

STUDIES IN THE GRAMMAR OF EARLY ARABIC BASED UPON PAPYRI DATABLE TO BEFORE 300 A.H./912 A.D. By SIMON HOPKINS. (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London Oriental Series, Vol. 37.) pp. xlvii, 309. Oxford etc., Oxford University Press, 1984. £28.00.

The history of Arabic is, in the main, characterized by the existence of two clearly different linguistic layers, viz. Old Arabic, to a great degree reflected by Classical Arabic, and Neo-Arabic. "Pure", unmixed Neo-Arabic is only preserved in modern Arabic dialects,¹ yet it can be reconstructed from mediaeval Middle Arabic texts, which exhibit a mixture of Classical, Neo-Arabic and pseudo-correct features.² The very earliest Middle Arabic texts are papyri, in their most ancient layer from the VIIth century. Hopkins's work, substantially identical with his London dissertation (1978), analyses the linguistic structure of the Arabic papyri from the first three Islamic centuries.

Till the publication of Hopkins's grammar no full-scale study of this earliest Neo-Arabic (and Middle Arabic) existed. My own study,³ though basically arriving at the same results, was only intended to demonstrate that the main features of Neo-Arabic had already emerged at the beginning of the second Islamic century. Hopkins's study, on the other hand, comprises the whole available material; moreover, whenever possible, Hopkins⁴ has verified readings according to the original documents.⁵ Therefore, but for possible new finds, Hopkins's study can be considered the definitive work dealing with the linguistic structure of early Arabic papyri.

Whenever the language of these papyri deviates from Classical Arabic, it deviates in the direction of Neo-Arabic,⁶ thus demonstrating that in the VIIth century A.D. at the latest the Neo-Arabic lingual type had already emerged. This does not, however, answer the moot question whether Neo-Arabic had come into being as late as the VIIth century in the wake of the social upheaval caused by the emergence of the Arabic-Islamic empire, or rather it had arisen, even among tribes participating in the culture of *'arabiyya*, as early as the days of the *jāhiliyya*. As well known,⁷ no agreement obtains among orientalist about this problem. I personally agree with those who think that the social upheaval at the beginning of the Islamic era was great enough to cause a complete change in linguistic habits in a comparatively short time.⁸

Hopkins⁹ speaks of deviation in the direction of Middle Arabic, rather than of Neo-Arabic. We have above opposed Neo-Arabic, the late vulgar layer of Arabic, to Middle Arabic, the literary language consisting of Classical Arabic, Neo-Arabic and pseudo-correct elements. In many of my earlier publications,¹⁰ I have used Middle Arabic for both this literary language and the late vulgar layer of Arabic, and thus misled Hopkins as well. It was H. Blanc¹¹ who in his lucid way called attention to the use of the term "Middle Arabic" for two different notions.¹² In my later publications,¹³ therefore, I have carefully distinguished between Middle Arabic and Neo-Arabic, and accordingly, I would rather speak of deviation in the direction of Neo-Arabic.

The language of Middle Arabic texts constitutes a whole range of styles with infinitely varied mixtures of Classical and Neo-Arabic elements, extending from some kind of Classical Arabic with Neo-Arabic admixture to some kind of classicized Neo-Arabic.¹⁴ Which variety of Middle Arabic is reflected in early papyri? As Hopkins correctly states,¹⁵ "impressions of the type of Arabic studied here have varied", and the word "impressions" highlights the problem: we do not possess objective criteria for such a classification. I myself have regarded the language of the papyri as standard Arabic with a slight Neo-Arabic admixture.¹⁶ Yet Hopkins¹⁷ regards my view that papyri reflect only slight Neo-Arabic admixture as "something of an underestimation". I have, however, the impression that these opinions do not reflect a real difference of view,¹⁸ but rather result from a different vantage point. Hopkins attempted to establish the main features of Neo-Arabic from early papyri. As he was interested in Neo-Arabic, rather than in the Classical elements, the former, naturally enough, excited his attention. Yet if one compares, as I did, the language of these documents with that of Judaeo-Arabic texts, especially with the language of non-literary Jewish documents of a corresponding type, the differences are conspicuous. Whereas in Judaeo-Arabic documents the Neo-Arabic elements are much more prevalent and in some extreme cases their language may be dubbed classicized Neo-Arabic (although in other cases the Classical component is much more conspicuous), the language of the papyri reflects some kind of Classical Arabic with a Neo-Arabic admixture.¹⁹ Nevertheless, even this Neo-Arabic admixture, clearly reflecting a structure typologically akin to modern

