Appendix I

Vocabulary of Rare Words and Phrases
Occurring in *The Book Of Charlatans*

This Vocabulary attempts to capture the words and phrases used by al-Jawbari that are not to be found, or not to be found in the relevant sense, or to be found but not sufficiently elaborated on in standard lexica. Some may belong to the jargon of charlatans, if we use “jargon” in the sense of “the modifications that a socio-professional group brings to the national language” (Ducrot and Todarov, quoted in *EALL*, art. “Jargon,” 2:468) while excluding from that definition lexical items generated by “the need for group members not to be understood by others” (same reference). Put differently, it probably does not include items from the *sin* (“cant, argot”) of charlatans, i.e., words created specifically to baffle outsiders. Al-Jawbari devotes a separate paragraph (§27.25) to *sin*, which he associates exclusively with astrologers and of which he says “This is the form of communication they use for speaking to one another and that only they and those that hang out with them can understand”; this separate mention is in itself sufficient evidence that the author does not regard other terms that he uses as belonging to it. Jargon, then, in the sense used here, is limited to the socio-professional terminology of the groups described. Even so, in a work replete with Middle Arabic usage and colloquialisms, it is hard to be sure when a word truly qualifies to be described as jargon; comments by the author such as “they call X such-and-such” are a clue. I have marked with an asterisk items that seem to me likely to qualify as such.

I have also tried to find and list examples from other sources of the words included here. It is noticeable, however, that the number is limited. Even when the list below is compared with the *qaṣīdah sāsāniyyahs* of Abū Dulaf and Şafi l-Dīn reproduced in Part 2 of Clifford Bosworth’s *The Medieval Islamic Underworld*, which are devoted to descriptions of more or less the same group, the Banū Sāsān, the overlap is small, the two sets having only twenty out of a total of eighty items, or 25%, in common, while later sources have yielded only a few additional common items.
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Abbreviations

adj. adjective
adv. adverb
coll. collective
def. definite
EA Egyptian Arabic
EALL Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics
EI2 Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition
inst. instance
LA Literary Arabic
n. noun
pl. plural
phr. phrase
QS Qaṣīdah Sāsāniyyah
v. verb
v.i. intransitive verb
v.n. verbal noun
v.t. transitive verb
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ب-د

(ن.) “bronze”

§14.7: طاسبة إسبرادية, “a bronze bowl.”

*Note:* The word is assumed here to be an appositional noun; however, it might also be interpreted as an adjective (i.e., إسبرادیة).


ب-ر-رب

(پل. ن.) “hawkers, peddlers”

§5.6: فن ذلک البورز والحزاژین الذين يدورون بالبيوت، والضائع والنساءين، “Another example: Hawkers and cobblers who make the rounds of houses, farms, and plantations.”

*Note:* Bosworth, “Jewish Elements,” VI:12, interprets the word thus, without citation.

ب-ر-ک

الباروک

(ن.) “the clap” (an unspecified venereal disease)

§4.1: ویستجوون نسائیون وییلوئن ملاون ایل الباروک, “They ... seduce their women, and infect them with the clap.”

*See also:* §14.10.

*Note:* It is assumed that الباروک is related to البیارک, a word that, by the early twentieth century, had come to be applied to syphilis (Spiro, *Dictionary*, 42a); however, prevailing opinion holds that syphilis was not introduced from the New into the Old World before the sixteenth century.
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(1.) “to peddle, flog, sell”

§12.1: “Some peddle amulets.”
§14.8: “I’d . . . flog a pill for one silver piece.”
§14.12: “When they want to say spells over ointments so as to peddle them to the marks . . . .”


Other sources: Ṣafī l-Dīn (eighth/fourteenth century), QS, verses 31, 40, 50 (see Bosworth, Underworld, 2:322); Bosworth notes that the word is explained in one gloss as “fraudulently to substitute” and that بَذَلْتُ is substituted for بَذَرُ in one printed edition. Nevertheless, the examples in this work do not require that interpretation.

(2.) a book filled with illustrations of wonders, used by fake astrologers

§12.7, heading: “Those Who Use the Balhān to Make Predictions.”

Note: Or بَلِهَان. See n. 142. Perhaps related to بَلِهَان “stupidity, feeble-mindedness,” implying that the illustrations appeal to the simple-minded.

Vocabulary of Rare Words and Phrases Occurring in *The Book Of Charlatans*

بِلْهَانَةٍ (n.) an object (e.g., a stuffed serpent) that serves to attract a crowd to a charlatan

§27.56: "Then they make their patter and gather their crowd. It’s what they call a crowd-drawer."

See also: §27.57.


بُنْكَةٍ (n.) “hammock”

§13.8: "Then he’d hang the hammock in another place."


الأبيض (n.) “the white” (alchemical term for silver)

§27.2: "Let me mention here a few things from which an honest living may be made. One of these is production of ‘the white.’"

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§13.5: “They have a contrivance made of iron called a *dār or a manj.”

