

Spanish Arabic loanwords in late Middle and early Modern English

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The influx of Arabic vocabulary into English has received relatively scarce attention in the past: Taylor (1934) and Cannon & Kaye (1994) remain classic lexicographical works, but few subsequent investigations have monographically tackled the Arabic lexical legacy in English. This article concentrates on the Spanish Arabic influence on English, that is, on Arabic-origin lexis specifically used in the Iberian Peninsula as well as on the vocabulary which was mediated by Spanish at some point in its history from Arabic to its adoption into the English language. It assesses two sets of data retrieved from the *Oxford English Dictionary* and examines the most frequent routes of entry into the English language (e.g. Arabic > Spanish > French > English) and the larger networks of transmissions of these borrowings throughout the history of the language, with particular attention to the late medieval and early modern periods.

Keywords: Arabic; loanwords; Spanish; vocabulary

1. Introduction

The influx of Arabic vocabulary into English has received relatively scarce attention in the past: Taylor (1934) and Cannon & Kaye (1994) remain classic lexicographical works, but few subsequent investigations have monographically tackled the Arabic lexical legacy in English. Arguably, few direct borrowings can be traced, but the proportion of indirect loanwords (i.e. those mediated by other languages such as French or Latin) in the Middle Ages and early Modern period is significantly higher. The long and convoluted history of some of these words in English often blurs their ultimate etymon: Durkin's (2014: 384) brief section on Arabic loanwords in the history of English lists three of such cases: *syrup*

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(< Arabic *sharāb*), *ream* (< Arabic *rizma*, also obsolete *razma*), and *mosque* (< Arabic *maṣjid*). The present article explores an intermediate linguistic pair which has been mostly overlooked in the past: Spanish Arabic. The two most notable exceptions to this trend of neglect in scholarship are Breeze's (1991) case study, based on Old English *ealfara* (a Spanish-Arabic borrowing), and Conde-Silvestre's (1998) article concentrating on two Mozarabic words, *corcho* and *cordoban/cordovan* (> English *cork* and *cordwain* and the derivative *cordwainer*).

It is worth clarifying what Mozarabic stands for: the *Oxford English Dictionary* (henceforth, OED) defines it as “an extinct Ibero-Romance dialect spoken by the Mozarabs, and many Arabs, in Spain under Muslim rule”, adding that “this dialect is known almost entirely from refrains (known as *kharjabs*) added to Arabic and Hebrew poems of the 11th cent.” (OED3 [2003] s.v. *Mozarabic*, adj. and n.).¹ In contrast to its classification as a dialect, the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española* (henceforth, DRAE) labels it a Romance language and points out its Visigothic, Vulgar Latin heritage (DRAE, s.v. *mozárabe*). Conde-Silvestre (1998: 88–89) adds another caveat to the discussion of the Latin and Arabic sources of the lexical make-up of Mozarabic, which is “the influence of the ‘dialects’ on one another, which functioned, therefore, as superstrata in a sort of interactive relationship”.

Noticeably, the study of the Arabic influx on Spanish has received greater attention and has been widely examined by Hispanists,² but it is my perception that, when it comes to the history of English, Spanish-Arabic is in no lexicographer's land: on the one hand, those interested in the lexical traces of Spanish on English usually concentrate on later periods and do not even mention the noteworthy impact that Arabic had on Spanish itself; and, on the other, those few researchers delving into the Arabic contributions to English typically devote themselves to Classical Arabic and only adumbrate intermediate languages and the respective lexical contributions of the varieties of Arabic formerly spoken in territories such as Muslim Iberia. Even though the number of Spanish-Arabic words is limited, they deserve special attention; this article attempts to fill that lexicographical lacuna.

¹ It is worth stressing that the OED is a dynamic resource, which is why I will be citing the precise edition (and its date of publication/revision) employed in my analysis.

² *Inter alia*, see Maíllo (1983), Kiesler (1994), Corriente (1999, 2008), and, along with Pereira & Vicente, their very recent dictionary on Ibero-Romance lexical borrowings (Corriente, Pereira & Vicente 2019).

