



ORIGINAL ARTICLES

An etymological review on fish common and scientific names in the Euphrates and Tigris

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ABSTRACT

As the Mesopotamia has a long history of fishery, the etymological analysis of currently used fish names may have interesting motifs for other scientific fields. Because of some recent political factors, fewer studies have been conducted on the aquatic fauna in Iraq. Additionally, native and local studies will be not recognized and understood without having a clear knowledge about the local fish names. As some of these words have been deformed and almost of them are far variants from the standard or original forms, we have use etymology for elucidating the Arabic names. Of all species presented in the available sources, 46 species were selected for this study. All names, including scientific (Greek and Latin) and common Arabic names in Iraqi dialects were etymologically analyzed. For etymology of Arabic words, we had not, in fact, any real pattern for the methodology of Arabic words. Thus, we may consider this article, one of the first works deals with this field of international scientific terminology. We have proposed a so-called methodology for Arabic etymology, and then we have presented the suggestions for word etymologies.

Key words: Etymology, scientific names, common names, Iraq, Persian Gulf, ichthyology

Introduction

The Mesopotamia may be considered as one of the first fishery regions in the ancient history of human being. Some cities in the present days of Iraq have etymons related to fish or fishery, e.g. Nineveh etc. Because of some historical and political causes, fewer studies have been conducted on the aquatic fauna in this region. On the other hand, native and local studies have been less recognized and evaluated. It is clear that studying the terminology used by the natives in describing the fishes of this region will be useful for further studies in the field. We have tried to collect and present these terminologies and common fish names in the dialects currently used in Iraq. As some of these words have been deformed and almost of them are far variants from the standard or original forms, we have use etymology for elucidating the Arabic names. In some cases, it seemed that there might be a correlation between the meaning of scientific names and some local common fish common names. Therefore, we have presented the etymology of all scientific and common Arabic names of currently used dialects in Iraq.

Methodology:

In this study, we reviewed several sources for collecting data about the terminology used for describing the fishes in the Mesopotamia. Ultimately, we choose the valuable book of Coad, *Freshwater Fishes of Iraq*, and also we reviewed some other sources mentioned in the bibliography of the former book. All species of fishes in the territory of Euphrates and Tigris mentioned in this book were selected, as long as having the local Arabic names. The species were ordered according to their related families based on the systematic classification mentioned in *Freshwater Fishes of Iraq*. After preparation the material, all scientific and native Arabic names were etymologically analyzed. For etymology of scientific names, we tried to use some standard sources for zoology and scientific nomenclature. For etymology of Arabic words, we may consider this article, one of the first works deals with this field of scientific international terminology. Arabic language is one of the Semitic languages, which is cognate with Hebrew, Syriac, Mandaic, Abyssinian etc. Although some valuable works have been published for other brother languages, there is not any work for Arabic etymology. Therefore, we should propose a methodology for Arabic etymology, due to lack of any previous pattern, and then we should present the suggested etymologies. For this purpose, we used some valuable etymological sources of other Semitic languages, which mentioned Arabic evidence. We have proposed standard forms for dialectal variants

presented by Coad as Iraqi fish names. The compound names, have been divided to their components and then were etymologically analyzed.

Findings:

Of all species presented in the *Freshwater Fishes of Iraq* by Coad, 46 species were selected for this study. All names, including scientific (Greek and Latin) and common Arabic names in Iraqi dialects were etymologically analyzed. The referred references were also immediately mentioned. As the authors wished to precede more in the etymology of the words, the probable correlation of fish names with Arabic or Semitic roots have been also proposed. The order of the contents are based on the systematic classification in Coad's valuable work.

Family Carcharhinidae:

The family *Carcharhinidae*, is also called *Carchariidae*, derived from Gr. *ho karcharias* shark, from *kárcharos* having sharp teeth (Paululat, 2011).

[*] Genus *Carcharhinus* Blainville, 1816

[1] *Carcharhinus leucas* (Valenciennes in Müller and Henle, 1839) bull shark.

Carcharhinus—is a mingled form of *carchar-* (see above) and *-rhinus* from Gr. *rhinos* nose (Maggenti, 2005).

leucas—from Gr. *leukós* white (Paululat, 2011).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“kosetch, kossage, koseage, and khushu” (Coad, 2010). Coad suggests the latter as Sumerian name for *shark*, but it seems that all names are the variants of Pers. *kūsa* shark, from Pahl. *kōsag*, hence Arabicized form of *kōsaj* swordfish (Wehr, 1979). The form *khushu* probably a deformed variant of Pers. *kūsa* or other local dialects. Middle Pers. *kōsag* means *beardless*; that fish being prob. so called on account of its lack of scales (Corriente, 1997).

Family Engraulidae:

The family name is derived from Gr. *éngraulis* (*éggraylis*) anchovy (Paululat, 2011).

[*] Genus *Thryssa* Cuvier, 1829

[2] *Thryssa hamiltonii* (Gray, 1835) Hamilton's thryssa.

Thryssa—from Gr. *trissa* or *trisses* shad (see Liddell and Scott, 1885).

hamiltonii—named after Hamilton.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“balam; shega; usbur” (Coad, 2010).