Note: Voweling not known.

§23.5: “They make a production box with six compartments that has a lining to which the boxes are attached and that manipulates them.”

Note: From draw, drag.” Cf. Wehr, Dictionary, 140a (Syrian) “drawer (of a desk, etc.”; also Zarkhūrī, Zahr, 57-58.

§29.6: “[some horse thieves carry] skeleton keys, and try key after key on the fetter.”

ج-ر-ر

*جاء*

(n.) one of the names for a device made of iron used in a trick played by “masters of the mandal” (see also manj)

§13.5: “They have a contrivance made of iron called a *dār or a manj.”

Note: Voweling not known.

ج-ر-ر

*جر

(n.) “production box” (a box with hidden compartments that allow objects to appear or disappear)

§23.5: “They make a production box with six compartments that has a lining to which the boxes are attached and that manipulates them.”

Note: From draw, drag.” Cf. Wehr, Dictionary, 140a (Syrian) “drawer (of a desk, etc.”; also Zarkhūrī, Zahr, 57-58.

ج-م-ل

*جملة*

(n. phr.) “skeleton keys”

§29.6: “[some horse thieves carry] skeleton keys, and try key after key on the fetter.”

ج-م-ل
Vocabulary of Rare Words and Phrases Occurring in *The Book Of Charlatans*

ح-دم-د

المديد: أحجاب الحميد

(n. phr.) “those who use metal instruments,” meaning quack eye doctors of a certain kind

Ch. 16, heading: “Exposé of the Tricks of Eye Doctors Who Use Metal Instruments.”

See also: §16.1.

المديدة

(n. def.) “the iron” (a piece of iron grasped by the mark supposedly to allow the charlatan to read his mind, the operation as whole being called “writing with the iron”)

§12.15: “So the mark sits down and places his hand on the iron and thinks of something.”

تحمير

(n.) “reddening” (alchemical term for the making of gold)

§27.3, heading: “Section Two on ‘the Craft,’ on ‘Reddening.’”


استجيب

(v.t.) “to seduce”

§2.20: “They trick people with illusions, eat up their money, and seduce their children and women.”

See also: §4.1, §5.5.
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خ-ش-ن

حُشْنَ /حُشْنَي، أَخْشَانَُ

(n.) “mark” (intended victim of a confidence trick)

§12.15: “when a mark comes along, the shill sits down and places a finger on the iron.”

§14.10: “unbeknownst to the mark, [they] mix the bits of sinew in with these.”

§12.7: “The marks are fooled.

See also: §§7.18–22, heading to §12.3, §§12.15–16, §12.19, §14.9, §14.12, §27.8, §27.57.

Note: Bosworth translates as “‘the common people’, i.e., non-beggars” and “those outside the circle of the Banū Sāsān” and derives the term from classical حْشَنَ “to be coarse” and understands that “the beggars stigmatise those outside their circle as ‘coarse fellows’” (Underworld, 2:247; see also 302).


ح-ي-ر

أَخْبَرَ

(adj.) “cleverer, slicker”

§4.1: “They are . . . cleverer than the rest, even though among themselves they know they are on the wrong path.”

§7.1: “they are crafty and cunning and cleverer than any of the others.”

Note: A specialized use of أَخْبَرَ, “better.”
دُوْنَيْنِيّ (adv.) “(communicating) by using verse to convey secret information” (of charlatans who sell amulets)

§12.1: وَلَهُمُ إِشْعَارُ بَالسِّينِ وَدُوْنَيْنِيّ وَغَيْرِهِ "Some . . . have a way of communicating using *Sin* or by means of verse or by other systems.”

Note: دوینَيْنِيّ is an adjective, apparently here used adverbially, derived from دوینَيْنِ, meaning “quatrain”; the use of verses (though not necessarily quatrains) to impart information during mind-reading tricks is described by the author at §12.10–12.

درموت (n.) a kind of container (?)

§27.9: وَمَنْ ذَلِكَ أَنْهُمْ يَأْخُذُونَ ذَمَنَاتِهِمْ إِلَى الْفَاحُورَةِ وَإِلَى الْبَنَاءِ وَفُضُّوْهُ وَفَضُّوْهُ يَكُونُ وَبِذَلِكَ إِلَى بَعْضِ الْمَوْضِعِ وَيَقُولُمُونَ أَنْهُمْ قَدْ عَسَى مَرَيًّا بِالْدِرْمُوتِ وَقَالُهُمْ لَهُمْ عَنْ رَأْسِهِمْ “Another example: One of them takes a container, goes to the potters’ field, fills it with broken shards, covers it with a cloth, and carries it off with him someplace, where he makes himself out to be a pauper [and] throws the container down off his head.”

Other sources: Bosworth has دْرَمُن (Underworld, 1:111 n.44).

درِزْك (n.) “mold”

§9.5: يَقِلَّهُ فِي دِرْزَكَ جَمْر "He pours this into a stone mold,”

See also: §24.9.

