΝΤΕ Φ† ΕΡΟΨΙ ΟΥΜΕΤΣΟΧ

But the natural man received not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are οΥΜΕΤΣΟ` unto him.

The term ΟΥΜΕΤΣΟΧ has been translated as "stupidity", "idiot" "foolishness" simply to mock of people who prayed since even they have been rescued.

Doc. IV.VII (Corinthians 1:25)

The biblical context is "*For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength*".⁽⁷⁰⁾

ΧΕ †ΜΕΤΣΟΧ ΝΤΕ Ξ† †ΟΙ ΝCΔΒΕ Ε2ΟΤΕ ΝΙΡΩΜΙ

Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men

Doc. IV.VIII (Corinthians 2: 14)

Corinthians 2 is the second chapter of the Second Epistle of the Corinthians in the New Testament. It is composed by Paul the Apostle and Timothy in Macedonia in 55–56 CE. The biblical context for *sūga* in verse 14 is "*The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, because he considers them foolishness so, they won't be understood because they are discerned only through the Spirit*"⁽⁷¹⁾.

ΠΙΨΥΧΙΚΟΣ ΔΕ ΝΡΩΜΙ ΜΡΩΜΙ ΜΠΑΨΩΕΠ ΝΑΠΙΠΝΑ ΝΤΕ Φ† ΕΡΟΨ ΟΥΜΕΤΣΟΧ ΓΑΡ ΝΔΨ ΠΕ ΟΥΟ2 ΜΜΟΝ ΨΧΟΜ ΜΜΟΨ ΕΕΜΙ ΧΕ ΔΥΟΞΟΤ ΞΕΤ ΜΜΟΨ ΠΝΔΤΙΚΟΣ

But the man does not receive things from the spirit of God; for it is [a] οΥΜΕΤΣΟ` for him, and it is possible for him to know because he was spiritually searched⁽⁷²⁾

The same thing is repeated in this case where, the term oumetso` has been translated as "foolish" because the man who does not believe in God sees His miracles as naivety.

Doc. IV.IX (Epistles to Timothy 2 -2: 23)

The Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy is one of the three pastoral ones, which are traditionally attributed to Paul the Apostle, and addressed to Timothy, a fellow missionary considered to be the last epistle he wrote before his death.⁽⁷³⁾ *Sūga* was indicated in a

biblical context dealing with false teachers *"Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels"*.

Nikw5 ΔΕ ΜΜΕΤCΟΧ ΟΥΟ2 ΜΜΕΤΑΤCΒΩ 2ΕΝΚ ΕΒΟΛ
But ΜΜΕΤCΟ` and unlearned questions avoid⁽⁷⁴⁾

The term ΜΜΕΤCΟ` has been translated as "stupid".

Doc. IV.X (Epistle of Ephesians)

The Epistle of Ephesians is the tenth book of the New Testament, which is traditionally attributed to Paul the Apostle.⁽⁷⁵⁾

ΟΥΟ2 ΝΙCΑΧΙ ΕΤΩΟΥΙΤ ΝΕΜ ΝΙCΑΧ ΜΜΕΤCΟΧ
Neither filthiness, nor ΜΜΕΤCΟ` talking⁽⁷⁶⁾

The translation "stupid" or "foolish" was adapted for m-metso`, because it describes a behavior and judges the quality of speech.

Doc. IV.XI (Deuteronomy 32: 6)⁽⁷⁷⁾

The Book of Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Jewish Torah and the Christian Old Testament, where it is also known as the Fifth book of Moses. The chapters from 31 to 34 contain the Song and Blessing of Moses and the narratives recounting the passing of the mantle of leadership from Moses to Joshua. Finally, the death of Moses on Mount Nebo.⁽⁷⁸⁾

The verse in which the word *sūga* is mentioned (no. 6): *"is this the way you repay the Lord, you foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you"*⁽⁷⁹⁾

ΝΘΩΤΕΝ ΟΥΛΛΟC ΝCΟΧ
You are ΝCΟΧ people

A human group, or rather an inferior social class, has been described as ΝCΟ` with a connotation as a kind of stigmatization of speakers. Nevertheless, ΝCΟ` was translated as "stupid, unwise or foolish", while the social meaning like "miserable" seems more probable.