Balam—Ar. *balam* small rowboat, skiff (Woodhead, 1967).

Šbūr—Ar. *šbūr* a kind of kippered fish (Woodhead, 1967); it seems that the Ar. *šbūr* (originally *šubūr*) is derived from *shābil* shad, perhaps derived from Celtic **sabolos* relating to summer (Corriente, 1997).

Family Clupeidae:

The family name derived from *Clupea* from L. *clūpea* a fish described by Plinius (Paululat, 2011).

[*] Genus *Nematalosa* Regan, 1917

[3] *Nematalosa nasus* (Bloch, 1795) Bloch's gizzard shad, hairback.

Nematalosa—formed from Gr. *nema* thread and *Alosa*—from Saxon *Allis*, old name of the European shad, compare *Alosa alosa* (Becker, 1983).

nasus—from L. *nasus* nose (Maggenti, 2005).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“Jaffot, yaffoud, juwwaf; shroom” (Coad, 2010).

Shrūm—perhaps related to *sharma*, as plural *shurum* having a harelip (Woodhead, 1967), referring to the form of mouth part of the species; compare Sem. root *sh-r-m* to cut, split (Payne Smith, 1895).

Juwwāf—Ar. *juwwāf* also as *yuwwāfah*, perhaps related to Syr. root *j-w-f* to hunt, hence hunter fish (Payne Smith, 1895).

[*] Genus *Tenulosa* Fowler, 1934

[4] *Tenulosa ilisha* (Hamilton-Buchanan, 1822) hilsa, Indian shad or river shad.

Tenulosa—formed from L. *tenuis* thin and *Alosa*—from Saxon *Allis*, old name of the European shad, compare *Alosa alosa* (Becker, 1983).

ilisha—L. *ilisha* a fish, usually *Clupea ilisha*, from Skr. *ilīśaḥ* hilsa, hilsah (Klein, 1983).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“sbour, zoboar, soboar, sobour” (Coad, 2010).

Šbūr—Ar. *šbūr* a kind of kippered fish (Woodhead, 1967); it seems that the Ar. *šbūr* (originally *šubūr*) is derived from *shābil* shad, perhaps derived from Celtic **sabolos* relating to summer (Corriente, 1997).

Family Cyprinidae:

[*] Genus *Acanthobrama* Heckel, 1843

[5] *Acanthobrama marmid* (Heckel, 1843)

Acanthobrama—Latinized acanth-, from Gr. *akantha* thorn, spine + Old Fr. *brème*, *bresmia* a fresh water fish (Paululat, 2011).

marmid—L. *marmid*, relating to L. *marmor* marble, white or gleaming stone (Lewis, 1969).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“semnan arrez, semnan areed, arath” (Coad, 2010).

Samnān ‘arīdh—Ar. *samnān* sleek, healthy, fat, corpulent + ‘*arīdh* wide, broad (Woodhead, 1967), referring to the deep body, often humped behind the head of the species. ‘*Arīda^h* independently used for some fishes.

[*] Genus *Alburnus* Rafinesque, 1820

[6] *Alburnus caeruleus* Heckel, 1843

Alburnus—L. *alburnus*, from Middle L. *alburnus* off-white, whitish, from L. *albus* white (Lewis, 1969).

caeruleus—L. also *coeruleus* bluish, dark green blue (Paululat, 2011).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“lassafa” (Coad, 2010).

Laśśāfa^h—Ar. *laśśāfa^h* fluorescent, from verb Ar. *laśafa* to fluoresce (Ba'albaki, 2002).

[7] *Alburnus mossulensis* Heckel, 1843

mossulensis—pertaining to local name Mosul.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“semnan, simnan, semnan tuyel; sink; lassaf; zurri at Mosul (zurri is also used for *Chondrostoma regium*, *Aphanius* spp., *Gambusia* and any small fishes or large fishes when young)” (Coad, 2010).

Samnān ṭawīl—Ar. *samnān* sleek, healthy, corpulent + *ṭawīl* long (Woodhead, 1967), hence long sleek fish. Compare with *Samnān ‘arīdh* (*Acanthobrama marmid*) broad sleek fish.

Laśśāf—Ar. *laśśāf* fluorescent, from verb Ar. *laśafa* to fluoresce (Ba'albaki, 2002).

Shilik—perhaps relates to Ar. *shilig* a cucumber-shaped variety of melon. *Shanak* or *sink* is probably a variant of this word.

Zūrrī—etymology uncertain, perhaps relating to a place name.

[*] Genus *Aspius* Agassiz, 1832

[8] *Aspius vorax* Heckel, 1843

Aspius—L. *aspius*, from Gr. *aspis*, relating to “asp” a small poisonous snake (Partridge, 1966).

vorax—L. *vorax* swallowing greedily (Lewis, 1969).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“shilling, shillik, shelej, shalaj, sholgeh; bu aliawi, abu elawi; called “snake” by American soldiers because of the name asp being familiar as the snake that killed Cleopatra” (Coad, 2010).

Shilik—perhaps relates to Ar. *shilig* a cucumber-shaped variety of melon.