Note: Cf. Steingass, Persian–English Dictionary, 517b: دِرْزِك “a mold in which goldsmiths cast gold and silver.”
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دُ-كّ

1 (v.t.)

a “to palm (s.th.), hide (s.th.) in the hand”

§13.19: “Then he palms the [heavy] ring and brings out the light ring.”

b “to cause to appear or disappear through sleight of hand, switch through sleight of hand”

§7.20: So he takes the money from the mark, switches it for copper, silver, or lead coins.”

§23.1: “everything they do is by sleight of hand, dexterity, and nimbleness.”

c “to surreptiously introduce (one thing into another)”

§5.1: “they put a knockout drug in his food.”

See also: §7.8, §9.6.

2 (v.i.)

a “to scam, trick, cheat (علي, s.o.)”

§9.37: “and cheated you out of a thousand gold pieces.”

Ch. 25, heading: “Exposé of the Tricks of Money Changers, of Scams They Pull and Scams Pulled on Them.”


b “to obtain (s.th.) using a scam”

§9.3: “To set up a scam, they set their sights on some well-heeled would-be student of the craft.”

See also: §25.12.
c “to tamper (في, with s.th.)”

§9.39: “I exposed his trickery, discovering that he was tampering with the crucible.”

3 (v.t.)

a “to treat (a quantity of silver or gold) with [alchemists’] ‘sauce’”

§9.3: “Then he takes a little silver and gold, treats it with ‘sauce’ and says, ‘Go sell this in the market!’”

b “to treat a quantity of gold with [alchemists’] ‘sauce’”

§9.39: “[he] could treat a hundred silver pieces with sauce and get a thousand.”

Note: Possibly related are: Behnstedt-Woidich, Ägyptisch-arabischen Dialekte, 4:140: “da:kk, yide:kk (Dakhla oasis/Bašandi) “to bite, sting (insect), prick”; (Kharga oasis) dukka = ma?lab [trick played on someone].”

Other sources: Hava, al-Farā′id (1899), 211a: “to cheat” (dialect of Syria).

dًكتب

1 (n., pl. دكتات) “instance of chicanery, trick”

§9.27: “I shall now reveal to you clearly how this trick was done, the Almighty willing.”

2 (n., pl. دكتوك) “sauce” (the false alchemist’s equivalent of the true alchemist’s “elixir,” i.e., a substance that appears to increase the bulk of gold and silver and changes base metal into gold or silver)

§9.6: “They take empty hazelnuts, place the sauce inside them, and hide them on their persons.”

Note: Sense 2 is not necessarily derived from the verb دكتوك and the exact pronunciation is unknown (both دكتوك and دكتوك are plausible). For the purposes of this translation, I have assumed that the word represents underlying دكتوك or دكتوك through a phonetic shift noted in certain dialects (see EALL, 4:2, art.
“Qāf”). Thus دُقَّة may derive from either دُقَّة (in Egypt today “condiment of hot red pepper, oil, vinegar, salt and water” [Hinds, *Dictionary*, 296b]) or دُقَّة (in Egypt today “condiment consisting of salt and pounded spices” [Ibid]).

دنكاء. دُكَّة

(n.) “con-artist, cheat”

§9.1: “This tribe of charlatans is the most prodigious of all in terms of getting their hands on people’s money, and their so-called ‘initiates’ are simply con artists.”

§9.31: “Since my lord probably thinks that all who lay claim to this rank are liars, plunderers of others’ wealth, and cheats for whom everything is an opportunity for a scam, I have just one thing to say.”

See also: §9.39.

Other sources: Abū Dulaf (fourth/tenth century), *QS*, verse 106 and Ṣafī l-Dīn (eighth/fourteenth century), *QS*, verse 53 (see Bosworth, *Underworld*, 2:264, where Bosworth translates as “compounder of pills and medicines” and 336, where he translates (with reservations) as “quack doctor”). Abū Dulaf, *QS*, verse 40 also uses the verb دُكَّة translated by Bosworth as “[to practice] as a manipulator and quack dentist” (*Underworld*, 2:194), while Abū Dulaf’s contemporary commentator uses the noun دُكَّة in the sense of “the person who straightens out the contorted limbs of children and who hoodwinks someone with an aching molar” (Ibid). All of the above appear to be contextualized uses of the general sense of “con-artist, cheat” that is evidenced by al-Jawbarī’s more frequent use of this word and other derivatives of the same root.
“devices for deception, instruments for the execution of scams”

Note: The term occurs only in the title of an anonymous book.

“dishonest horse copers”

Note: Höglmeier (Al-Ğawbarī, 65) suggests that the word is an “ironic neologism” formed from دك ("ruse, trick") and د-ش-ر (from I √ د-ش-ر "to file down old teeth").

“hidden thought, preoccupation (?)”