Arabic dialects, suffices to establish the structure of Neo-Arabic, as known to us, in the Middle Ages, from Judaeo-Arabic, Christian Arabic and also from Muslim Middle Arabic texts, as well as from modern Arabic dialects.

In some cases, however, this difference of opinion as to the relative importance of the Neo-Arabic stratum in the papyri, though in the main theoretical, may cause differences in the analysis of linguistic phenomena. Thus Hopkins (p. 21, n. 5) wonders whether the shift of *iii w* to *iii y* did exist in the language of the papyri. Yet if one takes into account the prevailing Classical component of the papyri, one will refrain from doubting the existence of this shift and attribute the occurrence of *iii w* forms to Classical influence (as, finally, Hopkins himself does at the end of this note, further p. 84, par. 82a). Similarly, I would rather consider the use of *lām* to be due to Classical influence, *pace* Hopkins p. 152, n. 1 (who even surmises that negative *mā* had not yet spread widely); p. 153, par. 155b, the more so since one case of pseudo-correction is attested in the papyri according to this paragraph and others perhaps according to p. 252, n. 4 (contrary to Hopkins's analysis). At any rate, even in South Palestinian Christian texts from the first millennium²⁰ I have noted only one(!) case of pseudo-correct use of *lām*. Just as it seems rather far fetched to suggest that the occurrence of *lām* in these Christian texts reflects living usage rather than Classical influence, so it stands to reason that *lām* in early papyri merely exhibits the prevailing Classical layer of these documents.

Hopkins's philological approach is exemplary. The quotations are arranged chronologically. As mentioned above, readings were verified, whenever possible, according to the original documents, and many of his readings reflect his philological acumen (v. e.g. p. 31, n. 14; p. 55, n. 5; pp. 57-9, par. 55; p. 95, n. 10; p. 105, n. 26; p. 131, n. 3; p. 139, par. 140, n. 3; p. 227, par. 266, rem.; p. 232, n. 19; p. 254, n. 4). He accurately analyses complex features (v. e.g. pp. 189 ff., par. 193c, though, of course, in such complicated matters no final decision can be reached, since one is always exposed to the danger of over-analysing). In other cases he advances very reasonable suggestions for chronological developments, as for the expression of the optative, v. pp. 137-8.

This review, until now, has maintained a sense of proportion, at least that has been the reviewer's intention. Yet it is customary for a reviewer to discover items, however minute, about which he disagrees with the author of the work reviewed. I shall adhere to this convention, thus, however, destroying the balance and overemphasizing criticism. The reader has to be cautioned not to attach too much importance to these qualifications.²¹