Abū ‘alāwī—Ar. *abū ‘alāwī*, belonging to ‘*alī*.

[*] Genus *Barbus* Cuvier and Cloquet, 1816

[9] *Barbus barbulus* Heckel, 1849

Barbus—L. *barbus*, a fish with L. *barba* beard (Paululat, 2011).

barbulus—diminutive form of L. *barbus*, a fish with L. *barba* beard (Paululat, 2011).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“abu-barattum, abu baratem, abu bratum; nabbash” (Coad, 2010).

Abū-barātīm—Ar. *abū* a prefix particle denoting “an animal having” + Ar. *barātīm* thick lips (Woodhead, 1967). Referring to some fish have very thick lips so a central lobe is apparent.

Nabbash—Ar. *nabbash* to keep digging up, keep unearthing, from verb Ar. *nibash* to dig up, unearth (Woodhead, 1967). Referring to the feeding behavior of the fish.

[10] *Barbus esocinus* (Heckel, 1843) Tigris “salmon”, Euphrates “salmon” (not a salmon of course), pike barb.

esocinus—L. *esocinus*, relating to L. *esox* pike (Paululat, 2011).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“bizz; farkh; farch; farkh-el-biz; mangar” (Coad, 2010).

Farikh-al-bizz—Ar. *farikh* a young animal, especially bird, fledgeling + Ar. *bizz* a large Iraqi food fish (Woodhead, 1967).

Manjar—perhaps related to Sem. n-g-r flow or small pond, hence a running fish or dweller in a pond.

[11] *Barbus grypus* (Heckel, 1843) large-scaled barb.

grypus—L. *grypus* or *gryphus*, from Gr. *gryps* hunter (Lewis, 1969).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“shabout, shabbout; hamrawi” (Coad, 2010).

Shabbūt—Ar. *shabbūt* a kind of large fish found in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (Woodhead, 1967). Relates to Syr. *shabōṭa* a large fish found in the Nile (Klein, 1983). Perhaps derived from verb root *sh-b-ṭ* to beat, knock; hence a beating, knocking and striking fish.

Humrāwī—Ar. *humrāwī* adjective form of Ar. *humrā* redness, red color, red coloration (Woodhead, 1967).

[12] *Barbus kersin* Heckel, 1843

kersin—this Latinized word is related to Ar. *karsīn*, see below.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“jassan, shissan, jazzan, gazzan, djissan; barzam, barsam; kersin at Aleppo (= Halab, Syria) (hence the scientific name)” (Coad, 2010).

Karsīn—Ar. *karsīn*, perhaps from a Syr. place name or from Neo-Syr. *karśīn* paunchy, gluttonous, from Syr. *karsānā* ventricosus, pot-bellied (Payne Smith, 1895).

Jassān—perhaps from root *j-s-s* to explore, hence Ar. *jassān* an explorer.

[13] *Barbus lacerta* Heckel, 1843

lacerta—English ‘lizard’ is finally derived from L. *lacerta* lizard, from Indo-European base **lĕq-* meaning to bend, twist (Klein 899).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“shabout moraqqat” (Coad, 2010).

Shabbūt muraqqat—Ar. *shabbūt* a kind of large fish found in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers + Ar. *muraqqat* spotted (Woodhead, 1967).

[14] *Barbus luteus* (Heckel, 1843) golden barb.

luteus—L. *luteus* golden yellow (Maggenti, 2005), referring to the eye rim, which is yellow-green.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“himri, hamria or hamra; binni hamour, binni hamri, bunnī himri, binni shifatha, beni asphar; beni abjad or beni ebjas (for *Systomus albus*); zurri; bartema” (Coad, 2010).

Himrī—Ar. *himrī* a kind of reddish-colored fish, from Ar. *humrā* red color (Woodhead, 1967).

Bunnī himrī—Ar. *bunnī* a common variety of edible fish similar to the carp (Woodhead, 1967) + Ar. *himrī* a kind of reddish-colored fish.

Other forms as binnī or binī is used with following epithets:

Aṣfar—Ar. *aṣfar* yellow.

Shifata^h—relates to Ar. *shiffa* lip (Woodhead, 1967), standard Ar. *shafata^h* (Ba'albaki, 2002), hence having (thick) lips.

Abjas—causing to flow or gush out, from Ar. verb *b-j-s* to flow or gush out (Ba'albaki, 2002). *Abjad* may be confusingly used for *abjas*.

Bartima^h—relates to Ar. *barātim* thick lips (Woodhead, 1967). Referring to thick lips of the species.

Zūrrī—etymology uncertain, perhaps relating to a place name.

[15] *Barbus pectoralis* Heckel, 1843

pectoralis—L. *pectoralis* relating to the breast, chest, distinguishing from *Barbus capito*, referring to the head part.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“nebbash; sheikh san; ajzan” (Coad, 2010).

Nabbash—Ar. *nabbash* to keep digging up, keep unearthing, from verb Ar. *nibash* to dig up, unearthing (Woodhead, 1967). Referring to the feeding behavior of the fish.