Note: Bosworth (see below), who gives the base sense of the plural د-ش-ر as "tales, sayings, allusions" (Underworld, 2:302), posits د-ش-ر as the singular, and suggests a possible connection to Iraqi colloquial dannag “to bend one’s head forward (as if to speak intimately with someone?).” He also notes د-ش-ر “to say, assert” elsewhere in Ṣafī l-Dīn’s poem and in Ibn
Dāniyāl’s ‘Ajīb wa-Gharīb (both eighth/fourteenth century). The word is preceded by the verb ماس (q.v.) both here and in Ṣafī l-Dīn.

**Other sources:** Plural دوائين (only) occurs Ṣafī l-Dīn, QS, verses 2, 45 (see Bosworth, Underworld, 2:43).

(น.) “camp follower,” i.e., a thief who follows nomads in the hope of stealing from their camps

§29.5: فَعِدْتُهَا فَمَا إِلَى الدِّوارِ مِنَ الَّذِي جاءَ فِي طَلِيبِهُ，“Once this is achieved, the camp follower can get his hands on whatever he came for.”

**Note:** Apparently synonymous with مداور (see next entry).

(น.) “camp follower,” i.e., a thief who follows nomads in the hope of stealing from their camps

§29.8: وأَمَّا الدِّوارُ الَّذِين يَداوِرُون العِربَان والتركمان والأَكراد فإنَّ منْهُم مِّنْ يَأخُذ الكُتبُ وَهْمَهُ بمُشاقة الشعر ويَكون معه，“A camp follower of the sort that hangs around the encampments of the nomadic Arabs, Turkmen, and Kurds will take oil cake, knead it with wadded hair, and keep it with him.”

See under second element of the phrase.
1 (v.t.) “to win over, gain the confidence or allegiance of (s.o.)”

§2.19: “When he’d become the talk of the town, he claimed to be a prophet, and that he was Jesus, son of Mary. He won over a group of the city’s notables.”

See also: §2.27, §11.9–10, §13.14, §27.36, §27.38.

2 (v.t.)

a “to dupe, deceive, take in (s.o.)”

§14.4: “Everything said to the contrary is twaddle and a pack of lies to dupe the mark.”


b “to dupe, deceive (s.o.) into (or or or or, or believing (s.th.))”

§4.5: “They have fooled everyone into believing that the oil cures sickness and disease.”

See also: §4.10, §6.24, §13.11, §19.4, §27.33.

رابط

(n.) “duplicitous talk”

§14.4: “Everything said to the contrary is twaddle and a pack of lies to dupe the mark.”

Note: A substantivized use of the verbal noun.

اربط. بربطٍ على

1 (v.i.) “to be won over by, give one’s allegiance to, place one’s confidence in”

§27.39: “All the Beja, Takrūr, Nubians, and Abyssinians became his followers.”

See also: §1.23, §§13.14–17.
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2 (v.i.) “to be deceived by, duped by, taken in by”

§19.5: “When he heard this, he fell for it and begged me to tell him, so I said, ‘One good turn deserves another.’”


زُطَّ (coll. n.) “vagabonds” (?)

§6.1: “they include illusionists; dervishes and pseudo-dervishes; lepers (be they vagabonds or others).”

Note: The Arabic word derives from “Jat,” the name of a north-west Indian people some of whom were brought to Khuzistan and the Gulf before Islam while others migrated or were moved in early Islamic times to Persia, the marches of Iraq, and Syria (see Bosworth, “Zuṭṭ” in EI2); some see them as ancestors of at least part of the “Gypsy” population of the Middle East (same reference, end) and Bosworth, referring to this occurrence, remarks that here the means “the gypsies” (Underworld, 1.170). However, given that, despite his interest in criminal groups, the author does not discuss the term and does not use it again, he is likely using it here in a generalized sense, i.e., to mean simply “vagabonds”; the related word زُطَّ is used apparently similarly elsewhere (see next).

زُطَّ (v.n.) “behaving like zuṭṭ” (?) (i.e., like vagabonds, vagabondage)

§2.41: “eating or drinking of impure things, or gambling, or whoring, or vagabondage.”

Note: The definition is based on an assumed connection to زُطَّ, see preceding entry.
زَغِل (v.t.) “to counterfeit, produce a fake version of (s.th.)”
§5.3: “They produce fake versions and imitations of all the apothecary’s products.”
Other sources: Dozy, Supplément, 1:594 “falsifier, sophistiquer.”

زَغِل (n.) “counterfeit coin”
§25.12: “He’d also have with him either a good gold or a good silver piece, depending on how much he wanted to score, the good coin being of the same face value as the bad.”
Note: Cf. Dozy: زِعْل “falsificateur, fabricateur de fausse monnaie” (Supplément, 1:594b). Cf. al-Shirbīnī (late seventeenth century): “zugaliyyah, a class of people who make counterfeit silver coins” (Brains Confounded, 2:333).

