

IBN KHĀLAWAYH SAID: In all the speech of the Arabs and all books of Arabic philology put together, there are no names for the lion besides what I have written for you, numbering roughly five hundred names (such as *al-Darḍam*) and epithets (such as *al-Dubbakhs*, said also of huge camels and men of lion-like strength).

The lion is called:

<i>al-Darḍam</i>	“Who Hates Frustration” (?) ¹
<i>al-Dubbakhs</i>	“The Giant,” ² also <i>al-Dubākhis</i>
<i>al-Afḍaḥ</i>	“Whose Coat Is the Color of the Early Morning”
<i>Sā’ida</i>	“Big in the Forearm” ³
<i>al-Haṣūr</i>	“The Crusher,” also <i>al-Muhāṣir</i> , <i>al-Muḥṣir</i> , <i>al-Hāṣira</i> , and <i>al-Huṣra</i>
<i>al-Qaswar</i>	“The Domineering,” also <i>al-Qaswara</i>

¹ The first lion’s name happens to be the only one for which I propose a completely anomalous derivation. *Lisān* art. $\sqrt{d}rḍm$ quotes Ibn al-A’rābī (d. 231/845) to the effect that *al-Darḍam* is both “a rare name for the lion” and a name for its male member. My derivation takes the second $\mathring{d}ād$ of *darḍam* as a reduplication of the first root letter of trilateral $\sqrt{d}rm$. The verb *darima* means “to burn,” as with desire, anger, or actual flame (*ḍirram* is an epithet for “wood that ignites quickly”) and is used especially for “the lion when his gut burns with hunger, or any meat-eater that suffers hunger” (*Lisān* art. $\sqrt{d}rm$).

² *Dubbakhs* may be connected to the rare verb *dabbakha*, said of a man who stoops forward with his head bent down (as when confronting someone of inferior stature).

³ *Sā’d* and *Sā’id* are men’s names meaning “Happy” or “Fortunate.” *Sā’ida*, however, comes from *al-sā’id*, “the forearm.”

<i>al-Baswar</i>	“The Rash” ⁴
<i>al-Aghḍaf</i>	“Whose Ears Fold Back [in Anger]”
<i>al-Aghlab</i>	“Big in the Neck”
<i>al-Firnās</i>	“Who Snaps the Neck of his Prey,” ⁵ also <i>al-Firḥaws</i> , <i>al-Furānis</i> , <i>al-Furāsin</i> , and <i>al-Farrās</i>
<i>al-Damḍam</i>	“The Grasper,” ⁶ also <i>al-Ḍamḍām</i> and <i>al-Ḍumāḍim</i>
<i>al-Dubārim</i>	“Who Defies his Enemies,” ⁷ also <i>al-Ḍubārima</i>
<i>al-Hirmās</i>	“Aggressive Towards People”
<i>al-Dalahmas</i>	“Whose Effrontery Increases after Dark,” ⁸ also <i>al-Dilhām</i>
<i>al-ʿAnbas</i>	“The Lion from Whom Other Lions Flee,” ⁹ also <i>al-Anābis</i> , <i>al-Unābis</i> , and <i>al-Anbasa</i>
<i>al-Asjar</i>	“Whose Eyes Are Bloodshot” ¹⁰
<i>al-Bāsīl</i>	“Whose Look Is Hateful”

⁴ *Basara* means “to frown,” but also conveys the idea of premature action, such as harvesting unripe dates or picking a scab before it is healed.

⁵ The root \sqrt{frs} is used for hooved animals, and the breaking of their necks. *Al-faras* is an Arabian horse; the lion’s kill is called a *farīsa*.

⁶ *Damḍam* is formed by redoubling the root letters of the verb *ḍamma* (“to lay hold of”), and is an epithet of the miser. (For no clear reason, it is reckoned by some as an expression for the lion’s roar.)

⁷ The root of *ḍubārim* ($\sqrt{ḍbr}$) offers more than one lion-like meaning. *Ḍabara* means “to leap with forelegs gathered” (said primarily of horses). On the other hand, it means “to gather an armed band.” *Ḍubārim* might in this light be supposed as “Eminent at the Warlike Gathering,” which comes close to the above meaning (found in *Lisān* art. $\sqrt{ḍbrm}$).