Shaykh san'ā—perhaps related to a historical character, an old man in the oriental history, perhaps because of his long barb.

[16] *Barbus sharpeyi* Günther, 1874

sharpeyi—relating to Sharpe.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“binni, bunnī, bunia; aradah at Baghdad according to Albert Günther but this may be an error for *Acanthobrama marmid*” (Coad, 2010).

Bunnī—Ar. *bunnī* a common variety of edible fish similar to the carp (Woodhead, 1967).

[17] *Barbus subquincunciatus* (Günther, 1868) black spot barb, leopard barbel.

subquincunciatus—formed from L. *sub-* beneath, hence nearly + L. *quin cunx* L. *quinque* five + *uncia* an ounce. The quincunx was marked by five small spots or balls. An arrangement of things by fives in a square or a rectangle, one being placed at each corner and a set of 5 objects arranged with 4 as the corners of a square and the fifth centrally placed, e.g. lateral line pores in *Nemichthys scolopaceus*; spots on the flank of *Barbus subquincunciatus* are arranged almost like a five in dominoes, but irregularly (Dictionary of ichthyology, 2009).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“abu khazzama; a'djzan, ajzan, agzan, adzan; nabish” (Coad, 2010).

Abū-khizzāma^h—Ar. *abū* a prefix particle denoting “an animal having” + Ar. *khizzāma^h* nose ring (in bulls, male camels, or women). In Iraqi Ar. *abū-khizzāma^h* also denoted an old-fashioned type of cannon (with a ring on it for hitching to a horse) (Woodhead, 1967).

Nabbash—Ar. *nabbash* to keep digging up, keep unearthing, from verb Ar. *nibash* to dig up, unearthing (Woodhead, 1967). Referring to the feeding behavior of the fish.

'Ajzān—perhaps related to a bird name as *'ijz*, pl. *'ijzān* cuckoo.

[18] *Barbus xanthopterus* (Heckel, 1843)

xanthopterus—formed from Gr. *xanthos* yellow + Gr. *pteron* wing (Maggenti, 2005), referring to all fins of the species, which are lemon-yellow to orange.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“gattan, ghattan, kattan, khattan; nobbash; thekar” (Coad, 2010).

Kaṭṭān—Ar. *kaṭṭān* also *qaṭṭān*, perhaps related to Sem. root *q-ṭ-n* to be small, thin and frail. However, it is more probable related to *q-ṭ-ṭ* to quarrel, discord (Klein, 1983).

Nabbash—Ar. *nabbash* to keep digging up, keep unearthing, from verb Ar. *nibash* to dig up, unearthing (Woodhead, 1967). Referring to the feeding behavior of the fish.

[*] Genus *Barilius* Hamilton-Buchanan, 1822

The genus name of *L. Barilius*, relating to a region in Congo.

[19] *Barilius mesopotamicus* Berg, 1932

Barilius—*L. Barilius*, relating to a region in Congo (Paululat, 2011).

mesopotamicus—*L. mesopotamicus* belonging to *Mesopotamia* (Lewis, 1969).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“sboura iraqia” (Coad, 2010).

Šubūra^h irāqiyya^h—it seems that the standard Ar. form for *šubūra^h* (in dialect as *šbūra^h*) is *shābil* shad, perhaps derived from Celtic **sabolos* relating to summer (Corriente, 1997) + Ar. *irāqiyya^h* belonging to Iraq, Iraq.

[*] Genus *Capoeta* Valenciennes in Cuvier and Valenciennes, 1842

[20] *Capoeta damascina* (Valenciennes in Cuvier and Valenciennes, 1842)

Capoeta—The local vernacular name *kapwaeti* used in Georgia and Azerbaijan (fishbase.com).

damascina—feminine of *L. damascinus* belonging to *Damascus* (Lewis, 1969).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“toueni, toyueni, twena; bertin, bartin; tin; zardah masih; tela shami” (Coad, 2010).

Bartima^h—relates to Ar. *barātim* thick lips (Woodhead, 1967). Referring to thick lips of the species. Hence, *tīn* and *bartīn* probably are the vernacular forms of *Bartima^h*.

Zarda māsi—formed from Kurd. *zarda* yellow, gold + Kurd. *māsi* fish (Jaba, 1879).

Tuwaynī—etymology uncertain, perhaps relating to a place name.

Telā shāmī—*telā* perhaps related to Pers. gold(fish) + *shāmī* related to Syria.

[21] *Capoeta trutta* (Heckel, 1843)

trutta—*L. trutta* from It. *trotta*, from Medieval *L. tructa* trout (Paululat, 2011).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“touyeni, twena; hemira; tela morqat; kwesa; ethra or ethry at Mosul” (Coad, 2010).

Humayrā—Ar. *humayrā* diminutive of Ar. *hamrā* red, red colored, with red coloration (Woodhead, 1967).

Muraqqat—Ar. *muraqqat* spotted (Woodhead, 1967).

Tuwayna^h—Ar. *tuwayn* or *tuwayna^h* perhaps a place name.

For *kwesa*, see Ar. *kōsaj*, above.

[*] Genus *Carassius* Nilsson, 1832

[22] *Carassius auratus* (Linnaeus, 1758) goldfish.

