

THE STATE OF RESEARCH  
IN THE FIELD OF THE LINGUISTIC STUDY  
OF MIDDLE ARABIC

BY

JOSHUA BLAU

THE term Middle Arabic is not quite unequivocal. Some scholars use it to mark the vernacular elements which penetrated mediaeval Arabic texts, others to denote the combination of Standard Arabic and vernacular elements characteristic of these texts. Some even use it without differentiation in both senses<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, it has been proposed to use «Middle Arabic vernacular» to denote the vernacular elements in mediaeval texts, and to designate the language of these texts, including Standard Arabic and vernacular, as «Middle Arabic Literary Standard»<sup>2</sup> or to dub the vernacular elements the Middle Arabic layer of Neo-Arabic (its late stratum being the modern Arabic dialects)<sup>3</sup>. It seems, however, more expedient to reserve the use of the term Middle Arabic for the mixed language of mediaeval texts, containing Standard Arabic, Neo-Arabic, and, as we shall see later, pseudo-correct features, and to call the vernacular component of Middle Arabic Neo-Arabic (or, more exactly, the early layer of Neo-Arabic, its later layer being the language of the modern Arabic dialects)<sup>4</sup>.

The importance of the linguistic study of Middle Arabic is that its Neo-Arabic component, which, as a matter of fact, contains all the features characteristic of modern Arabic dialects<sup>5</sup>, enables us to recon-

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the just strictures raised by H. BLANC, *Tarbiz* 36 (1967), p. 407, par. 3.

<sup>2</sup> V. J. BLAU, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 10 (1959), pp. 15 ff., *idem*, *Scripta Hierosolymitana, Publications of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem*, vol. IX, *Studies in Islamic History and Civilization*, ed. U. HEYD, 1961 p. 209.

<sup>3</sup> V. J. BLAU, *Joshua Finkel Festschrift*, ed. S. B. HOENIG - L. D. STITSKIN, New York 1974, p. 38, par. 3, 4.

<sup>4</sup> V. J. BLAU, 'The Beginnings of the Arabic Diglossia, A Study of the Origins of Neoarabic', *Afroasiatic Linguistics*, ed. R. HETZRON, 4:4, p. 5. n. 30.

<sup>5</sup> V. BLAU (N 4), p. 17, n. 81. For an overall view of features characteristic of Neo-Arabic from its very beginnings v. *ibid.*, pp. 2-4. Even small morphological and lexical items occurring in modern dialects are attested in Middle Arabic texts, v. *ibid.*, p. 17, n. 83.

struct the beginnings of Neo-Arabic<sup>6</sup>, and thus to retrieve the missing link between Classical Arabic and the modern dialects. The material that can be elicited from these data is of decisive importance for the handling of such intricate problems as the beginnings of the Arabic diglossia<sup>7</sup>.

The ratio of Neo-Arabic in Middle Arabic texts varies greatly<sup>8</sup>. The language of the various Middle Arabic texts constitutes a whole range of styles with infinitely varied mixtures of Classical and Neo-Arabic elements. Alongside of texts reflecting Classical Arabic with only slight Neo-Arabic admixture, others are written in some kind of slightly «classicized» Neo-Arabic, and between these two extremes all the possible varieties of mixture occur. As a rule, the writers wanted to write in the language of prestige, viz. in Classical Arabic, yet, because of their inability to master its complex grammar, elements of their spoken language, viz. Neo-Arabic, penetrated their writings. Yet in the course of time, a certain mixture of Classical and Neo-Arabic elements came to be thought of as a literary language in its own rights, employed even by authors who were well able to write in a «more Classical» language<sup>9</sup>. So some authors employed a «more Classical» language when they addressed higher layers of their audience, but a more vernacular style when writing for lower strata<sup>10</sup>. The author of a commentary to the Sayings of the Fathers, attributed to Maimonides's grandson<sup>11</sup>, written in a classized Neo-Arabic, had no doubt a much better knowledge of Classical Arabic than reflected by his writing; this is borne out by the fact that he uses the pronominal suffixes of the third person masc. *-hû/-hî* (in *scriptio plena*) generally in accordance with the rules of Classical Arabic, thus presupposing the knowledge of vowel changes in declen-

<sup>6</sup> V. e.g. BLAU, *Scripta* (N 2), *passim* (entitled *The Importance of Middle Arabic Dialects for the History of Arabic*, pp. 206-228).