P. 4, n. 2: As stated by Hopkins, in the meantime I have analysed *imāla* in Violet's fragment in *JSAI* i, 256 ff. in detail; yet Hopkins, who, in the main, left his thesis of 1978 unchanged, has not re-analysed this feature. As to the *imāla* of short *a* (Hopkins pp. 4-5; *JSAI* i, 257-8), my analysis has not accounted for two occurrences (v. *JSAI* i, p. 259, n. 67). Therefore, *prima facie*, Hopkins's suggestion that, as in modern dialects, sixteen consonants may obviate *imāla*, is preferable (although his suggestion involves four sevenths (!) of the inventory of the Arabic consonants). On the other hand, I would prefer my analysis of the *imāla* of long *ā* (*JSAI* i, 256-7) to Hopkins's (p. 8, par. 7a). Hopkins's analysis does not account for Violet 24 *lia* . . . *u*, i.e. *li-yākulū*; *a.hag*, i.e. *ahāj*; 56 *xe.ua.d.tu*, i.e. *shahādāto*; 58 *awthanhum*, i.e. *awthānhum*, whereas according to my interpretation (in the perfect of the first conjugation of verbs *ii w/y ā* shifts to *ē* when not influenced by *tafṣim*: otherwise the shift obtains in the vicinity of *i*) only the final *ā* in Violet 26 *ate*, i.e. *ātā* forms an exception.

P. 15, par. 12e: According to my *Christian Arabic*, p. 83 (cited by Hopkins *ibid.*!), the spelling of *kadhā* with final *y* is Classical (as also recognized by Hopkins in *addenda*, p. 267).

P. 30, par. 27b: According to the instances adduced in *Christian Arabic*, pp. 101-2 (cited by Hopkins!), it is after monosyllabic, rather than inseparable, prepositions that initial *hamza* is omitted (e.g. after *min*).

P. 68, n. 5: As a matter of fact, ' does in Violet's *Psalms* fragment prevent assimilation (as it prevents *imāla*, v. Hopkins himself p. 5, n. 5), as 20 *legal*, i.e. *la'all*: 21 *faamtenag*, i.e. *fa-imtana*; *exteg.alet*, i.e. *ishtā'alat*.

P. 83, line 8: Since in Classical Arabic the indicative after *idhā* "when, if", though exceptional, is nevertheless more frequent than the jussive (v. H. Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, Heidelberg 1921, p. 466, par. 235.5), there is no need to interpret *tuṣīb* in *fa-idhā tuṣīb* "and if you meet" as jussive (cf. Hopkins himself p. 246, par. 301b, and p. 251, par. 311a).

P. 135, n. 5: Nevertheless, the imperfect forms should be interpreted (in Classical Arabic) as jussives in *jawāb al-amr*.

P. 135, n. 7: I would prefer to interpret *wa-tatanāḍarū* in *wa-lā budd min ishḫāsihī . . . wa-tatanāḍarū* as an asyndetic clause continuing an infinitive (v. *Christian Arabic*, p. 617, par. 529); translate accordingly "and he must be brought . . . and you (must) argue the matter"!

P. 201, par. 207: In Classical Arabic proper the article may be attached only to the numeral governing the counted noun in the accusative, rather than to both the numeral and the counted noun. Brockelmann, cited by Hopkins, attributes the attachment of the article to the accusative counted noun as well, to the post-Classical period, in which the case endings had already disappeared. Hopkins was misled, it seems, by Reckendorf (cited by him), who simply mentioned the possibility of attaching the article to the accusative counted noun as well. Yet Reckendorf, in the chapter on numerals, adduced post-Classical usage as well (v. e.g. p. 212). The Classical usage proper, at any rate, demands the article only with the numeral governing the accusative, v. e.g. H. L. Fleischer, *Kleinere Schriften* ii, Leipzig 1888, W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 3rd edn, Cambridge 1896–8, ii, 245A, etc. Similarly, the definite counted noun in the cases dealt with by Hopkins, p. 202, n. 3 is contrary to Classical usage proper.

P. 229, n. 1: In the instance cited in *Christian Arabic*, par. 392, predicative relation obtains between the object and the asyndetic clause, the governing verb belonging to the *afāl at-taṣyīr* (I am inclined thus to interpret also 'allam "to teach" in an expression like "to teach people to do", i.e. to cause them by teaching to do), whereas in the cases adduced in par. 390 no special relationship prevails between a possible direct object and the asyndetic clause.

P. 295, line 18: Though *phonetically tanwīn* may shift to *in*, (morpho-)phonemically and historically I would prefer to speak rather of *an*.