Carassius—*L. carassius*, related to Gr. *chárax* an ancient unknown fish (Paululat, 2011).

auratus—*L. auratus* ornamented with gold, gilded; formed from *L. aurum* gold + *L. suffix -at* having (Lewis, 1969).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“samak zahabi; buj-buj in Nasiriyah; samti; yaybash in Basrah; karssen in Baghdad” (Coad, 2010).

Samak zahabī—Ar. *samak* fish + Ar. *zahabī* golden (Woodhead, 1967), hence golgfish.

Karsīn—Ar. *karsīn*, perhaps from a Syr. place name or from Neo-Syr. *karśīn* paunchy, gluttonous, from Syr. *karsānā* ventricosus, pot-bellied (Payne Smith, 1895).

Yāybāsh—formed from Turk. *yāy* bow, arch, curve + Turk. *bāsh* head.

[*] Genus *Chondrostoma* Agassiz, 1832

[23] *Chondrostoma regium* (Heckel, 1843)

Chondrostoma—formed from Gr. *chondros* cartilage + Gr. *stoma* mouth (Maggenti, 2005).

regium—relating to a city in Gallia Cisalpina, now Reggio (Lewis, 1969).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“baloot muluki; pangka; zurri at Mosul (also used for *Alburnus mossulensis*, *Aphanius spp.*, *Gambusia* and any small fishes or large fishes when young)” (Coad, 2010).

[*] Genus *Ctenopharyngodon* Steindachner, 1866

[24] *Ctenopharyngodon idella* (Valenciennes in Cuvier and Valenciennes, 1844)
Ctenopharyngodon—formed from Gr. *kteis* comb + Gr. *pharynx* gullet, throat + Gr. *odous* tooth (Maggenti, 2005). Referring to comblike pharyngeal teeth.
idella—presumably derived from the Greek *idios*, distinctive or peculiar (Scharph 2005).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“carp eshaby, gareba” (Coad, 2010).
 [*] Genus *Cyprinion* Heckel, 1843
 [25] *Cyprinion kais* Heckel, 1843
Cyprinion—L. *cyprinion*, related to L. *cyprinus*, diminutive of Gr. *kyprinos* goldfish, Aristoteles mentioned it, derived from Gr. *Kýpris* Aphrodite, goddess of Love, because of its fecundity (Paululat, 2011).
kais—perhaps from Neo-Syr. *kayis*, see below.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“bunni saghir, bnaini; kais at Aleppo (= Halab, Syria), hence the scientific name” (Coad, 2010).
Bunnī saghīr—Ar. *bunnī* a common variety of edible fish similar to the carp + Ar. *saghīr* little, small (Woodhead, 1967).
Bunnaynī—Ar. *bunnaynī*, pertaining to Ar. *bunnayn*, diminutive of Ar. *bunnī* a common variety of edible fish similar to the carp (Woodhead, 1967).
Kays—perhaps from Neo-Syr. *kayis* little; compare with synonyms above.
 [26] *Cyprinion macrostomum* (Heckel, 1843) large-mouthed barb.
macrostomum—formed from Gr. *makros* large + Gr. *stoma* mouth (Maggenti, 2005), referring to the wide mouth (22-27 percent of head length) in this species.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“himriya sefra, hmarriya sefra, surrah masih; dunbuk kabir al-fam, benayne; dombok or dumbek at Mosul (= meaning solid or compact flesh, a good source of food, according to Johann Jakob Heckel; kais at Aleppo (= Halab, Syria) according to Johann Jakob Heckel (but see above species)” (Coad, 2010).
Humriya^h safra—Ar. *humriya^h* derived form of Ar. *humrā* redness, red color, red coloration, hence a red fish + Ar. *safra* yellow, yellowish (Woodhead, 1967).
Sūra māsi—Kurd. *sūr* or *sūra* red + Kurd. *māsi* fish.
Bunnaynī—Ar. *bunnaynī*, pertaining to Ar. *bunnayn*, diminutive of Ar. *bunnī* a common variety of edible fish similar to the carp (Woodhead, 1967).
Dumbak kabīr al-fam—Pers. *tombak*; Ar. *kabīr* great + Ar. *fam* mouth.
 [*] Genus *Cyprinus* Linnaeus, 1758
 [27] *Cyprinus carpio* (Linnaeus, 1758) carp, European carp, German carp, wild carp; mirror carp, leather carp, line carp, naked carp (last four referring to different forms of escalation), koi (aquarium variety).
Cyprinus—L. *cyprinus*, from Gr. *kyprinos* goldfish, Aristoteles mentioned it, derived from Gr. *Kýpris* Aphrodite, goddess of Love, because of its fecundity (Paululat, 2011).
carpio—L. *carpio* carp (Paululat, 2011).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“carp, karp, carp shaeeh; samti (= helicopter – used in the marshes from a supposed resemblance in shape)” (Coad, 2010).
 [*] Genus *Garra* Hamilton-Buchanan, 1822
 [28] *Garra rufa* (Heckel, 1843)
Garra—perhaps related to Sp. *garra* claw, talon, from Celtic origin meaning leg, stalk, stem, hence calves of the leg.
rufa—feminine of L. *rufus* red

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“djulake; kokur ahmar, karkoor ahmar, garagoor; algargor alahmer” (Coad, 2010).
Jūlaka—Kurd. *jūlaka* Jewish, compare Ar. *jahūdī* Jewish.
Karkūr al-hamrah—Ar. *karkūr*, perhaps related to root *k-r-k-r* to giggle (Woodhead, 1967), hence a giggling fish + Ar. *hamrah* red colored or Ar. *ahmar* red.