<sup>7</sup> V. BLAU (N 4), *passim*, further *idem*, *L'apparition du type linguistique Néo-arabe*, in *Revue des Études Islamiques* 37, 1969, pp. 191-201.

<sup>8</sup> V. J. BLAU, *The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic, A Study of the Origins of Middle Arabic*, in *Scripta Judaica* V, Oxford 1965, p. 25. A second, revised edition of this work has been published by YAD IZHAK BEN-ZVI, Jerusalem, 1981.

<sup>9</sup> V. BLAU (N 8), p. 48.

<sup>10</sup> V. BLAU (N 8), p. 26 for Maimonides.

<sup>11</sup> R. DAVID b. Abraham b. RAMBAM, *Sefer Pirqe Abhot 'im peruš belašon 'arabhi...*, ed. B. H. HANAN, Alexandria 1900-1901: it is not known from which manuscript this book was printed.

sions<sup>12</sup>. This proves that he wanted to write in Middle, rather than in Classical Arabic<sup>13</sup>.

As a rule, however, the writers' purpose was to write in the language of prestige, viz. Classical Arabic. This is clearly demonstrated by the existence of a third set of features, alongside with Classical and Neo-Arabic elements, viz. pseudo-correct features (including hypercorrections, half-corrections and malapropisms). In their desire to use Classical Arabic, of which, however, they were not conversant enough, Middle Arabic authors often applied «Classical» forms wrongly. So replete are Middle Arabic texts with pseudo-corrections that a new theory of these features can be based on Middle Arabic texts, and, as a matter of fact, the term «pseudo-correction» itself was coined in connection with Middle Arabic<sup>14</sup>.

It is the coexistence of three sets of features, viz. of Classical Arabic, Neo-Arabic, and pseudo-corrections that makes the linguistic interpretation of Middle Arabic texts so precarious. Deviations from Classical Arabic need not reflect genuine Neo-Arabic. They may not only be, in some restricted cases, to be sure, obsolete Neo-Arabic features, retained

<sup>12</sup> This is the case in the printed edition as e.g. well as in Ms. of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, 2nd Adler Collection no. 745 (17th century). Ms. Paris Heb. 583, to be sure, no longer contains *-hū/-hī* according to Classical usage. Nevertheless, traces of the use *-hī* in Ms. Paris show that in its *Vorlage* the distribution of *ihū/-hī* was as in Classical Arabic; for details see BLAU (N 8), p. 27, n. 2. In some mss. of this work, however, I have not found any traces of the alternation of *-hū/-hī*.

<sup>13</sup> V. BLAU (N 8), p. 27, where the use of vulgar language by authors conversant with Classical grammar is attributed to the lower strata addressed, and p. 48, where, as stated, the emergence of a literary language in its own right is proposed. I am preparing an analysis of this literary standard, consisting of Classical and Neo-Arabic features. Even pseudo-correct elements that have become a part and parcel of the standard (for which see below) are attested; as a rule, however, pseudo-corrections are, as expected, rarer in this literary standard than in texts of authors who attempt to write Classical Arabic. — *The Book of Demonstration (Kitāb al-Burhān)*, attributed to Euty chius of Alexandria, ed. by P. CACHIA, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, vol. 192; 209 (Louvain 1960-61) reflects South Palestinian Christian Arabic Literary Standard of the first millennium, although, in all likelihood, its author was Butrus ibn Nastās from Capitolias (North Transjordanian), who, it seems, to purpose imitated South Palestinian Christian Arabic Literary Standard, rather than Classical Arabic. I hope to deal with this subject in the near future. — The existence of Middle Arabic literary standards within Middle Arabic texts makes the linguistic analysis of Middle Arabic the more difficult, since it necessitates to distinguish between genuine Neo-Arabic that forms a part of spoken language and Neo-Arabic elements that have ceased to be used in speech, but have been retained as part of Middle Arabic literary standard.