V. *sūqa* in Arab literature

Arab linguists believe that the root of this word is composed of three letters *s w q* سوق. It appeared in several terms in which *sūqa(t)* is attested in poetry and literary texts. All the variation are related to "conduct" like "conducting cattle", "driving a vehicle", "bringing oneself to death", "those who are subject", "those who follow" or "those who are led by sovereigns". Additionally, *sūq* also means "market" to which traders transport their goods there.⁽⁸⁰⁾

These varied synonyms link the *sūq*'s tangible definition "market" with its moral and social significance. However, the Arab philologists linked the word *sūqa* with Arabic root, which is *swq* as they used to relate expressions of foreign origin to Arabic roots in neglecting the contribution of borrowing from other languages since the Arabic *sūq* سوق means "market" could be borrowed from the Akkadian *sūqa* means "street". Consequently, *sūqa* and its social significance were probably a loanword from more ancient languages.

Doc. V.I.

The speech of Hurqa daughter of the King of the Lakhmids Al-Nu'man bin Al-Mundhir (582-609 A.D.):⁽⁸¹⁾

بيننا نسوسُ الناسَ والأمرُ أمرُنا * إذا نحنُ فيهمُ سوقةً نتصَفُ * وإن كُنَّا ملوكُ والأمرُ أمرُنا

*bynā nsws ālnās wālamr amrnā ** eqā nḥn fyhm swqatn ntnsf ** w-in knā mlwk wālamr amrnā*

*We were once upon a time we were ruling over people and the sovereignty was ours * suddenly we became sūqa(t-un) seeking justice *. Although we were kings and sovereignty were ours.*

It is obvious that **sūqa(t-un)** in this poetic form is the opposite of the word "sovereign", which confirms its sense of "inferior class".

Doc. V.II.

ālḥārṭ bn ḥlzh ālbkry, (dead 580 A.D.) is a commentators' (*ālm'iqāt*) poet, said:⁽⁸²⁾

ما إن يُسافِهنا أناسُ سوقةً * إلا سَسَعَبُ هَامَهُمُ في الهامِ

*mā in yūsafahona onasson sūqatun ** elā sanš^cbw hamwhmw fy ālhāmi*

*If it happens that sūqa(t-un) people deals stupidly with us * we will hit their heads together*

In this sentence *sūqa* probably denotes "idiots", a meaning which is close to the expressions of the word in ancient Egyptian texts.

Doc. V.III.

Another commentators' poet, Zuhair bin Abi-Salmā, (520- 609 A.D.) mentioned the term in three poems:⁽⁸³⁾

لَمْ أَرْ سوقةً كَبَنِي سِنَانِ

Im ara sūqatan kābny snān

*I have not seen **sūqa(t-an)** such as Beni Sinan*

Sūqa in this sentence almost certainly indicates an insult which is close to the term “mobs”.

يَطْلُبُ شَأْوَ امْرَأَيْنِ قَدَمَا حَسَنًا * نَالَا الْمُلُوكَ وَبَدَا هَذِهِ السُّوقَا

*yṭlb šaw āmryn qdmā ḥsnā ** nālā ālmlwk wbdā ḥdh āl-sūqa*

*He is asking about two men did a favor they obtained the kings level and passed this **sūqa***

In this passage, the poet praises a certain Harim bin Sinān. He describes his father and grandfather as elites in the society. They reached a kings' standard of life, i.e., a higher class with those who are above that ordinary people who represent the lower class (*sūqa*)⁽⁸⁴⁾

يَا حَارُّ لَا أَرْمِيَنَّ مِنْكُمْ بِدَاهِيَةٍ لَمْ يَلْقَهَا سَوْقَةٌ قَبْلِي وَلَا مَلِكٌ.

yā ḥār lā armyn menkūm bādāhyten lm ylqhā sūqa qābly wlā mālek

*O Har⁽⁸⁵⁾, I would not be drawn from a catastrophe no one met it before me neither **sūqa(tn)** nor king.⁽⁸⁶⁾*

The meaning of *sūqa* in this poetic passage is certainly the contrary of kings as shown by a common linguistic enhancement which is known in Arabic as rhetoric, namely the use of a contradiction to clarify and stress the meaning.

Doc. V.IV.

The poet Āa'sa ālkbyr (570-629 A.D.), one of the poets of ālm'lqāt, recites:⁽⁸⁷⁾

مِنْ سَوْقَةٍ حَكَمَ وَمِنْ * مَلِكٍ يُعَدُّ لَهُ ثَوَابُهُ.

*men sūqaten ḥākām wāmen ** mālek y'd lh ṭwābāh*

*Among **sūqa(ten)** well-controlled and ** a king who is evaluated in his reward.*

Mohammed Hussein⁽⁸⁸⁾ in his commentary explains that the word *sūqa* means “common people” in the singular and plural form.