In order to do so, I used the advanced search option available in the OED online and retrieved all the entries containing the words “Spanish Arabic” in the etymology section of the OED. These searches resulted in thirty-seven results containing those terms in their etymological descriptions. Having assessed all the elements which were explicitly labelled “Spanish Arabic” in the OED, I attempted to gauge the presence of Arabic borrowings mediated by (or coming from) Spanish and extended the searches (e.g. it was found that *zoco* was not explicitly labelled as “Spanish Arabic”, although it was borrowed from Arabic into Spanish, which makes it fulfil the criterion for its inclusion in this study).³ The search terms were looser —“Spanish”, on the one hand, and “Arabic”, on the other—, so the total preliminary results amounted to 392. Among them were many Arabic loanwords borrowed from French into English also occurring in Spanish (*jiraffe*, *jar* (French *jarre*), *gazelle*), but also some direct Arabic borrowings (*jubbah*, *kantar*, †*mandil*, *Sabrawi*, *salat*, *sbeikh*, *ulema*, and *sebesten* (< Persian)), and others whose direct etymons are (post-classical) Latin lexemes (*jerboa*, *Maimonidean*, *marcasite*, *mezereon*, *nenuphar*, *nucha*, *realgar*, *ribes*, and *rob* (n.¹)), Portuguese (*miramamolín* and maybe partly Portuguese and Dutch in *monsoon*), Italian (*sirocco*), or Turkish (*vizier*).

Given the broad range of types of borrowings that this search yielded, I excluded those lexical items occurring in Spanish but not having contributed to the adoption of the word in English in any way, as well as those which are particularly ambiguous as far as their etymology is concerned (e.g. *felucca*, attested as Italian *fèlu(c)ca*, French *felouque*, Spanish *faluca*, Portuguese *falua*, and modern Arabic *falūkah* (also *fulaikah*) (OED2 [1895] s.v. *felucca*)). Cases like *barrack* (discussed in greater depth later on in this article) have likewise been omitted because regardless of whether the French (whence the English) lexeme might have been adopted from Spanish, Italian, or Portuguese, in more dubious scenarios, evidence for the ultimate etymon is wanting. I also used the *Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé* (TLFi) to corroborate intermediate Spanish borrowings of Arabic loanwords in French —especially, when faced with non-revised OED entries such as *cubeb* and *elemi*—,⁴ and both the DRAE and

³ Some of them overlapped with those in my general list and have, thus, been omitted from the discussion.

⁴ As for the latter aforementioned example, *elemi*, the TLFi rejects an intermediary Spanish source because the word is already attested in an earlier text in Medieval Latin produced in Rome in 1517 (TLFi, s.v. *élémi*). Other lexical items such as *fustoc* cannot be pinned down in historical dictionaries of French.

the *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico* (Corominas & Pascual 1980–1991) to compare their etymological descriptions.⁵ An entry-by-entry evaluation of the OED results was also imperative: unfortunately, the advanced search option does not disambiguate the status of the lexical material quoted, which signifies that, a priori, no distinction is made between whether the term cited is the near or remote etymon, or if the lexical material is included only for illustrative purposes —just to show that a given lexeme was present in an array of likely source languages.

2. Analysis of the results

I will first concentrate on the “Spanish Arabic” results from the OED. These are the following:⁶ *achaque*, *acton*, *albondigas*, *albricia*, *alcazar*, *alcohol*, *alcornoque*, *alezan*, *alfalfa*, *alguazil*, *almanac*, *Almohad* (n. and adj.), *alpargata*,⁷ *alpiste*, *apricot*, *arsenal*, *artichoke*, *assogue*, *cork* (n.¹), *cotton* (n.¹), *El Nath*, *gingelly*, †*mandil*, *Marrano*, *merguez*, *Morocco* (adj. and n.), *Mudéjar* (n. and adj.), *ogive*, †*orafle*, *reja*, *rincon*, *rosicler*, *rotumbe*, *round*, n.¹, *zecchino*, and *zoco*.⁸ A few preliminary notes should be first given.

Out of the aforementioned words, †*mandil* (OED3 [2000]), *El Nath* (OED3 [2012]), *orchil* (OED3 [2004]), and †*orafle* (OED3 [2004]) are not to be considered in this article because the Spanish Arabic lexeme has only been added to the etymology section for illustrative purposes —that is, these words ultimately derive from Arabic but the English attestations cannot be accounted

⁵ I will refer to the specific volume of Corominas & Pascual (*Diccionario crítico etimológico*) where the entry can be found by citing its publication year.