<sup>14</sup> V. J. BLAU, 'Hyper-Correction and typo-Correction (Half-Correction) in Pseudo-Correct Features', in *Muséon* 76 (1963), pp. 363-367. Cf. in general J. BLAU, *On Pseudo-Corrections in Some Semitic Languages*, Jerusalem 1970, especially pp. 64-101.

as characteristic of a Middle Arabic literary standard<sup>15</sup>, but they may very often exhibit pseudo-corrections, which even may become productive<sup>16</sup>. Generally speaking, one must analyse the features of every text or group of texts, before one can draw distinctions between genuine Neo-Arabic and pseudo-correct forms. Only if a feature appears more or less consistently in a text or a group of texts, may it be regarded as a reflection of living Neo-Arabic, and even then the danger of pseudo-corrections that have become productive (or of an obsolete Neo-Arabic feature that has become a part of Middle Arabic literary standard) looms large. Constant and careful comparison with late Neo-Arabic, viz. modern dialects, may be of great help<sup>17</sup>.

The oldest documents in Middle Arabic are early papyri, as a rule reflecting Classical Arabic with not too conspicuous Neo-Arabic elements, which however suffice to reconstruct early Neo-Arabic<sup>18</sup>. These documents, datable to the first three Islamic centuries, the earliest ones being from 22. A.H., as far as they deviate from Classical Arabic, unmistakably deviate in the direction of Neo-Arabic. Their language, «therefore, lies fully in the mainstream of Middle Arabic»<sup>19</sup>, and thus establishes the early roots of Neo-Arabic. To these unlitary papyri, including many official documents, one may add some literary papyri belonging to the *ḥadīth* literature, including the *Jāmiʿ* of Ibn Wahb from the second Islamic century<sup>20</sup>. It seems probable that, owing to the disdain of orthodox circles for secular subjects, including grammar, *ḥadīth* literature was composed in a language not free from Neo-Arabic elements. Among texts of Muslim authorship<sup>21</sup> written in Middle

<sup>15</sup> G. n. 13, end.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. BLAU, *On Pseudo-Corrections* (N 14), p. 146b, s.v. Pseudo-correction becoming productive. Cf. also above n. 13 for pseudo-corrections becoming part of literary standard.

<sup>17</sup> V. *ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>18</sup> I have given a preliminary description of the language of early papyri (including literary papyri belonging to the *ḥadīth* literature; the language of the *ḥadīth* literature has not yet been sufficiently analysed) in BLAU (N 8), pp. 123-132. There exists now a definitive description of the language in S. A. Hopkin's yet unpublished doctoral thesis *Studies in the Grammar of Early Arabic (Based upon Documentary Material Datable to before 300 A.H./912 A.D.)*, University of London, 1978. HOPKINS, p. lxxviii, considers the Neo-Arabic component of the language of the papyri to be more conspicuous than I do, this, however, is, it seems, mainly a question of preference. Through HOPKINS' work mere notes, as those of A. DIETRICH, *Arabische Briefe aus der Papyrussammlung der Hamburger Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek*, Veröffentlichungen aus der Hamburger Staats- und Universitäts-Bibliothek, 5, Hamburg 1955, pp. 9-12, are superseded.

<sup>19</sup> HOPKINS (N 18), p. lxxvii.

<sup>20</sup> V. BLAU (N 8), p. 123.

<sup>21</sup> Scholarly literature, even of Muslim origin, will be treated in the next paragraph.

Arabic, Usâmâ ibn Munqidh's memoirs, written in rather vulgar language, has to be mentioned<sup>22</sup>, rising the problem of why the author, known as writer of book composed in irreproachable Classical Arabic, produced a work replete with Neo-Arabic elements<sup>23</sup>. A. Spitaler published studies<sup>24</sup> of certain constructions in Middle Arabic literature, and also stressed the importance of profane scholarly popular literature for the study of Middle Arabic<sup>25</sup>.