Doc. V.V.

Another similar example, where the term appeared in one of the Hadiths of the Prophet (571-632 A.D.) bearing the same meaning. This is a lady who refused to

marry the Prophet himself by saying "a woman, among the daughters of sovereigns (i.e., princess), how could she have been married to a *sūqa*?"⁽⁸⁹⁾

Doc. V.VI.

During the VIIIth century, the word was still used with a general sense of lower class. *Sūqa* appeared in a book⁽⁹⁰⁾ on cooking recipes, dated from that period:

"Four recipes, the first has two variants: the first is prepared by as-sūqa and the rest of the flock (sā'ir an-nās); also the description here would be pointless but I saw that they put carrots, chard, large calabashes? and saffron. It becomes a tasty dish."⁽⁹¹⁾

This extract shows that we have at least three classes in the Islamic society during this period: the high class, the common people (*sā'ir an-nās*), and the lower class (*as-sūqa*). Apparently, this meal was eaten by both the ordinary community and the poor men.

Reflections and Comments

The word *sūqa* can be considered a loanword and it is not of an Egyptian origins for several reasons:

The Historical Precedence

The historical precedence offered the first evidence for the hypothesis of the ability to borrow. This means that the first appearance of the term could be the key reason to assume a non-Egyptian word. It was used for the first time in Egyptian texts during the reign of Ramesses II (1279–1213 B.C.). This is roughly the middle of Late Egyptian phase that was characterized, among other elements by the introduction of the Semitic loanwords in its texts. The late appearance and the indecomposable unit⁽⁹²⁾ of the word permit to exclude the possibility of descent from a common ancestor.

On the other hand, the most important ancient attestation for our term is dated back to the Babylonian king, Hammurabi (c. 1810–c. 1750 B.C.). Therefore, concerning the question of which language used the word first, it is confirmed that Akkadian had used the word at least for five centuries before Egyptian. This leads to the hypothesis that *sūga* is an Akkadian word, which moved to the Egyptian language during the late New Kingdom (Ramesside Period) for a reason or another.

The Second element in this argument is the morphology and orthography. As it is noted, the same elements of orthography were transformed from Akkadian to Egyptian: two consonants "s" "q" and two vowels "ū" "a" with nearly the same order and pronunciation.

Both, the etymological research about the first attested form of *sūqa* and the comparison

with its appearance in other languages are very important. This term appeared in several Semitic languages with the same root and its signification had two meanings: the first "street" and the second "people".

The Akkadian root is *s-ū-q* with variations: *sūqam* in ancient Babylonian, *sūki* and *sūku* in Assyrian. The term was translated as "street" in Hammurabi's text (Babylonian) and retained the same in the New Assyrian.⁽⁹³⁾ Subsequently, the Aramaic texts kept the synonyms which are related to "street".

Other possible meanings were also attested in Assyrian texts to describe a man, not just a place, as in "the one who has no family", "the one who does not know his parents" or "the one who is controlled by the laws of the street".⁽⁹⁴⁾ The origin of all these phrases certainly has a connection with the primitive meaning of *sūq* as "street" to describe someone who belongs to a life on the streets. Thus, in a second usage with the development of its connotations, the social denotation was approved.

Such origins may have something to do with another synonym for the word *suki* which is "market"⁽⁹⁵⁾ since the practice of activities that linked to bartering or commercial exchange in general which took place in the streets.

Orthography of the Egyptian *sūga*

When Egyptians used *sūga*, they did not write it with composite signs (bilateral - trilateral) or ideograms values as their habits, but they wrote it phonetically with unliteral signs (almost alphabetical), and added a determinative to express the human and his bad behaviour.⁽⁹⁶⁾




The occurrences of *sūqa* in the ancient Egyptian texts as a noun retained the same pronunciation. It is in only a few Demotic texts which the term was written with the letter *k* instead of *g*. James Allen supposes that the palatalization of "g" along with "q" amalgamed in Late Egyptian texts both appeared as variants in words.⁽⁹⁷⁾ In addition, the change of the phonetic value *k* to *g* is well known in the Sahidic dialect.