زَغِلات (pl. n.) “counterfeit coins”
§9.4: “or he tricks him with a few counterfeit coins.”
Note: Apparently, the functional plural of زَغِل (see preceding entry).
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§14.7: “taking a zanjalah (meaning a metal bowl) like this with me . . . holding nine-fifths of an Egyptian pint.”

Other sources: Fagnan, Additions, 72a “sébile du mendicant.”

See also: §12.1, heading to §12.2, §12.6, §12.9, §12.10.

§29.5: “the extraction men are those who slip away with fine horses of good pedigree.”

See also: §29.6.

See under م-ش-ت-ن.
ش-ر-ح
شريحة، شراق

(n.) “slice” (a small amulet)
§12.2: “There are two kinds of amulet—the smaller, which they call ‘slices,’ and the larger, which they call ‘temples.’”
See also: §12.3, §12.4, §12.9, §27.49.

ش-ع-ر
شرا

(pl. n.) “goldsmiths”
§9.20: “Then he sent the metal to the goldsmiths and they made signet rings from it.”

Note: Perhaps derived from شير (literally “barley grains”; a type of gold necklace, so called because made up of barley-shaped appendages (see Lane, Manners, 566) and/or the similar شور (Lane, Lexicon).

ش-ل-ب
شلاب

(n.) “electuary”
§14.1: “The tribe includes those who say spells over . . . shalab—meaning “electuaries.”
See also: §14.6, §14.7.

Other sources: Şafī l-Dīn (eighth/fourteenth century) ضيف الدين “seller of electuaries” (Bosworth, Underworld, 2:47 (Ar.), 2:297). Bosworth suggests that شلب may be a back formation from the latter in its sense of “barber,” given the barber’s role as “barber-surgeon” and doctor in the past (Bosworth, Underworld, 2:319–20). However, it seems possible that the
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process was the opposite, with the opposite being derived from according to a common process (e.g., firmament, astronomer), though this leaves the etymology of unsolved.

 ش-ي-ل

(vi) “to make off, run away”

§9.27: [He] set up things up as described and made off.

See also: §12.4, §27.8, §28.4

ص-ح-ب

أحصاء ال... See under the second element of the phrase.

ص-م-ي

ضَيْنَةُ

(coll. n.) “wine”

§27.9: [he] keeps bleating till he’s got his hands on some half-ripe dates, wine, and fried offal.

Note: Bosworth relates the root to Hebrew šame’ “to be thirsty,” reflex of Arabic طَنُّ (Bosworth, Underworld, 2:215–16).

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ص-ن-ع

المصطلح: أرباب الصنائع (والعلوم)

(n. phr.) “masters of the crafts (and sciences)”, a catch-all term covering many types of charlatan

§0.7: “Ibn Shuhayd’s book, with its exposés of ‘the masters of the crafts and sciences.’”

See also: §27.1.

Note: Bosworth understands as “exponents of mechanical and scientific devices” (Underworld, 1:111). However, given that Ibn Shuhayd’s book is described as the model for al-Jawbari’s, with its all-encompassing remit, it would seem that the latter had a broader understanding of the term, and this is confirmed by the grab-bag of charlatans referred to in Chapter 27 as “Masters of the Crafts.”

ض-ر-ب

ضراب

(v.n.) “whoring”

§2.41: “[they] have no fear of suffering or engaging in any defilement, whether it be the eating or drinking of impure things, or gambling, or whoring, or vagabondage.”

Note: The definition is tentative and based on the non-jargon sense of “mating (of camels)’’.

ط-ر-س

طروس

(pl. n.) molds for stamping out amulets

§12.2: “They have cut-out blocks called turūs. These are molds with which they stamp out a staggering number of amulets each day.”
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Note: Possibly derived from classical Arabicُّ "to write" andُّ "a written paper" (Lane, Lexicon, 1840c).

Other sources: The word appears in other sources asُّ, pl.ُّ: e.g., Abū Dulaf (fourth/tenth century), QS, verse 74 and Ṣafī l-Dīn (eighth/fourteenth century), QS, verse 39 (Bosworth, Underworld, 2:327); see also Bulliet, R.W., “Ṭarsh,” in EI2.

ةَطْرَقُةٌ، طَرْقَةٌ (n.) "itinerant quack"

§16.1: لا يكون كَان صاحب جديد إلا طرقٌ، "an eye doctor who uses metal instruments can only be a ‘highwayman.’"
See also: §14.3, heading to §27.55.

Note: Literally, a “road man” (from طرَقَةٌ، طَرْقَةٌ, i.e., “one who plies his trade on the public highway” but used here only of quack physicians. Compare the (transparent) termأصحاب/أرباب الطريق (“those who ply their trade on the public highway”), which is used by al-Jawbarī of both itinerant doctors and astrologers.