Profane scholarly literature often remained beyond the pale of *'arabiyya*, especially scientific literature, often composed by non-Muslim authors<sup>26</sup>. One of the earliest studies of scholarly Middle Arabic is A. Müller's study of Ibn Abî Uşaybî'a's (13th century) history of physicians<sup>27</sup>; despite having been written almost one hundred years ago, it still contains important material for those interested in the development of Arabic in general and Middle Arabic in particular. Müller has clearly understood the problems of Middle Arabic, which is the more to be stressed, since even modern editors sometimes are not aware of the linguistic character of Middle Arabic texts<sup>28</sup>, and also added an

<sup>22</sup> The text was edited first by H. DERENBOURG, *Ousame ibn Mounkidh, un émîr syrien au premier siècle des croisades (1095-1188)*, deuxième partie: *Texte arabe de l'autobiographie d'Ousâma*, Paris 1886, later by P. K. HITTİ, *Usâmah's Memoirs, entitled Kitâb al-îtibâr*, Princeton Oriental Texts I, Princeton 1930. Hitti's linguistic introduction is rather poor, in contrast to his excellent edition. Usâma's language was treated by A. V. KREMER, *Wiener Zeitschrift zur Kunde des Morgenlandes* 2, 1888, pp. 265-68, and especially by T. NÖLDEKE, *ibid.* 1, 1887, pp. 237 ff., C. LANDBERG, *Critica Arabica* ii, Leyde 1888, pp. 5-57, I. SCHEN, *Journal of Semitic Studies* 17, 1972, pp. 218-36; 18, 1973, pp. 64-97.

<sup>23</sup> SCHEN (N 22), pp. 224-33, dealt with this question extensively, citing the views of his predecessors; he thinks that this work was dictated by Usâma, because of his age, rather than written, and it was originally dictated in real Neo-Arabic, the classical elements in it being due to copyists. It is difficult for me to accept this ingenious solution. I would rather assume that Usâma used Middle Arabic (i.e., Classical Arabic mixed with Neo-Arabic), rather than pure classical Arabic, because he dictated, as well as, as surmised by NÖLDEKE (N 22), because the Memoirs did not come within one of the recognized categories of «literature» and so did not require an elevated style.

<sup>24</sup> The most important being 'Al-ḥamdu lillâhi llaḏî and *Verwandtes, ein Beitrag zur mittel- und neuarabischen Syntax*', in *Oriens* 15, 1962, pp. 97-114; cf. also parts of his 'sattâna', *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph* 48, 1973-74, pp. 97-135, as well as many of his additions to T. NÖLDEKE, *Zur Grammatik des klassischen Arabisch*<sup>2</sup>, Darmstadt 1963, pp. 125-67.

<sup>25</sup> V. A. SPITALER, in: G. LEVI DELLA VIDA, ed., *Linguistica semitica: presente e futuro*, Università di Roma, Centro di studi semitici, Studi semitici 4, Roma 1961, p. 127.

<sup>26</sup> For Jewish and Christian Middle Arabic v. below.

<sup>27</sup> A. MÜLLER, 'Über Text und Sprachgebrauch von Ibn Abî Uşeybî'a's *Geschichte der Ärzte*', *Sitzungsberichte der philos. philol. u. histor. Classe der k. bayer. Akademie der Wissenschaften* 1884, Heft v, pp. 853-977.

<sup>28</sup> Thus P. CACHIA ably recognized the deviations of *The Book of Demonstrations* (N 12), yet, as late as 1960-61, lacking the proper model of Middle Arabic entirely, has failed to place these deviations in their apposite framework.

important glossary of words and expressions not to be found in current dictionaries<sup>29</sup>. Late histographic works are also composed in Middle Arabic: W. M. Brinner analysed the language of a chronicle from the 14th century from Damascus<sup>30</sup> and K. V. Zetterstéen wrote an extensive introduction to his edition of historiographers from the Mamluk period<sup>31</sup>. Under the supervision of H. Blanc from the Hebrew University, T. Ḥason extensively analysed the language of an Egyptian historiographer from the second half of the 15th century<sup>32</sup>. In the field of geography, F. Wüstenfeld's linguistic notes to his edition of Yâqût<sup>33</sup> are not of special importance. For the language of scientific translation one may consult M. Simon's introduction to his edition of Galen<sup>34</sup> as well as G. Bergsträsser's structures<sup>35</sup> who, however, went, in our opinion, too far in his criticism of Simon.