In the following cases I would like to add some supplementary material:²²

P. xlvii, n. 18: Add *Emergence*, p. 132.

P. 16, n. 10: The occurrence of *ihdāhumā*, spelt with *y* after the *d*, in the Qur'ān (v. e.g. W. Diem, *Orientalia* 48, p. 247, par. 56 (1979)) and in Judaeo-Arabic (v. e.g. the instances cited in my *A Grammar of Mediaeval Judaeo-Arabic*, 2nd edn, (in Hebrew), Jerusalem 1980, p. 19, par. 5) tips, in my opinion, the balance of probability in this direction.

P. 23, par. 21b: It is very interesting to note that not only in Judaeo-Arabic and ancient South Palestinian Christian Arabic (v. the literature cited in *Christian Arabic*, p. 90, n. 28), but also in early papyri *alif mamdūda* is more often spelt with *y* than *alif maḡṣūra*. Could it be that somehow a certain inclination arose to distinguish between *alif mamdūda* and *maḡṣūra* by marking the first with *yā*?

P. 71, par. 68, n. 1: Infinitives of the type *fā'il* also occur in Judaeo-Arabic, especially of Maghreb-Spanish provenance.

P. 110, n. 16: *jinān* as singular is, indeed, frequent in Judaeo-Arabic from the earliest times; Saadya Gaon uses it in his Bible translation e.g. Genesis ii 8. And, indeed, *ajinna(t)* is, it seems, its plural: Maimonides in his Mishna commentary (ed. J. Qafih) uses *jinān* as singular e.g. i 396, 7, and *ajinna(t)* as plural e.g. ii 154, -9.

P. 130, par. 132a: Expressions similar to *amsi hādha -l-yawm* "yesterday" are attested in Judaeo-Arabic, being characteristic of epistolary style, v. e.g. S. D. Goitein, *Palestinian Jewry in Early Islamic and Crusader Times in the Light of the Geniza Documents*, Jerusalem 1980, p. 98, 10, *wakān wuṣūluhū amsi yawminā hādihā* "he arrived yesterday". Cf. also e.g. *ibid.* p. 105, 17 *wa-ana ghad yawmi hādihā ṣā'id ila -l-quḍs* "I shall tomorrow go to Jerusalem" and M. Beausnier, *Dictionnaire pratique arabe-français*, 2nd edn, Alger, 1931, s.v. *ams*: *ams ta'rixihī* "the day before".

P. 136, n. 13: For the use of the indicative after *hattā* cf. now S. Wild's paper in W. Diem-S. Wild, *Studien aus Arabistik und Semitistik: Festschrift A. Spitaler*, Wiesbaden 1980, pp. 204–23.

P. 142, n. 7: Invariable passive participle is attested in Judaeo-Arabic as well: M. Gil, *Palestine during the First Muslim Period*, Tel Aviv 1983, iii 79, 11 *quḡayfa maḡiṭ* (or rather *muxayyaṭ*?) "a small sewn basket".

P. 145, remark: This extended use of the feminine plural is in Judaeo-Arabic characteristic of dates, as e.g. Gil, *op. cit.* iii 124, 2 *li-YG xalawna min ṭebhet* "on the 13th of Tebhet".

P. 148, n. 1: Cf. already my *Syntax des palästinensischen Bauerndialekts von Bir-Zēt*, Walldorf-Hessen, 1960, p. 9.

P. 184: This feature is attested in Judaeo-Arabic e.g. Gil, *op. cit.* iii 66, 11.

P. 209, par. 228, n. 1: This feature is well attested in Judaeo-Arabic, as *yawm bi-yawm* Goitein, *op. cit.*, 267, 6; *harf bi-harf* Maimonides, *op. cit.*, iii 227, 4.

P. 222, n. 2: For Judaeo-Arabic cf. now also my *Grammar of Judaeo-Arabic* (quoted above), p. 331.

P. 250, n. 3: Cf. also Brockelmann, GVG ii, 265, quoted in *Christian Arabic* 397, n. 28, [the reference to *Christian Arabic* is adduced here by Hopkins].