⁸ *Al-dalahmas* is an epithet for night itself, and might stem from *al-dalam* as well as *al-dalas*, both of which mean “the dark.”

⁹ “The lion from whom other lions flee” is a quote from art. $\sqrt{ʿbs}$ of the *Arabic-English Lexicon* of E. W. Lane (d. 1293/1876), who quotes it from *Tāj al-ʿarūs* (The Bridegroom’s Crown) by al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1790).

¹⁰ *Asjar* describes an eye afflicted with redness, as well as the redness in a pool of muddy water mixed with clay.

<i>al-Mukhdir</i>	“The Lurker,” also <i>al-Khādir</i> and <i>al-Khadir</i>
<i>Ḥabīlu Barāḥ</i>	“Who Fights to the End” ¹¹
<i>al-Ṣildim</i>	“Who Doesn’t Care What Happens” ¹²
<i>al-Shatīm</i>	“Whose Countenance Is Grim”
<i>al-Ghadūb</i>	“The Swift to Anger”
<i>al-Ghashūm</i>	“The Tyrant,” also <i>al-Ghashamsham</i>
<i>al-‘Asharram</i>	“The Trenchant,” also <i>al-Ushārim</i>
<i>al-Qamūṣ</i>	“The Sportive”
<i>al-Qamqām</i>	“The Sublime” ¹³
<i>al-‘Ādī</i>	“The Aggressor”
<i>al-‘Azzām</i>	“The Resolute,” also <i>al-Mu‘tazim</i>
<i>al-Muza‘fur</i>	“Whose Coat Is Yellow, Stained with Red” ¹⁴
<i>al-Sharanbath</i>	“Big in the Paws,” ¹⁵ also <i>al-Shurābith</i>
<i>al-Mudlijf</i>	“Whose Speech Is Uncouth”
<i>al-Qahim</i>	“Who Eats Until he’s Sick of Food” ¹⁶
<i>al-Jahm</i>	“Whose Face Is Huge and Wears a Hideous Expression”

¹¹ “*Ḥabīlu Barāḥ* is an epithet of the lion, or for the hero who does not quit his place (*lā yabraḥ*), as if bound to the spot by cords (*ḥibāl*),” says *Lisān* art. \sqrt{brh} .

¹² The root $\sqrt{šld}$ is used for what is hard and stony; in addition to the lion, *šildim* is said for a horse with firm hooves. The gloss “Who doesn’t care what happens” comes from *Kitāb al-Jīm* (The Book Beginning with the Letter *Jīm*) II.177, by Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī (d. 213/828).

¹³ *Qamqām* is an epithet of the sea, and a nobleman whose largesse is widely spread. A matter that is *qamqām* is great and terrible.

¹⁴ *Muza‘fur* is one of several descriptors of the lion with blood on it. It comes out of *za‘farān*, an Arabic word for saffron.

¹⁵ For *al-shurābith*, it is hard to fault Ibn Fāris’s derivation from *al-sharath*, a word for “stoutness of hand and fingers,” even though it means dropping a consonant (*bā*) that is nowhere acknowledged as an augmentative letter (*Mu‘jam Maqāyīs al-luḡha* III.273).

¹⁶ *Al-qahim* seems best explained in relation to *al-iqhām* as defined by Ibn al-‘Arabī (quoted in *Lisān* art. \sqrt{qhm}): “To feel *iqhām* towards a meal is to desire it greatly. *Iqhām* from a meal is aversion to it.”