As to the Middle Arabic of popular literature, H. L. Fleischer, the highest authority in Arabic philology in the 19th century, published as early as 1836 important notes to the language of the Arabian Nights<sup>36</sup>. Fleischer may, indeed, be considered the founder of the scholarly treatment of Middle Arabic, the more so since he recognized the cultural importance of Middle Arabic as early as 1854<sup>37</sup>, described in a masterly way some Christian-Arabic mss. from Sinai<sup>38</sup>, and published between 1863-84<sup>39</sup> his erudite notes on de Sacy's *Grammaire arabe*, which are a veritable storehouse of Middle Arabic phenomena. H. Wehr<sup>40</sup> carefully described the linguistic characteristic of a 14th century ms. containing popular stories. In this context also R. Paret's study<sup>41</sup> of the story of 'Umar an-Nu'mân may be mentioned.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* (N. 27), pp. 934-77.

<sup>30</sup> In his edition and translation of M. IBN ṢAṢARRĀ's history of Damascus, entitled by BRINNER *A Chronicle of Damascus*, Berkeley 1963, pp. xix-xxv.

<sup>31</sup> *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultane*, Leiden 1919.

<sup>32</sup> In her unpublished M. A. thesis from December 1980 on the language of Ibn Iyās, based on the fifth volume of his *Badā'ī'u-z-zuhūri fī waqā'ī'i -d-duhūri*.

<sup>33</sup> *Jacut's geographischen Wörterbuch ...v*, Leipzig 1873.

<sup>34</sup> *Sieben Bücher Anatomie des Galen ...i*, Leipzig 1906.

<sup>35</sup> *Hunain ibn Ishāq und seine Schule ...*, Leipzig 1913.

<sup>36</sup> H. O. (= H. L.) FLEISCHER, *De glossis Habichtianis in quatuor priores tomos MI noctium dissertatio critica i-ii*, Lipsae 1836.

<sup>37</sup> It was later published in his *Kleinere Schriften*, Leipzig 1885-88, iii, pp. 155-56.

<sup>38</sup> See below, note 42.

<sup>39</sup> Later collected in the first volume of his *Kleinere Schriften* (N 37).

<sup>40</sup> *Das Buch der wunderbaren Erzählungen und seltsamen Geschichten*, Bibliotheca Islamica 18, Wiesbaden-Damascus 1956, pp. xvi-xix.

<sup>41</sup> *Der Ritter-Roman von 'Umar an-Nu'mân und seine Stellung zur Sammlung von Tausend und einer Nacht*, Tübingen 1927.

Yet even more important for the evaluation of Middle Arabic are Christian-Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic texts. We have already mentioned works written by non-Muslims, especially in the field of scientific literature and scientific translations. This time, however, we limit the orbit of Christian Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic, defining them as literature written by Christians for Christians and by Jews for Jews respectively. Being less devoted to the ideal of Classical Arabic than their Muslim confrères, Christian and Jewish authors wrote in a language more replete with Neo-Arabic elements, especially since they addressed their coreligionists and, therefore, did not make special efforts to write in Classical Arabic, their readers being too somewhat estranged from the ideal of *'arabiyya*.

The most important group of Christian Arabic texts stem from South Palestine. There exist many dated mss. from the ninth and tenth century, which were copied in the monasteries of South-Palestine, including Sinai, and preserved mainly in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mount Sinai, and some undated mss. of this group may have been written as far back as the eighth century. The only disadvantage of these ancient South-Palestinian Christian-Arabic texts is that they are mostly translations from Greek and Syriac, sometimes (especially the Bible translations) so literal that they are hardly worthy of being called Arabic at all. The greater importance should be attached to those few texts of this group which were composed originally in Arabic and are written in a fluent and even elegant language, nevertheless reflecting all the features characteristic of Middle Arabic. H. L. Fleischer was the first who, as far back as 1847-64, linguistically investigated Sinaitic mss; Fleischer's linguistic mastery becomes manifest even in these short treatises<sup>42</sup>. In 1897, J. Oestrup published his important paper on two Sinaitic mss.<sup>43</sup>, in which<sup>44</sup>, following Fleischer, he examined their linguistic character. G. Graf's grammar<sup>45</sup> is the only *general*<sup>46</sup> work dealing with Christian Arabic. Graf's book is, no doubt, a pioneer work, but is hardly capable

---

<sup>42</sup> They were later collected in his *Kleinere Schriften* (n 37), iii, pp. 378-99. Cf. above note 38.