[29] *Garra variabilis* (Heckel, 1843)
variabilis—L. *variabilis* variable; referring to diversity in color and ornaments (Lewis, 1969).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“karkoor mit-la’oon” (Coad, 2010).

Karkūr mutalawwin—Ar. *karkūr*, perhaps related to root *k-r-k-r* to giggle (Woodhead, 1967), hence a giggling fish + Ar. *mutalawwin* colored, variable.

[*] Genus *Squalius* Bonaparte, 1837

[30] *Squalius cephalus* (Linnaeus, 1758) European chub.

Squalius—from L. *squaleo* to be rough and stiff (Lewis, 1969), hence along with species name means stubborn, pig-headed. Other etymologies have been also suggested, including filthy or dirty headed or rude and without ornament.

cephalus—Gr. *cephalos* head (Liddell, 1885).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“bir-aan siphaloos, barayan, baraan” (Coad, 2010).

[*] Genus *Typhlogarra* Trewavas, 1955

[31] *Typhlogarra widdowsoni* (Trewavas, 1955) Iraq blind barb.

Typhlogarra—formed from Gr. *typhlos* blind + *garra* see above.

widdowsoni—related to Widdowson.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“samak aa’ama” (Coad, 2010).

Samak a’mā—Ar. *samak* fish + Ar. *a’mā* blind.

[*] Genus *Cobitis* Linnaeus, 1758

[32] *Cobitis taenia* (Linnaeus, 1758) spined or spiny loach, stone loach, weatherfish, spotted weatherfish, Siberian loach.

Cobitis—Gr. *kobítis* a well-known fish from antic period (Paululat, 2011).

taenia—L. *taenia*, from Gr. *taenia* band, ribbon (Maggenti, 2005).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“lakh mukhattat” (Coad, 2010).

Lakh—Ar. *lakh* also as *lakh*; this name may be related either with Sem. root *l-kh* moist, fresh, humor, pus, phlegm, or *l-kh-y* jaw, jawbone, referring to the certain characteristics of the mouth (i.e. barbs) of the fish.

Family Balitoridae:

[*] Genus *Barbatula* Linck, 1789

[33] *Barbatula argyrogramma* (Heckel, 1849)

Barbatula—diminutive form of L. *barbatus* from L. *barbus*, barbel, a fish with L. *barba* beard (Paululat, 2011).

argyrogramma—formed from Gr. *argyros* silver + Gr. *gramma* picture (Maggenti, 2005), referring to silvery lateral line on the body of the species (Lewis, 1969).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“kebudi at Aleppo (= Halab, Syria) according to Johann Jakob Heckel” (Coad, 2010).

Kabūdī—Pers. *kabūdī* literally means blue, livid.

[34] *Barbatula frenata* (Heckel, 1843)

frenata—formed from L. *frenum* bridle + suffix *-at* having (Maggenti, 2005), referring to the very distinctive band from eye to eye across snout.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“lakh; telay at Mosul according to Johann Jakob Heckel” (Coad, 2010).

Lakh—Ar. *lakh* also as *lukh*; this name may be related either with Sem. root *l-kh* moist, fresh, humor, pus, phlegm, or *l-kh-y* jaw, jawbone, referring to the certain characteristics of the mouth (i.e. barbs) of the fish.

[*] Genus *Paracobitis* Bleeker, 1863

[35] *Paracobitis malapterura* (Valenciennes in Cuvier and Valenciennes, 1846)

Paracobitis—formed from Gr. *para* beside, near, similar + *Cobitis*, hence a type locality of *Cobitis malapterura*.

malapterura—formed from Gr. *malakrós* soft + Gr. *pterón* wing or flyer + Gr. *urá* tail (Paululat, 2011).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“lakh” (Coad, 2010).

Lakh—Ar. *lakh* also as *lukh*; this name may be related either with Sem. root *l-kh* moist, fresh, humor, pus, phlegm, or *l-kh-y* jaw, jawbone, referring to the certain characteristics of the mouth (i.e. barbs) of the fish.

Family Siluridae:

[*] Genus *Silurus* Linnaeus, 1758

[36] *Silurus triostegus* (Heckel, 1843) Mesopotamian catfish.

Silurus—Gr. *silouros* a very large catfish (Liddell and Scott, 1885).

triostegus—formed from *tri-*, L. *tres* three + *stegus*, deck of a ship, roof (Liddell and Scott, 1885), hence perhaps referring to the three rays of dorsal fin branches.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“jirri, djirri, girri, yerri” (Coad, 2010).