<i>al-Naḥḥām</i>	“Whose Voice Is Menacing”
<i>al-Baḥūr</i>	“Who Always Wins,” also <i>al-Baḥwar</i>
<i>al-Ḥaṭṭām</i>	“Who Crushes What he Devours”
<i>al-Qaṭūb</i>	“The Scowler”
<i>al-Karīh</i>	“The Hateful”
<i>al-Haḍḍām</i>	“The Wasteful”
<i>al-Shaḍqam</i>	“Wide of Mouth,” also <i>al-Shudāqim</i> and <i>al-Ashdaq</i>
<i>al-Qasqas</i>	“Whose Food Has Bones in It” ¹⁷
<i>al-Muḍabbar</i>	“Well Put Together”
<i>al-Ḍayṭar</i>	“Whose Wealth Is in his Huge Size,” ¹⁸ also <i>al-Daynaṭar</i>
<i>al-Dirwās</i>	“Whose Head Is Massive”
<i>al-Dawwās</i>	“Whose Prey Is Flattened”
<i>al-Dirbās</i>	“The Rapacious”
<i>al-Ashjaʿ</i>	“The Daring”
<i>al-Dāhī</i>	“Bad Fortune” ¹⁹
<i>al-Mutazanjir</i>	“The Yowler”
<i>al-Aghamm</i>	“Whose Head and Neck Are Cloaked in Hair”

¹⁷ As with *al-Damdam* (page 2), the reduplicated form of *al-Qasqas* indicates an action performed repeatedly and with gusto. Its root verb, *qassa*, means “to strip a bone of meat and suck its marrow.”

¹⁸ *Ḍayṭar* means “a huge man with no wealth.” Also heard are *ḍawṭar*, *ḍawṭarā*, and a number of plural forms (including the emphatically redundant *ḍayṭirūn*). To call a tribe *Banū Ḍawṭarā* (“Sons of *Ḍawṭarā*”) was to mock their poverty.

¹⁹ *Al-Dāhī* could also be translated as “The Crafty.” Its root verb, *dahiya*, means “to be cunning”; voweled as *dahā* it means “to outwit” someone, and *al-dāhī* is the active participle of both. However, the intensive form *dāhiya* is a word for “unanticipated calamity” that outwits those who fail to see it coming. In this sense, says Lane (again quoting *Tāj al-ʿarūs*), *al-Dāhī* is said for the lion: “it means *one who is as though he were calamity, or misfortune, personified.*”

<i>al-Ghaytham</i>	“The Brawler” (?) ²⁰
<i>al-Ri’bāl</i> ^w	“The Marauder,” ²¹ also <i>al-Rībāl</i>
<i>al-Fadqham</i>	“The Mutilator” ²²
<i>al-Ṣumull</i>	“The Husky”
<i>al-Hayṣam</i>	“The Destroyer,” also <i>al-Hayṣama</i> and <i>al-Hayṣal</i> . (<i>Al-hayḍal</i> is an army.)
<i>al-Shaj’am</i>	“Huge and Lengthy” ²³
<i>al-Afarnā</i>	“Whose Foe Is Outraged in the Dust,” ²⁴ also <i>al-Afarnas</i> , <i>al-Afrar</i> and <i>al-Afriyy</i>

²⁰ *Ghaytham* is my speculative reading of a garbled word, appearing (unvoweled) as *ghythm* or *al-ghymthm* in manuscript. Darwish reads it as *al-Athamtham*, but this name appears with clarity later in the text. As a man’s name, *Ghaytham* is rare but attested, and *ghaythama* is defined in *Lisān* art. \sqrt{ghthm} as “mortal combat and unrest.”

^w Also said for the wolf.

²¹ Ibn Sīda’s *Mukhaṣṣaṣ* VIII.60 cites an opinion that *al-ri’bāl* means “born singly” (cf. the note to *al-Furhūd* on page 19). But *al-ri’bāl* is also a “thief,” and majority opinion is that it means “a taker and eater of what belongs to other people.”

²² *Fadqham* derives from the verb *fadaqha*, which means “to stave in a victim’s skull.” The Prophet Muḥammad forbade eating flesh that was so killed, saying, *Kul mā lam yufdaqh*: “Eat [only] what has not been mutilated” (*Lisān* art. \sqrt{fdqh}).

²³ Although *shaj’am* would seem to come from the same root as *al-Ashja’* (“The Daring”), *Lisān*’s definition (“lengthy and of great size, said of lions and other creatures”) indicates no semantic relation between them (art. $\sqrt{shj’m}$).