<sup>43</sup> *Über zwei arabischen Codices sinaitici ...*, in *ZDMG* 51, 453-71.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 462-71.

<sup>45</sup> *Der Sprachgebrauch der ältesten christlich-arabischen Literatur, ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Vulgär-Arabisch*, Leipzig 1905 (124 pages).

<sup>46</sup> Besides Ancient South Palestinian Christian Arabic, it also deals with the Arabic diatessaron and the gospel translation made in Spain (cf. note 61).

of being considered a linguistically profound study<sup>47</sup>. The renowned Russian linguist N. Marr edited from a Sinaitic ms. the life of Gregorius with Russian translation and a lengthy commentary<sup>48</sup>. In 1938, B. Levin's Gospel edition (Matthew and Mark) appeared<sup>49</sup>, containing<sup>50</sup> a study of its language; Levin, however, was mainly interested in textual problems, which overshadowed his treatment of the linguistic problems. As usual, even H. J. Polotsky's restricted remarks on Sinaitic mss.<sup>51</sup>, especially on ms. Sinai ar. 1<sup>52</sup>, exhibit his mastery of the problems involved. In 1966-67, J. Blau published a comprehensive grammar of Ancient South Palestinian Christian Arabic<sup>53</sup>. It is appropriate to mention here also R. H. Boyd's unpublished doctoral thesis on a Sinaitic text<sup>54</sup>, though his claim<sup>55</sup> that certain archaic features of grammar of Arabic (also) indicate the pre-Islamic composition of the text studied is, in my opinion, totally unfounded. C. Rabin, too, in his brilliantly written article on *'arabiyya* in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*<sup>2</sup><sup>56</sup>, wondered<sup>57</sup> whether early Middle Arabic, including Christian Arabic, already reflects early colloquial influence or rather Classical Arabic not yet standardised by grammarians. Even more extreme is J. Wansbrough's view<sup>58</sup>, who<sup>59</sup> regards the linguistic situation described as Middle Arabic as typical of

<sup>47</sup> For a bibliography of reviews of Graf's grammar v. J. BLAU, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic Based mainly on South-Palestinian Texts from the First Millennium*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 267; 276; 279, Louvain 1966-67, p. 39, note 35. J. FÜCK's *Arabiya*, *Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-historische Klasse* 45/1, Berlin 1950, no doubt the most important publication on the development of Classical Arabic in the last generation, treats Middle Arabic in only one small chapter (chapter v, pp. 57-62), basing himself mainly on GRAF. FÜCK sometimes applied, it is true, sound linguistic criteria to the data provided by GRAF, but it is felt that he relied on second hand information; for details v. BLAU, *Scripta* (N 2), pp. 206-07.

<sup>48</sup> 'The Life of St. Gregorius' (in Russian), *Zapiski vostochnavo otdyeleniya imperatorskavo russkavo arkheologicheskavo obshchestva* 16, 1904-05, pp. 63-211.

<sup>49</sup> *Die griechisch-arabische Evangelien-Übersetzung Vat. Borg. ar. 95 und Ber. orient. oct. 1108*, Inaugural-Dissertation ... Upsala.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-25 (cf. also pp. 25-39).

<sup>51</sup> *Christian News from Israel*, ed. Ch. WARDI, Government of Israel, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Jerusalem vii, 3-4, pp. 28 ff.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>53</sup> BLAU (N 47) (668 pages).

<sup>54</sup> *The Arabic Text of Corinthians in «Studia Sinaitica No. II»*, A Comparative, Linguistic, and Critical Study, A Dissertation Presented to the ... Princeton University ... May 1942.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. VII.

<sup>56</sup> I, pp. 561-67.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 564b.

<sup>58</sup> *Quranic Studies*, Oxford 1977.

<sup>59</sup> V. e.g. *ibid.*, p. 106.



the earlier period, from which Classical Arabic represents a substantial deviation. Yet the assumption that Middle Arabic in general and Christian Arabic in particular represents standard Arabic preceding Classical Arabic is clearly disproved by a plethora of pseudo-correct features occurring in these texts, which irrefutably prove that their authors tried to use Classical Arabic, yet failed<sup>60</sup>.