⁶ I will only cite the word category if it is multiple (e.g. noun and adjective) or distinct from noun. As can be inferred from the full list above, all of them are nouns (37) and three of them can also function as adjectives.

⁷ In quot. 1613 the direct source is French rather than Spanish (OED3 [2012] s.v. *alpargata*).

⁸ It is, nevertheless, worth considering the inclusion of what seems to be the Spanish article *el* in the OED lemma instead of the Arabic article *al* (also cf. Middle French *Alnathay*). This question remains unsolved in the etymology section of the entry but should be further pursued because of the co-occurrence of the *al* and *el* forms in the quotations provided (*el* in some of the *el*-forms appears merged to the following morpheme (*nath*), thereby exhibiting the same behaviour as the *al*- Arabic borrowings).

for by referring to Spanish or Spanish Arabic.⁹ *Round*, n.¹ and *zecchino* can only be tangentially associated with this diatopic variety of Arabic, namely, in the military sense (number 23) of the former (OED3 [2011] s.v. *round*, n.¹), and the form *zequi* —probably after Spanish *cequí*— of the latter (at α . forms under *zecchino*, OED3 [2018]). According to the OED3, the sense development of “office, tour of duty” (listed under *round*, n.¹, sense 23) is specific to Spanish Arabic and would have been borrowed into English through French, which in turn borrowed it from a Spanish variant (i.e. *ronda*) of Spanish Arabic *al-rutba*,¹⁰ whereas the variant *zequi* can be more easily explained on contrastive morphological grounds.

The cases of *rosicler*, *merguez*, and *rotumbe* are more problematic, as different origins have been postulated: Corominas & Pascual (1980–1991, s.v. *rosicler*) proposes *rosicler* < Catalan *rogicler* (*roig* “red” + *i* “and” + *cler* “clear”, *cler* being the Arabised or Frenchified pronunciation of Catalan *clar*), and that the Catalan word was ultimately borrowed from Arabic *rāḥġ al-ġār*. According to the OED (OED3 [2010] s.v. †*rosicler*), the ulterior etymology is “both phonologically problematic and difficult to justify in terms of semantic motivation, since borrowings of Arabic *rahj al-ġār* were already established as the name of this mineral in Catalan and Spanish”, but that possibility cannot be fully ruled out; this begs the question of whether the lexeme should be discussed among the Spanish Arabic borrowings in English at all.

An examination of the direct source of another English word (i.e. French *merguez*) is also in place. Even if the Arabic word (the ultimate source of French *merguez* > English *merguez*) is first attested in Spain (OED3 [2001] s.v. *merguez*), the TLFi claims that the French word was borrowed from Maghrebi Arabic (TLFi, s.v. *merguez*). Yet, no early quotations or further textual proof is adduced; the only scholarly source given is a lexicographical work which precisely traces the use of the Spanish word, Simonet’s *Glosario de voces ibéricas y latinas usadas entre los mozárabes* (1888); it is also acknowledged that the word

⁹ *Orchil* is a particularly interesting example of a route which remains to be further explored in forthcoming research: the importation of a term from Mozarabic Catalan, *orxella*, into French (*orseille*) (cf. Corominas & Pascual 1980–1991, s.v. [Spanish] *urchilla*). As usual, the French adaptation was afterwards integrated in Middle English (OED3 [2004] s.v. *orchil*).

¹⁰ *Ronda* is “a variant (with consonantal assimilation) of †*robda*, in turn a variant (with loss of the initial vowel) of †*arobda*, †*arrobdā* (a. 1207), probably (with metathesis of consonants) < Spanish Arabic *al-rutba*” (OED3 [2011] s.v. *ronda*).

was used in Spain as *mirkās/merkās* (Simonet 1888, s.v. *mircás/mercás*), so we should not dismiss the possible integration of the Arabic word into French via Spanish / Spanish Arabic. If we turn our attention to *rotumbe*, the picture that emerges is slightly similar and, at the same time, divergent in other respects: the direct etymon of English *rotumbe* < post-classical Latin *rotumba* (coming from Spanish *redoma* or tentatively its cognate in Portuguese) does not pose any special difficulties unlike its remote etymon, which is uncertain. Corominas & Pascual (1980–1991, s.v. *redoma*) cautiously advance the possibility that it might come from Arabic *raḏūma*, which is allegedly found in Africa, although it is uncertain whether the lexeme is ancient and genuinely Arabic. The OED (OED3 [2011] s.v. †*rotumbe*) suggests a morphologically similar form, albeit unattested: Spanish Arabic **raṭūma* or **ruṭūma* from Arabic *raṭūm* “narrow”, which, nevertheless, “presents semantic problems”. For the purposes of this article, I will attempt to concentrate on those lexical items whose direct and/or remote etymology is less obscure.