About Changing the Meaning

The weak point in the theory of a loanword is the meaning and signification. In Akkadian, the meaning was "street", while Egyptian and Arabic attestations describe a human behaviour. Nevertheless, the close examination showed a logical link that could be remarked between the different phases of transference process. From *sūqa* as "streets" in Akkadian to *sūga* as "the people who lives in the streets" and behaves like the people in the streets in the Egyptian texts and lastly *sūqa* as inferior class in the society in the Arabic literature, the evaluation of *sūga* signification to acquire social and hierarchic dimensions seems logical and acceptable.

Based on previous evidence, the term *sūqa* appeared in Egyptian documentation only from the New Kingdom (in Late Egyptian texts) onwards, and therefore, the word is not of Egyptian origins; rather, it is a loanword. During this period, the Egyptian state expanded its borders and opened to the neighboring states in the Near East.

We have witnessed the emergence of a new phase of the Egyptian language, what is linguistically called Late Egyptian.⁽⁹⁸⁾ One of the most important linguistic characteristics of this phase was the borrowing of words from foreign languages, especially the Semitic ones.⁽⁹⁹⁾ However, the cultural exchange with Near Eastern Societies led to the assimilation of many linguistic expressions and spelling rules (syllabic writings) into the Egyptian language.

Although the social significance in the Egyptian texts was apparently proposed according to the linguistic side, as seen above, its meaning given in the Egyptian linguistic dictionaries was always "foolish" "stupid", "idiot", "senseless", "imbecile" or "madness" "childish", "miserable", which had another Egyptian word. Even the social description for certain group of people proposed in this study has many words in Egyptian Lexicon like  *nds* "small", "commoner" "man of lower class",  *ndsw* "poverty"⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ and  *rhyt* "common folk" "mutinous people", "subjects of the king"⁽¹⁰¹⁾.

Therefore, the motivations for such a borrowing from Akkadian language need to be discussed, as it can change our comprehension to this term. The same case applies to Arabic, as a lot of words can express the meaning of *sūqa*. Why did Arabic from the periplasmic period borrow it?

The Egyptians had selected an Akkadian word over a receptor language equivalent, for complex reasons that do not seem obvious. What is the perceived social meaning of such borrowing? Of course, it could not be a loanword by necessity. There is nothing necessary about borrowing process, because the Egyptian Language had words with a close meaning⁽¹⁰²⁾.

Nevertheless, the Egyptian attestations and the lexical semantic field analysis for *sūga*, show that it means a kind of personality behavior and indicates at the same time a social group. Egyptian language had many other vocabularies that gave the exact concept for one of these two connotations, but according to our knowledge, both had never been expressed by only one word.

An overview of the period during which the word was borrowed could help in understanding the reasons of the borrowing. Akkadian during this era of the history of Ancient Near East (the Late Bronze Age) was the language of diplomacy and correspondence between sovereigns and rulers of the region. It became the *lingua-*

France of the Ancient Near East. Amarna letters conserved in the archives of Akhenaton capital (Tell el-Amarna) are the best example of the fact that Akkadian was the universal language at this time.⁽¹⁰³⁾

Hence, the specialists in loanwords divide the borrowing into two kinds: core borrowings and cultural borrowings. Core borrowings is duplicating and replacing the exiting native words⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ while cultural borrowing could be considered as "loanwords by necessity", which can be defined as the use of a foreign vocabulary whose meaning did not exist in the recipient language.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾

According to this, for the transition from Akkadian to Egyptian, it took place through "cultural borrowings". On the contrary, the transference from Egyptian to Arabic happened via the "core borrowings" type, because Arabs used the term in addition to equivalents and similar ones in both personality conduct and social significance, such as "r'ā" رعا and "dhmā" دهماء.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

As for Akkadian-Egyptian borrowing, the presence of bilingual high class in the New Kingdom society in Egypt who used expressions and terms that were borrowed from the international language of the period could be a logical motivation for such an arrival of the word in Egyptian terminology. The speakers adopted foreign words to be associated with the prestige of the donor language.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ This can be justified as well by the social significance of *sūqa*, a word that could be said by an aristocrat to commoners as a kind of social arrogance.

Conclusion

The term *sūqa* was used in the Akkadian texts since the 18th century B.C., at least, with the original meaning "street". This is how Late Egyptian texts from the New Kingdom 15th century B.C.), borrowed it, but with a change of meaning. Nonetheless, the general sense in the Egyptian texts was "the one who belongs to the life of the street", which was not far from Akkadian origins of "the street". This can be confirmed by the appearance of the word in a few Akkadian texts, with the signification of a lower social class that has only the street to live in their behaviors and moral were disturbed.