²⁴ The division between *al-Afarnā* and *al-Ifrīt* is somewhat arbitrary. Both these words and all their congeners derive from *ʿafar*, which is the dust of the earth’s surface; the verbs *ʿafara* and *ʿaffara* mean to roll somebody in it. *Ifrīt* seems to have gained its strictly demonic meaning from the Qur’ān (27:39), where it is the epithet for a “capable” spirit of the air (*ʿifrītun min al-jinn*), i.e., one with the power to move physical objects. Both the demonic sense and the ordinary sense of “outrage in the dust” well suit the lion, and so I have kept the two separate. And $\sqrt{ʿfr}$ is connected to the lion by other semantic means as well. *Al-ʿufra* is the hair on its neck that bristles in anger; for this the lion is called *Dhu ʿl-ʿufra* (“Whose Hair Gets Thicker When he’s Mad”), and for the color of its coat *al-Afar* (“Whose Coat Is the Color of the Surface of the Earth”).

<i>al-ʿIfrīt</i>	“The Demon,” also <i>al-ʿIfirriyy</i> , <i>al-ʿIfrās</i> , <i>al-ʿIfriya</i> , <i>al-Nifriya</i> , and <i>al-Nifrīt</i> ²⁵
<i>Layth ʿIfirrīn</i>	“Lion of the Savage Waste”
<i>Layth</i>	“The Lion” ²⁶
<i>Layth al-Luyūth</i>	“Lion of the Lions”
<i>Ḍubāth</i>	“Grabby” ²⁷
<i>al-Aṣbah</i>	“Whose Coat Is the Color of Dawn”
<i>al-Ahzam</i>	“Whose Voice Is Loudest”
<i>al-Ṣamūt</i>	“Who Pierces Deeply” ²⁸

²⁵ As for *al-Nifriya* and *al-Nifrīt*, these illustrate a principle of Arabic coinage called *itbāʿ*, which is the “following” of one word by an assonant double of itself. *Itbāʿ* is no mere poetic flourish, but a generative principle of the language: what begins as a nonsense rhyme can acquire a dedicated meaning of its own. *Lisān* art. \sqrt{nfr} defines *nifrīt* as “a wicked demon,” upholding nevertheless its derivation from *ʿifrīt*. (The verb *nafara*’s meaning “to stampede” might furthermore suggest “Who Spooks the Herd” as a meaning for *al-Nifrīt*.) Ibn Fāris reports that when one of the grammarians asked an Arab of the desert about *al-itbāʿ*, he responded: “It is a thing by which we give order to our speech.” *Al-Ṣāḥibī fī fiqh al-luġha* (The Statutes of Language for al-Ṣāḥib ibn ʿAbbād), 209.

²⁶ *Layth* in Arabic is used for “lion” the way English *serpent* is used for “snake.” It is an old word, with cognates throughout the Semitic languages, including Hebrew *layiš* and Aramaic *laytā*. “This is the same word as Assyro-Babylonian *nēšū*,” writes Edward Lipiński (“Lion” and ‘Lioness,” 218), “with a feminine *nēštu*, ‘lioness.’ Although the Assyro-Babylonian texts are older, the form with initial *l* should be considered as primary, since it appears also in Greek as *līs*” [as at *Iliad* XI.238, 480, XV.275 and XVIII.316]. Meanwhile, the more common Greek word *leōn* goes back by means of an *r > l* shift to Egyptian *rw* “lion” (Ibid., 214). In fact no Indo-European root can be shown for *lion* in the European languages.

²⁷ *Ḍubāth* comes from *ḍabatha*, which means “to hit” and “to grab.” The lions claws are called *maḍābiḥ*.

²⁸ The root of *ṣamūt* is probably an allomorph of $\sqrt{\text{šmm}}$, which like $\sqrt{\text{šmt}}$ is used for words of silence and deafness. (From $\sqrt{\text{šmm}}$ comes a well-attested lion’s name not mentioned by Ibn Khālawayh: *al-Ṣimma*, “The Deafener.”) *Ṣamūt* is an epithet for the sword whose cut is deep and silent, and for fine chain mail whose joinery makes no sound.