As can be inferred from the morphological parallels of many of the lexemes including “Spanish Arabic” in their etymology and the identical surviving forms in present-day Spanish (e.g. *albondigas*, *alcazar*, or *alconorque*), in a significant number of them the direct etymon of the English word is, unequivocally, Spanish:¹¹ *achaque* (< Spanish *achaque* “an attack of (chronic or intermittent) illness” < Spanish Arabic *al-šakā*), *albondigas* (< Spanish *albóndigas*, plural of *albóndiga* “meatball” < Spanish Arabic *al-bunduqa*), *albricia* (< Spanish *albricia* “a gift given to a messenger carrying good news” probably a loanword into Ibero-Romance languages < Arabic *al-biṣāra*), *alcazar* (< Spanish *alcázar* “fortress, castle, palace” < Spanish Arabic *al-qaṣar*), *alcornoque* (< Spanish *alcornoque* “cork oak” < an unattested Spanish Arabic (Mozarabic, according to the DRAE) form, **alqurnūq* < Arabic *al* “the” + an unattested post-classical Latin form **quernoccus* < Latin *quernus* “oak”), *alfalfa* (< Spanish *alfalfa* “a leguminous plant belonging to the *Medicago sativa* variety” < Spanish Arabic *al-faṣṣa*), *alguazil* (< Spanish †*alguazil* (cf. present-day Spanish *alguacil*) < Arabic *al-wazīr*, which developed a specific Spanish Arabic sense out of the Classical Arabic form, viz. “minor government official”), *Almohad* (< Spanish *almohade* “a follower of Aben Tumart, the chief of an Islamic dynasty that ruled in northern Africa and Spain during the twelfth and thirteen centuries after the decline of the Almoravid empire” < Spanish Arabic *al-muwaḥḥad*), *cork*, n.¹ (see Conde-Silvestre’s 1998

¹¹ The Spanish graphic accent has also been preserved in a few of the OED entries (e.g. *Mudéjar*).

exhaustive analysis of this word), *gingelly* “sesame oil; (also) the sesame plant” (apparently < Spanish †*genjoli*, possibly < †*agenjoli* by apheresis < Spanish Arabic *al-jonjolī*), *Mudéjar* “a subject Muslim who, during the Christian reconquest of the Iberian, was allowed to retain Islamic customs and traditions and to live in their own quarters in return for owing allegiance and paying tribute to a Christian monarch” (< Spanish *mudéjar* < Spanish Arabic *mudajjan*), *rincon* (< Spanish *rincón* “corner” < *rukān*, a Spanish Arabic variant of Arabic *rukn* “corner”), *reja* (< Spanish *reja* < Spanish Arabic *rīša* (also Maghribi Arabic *rīša*) and Medieval Latin *regia*),¹² and *zoco* (< Spanish Arabic *assūq* < Classical Latin *sūq* < Aramean *sūqā* < Akkadian *sūqu[m]* “street”).¹³

All of these entries (except for *zoco*, OED2 [1986]) have been recently revised as part of OED3, but some of them may require further scrutiny: first of all, the only attestation of *achaque* leads me to believe that it is a code-switch rather than an integrated borrowing. According to the OED (OED3 [2009] s.v. †*achaque*, n.), “the wider context of quot. 1647 suggests that the recipient of the letter was a Spanish speaker”, which would explain why the author decided to make use of the Spanish word to create a good rapport with the reader: “I am sorry to heare of your *achagues*, and so often indisposition there” (1647 J. Howell New Vol. of Lett. 238). The absence of any later textual testimonies as well as the editorial use of italics to indicate the insertion of a foreign word would further prove its better lexicographical treatment as a nonce borrowing or a single, one-off, code-switch to Spanish rather than an integrated loanword in the English language.