As for Arabic texts, the term with the same meaning existed in classical Arabic. *Sūqa* has appeared with various endings to always mean "the commons", "the lower class", "submissive", or "the scoundrel" in the classical Arabic documentation, since the late pre-Islamic poetry and hadiths of the Prophet.

Pre-Islamic Arabic poetry, Coptic literature, and even several Arabic dialectics have kept this meaning to express a hierarchical connotation of arrogance and superiority as well. Therefore, the Arabic word *as-sūq* or *sūqa* that is not of Arabic origins, but of a Semitic ones, transferred to it via the Egyptian Language. The Arabic meaning of

"lower class" is compatible with the Egyptian use, from which the word was borrowed.

Therefore, as can be realized from the different attestations, the development path of this term has gone through two main stages: first, from Akkadian to Egyptian, then, from Egyptian to Arabic. The Egyptian language stage itself had two phases: from Late Egyptian to Demotic, and from Demotic to Coptic. From Akkadian to Egyptian, the loanword has kept its form, but it was used as one of the social significations, that is when Egyptian used the word in their texts, they abandoned the primitive synonym, which is "street".

Summary Table

Doc.	Script	Language	Particularities	Date		Meaning
I.I	Cuneiform	Akkadian	Babylonian	Hammurabi	1810–1750 B.C	street
I.II	Cuneiform	Akkadian	Assyrian	Ashurnasirpal II	c. 883–859 B.C.	street
I.III	Cuneiform	Akkadian	Assyrian	Sennacherib	704–681 B.C.	street
II.I	Hieratic	Egyptian	Late Egyptian	Ramesses II	1279–1213 B.C	Childish/punishment
II.II	Hieratic	Egyptian	Late Egyptian	Ramesses II	1279–1213 B.C.	populace/people
II.III	Hieroglyphic	Egyptian	Late Egyptian	Merneptah	1213-1203 B.C	senseless
II.IV	Hieratic	Egyptian	Late Egyptian	Sety II	1200-1194 B.C	stupid
II.V	Hieratic	Egyptian	Late Egyptian	Ramesside Period	1292–1075 B.C	madness
II.VI	Hieratic	Egyptian	Late Egyptian	21th Dynasty	1080–1074 B.C.	childish, foolish
II.VII	Demotic	Egyptian	Demotic	Darius I	522 – 486 B.C	rascals/ rascally fellow
II.VIII	Hieroglyphic	Egyptian	Late Egyptian	Nectanebo II	358–340 B.C	child/ orphan
III	Aramaic	Aramaic	Aramaic	.	500-200 B.C	street
IV.I	Coptic	Coptic	Gospel of Matthew	.	30 B.C – 641A.D	fool
IV.II	Coptic	Coptic	Gospel of Matthew	.	30 B.C – 641A.D	stupid/foolish
IV.III	Coptic	Coptic	Gospel of Matthew	.	30 B.C – 641A.D	foolish
IV.IV	Coptic	Coptic	Epistle to the Romans	.	30 B.C – 641A.D	idiots
IV.V	Coptic	Coptic	The Acts of Martyrdom of St. Isidore	.	30 B.C – 641A.D	senseless
IV.VI	Coptic	Coptic	Corinthians	.	30 B.C – 641A.D	stupidity/idiot/ foolishness
IV.VII	Coptic	Coptic	Corinthians	.	30 B.C – 641A.D	foolishness

Doc.	Script	Language	Particular-ities	Date		Meaning
IV.VIII	Coptic	Coptic	Corinthians		30 B.C – 641A.D	foolish
IV.IX	Coptic	Coptic	Epistles to Timothy		30 B.C – 641A.D	stupid/foolish
IV.X	Coptic	Coptic	Epistle of Ephesians		30 B.C – 641A.D	stupid/foolish
IV.XI	Coptic	Coptic	Deuteronomy		30 B.C – 641A.D	stupid/unwise/foolish
V.I	Arabic	Arabic	The speech of Hurqa		582-609 A.D	inferior class
V.II	Arabic	Arabic	ālḥārt bn ḥlza ālbkry		Dead 580 A.D.	idiots
V.III	Arabic	Arabic	Zuhair bin Abi-Salmā		520- 609 A.D	lower class
V.IV	Arabic	Arabic	Āa'ša ālbkbyr		570-629 A.D	common people
V.V	Arabic	Arabic	Hadiths of the Prophet		571-632 A.D	lower class
V.VI	Arabic	Arabic	Kitab al-ṭabīḥ	Ayyubid	700-800 A.D.	lower class

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