P. 259, par. 325, n. 2: For an extensive analysis of the use of *wa-illā fa* in Judaeo-Arabic cf. now *Studies in Geniza and Sepharadi Heritage Presented to S. D. Goitein*, Jerusalem 1981, pp. 131–4, par. 7, summarized in *Grammar of Judaeo-Arabic* (quoted above), pp. 343–4.

P. 308, line 12: Read: links isolated subject and predicate.

The number of typographical errors is small, a remarkable feat in such a difficult book. I have noted the following cases: p. xxiii, line -10 read construction for construction. p. 95, n. 10 read M. A. Friedman for M. K. Friedman (and the same applies to p. 268, line 6). p. 227, par. 267, n. 1 the diacritical point of the *bā* of *bi-āsaka* is missing. p. 259, -1 the printer has left three black smudges. p. 262, par. 331, n. 1 the diacritical point of the *dhāl* of *mādhā* is missing.

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NOTES

¹ Yet even most modern dialects, to a certain extent at least, reflect the influence of Classical Arabic. Nevertheless, in these cases the Neo-Arabic linguistic system remains intact, though externally influenced by Classical Arabic.

² For this definition of Middle Arabic cf. below par. 4.

³ *The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic, a Study of the Origins of Middle Arabic*, 1st edn, Oxford 1965, 2nd edn, Jerusalem 1981, pp. 123–32.

⁴ p. xlvi.

⁵ Whenever it was impossible to check the original document, Hopkins has expressly stated it, e.g. p. 47, n. 22; p. 108, n. 12; p. 243, par. 292; p. 258, n. 3.

⁶ p. xlvi.

⁷ V. e.g. J. Blau, "The Beginnings of the Arabic Diglossia. A study of the Origins of Neoarabic", *Afroasiatic Linguistics*, vol. 4, issue 4, 1977, p. 16; W. Fischer – O. Jastrow, *Handbuch der arabischen Dialekte*. Porta Linguarum Orientalium N. S. xvi, Wiesbaden 1980, pp. 15–17.

⁸ Nevertheless, I disagree with K. Versteegh, who in his *Pidginization and Creolization: The Case of Arabic*, Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science, Series iv, vol. 33, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 1984, claimed that, in their first stage, the Arabic dialects were pidginized, to be later influenced by Classical Arabic. What militates against this view is that the "marginal" Arabic dialects (with which Versteegh deals extensively, e.g. pp. 6; 29 ff.; 94 f., but without inferring what seems to us the correct conclusions), which, being less exposed to the influence of Classical Arabic, should, were Versteegh's theory correct, reflect a much more pidginized structure. As a matter of fact, however, these isolated dialects are characterized by a rather complicated structure, which cannot be compared with the extremely simplified structure of really pidginized languages.

⁹ p. xlvi.

¹⁰ Yet, happily enough, not in all of them, v. e.g. "The Importance of Middle Arabic Dialects for the History of Arabic", in *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization. Scripta Hierosolymitana* ix, Jerusalem 1961, p. 217.

¹¹ *Tarbiz* 36.407 (1967; in Hebrew: v. the English summary pp. v–vi).

¹² C. Toll (*Acta Orientalia* 37, 227–9, 1976, and *Zeitschrift für arabische Linguistik* 13.16–17; 18–19, 1984), on the other hand, was, in our opinion, wrong in totally discarding Middle Arabic (a time-honoured expression, already used by H. L. Fleischer in 1854 in *Verhandlungen der Königlich Sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften. Philol.-histor. Classe*, p. 4, repeated in his

Kleinere Schriften iii, Leipzig 1888, p. 155). Toll had, it seems, the right feeling that Middle Arabic should not be used for both a period (midway between old and modern) and a style (midway between classical and vernacular), yet, contrary to Blanc's lucid insight, his view was somewhat blurred, and he did not assess the situation correctly. If Neo-Arabic is used to designate pure vernacular, both in the Middle Ages and modern times, and Middle Arabic for marking the language of texts consisting of Classical Arabic, Neo-Arabic and pseudo-correct elements, no justification exists for discarding the well-established notion of Middle Arabic.