مَطَلَبُ مَطَالِبَةٍ (n.) "treasure hoard"

§27.25: إذا دخلت المطلب رأيت دهليماً ماذا، “When you enter a place where treasure is hoarded, you will see a corridor stretching ahead.”
See also: §0.8, heading to Ch. 11, §11.1, §11.2, §11.9, §11.11, §27.24–28.
(v.i. and v.t.) “to screw with, fool, deceive (esp. mentally)”

§13.1: “to screw with someone’s mind, be it a man or a woman, they make them think they’re seeing things, and send their wits packing.”

§13.11: “None of those who see him are in any doubt that he’s killed a jinni. He can now screw with their minds however he wants, using whatever trick he has in mind to dupe them.”

See also: §13.2, §13.4–5, §13.7–9, §13.11–14, 24.11

Note: Perhaps evoking عَزْرُ (penis”) with the letter ع as an intensifying adjunct.

(1) “to administer a knockout drug or sedative to”

§21.6: “To drug a person, they give it to him to eat in some food, drink, or halvah, and he falls asleep on the spot.”

See also: §21.1.

(2) “to dress (a beard)”

§18.6: “They pound this and dress the beard with it, and it turns a brilliant white.”

See also: §18.7.

Note: Sense 1 is an extension of the standard sense “to feed (livestock)”; sense 2 is perhaps an extension of the sense “to fatten (livestock)” (see Dozy, Supplement, 2:160a).
Appendix I

ع-ل-ف

(ع.م.) “knockout drug or sedative”

§21.2: فإنهم يضعون العفانات في المخزون يرموها على الطريق ورمى من ينكله، “They put knockout drugs in bread, throw the bread onto the highway, and watch who eats it.”

§21.8: ومن ذلك أن لهم عفانات غير معروفة، “Another example: They have preparations that, rather than putting a person to sleep, stupefy him.”


ع-ل-ق

(ع.م.) “to put one over (على/لـ, s.o.)”

§8.1: فإن من طلب أحد روحه فلن أن أعط لهما بما قدرت عليه، “If someone is trying to take my life, I have the right to put one over him using whatever means I have at my disposal.”

§28.2: وإن لم يجد أحداً علقهما مما قدر عليه; “If he doesn’t [find anyone at home], he seizes what he can and makes off with it.”

غ-ر-ب

(غ.م.) “wonder workers,” a term used of fake astrologers and quack doctors

§27.32: سمروا بالغراء لأنهم يأتون بالغراء من كل الفنون بما يجوز منها غيرهم، “They’re called wonder-workers because they come up with wonderful things in every field, things no one else could.”

See also: §12.1, §14.16.

Note: The author makes it clear (§27.32) that the word is not used here in its common sense of “strangers” and Dozy (speaking of astrologers) confirms this usage (Supplément 2:205a).
Other sources: In other sources, the term "أفعال infer" is used of the jargon of the Banū Sāsān in general (see Bosworth, *Underworld*, 1:158). Likewise, the name of the second of the two eponymous heroes of Ibn Dāniyāl’s shadow play ‘Ajīb wa-Gharīb, “in some sense embodies the entire profession . . . of the Banū Sāsān” (Jacob, “Jahrmarkt”, 6).

(ن._phr.) “paper-prognostications-men” (charlatans who make prognostications by writing on paper using an ink that appears when dipped in water)

§12.1: ومنهم أصحاب أفعال الورق الذي يفسنها في الماء, “Another group is the ‘paper-prognostications men,’ who dip papers in water.”

Note: To be distinguished from the “paper-men” ( أصحاب الورق), who heat their papers to make the ink appear. A description of the process is given at §12.13.

(س.) “jimmy” (for forcing locks, etc.)

See preceding entry.

Note: Bosworth transcribes as *fashāshah* (*Underworld*, 1:117) but the word appears to be a noun of instrument of the standard pattern "فعله".
Appendix I

ف-ي-س

قَبُس

(n.) “humbug, imposture”

§13.14: "they curl their hands and feet and foam at the mouth, all of which is nothing but humbug and screwing with people’s minds.”

Note: Probably related to classical قدَّس “to boast, make much of oneself, lay claim to what one does not have” (al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ).

Other sources: Ṣafī l-Dīn (eighth/fourteenth century), QS, verse 3 (see Bosworth, Underworld, 2:302, where it is translated as “mendacity”). Dozy, Supplément, 2:293a: قدَّس “jactance, arrogance” from a nineteenth-century Algerian source; Dozy notes that it also occurs with قدَّس.

قَبُسٍ

(adj.) “made-up, invented and meaningless”

§13.4: “and [they] write made-up names on the image.”

§13.20: “They take a rooster and write something meaningless on a piece of paper and place it around its neck.”

قَل-ب

مقلب مقالب

(n.) “flip-box” (i.e., a two-chamber paper box made of two tetrahedrons glued together, used in a mind-reading trick)

§12.9: “Now he opens the chamber of the flip box holding the blank pieces of paper.”

See also: §12.1, §12.2, §12.8.
(v. with suffix) “he hot foots it out of a place, he makes off”

§11.5: “then [he] takes it and makes a run for his home country.”