I have, however, excluded *Morocco* from the list of words with a direct Spanish etymon: this proper name has been argued to ultimately derive from Spanish Arabic †*Marrūkuš* (OED3 [2002] s.v. *Morocco*, adj. and n.), but it is

¹² *Reja* presents a more complicated and rather different history than the one offered in the OED: according to Corominas & Pascual (1980–1991, s.v. *reja*), there was a merger of Medieval Latin *regia* with Arabic *rīša* rather than a straightforward borrowing from Arabic; in addition, the direct etymon of the Spanish word does not seem to be Catalan (as indicated in the OED3) despite its relation to the Catalan, Occitan, and Italian cognates. The DRAE (s.v. *reja*²) completely neglects the Arabic etymon, but this may be due to the nature of the dictionary itself.

¹³ All the OED etymologies have been collated with those in the DRAE and Corominas & Pascual (1980–1991). Furthermore, it is necessary to state that in such entries as *acton* and *artichoke*, it is not clear whether the Spanish or rather its Spanish Arabic etymon contributed to the history of the loanword, but this issue should not be particularly contentious.

widely attested in other Romance languages, as in French *Maroc* and Italian *Marocco*, the latter form being morphologically closer to English Morocco than its Spanish counterpart, *Marruecos*. Another taxonomically problematic lexical item (and likewise excluded from the list below) is *apricot*: in its first attestation (OED [1885] s.v. *apricot*, n.) it occurs as *Abrecockes* (1562 W. Turner 2nd Pt. Herball f. 48^v), a form which may well derive from Portuguese *albricoque* or from Spanish *albaricoque*. The OED entry (subject to be revised in the forthcoming edition of the dictionary) is indecisive in this respect and leaves the door open for future emendations if new evidence emerges. It does indicate that it was later on assimilated to French *abricot*, which partly explains its present-day spelling,¹⁴ and that Spanish Arabic *al-borcoq(ue)* derives from another (classical) language (< Greek *πραϊκόκιον*, probably < Latin *praecoquum*).

As for the direct etymons of the other lexical items containing “Spanish Arabic” in their etymological descriptions, they can be grouped into the following intermediate languages: French (in *acton*, *alezan*, *alpiste*, *assogue*, *cotton*, and *amerguez*), Italian (*artichoke*, *zeczino*; see, particularly, *zequi* at α. forms for the possible unattested Spanish Arabic variant (OED [2018] s.v. *zeczino*)), Latin (*alcohol*, *rotumbe*), and multiple likely source languages (*almanac* (French and Latin), *alpargata* (French and Spanish), *round* (French and an English element)). The routes of entry into English, however, may not be as readily pinpointed; some quotations may signal other sources or (intermediate) languages (e.g. in texts mediated through translations) and some morphological variants (e.g. remodelled versions) may evince the influence of other languages. For instance, the OED states that *arsenal* “in some instances [it was] probably [borrowed] via French”—compare Middle French *archenal* (c. 1400 with reference to the Arsenal at Venice), *arsenail*, *arsinal*, *arcenal* (15th c.), Middle French *arsenal* (c. 1534). OED ([2018] s.v. *arsenal*) and the Spanish Arabic variant *dār al-šana* is only cited to exemplify an initial *d*- morphological variant occurring in Spanish; likewise, the form *alpistle* may evidence input from Dutch †*alpistel* (OED [2012] s.v. *alpiste*).

In those lexemes which penetrated the English language through French, the usual route is < Spanish or its Spanish Arabic etymon < Arabic. Many of

¹⁴ The later metathesis of the <p> may stem out of its association with peaches, as shown in the second quote of sense 1.a, which gives the two spelling variants as options: 1578 H. LYTE tr. R. Dodoens Nieuwe Herball VI. xl. 709: “There be two kindes of peaches. The other kindes are soner ripe, wherefore they be called abrecox or aprecox” (OED [1885] s.v. *apricot*).

them are also present in Old Occitan, Catalan, and Portuguese, among other Romance languages and, overall, Arabic is the ultimate (or penultimate etymon). As can be seen in Table 1, which lists them by date of first attestation in the OED, there is a peak of Spanish Arabic borrowings (roughly) chronologically coinciding with the end of Al-Andalus (1492) and the century thereafter. The first half of the seventeenth century is along the same lines (six borrowings as in the previous half of the sixteenth century). Many of these terms are, unfortunately, dated or rare and belong to a wide range of semantic fields, the most recurrent ones being SCIENCES, CRAFTS AND TRADES, and MANUFACTURING AND INDUSTRY, a finding which is not surprising considering the legacy of Arabic knowledge and culture.