Jirrī—Ar. *jirrī*, etymology uncertain.

Family Heteropneustidae:

[*] Genus *Heteropneustes* Müller, 1840

[37] *Heteropneustes fossilis* (Bloch, 1794) Indian stinging catfish.

Heteropneustes—formed from Gr. *héteros* different + Gr. *pneustés* breathing (Paululat, 2011).

fossilis—L. *fossilis* which can be dug out, from L. *fossus*, past participle of *fodere* to dig (up), excavate, whence compare L. *fossa*, a ditch or a trench (Partridge, 1966).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“samaka; dood; abu-al hakim, abu al-hakam, abu-al-hukum; samma; djirri lasseye; jamhoori (at Baghdad in reference to the then new republic or jamhooria); samak al-za'em (named after a former president who had this species introduced for mosquito control)” (Coad, 2010).

Samakah—Ar. *samakah* little fish.

Dūd—Ar. *dūd* worm.

Abū-al-HKM—all three forms may be used, etymology uncertain, perhaps relating to a person or place name.

Family Bagridae:

[*] Genus *Mystus* Scopoli, 1777

[38] *Mystus pelusius* (Solander in Russell, 1794)

Mystus—it is said to be a false reading of *Nystrus* (Lewis, 1969), hence probably from Gr. *nystázo* sleepy, drowsy, napping (Liddell and Scott, 1885).

pelusius—related to L. *Pelusium*, Gr. *Pēlousion*, an Egyptian city at the eastern mouth of the Nile, the modern Castle of *Tineh* (Liddell and Scott, 1885).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“abu-zummair, abouz-zoumeir, abu-al-zamir, abu'l-zoumeir; jahudi in Mosul and zugzug in Aleppo (= Halab, Syria) according to Johann Jakob Heckel” (Coad, 2010).

Abū-zummayr—Ar. *abū-zummayr*

Jahūdī—Ar. *jahūdī* Jewish.

Family Mugilidae:

[*] Genus *Liza* Jordan and Swain, 1884

[39] *Liza abu* (Heckel, 1843) abu mullet, freshwater mullet.

Liza—etymology uncertain, perhaps a person name.

abu—see Ar. *abū*.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“khishni, hishni, hosoon or hashoun; maid; abu-khraiza; abu sukkaneyn in allusion to the toothed suborbital bone according to Johann Jakob Heckel” (Coad, 2010).

Khashnī—Ar. *khashnī*, related to Ar. *khashin* coarse, rough (Woodhead, 1967).

Abū-khrīza^h—Ar. *abū* a prefix particle denoting “an animal having or being like” + Ar. *khrīza^h* (standard Ar. *khurayza^h*) a small bead, diminutive of Ar. *khirza^h* bead (Woodhead, 1967).

Abū-sukkānayn—Ar. *abū* a prefix particle denoting “an animal having or being like” + Ar. *sukkānayn* dual of Ar. *sukkān* steering wheel or handle bars (Woodhead, 1967), hence having two steering (=dorsal) fins.

Mayid—Ar. *mayid*, perhaps related to Sem. root *m-’-d* to multiply, become many, grow, be strong; compare Ar. *ma’ada* to grow (Klein, 1983).

[40] *Liza klunzingeri* (Day, 1888) Klunzinger’s mullet (keeled mullet and back keeled mullet as *L. carinata*).

klunzingeri—named in honor Prof. Dr. Carl Benjamin Klunzinger, 1834-1914, German (Stuttgart) medical doctor and naturalist, who published on fish, crabs and corals from the Red Sea (tmbi.gu.se, 2011).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“maid; biah, biah zahbee, beyah zhabee” (Coad, 2010).

Mayid—Ar. *mayid*, perhaps related to Sem. root *m-’-d* to multiply, become many, grow, be strong; compare Ar. *ma’ada* to grow (Klein, 1983). The younger fish is called *mayid*, hence it may mean the multiplying and growing fish; the grown fish is called *biyāh*.

Bayyāh—Ar. *bayyāh* the standard form of *biyāh*, perhaps related to Sem. root *b-w-ḥ* to be powerful or be given power, hence to be permitted; Ar. *biyāh* is the grown form of the fish, hence grown and became powerful fish. The younger fish is called *mayid*.

Biyāh zahabī—Ar. deviate form of Ar. *bayyāh* + Ar. *zahabī* golden.

[41] *Liza subviridis* (Valenciennes in Cuvier and Valenciennes, 1836) greenback mullet, greenback grey mullet, silver mullet.

subviridis—L. *viridis* green (Lewis, 1969); referring to the coloration on body of the animal.

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“biah, biah akhter, beyah akhter; maid, meid” (Coad, 2010).

Biyāh akhdhar—Ar. deviate form of Ar. *bayyāh* + Ar. *akhdhar* green.

Mayid—Ar. *mayid*, perhaps related to Sem. root *m-’-d* to multiply, become many, grow, be strong; compare Ar. *ma’ada* to grow (Klein, 1983). The younger fish is called *mayid*, hence it may mean the multiplying and growing fish; the grown fish is called *biyāh*.