<i>al-Damūz</i>	“Whose Cry of Alarm Is Seldom Heard” ²⁹
<i>al-Ṣilkhād</i>	“The Unrelenting,” also <i>al-Muṣalkhad</i>
<i>al-Huzāhiz</i>	“The Unmixed” ³⁰
<i>al-Dirqhām</i>	“The Battle-Ready,” also <i>al-Dirqhāma</i>
<i>al-Ghadanfar</i>	“Whose Bulk Is Massive”
<i>al-ʿAwwās</i> ^w	“The Night Prowler”
<i>al-Hizabr</i>	“The Ill-Tempered,” also <i>al-Huzābir</i>
<i>al-Quṣquṣ</i>	“The Stocky,” also <i>al-Quṣāqiṣ</i> , <i>al-Quṣāqiṣa</i> , <i>al-Quṣquṣa</i> , <i>Quṣqāṣ</i> , and <i>al-Qaṣūṣ</i>
<i>al-Muqarfīṣ</i>	“Who Sits Back on his Haunches”
<i>al-Habbāsh</i>	“The Acquisitive” ³¹
<i>al-Harhār</i>	“Whose Gut Sloshes [When he Walks]” ³²
<i>al-Furāfir</i>	“The Mangler,” also <i>al-Mufarfir</i>
<i>al-Mudghim</i>	“The Biter,” also <i>al-Dayqham</i> ³³
<i>al-Sinnawr</i>	“The Cat” ³⁴

²⁹ *Al-damūz* is also said for the adder, and the camel that never lifts its voice in complaint.

³⁰ *Huzāhiz* is an epithet for the sword of noble alloy, and water freshly drawn from a running stream.

³¹ *Al-Habbāsh* is Darwīsh’s reading of a word that looks at bottom like *al-hinbir*, overwritten to look something like *al-habash* (see the Apparatus to fol. 115v8 on page 32). Without going too far into the question (*habash* is a “painful blow,” and *hinbir* is said for the hyena’s offspring and the donkey’s), I am happy to adopt Darwīsh’s emendation, even though it is nowhere else attested as a lion’s name.

³² The noise made by *al-Harhār* is called *harhara*, meaning “laughter for no reason” as well as the bleating of the sheep and the war-cry of the Indian. It also names the sloshing sound of fluid in a skin.

³³ These names come from *al-daghm*, which is “a bite that does not tear”—a bite for play and combat, it would seem, but not for food.

³⁴ *Sinnawr* is an archaic Arabic word for the cat, not typically used for the lion but heard in a hadith that al-Damīrī (d. 808/1405) quotes in *Hayāt al-ḥayawān al-Kubrā* (The Greater Life of Animals) II.575:

<i>al-Hiqamm</i>	“The Glutton”
<i>al-Fruṣfāṣ</i>	“The Stalwart,” also <i>al-Fruṣāfiṣa</i>
<i>al-Miktām</i>	“The Self-Concealer”
<i>al-Nahhāt</i>	“Whose Voice Is in his Chest,” also <i>al-Munahhit</i>
<i>Ḥamza</i>	“Who Won’t Let Go” ³⁵
<i>al-Zubūr</i>	“Whose Hair Is Thick and Forms a Mane,” ³⁶ also <i>al-Zabūr</i> and <i>al-Zanbar</i>
<i>al-Mukfahirr</i>	“Whose Face Expresses Great Displeasure”
<i>al-Mundalif</i>	“Whose Gait Is Unhurried”
<i>al-Sirḥān</i> ^w	“The Wanderer” And <i>al-Sirḥān</i> is also said for the wolf.
<i>al-ʿAqūr</i> ^w	“The Hamstringer” ³⁷
<i>al-Sibaṭr</i>	“The Salient” ³⁸

The Prophet, God’s blessings and peace be upon him, used to visit the house of a Muslim family of Medina, while avoiding the house facing it. The occupants of that house were bothered by this, and spoke of it to the Prophet. He responded: “You keep a dog in your house.” [The Prophet was strongly dog-averse, and declared that no angel would enter a home in which a dog was kept.]

“But they keep a cat in their house, they said.

“The cat is a lion,” the Prophet said.