As discussed in the introduction, many other lexemes are not explicitly “Spanish Arabic” but Spanish is relevant to their development from Arabic to a greater or lesser extent; *c.* 90 additional lexical items were categorised into the same languages of origin discussed above.¹⁵ As has already been indicated, the most common routes proved to be French < Spanish < Arabic (e.g. *alkitran*, †*alphenic*, *avives*, and †*ciclatoun*) and Spanish < Arabic (e.g. *alcalde*, *algarroba*, *almagre*, *Almoravid*, n. and adj., and *hollock* [< Spanish *aloque* < Arabic *ḥalūqī*], *Morisco*, adj. and n.), but occasionally either Catalan or Occitan can have acted as intermediaries. For instance, French *basan* was borrowed from Provençal *besana*, *basana* < Spanish *badana* < Spanish Arabic *baṭāna* < Arabic *biṭānah* (TLFi, s.v. *basane*; OED2 [1885] s.v. *basan* | *bazan*). In addition, numerous combinations of partial language inputs have also been noticed:¹⁶ Italian,

¹⁵ This number is not definitive as we still do not know much about some lexical entries; future research may shed light on or uncover hitherto unknown evidence.

¹⁶ I have excluded those words which can only be speculatively linked with Spanish. For instance, the unrevised OED entry for *tamarind* (OED2 [1910]) gives “Spanish *tamarindo*, Portuguese *tamarindo*, Italian *tamarindo*, medieval Latin *tamarindus*, ultimately < Arabic *tamr-hindi*”, but the only evidence which could be adduced to allegedly claim a Portuguese/Spanish etymon (on the basis of the plural morpheme *-os* in *Tamarindos*) is a translation of a work by a Portuguese historian, Fernão Lopes de Castanheda. The French etymon did not seem to have been borrowed from Spanish either, but rather from Medieval Latin (cf. TLFi, s.v. *tamarin*, n.²). It is also worth clarifying that *tamarind* should not be confused with *tamarin* (OED2 [1910]), which has a completely different meaning: it denotes an animal species rather than a tree or its fruit. The same taxonomical difficulty applies to *massymore* (< Spanish *mazmorra* *dungeon* or Portuguese *masmorra* < Arabic *maṭmūra*) (OED3 [2000] s.v. *massymore*) or

Table 1. OED entries containing “Spanish Arabic” ordered by time span

Time span	Lexical items
1250–1299	<i>ogive</i>
1300–1349	<i>acton, round</i>
1350–1399	<i>almanac</i>
1400–1449	<i>cork, cotton</i>
1450–1499	<i>rotumbe</i>
1500–1549	<i>alcohol, alguazil, artichoke, gingelly</i>
1550–1599	<i>Marrano, albricia, apricot, rincon, zecchino</i>
1600–1649	<i>Almohad, Morocco, alcazar, alpargata, rosicler</i>
1650–1699	<i>assogue</i>
1700–1750	
1750–1799	<i>alfalfa, raja</i>
1800–1849	<i>Mudéjar, alcornoque, alezan</i>
1850–1899	<i>albondigas, zoco</i>
1900–1949	
1950–1999	<i>merquez</i>

Spanish, and Portuguese (e.g. *alcatras* 1555), Italian, Spanish, French (prob. †*marabut** 1622, and *zero*, n. and adj. 1598), French and Spanish (*alcove* 1655, *algarade a.* 1649, and *alpargata* 1613), Spanish and Arabic (*alfaqui* 1600), and Spanish and Portuguese (*alforja* 1608, *alferez* 1581, and *morabino* 1909). More complex words from an etymological viewpoint are *auge*, which was partly borrowed from Middle French *auge* < Spanish *auge* < Arabic *awj* and partly from

to *salep* (OED2 [1909]) (French *salep*, Spanish *salép*, Portuguese *salepo* “starch, or jelly made from the dried tubers” < Turkish *sālep* < Arabic *tha‘leb*).