[*] Genus *Aphanius* Nardo, 1827

[42] *Aphanius dispar* (Rüppell, 1829) high-finned pupfish, Arabian killifish, mother of pearl fish.

Aphanius—related to Gr. *aphanēs* inconspicuous.

dispar—L. *dis-par* unequal and different (Lewis, 1969).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“harsun; batrikh, batrikh motakayer” (Coad, 2010).

Batrīkh—compare with Egyptian Ar. *baṭrūkh* roe (of any type of fish) also *baṭārīkh* cured salted roe of the grey mullet, botargo (Hinds and Badawi, 1986).

[43] *Aphanius mento* (Heckel, 1843) Persian pupfish, Persian minnow, Black Persian minnow, Persian killie.

mento—L. *mento* one who has a long-chin, from L. *mentum* chin (Lewis, 1969).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“batrikh qabras” (Coad, 2010).

Baṭriḫ qabraś—for *baṭriḫ* see above; *qabraś* indeed as *qibriś* from Cyprus, Cyprian (Woodhead, 1967).

Family Poeciliidae:

[*] Genus *Gambusia* Poey, 1854

[44] *Gambusia holbrooki* (Girard, 1859) mosquitofish; eastern mosquitofish (for *holbrooki*, western mosquitofish for *affinis*) plague minnow in reference to its ecological impact.

Gambusia—derived from a provincial Cuban word *Gambusino* (bio.txstate.edu).

holbrooki—named in honor of J. E. Holbrook, an American naturalist of the mid-1800s (Ross, 2001).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“gambuzi; zoory, zurry” (Coad, 2010).

Zūrrī—etymology uncertain, perhaps relating to a place name.

Family Mastacembelidae:

[*] Genus *Mastacembelus* Scopoli, 1777

[45] *Mastacembelus mastacembelus* (Banks and Solander in Russell, 1794) Mesopotamian spiny eel.

mastacembelus—formed from Gr. *mastax*, hence *mastakos* bite, mouthful + Gr. *emallo* to throw oneself, into, on (zipcodezoo.com).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“salbouh abu-el-sian, salbu-al-sayan or saebouh abou siyan; abu salambah; marmaritch or marmarij at Mosul” (Coad, 2010).

Salbūh-al-siyān—Ar. *salbūh* worm + Ar. *siyān* muck, mire, mud (Woodhead, 1967).

Salbūh abū-l-siyān—Ar. *salbūh* worm + Ar. *abū* a prefix particle denoting “an animal dwelling in” + Ar. *siyān* muck, mire, mud (Woodhead, 1967). *Saebouh*, a deviate of *salbūh*.

Abū-salambah—perhaps Ar. *abū-salanbah*, etymology uncertain.

Marmarij—perhaps from Pahl. *marmarīk*, Pers. *marmarī* pertaining to marble.

Family Sparidae:

[*] Genus *Acanthopagrus* Peters, 1855

[46] *Acanthopagrus latus* (Houttuyn, 1782) yellow-finned porgy or seabream, yellow-finned black porgy, Japanese silver bream.

Acanthopagrus—formed from *acanth-*, Gr. *akantha* thorn, spine + *pagrus*, from Gr. *págros* and *phágros* sea-bream or braize (Liddell and Scott, 1885).

latus—L. *latus* side (Maggenti, 2005).

Arabic common names in Iraqi dialect:

“shanak, shagoom, shaam, sha’m, shaem, sheim, sha-om” (Coad, 2010).

Shilik—perhaps relates to Ar. *shilig* a cucumber-shaped variety of melon. *Shanak* is probably a variant of this word.

Sha’im—Ar. *sha’im*, or properly *sha’um*, perhaps from Syr. ܫܚܘܡܐ *sha’ōmā* unpleasant taste, non-sweet fish (Payne Smith, 1895).

Discussion and Recommendation:

As the Mesopotamia has a long history of fishery, the etymological analysis of currently used fish names may have interesting motifs for other scientific fields. As said above, some recent political factors caused fewer studies to be conducted on the aquatic fauna in this region. Additionally, native and local studies will be not recognized and understood without having a clear knowledge about the local fish names. As some of these words have been deformed and almost of them are far variants from the standard or original forms, we have use etymology for elucidating the Arabic names. For etymology of Arabic words, we had not, in fact, any real pattern for the methodology of Arabic words. Thus, we may consider this article, one of the first works deals with this field of international scientific terminology. Arabic language is one of the Semitic languages, which is cognate with Hebrew, Syriac, Mandaic, Abyssinian etc. Although some valuable works have been published for

other brother languages, there is not any complete work for Arabic etymology. Therefore, we should propose a methodology for Arabic etymology, and then we should present the suggestion for etymologies. For this purpose, we used some valuable etymological sources of other Semitic languages, which mentioned Arabic evidence. We have proposed standard forms for dialectal variants presented by Coad as Iraqi fish names. The compound names, have been divided to their components and then were etymologically analyzed. As the authors wished to precede more in the etymology of the words, the probable correlation of fish names with Arabic or Semitic roots have been also proposed. However, the authors wish to amend the errors and add more etymologies to the next edition of this list.

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