³⁵ The verb *ḥamaza* means “to burn the tongue” in addition to “to grab hold of.” For his young servant’s skill in cultivating the astringent green herb called *ḥamza*, the Prophet Muḥammad gave Anas ibn Malik (d. 91/709) the nickname *Abū Ḥamza*.

³⁶ *Al-Zabūr* in the Qur’ān (17:55) is for the holy scriptures identified with the Psalms of David. Elsewhere (18:96), it is the plural of *zabra*, which means “a lump of iron,” hence “an anvil,” and hence “the area between the shoulder blades.” Lion’s names from *zbr* are for the muscle mass of their shoulders (see *al-Mazbarānī*, page 11) or, as in this case, the hair that covers them.

³⁷ *Al-ʿaqūr* is the predator that attacks the hind legs of its prey. Wine is called *al-ʿuqār* because it “hamstrings” the intellect.

³⁸ For *sibaṭr*—said for the lion that leaps with paws outstretched—I have resorted to the language of European heraldry. *Salient* names the lion rampant with front and rear paws held together, as if leaping on its prey. (A stag in the same position is said to be *springing*.)

<i>al-Hamhām</i>	“Whose Voice Is Low and Indistinct,” also <i>al-Humhūm</i>
<i>al-Humām</i>	“The Headstrong”
<i>al-Nahhām</i>	“Whose Appetite Is Boundless” ³⁹
<i>al-Muzdalif</i>	“Who Steps Right Up”
<i>al-Habbār</i>	“The Carver”
<i>al-Muhathit</i>	“Whose Speech Is Garbled”
<i>al-Raṣīd</i> ^w	“Who Lies in Wait”
<i>al-Dhāmīr</i>	“Whose Complaint Sets Others Moving”
<i>al-Dhāfir</i>	“Great in Make”
<i>al-Muqranfiṣ</i>	“Whose Prey Is Immobilized,” also <i>al-Muqranṣif</i> ⁴⁰

³⁹ “The lion is called *al-nahhām* for its voice,” says *Lisān* art. \sqrt{nhm} , but this sense would seem to be attracted from *al-Nahhāt* (“Whose Voice Is in his Chest,” page 8) and possibly *al-Nahhām* (“Whose Voice Is Menacing,” page 4). The root \sqrt{nhm} is used for words of excessive desire, especially with regard to food. In pagan times, an idol called Nuhm was venerated by the tribe of Muzayna, and in the Islamic period this name was applied to Satan.

⁴⁰ *Muqranfiṣ* and *muqranṣif* are anagrammatic variants of the quadriliteral root $\sqrt{qrfṣ}$, used for words of binding: bandits who tie the hands and feet of their victims are called *qarāfiṣa*. *Al-Muqarfiṣ* (“Who Sits Back on his Haunches”) is from the same root, as is *qarfaṣ* which names the position assumed by a man sitting on his buttocks with his thighs hugged to his chest.

With this note I aver that the letter *rāʾ* can be an augmentative letter, as with $\sqrt{qrfṣ}$ which stems from *al-qafaṣ*, “the ribcage.” (The manner of binding named by *al-qarfaṣa* is essentially “to render someone a torso.”) Augmentative *rāʾ* would seem to be an open secret among the lexicographers: for *al-Sibaṭr* (“The Salient”), *Lisān* quotes the *Ṣaḥāḥ* (Correct Usage) of al-Jawharī (d. ca. 400/1010), art. $\sqrt{sbṭr}$: “*Sibaṭr* for the lion is like *hizabr*.” There being no semantic overlap between *sibaṭr* (< *al-inbisāt* “outstretching”) and *hizabr* (< \sqrt{hzb} , a root for ferocity and strength in various animals), it is clear that a *formal* similarity is meant, namely their ending in an unvoiced consonant + augmentative *rāʾ*. Other likely examples of augmentative *rāʾ* in the lion’s names are *al-Sharanbath* (a *shabūth* is a meat-hook), *al-Dirghāma* (< *ḍaḡhama* “to bite,” cf. *al-Dayqham*, page 7), *al-Qirḍab* (< *qaḍaba* “to lop off”), and *al-Jayfar* (< *jawf* “belly,” cf. *al-Ajwaf*, page 24).