¹³ V. e.g. Diglossia, p. 5, n. 30; *Grundriss der Arabischen Philologie, Band I: Sprachwissenschaft*, ed. W. Fischer, Wiesbaden 1982, p. 96; *Emergence* 1981, p. 215.

¹⁴ Cf. *Emergence*, p. 25.

¹⁵ p. xlvii.

¹⁶ *Emergence*, p. 132; Diglossia, p. 17.

¹⁷ p. xlvii.

¹⁸ V. *Emergence*, 1981, pp. 239–40.

¹⁹ It is on purpose that I do not call this language post-Classical, since I would prefer to call post-Classical a language that differs from Classical Arabic in syntax and phraseology, yet is more or less identical with it in morphology.

²⁰ V. *A Grammar of Christian Arabic based mainly on South-Palestinian Texts from the First Millennium, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, 267. 276, 279, Louvain 1966–7, p. 304, par. 203.

²¹ I am prevented, for obvious reasons, from dealing with the arrangement of the material. Hopkins, to my deep satisfaction, has chosen to follow my *Christian Arabic* (p. xlv). Perhaps another review will contribute to Middle Arabic studies by critically discussing the arrangement of the material.

²² On the other hand, I would rather omit completely Classical occurrences, as the use of *shatā* with inanimate plurals (p. 145, n. 7) or the use of *wa-yyā* (p. 123, par. 108, n. 1).

ATLAS DU MONDE ARABO-ISLAMIQUE À L'ÉPOQUE CLASSIQUE, IX^e–X^e SIÈCLES. Par GEORGETTE CORNU. Première livraison, Cartes I à VI; Répertoire des toponymes des cartes I à VI, pp. xii, 92; Deuxième livraison, Cartes VII à XV; Répertoire des cartes VII à XV, pp. x, 87. Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1983, 1985. Première livraison, guilders 52. Deuxième livraison, guilders 56.

This work originated in an attempt to compile maps to accompany a projected edition of Muqaddasī. The aim is eminently practical and sensible. As the author explains: "La lecture impose la nécessité de situer visuellement sur une carte les nombreux toponymes rencontrés et l'on se heurte alors à la difficulté de trouver des cartes répondant à ce besoin" (Rép. des cartes I à VI, p. vii). Maps hitherto available have certainly not met this need, which is specially acute in regions like the Iberian peninsula, Sicily and southern Italy, where the names as given by the classical Arabic topographers are not always easily recognizable in their contemporary forms; one might be forgiven for not immediately realising that Medina Sidonia is Qalsāna or that Pentadattilo is Ibn Dhaqtal. In what have remained, or have become, Arabic-speaking countries, and in Iran, the problem is obviously not so great, though even there some formerly important towns have ceased to be inhabited or have become too small to be shown on most maps. There are, of course, a number of reproductions of old Arabic maps, notably Konrad Miller's *Mappae arabicae*, but Arabic maps do not indicate locations with anything like sufficient precision for the modern student; they do little more than record the order in which the larger towns occur along a coastline or a recognized route, while physical features like mountain ranges and rivers are often ignored or marked in what is to the modern reader a highly misleading way. There are also some modern historical atlases of Islam, such as R. Roolvink's *Atlas of the Muslim Peoples* (Amsterdam, 1957), which do show these features but they do not use the Arabic forms of the toponyms. An obvious exception is the *Historical Atlas of Islam* by Professor W. C. Brice, published by Brill under the patronage of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, 1981). This marks physical features in accordance with modern cartographical conventions, and on many of the maps employs the classical Arabic spellings. However, since it