See also: §27.9, §28.4.

Note: Cf. LA مَدَدٌ “to take long strides” (Wehr, Dictionary, 1052b) and EA مدَّةٌ “to hasten one’s stride” (Hinds, Dictionary, 814a).

(pl. n.) “oilers” (accomplices whom a quack doctor uses to demonstrates the efficacy of his cure-all oil)

§14.13: “When he’s said his patter over it, the ‘oilers’ come, some walking with sticks. The quack goes over to one of them, anoints him with this oil, and rubs it in for a good while.”

Note: Cf. De Biberstein-Kazimirski: مَرْكِبُ “Qui fait un grand usage d’huile ou d’autres onguents pour s’en frotter le corps” (Dictionnaire, 2:1088b).

(v.t.) “arrange, fix” (?)
Appendix I

م-ن-ج

§12.1: “Every troop of these has its own prop and its own trick.”

§12.1: “Charlatans of this tribe are called ‘wonder-workers.’ They have ... props too plentiful to count or calculate.”

Note: Wild derives from Aramaic mawšṭānā (“Juggler’s Programme,” 358 n. 6).

Other sources: Ṣafī l-Dīn (eighth/fourteenth century), QS, verses 1, 23, 42, 48: Bosworth (transcribing as mishtān) understands the word, no doubt correctly, as an abstract noun and translates as “the beggars’ trickery, stratagems,” deriving it from classical سَمَّى “to weave, sew,” in the sense of “weaving a tissue of lies or trickery” (Underworld, 2:301–2).

§13.5: “Another example: They have a contrivance made of iron called a judār or a manj that has a piece of salt at its top that keeps it closed.”

Note: Either a short form of مَجَّيْب or derived independently from the same etymon as the latter, i.e., Greek mánganon “contrivance, machine.”

Other sources: Ṣafī l-Dīn (eighth/fourteenth century), QS, verse 34 (Bosworth, Underworld, 2:324), where Bosworth records a gloss on the verse that describes the manj as “a contrivance of the astrologers which is placed in water, and it divides up [the water into a special pattern of divinatory significance].”
§13.5: “They place the contrivance in the bowl, cover it with a kerchief.”

See also: §13.6.

Note: From Greek mάγανων “contrivance, machine”; مَخْطَف also occurs in the work with its better-known meaning of “trebuchet, mangonel” (§8.6).

§13.4: “He says, ‘Come to this mandal of mine, and inform me of your presence!’ and the pot tilts and falls over and the water in it all spills out, at which he exclaims, ‘They are come!’”

See also: §13.2.

§13.12: “They team up with a ‘seer,’ who must also know the science of sand [sc. geomancy] and with whom they will have worked out a signal for the revelation of secrets. If they want to screw with the mind of a particular person, they talk him into sponsoring a session of ‘striking the mandal.’”

Note: From Sanskrit मण्डल meaning “circle”; مَنْدَل occurs frequently with the verb ضرب (to strike the mandal). In four out of five occurrences (§13.2, §13.4, §13.12) مَنْدَل refers to an object possessed by jinn summoned by the conjuror (1). In the remaining case (§13.12), it is used in what Dozy
regards as its “proper” sense (Supplément, 2:652a) to refer to a divinatory or spirit-conjuring practice involving sand (2).


§12.15: So the shill takes him away from the charlatan and says, ‘I was thinking of such and such. What were you thinking of?’ and the other says, ‘Such and such.’ This way he finds out what’s on his mind.”

*Other sources: Ṣafī l-Dīn (eighth/fourteenth century), QS, verses 12, 41, 45, 65; v.n. مئوس also occurs (verse 36) (Bosworth, *Underworld*, 2:310).

§13.12: “Another example: They team up with a ‘seer,’ who must also know the science of sand and with whom they will have worked out a signal for the revelation of secrets.”

*See also: §13.13.*

*Note: As in English, an extension of the literal sense of “one who sees.”*
Vocabulary of Rare Words and Phrases Occurring in The Book Of Charlatans

نانم، ناموس

(ن.) “illusion, conjuring trick”

§4.3: "This lamp is the greatest illusion the ancients ever fabricated."

§1.24: "When people of the sort we are describing find themselves incapable of doing things of this kind that are appropriate only to those of the rank of prophet, they resort to illusions."

See also: §0.5, §1.10, heading to Chapter 2, §2.15, §2.26, §3.10, §§4.1–3, §6.1, §6.5, §13.17, §19.1, §22.1, §§27.20–22, §27.36, §27.39, §§27.43–44, §27.50.

١ (v.i.) “to fake, feign”

§26.1: "This tribe of charlatans puts on a show of being dervishes."

٢ (v.i.) “to substitute one thing (على) for another (ب) with the aim of deceiving”

§13.17: "All such tribes of charlatans dress up falsehood to look like truth."

Note: Derived from ناموس “conjuring trick, illusion” (see preceding entry).