post-classical Latin *aug-*, *aux* < Persian *awg* (OED3 [2017] s.v. *auge*); *mesquita* (*a.ʔa* 1425), which is tentatively suggested to have Italian, Spanish, French, and Latin sources (OED3 [2001] s.v. *mesquita*); and *mithqal*, whose α. forms can be considered to have been disseminated via Spanish, Portuguese, and French.¹⁷ Likewise, non-direct etymons can be a source of multiple language contributions: it is not clear whether Spanish *alfil* or its etymon Arabic *al-fīl* was the immediate source of Middle French *alfin/alphin* (also with its vocalised versions, *auffin*, *auffin*) and post-classical Latin *alpinus* (OED3 [2012] s.v. *alpin*). Partial inputs from typologically related and unrelated languages feature prominently in the etymological descriptions of many of these words (see e.g. *rial*, which was partly adopted from Persian *riyāl* and partly from Arabic *riyāl*, both of which ultimately come from both Spanish and Portuguese *real* (OED3 [2010] s.v. *rial*, n.³)).

In some other entries, the Spanish and/or the Arabic influx may not be as straightforward: *barrack* (OED2 [1885] s.v. *barrack*, n.¹), French *baraque* < Provençal *baraca* / Catalan *barraca* (> Spanish *barraca*), is of obscure (pre-Roman) origin even though some lexicographers have tried to track down an Arabic source. The source of *cigar* (< Spanish *cigarro*) is claimed to be ultimately Arabic (cf. Barcia's *Great Etymological Spanish Dictionary*, quoted in OED2 [1889] s.v. *cigar*); alternatively, the DRAE suggests that it is Mayan *siyar* (DRAE, s.v. *cigarro*). *Mondongo* might be an alteration of *bondongo*, itself the result of metathetic consonantal changes and the suffix *-ongo* < Arabic *baṭn* (*bondongo*) (Corominas & Pascual 1980–1991, s.v. *mondongo*), but this is just the most likely possibility. A conjectural Arabic origin has also been given to *patache*, whose origin is uncertain —Corominas & Pascual (1980–1991, s.v. *patache*) suggests the Arabic etymon *baṭāš* (see also OED3 [2005] s.v. *patache*). Therefore, even the assumed Arabic substratum might be disputable.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the current usage of some of these terms in reference not only to Spain but also to other Spanish-speaking countries including the Caribbean (*alcarraza*, *almagre*, *alpargata*, *alquerque*, *matraca*, *mondongo*, and *noria*). *Merino*, for example, has also developed an idiosyncratically Caribbean sense, “an undershirt, originally one made of merino wool” (OED3 [2001] s.v. *merino*, adj. and n., 3b). Even if other Arabic borrowings are obsolete (e.g. †*alphenic*, †*anatron*, †*ciclatoun*, †*ante*, and †*hollock*), the present-day geographical distribution of those loanwords still in use merits

¹⁷ In the β. forms via Persian, Urdu, and Turkish, and in the γ. forms directly < Arabic (OED3 [2002] s.v. *mithqal*).

further consideration and should be further traced and set in a global context in future research.

3. Concluding remarks

This article has attempted to highlight the mostly overlooked role of Spanish Arabic in the overall study of Arabic loanwords in the English language. The Middle English and Early Modern English periods witnessed the greatest adoption of such loanwords, which were incorporated into English through several routes of transmission: not only was French the source of the direct etymon but also Latin, Italian, and, in some cases, multiple Romance languages contributed. It is important to remember that many of those lexical items arrived in English after a complex and long transmission history, which did not necessarily start in Arabic but which sometimes can be traced further back to Persian or Greek. Throughout a word's history, each recipient language often made it its own by (re-)adapting it —phonologically and morphologically— to its lexical repertoire, a natural linguistic development which can complicate the linear narratives that modern scholarship generally seems to favour. In the present lexicographical enterprise, the relative dating of the quotations in the languages involved, the morphological make-up of the word in question, and any clues based on the use of translations in the source textual material can be of assistance. The cultural and commercial exchanges between England and regions around the world can be documented through the history of the vocabulary that entered the language, so lexicographical research can also help us better understand global history. Overall, this investigation hopes to open up a rather neglected line of enquiry and stimulate the exploration of such intriguing loanwords in the English language.

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