Other sources: Abū Dulaf (fourth/tenth century), QS, verse 43 (Bosworth, Underworld, 2:9 (Ar.) and 2:195).

همير، مهابرون

(ن.) “charlatan’s accomplice, shill”

§12.15: “When a mark comes along, the shill sits down and places a finger on the iron.”

See also: §12.16.
Appendix I

*Other sources:* Cf. Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Dīn (eighth/fourteenth century), QS, verse 3: "And I have exacted a share of all that they have managed to lay their hands on"; thus, the مهاجر is perhaps so called because he takes a cut (Bosworth, *Underworld*, 2:295, 302).

- حمهم

**“sneak thieves”**

§28.1: "Sneak thieves have nothing to do with tunneling through walls or climbing them. Their 모 is to enter a place without permission and quickly snatch anything they can lay their hands on."

*See also:* §2.40, Ch. 28, heading.

*Note:* From classical متحَّم "to enter without permission" (*al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ*).

*Other sources:* Rowson (late twentieth century): *haggām* "burglar" in the argot of Cairene criminals.

- كرا

**“booby trap”**

§11.6: "When the only thing left to do is actually enter the place, they make a booby trap to guard it."

*See also:* §11.7, heading to §11.8, §§27.24–27 (including headings).

*Note:* Clearly related to LA مَهْلَكَ "perilous place" from مِهَّلَ "to perish" but distinguished by consisting of a device, e.g., one using water, or sand, or mechanical figures, etc. (see e.g. §11.6).
(n) “circle of onlookers around a performer”

§12.8: فِإِذَا هَنُكَمَةُ، وَهِيَ لَهُ لَحَلَةّ قُالَ، “When he’s gathered his hankāmah—his circle of spectators—around him, he says . . .”

See also: §12.8, §14.6, §14.8, §14.13, §§27.55–57 (including heading).

Note: From Persian هنکامه “gathering.”

Other sources: Ṣafī l-Dīn (eighth/fourteenth century), QS, verse 56: هَنِكَمَةُ (pl.) هَنِكَمُ (Bosworth, Underworld, 2:337).

(v.i.) “to form, assemble” (of a circle of onlookers around a performer)

§14.10: فِإِذَا هَنُكَمَةُ، وَهِيَ لَهُ لَحَلَةً قُالَ “When an audience has gathered round, the quack says spells over the oil.”

Note: Denominative from هنکامه (see preceding entry).


1 (n) “great magical formula” (i.e., one used in the true hermetic sciences such as alchemy, astrology, and Qur’anic magic, in contrast to one used for deception or other nefarious purposes)

§0.4: فَثُمَّ تَأْمَلَ كَبِّ الحِكْمَةِ، مِثْلًا تَأْمَلُونَ الْفِيِلُوسُفِ . . . [وَمَثَّلُهُمُ] مِنَ الْمَلَأِ، الْفِثْرَاءَ وَأَمْشَابَ، “I then studied the books of such ancient sages as Ṭumṭum the Philosopher [. . .] and other similar outstanding scholars and masters of the great magic formulas.”
2 (n) “temple” (i.e., a large amulet)

§12.2: “There are two kinds of amulet—the smaller, which they call ‘slices,’” and the larger, which they call ‘temples.’”

See also: §§12.4–7, §12.9.

Note: Sense (2) is the physical manifestation of sense (1). Both must derive from the sense of هیكل as “anything colossal and of unusual size and scope” (Dozy, Supplément, 2:775b); cf. modern literary Arabic هیكل “temple, large building . . . (Tun.) colossal, gigantic, huge” (Wehr, Dictionary, 1223a–b).

ورق: أصحاب الورق

(n. phr.) “paper-men,” i.e., persons who make use of invisible and reappearing inks to make prognostications

§12.1: أصحاب الورق الذي يحمونها قطارة مكونة بالبشرة والهند، “the ‘paper men’ who heat papers, which come out with either good tidings or warnings written on them.”

Note: The “paper-men,” who heat their papers to make the ink appear, are distinguished from the “paper-prognostications-men (أصحاب قاتات الورق),” who dip their papers in water. A description of the process is given at §12.14.

واصل

(n.) one supposedly initiated into the secrets of alchemy or quack eye-doctoring, or who claims to have access to hidden treasures

§9.1: “their so-called ‘initiates’ are simply con artists.”

وصول

(n) the condition of having been initiated into the secrets of alchemy or quack eye-doctoring, or of claiming to have access to hidden treasures

§9.29: “There he became acquainted with the great men of the town, sponsored chanting and dancing sessions for the dervishes, spent a prodigal amount, and claimed that he had been initiated into the science of the Craft.”

§11.9: “Some of them pretend to have ‘access’ [ . . . they] claim to have access to certain famous hoards of treasure.”

See also: §9.3, §9.27, §11.1, §11.9, §11.11 (including heading).
Sources


Rowson, Everett. Unpublished list of cant terms collected in Cairo c. 1982.