Christian Arabic outside South-Palestine has been treated as well. In 1905 K. Römer published parts of his Jena dissertation on the Arabic translation of the gospels made in Spain from Latin<sup>61</sup>. In 1907, H. Ram published the late Karshuni ms. (written in 1705) Berlin Kod. Sachau 15, fol. 1-18a, which, despite its title<sup>62</sup>, «is in very nearly literary Arabic...; it is of little interest<sup>63</sup> except for some features of vocalization, which is rather fully marked»<sup>64</sup>. In 1963, J. C. J. Sanders published a Nestorian Bible commentary<sup>65</sup>. S. Kussaim published two studies of Coptic Christian Arabic<sup>66</sup>, the first<sup>67</sup> dealing in a rather lengthy way with *xâṣṣatan* «only»<sup>68</sup>, the second<sup>69</sup> with features of vocabulary, phonetics, morphology and syntax. In 1974, B. Knutsson edited four chapters of the Book of Judges according to three Syriac-Arabic versions<sup>70</sup> and com-

<sup>60</sup> For details v. the addenda in the second edition of BLAU (N 8).

<sup>61</sup> Its first part being *Der Codex Arabicus Monacensis Aumer 238* ..., Leipzig 1905, its continuation 'Studien über den Codex Arabicus Monacensis Aumer 238' *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und verwandte Gebiete* 19, 1905-06, pp. 98-125. From the *erster technisch-philologischer Hauptteil* of his dissertation, RÖMER published the first part in its entirety, i.e. the *technisch-formale Untersuchung*, yet from the second part, the *grammatisch-lexikalische Untersuchung*, he published the grammar only. He has not published the second main part, i.e. the *textkritischer Hauptteil*.

<sup>62</sup> *Qīṣṣat Mar ʿĪlīā (die Legende vom hl. Elias) als Beitrag zur Kenntnis der arabischen Vulgärdialekte Mesopotamiens* ..., Leipziger Semitistische Studien 2.3.I-VII, 1-20, Leipzig 1907. Karshuni mss., i.e. mss. written in Syriac script, are comparatively late, all of them belonging, as far as my knowledge goes, to the second millennium. In the first millennium, *ni fallor*, Christian Arabic texts are invariably written in Arabic character.

<sup>63</sup> Scilicet, for the study of dialects.

<sup>64</sup> Cited from H. BLANC, 'Iraqi Arabic Studies' in: H. SOBELMAN, editor, *Arabic Dialect Studies*, Washington D.C. 1962 (pp. 48-57), p. 52.

<sup>65</sup> *Inleiding op het genesis-kommentaar van de Nestoriaan Ibn aṭ-Ṭaiyib*..., Academisch Proefschrift ... Amsterdam, Leiden 1963.

<sup>66</sup> 'Contribution à l'étude du moyen arabe des Coptes', in *Le Muséon*.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* (N 66) 80, 1967, pp. 153-209.

<sup>68</sup> I dealt with this adverb in Judaeo-Arabic in J. BLAU, 'Arabic Lexicographical Miscellanies', in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 2, 1972 (pp. 173-90), pp. 182-86, where also its occurrence in Modern Standard Arabic is mentioned.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* (N 66) 81, 1968, pp. 5-78.

<sup>70</sup> *Studies in the Text and Language of Three Syriac-Arabic Versions of the Book of Judicum with Special Reference to the Middle Arabic Elements, Introduction — Linguistic Notes — Texts*, Leiden 1974.

petently analysed their language<sup>71</sup>. In the field of vocabulary, G. Graf's list of Christian-Arabic ecclesiastical terms<sup>72</sup> is worthy of mentioning, in that of chrestomathies P. Kawerau's chrestomathy of Christian Arabic historiography<sup>73</sup>.

As Middle Arabic in general, most Christian Arabic texts are not vocalized either. Therefore, we are left in ignorance as to the vowels of their Neo-Arabic layer. The few Christian Arabic texts vocalized are, as a rule, «elegant» Biblical translation, written in a very classical language and, therefore, without importance for the study of Neo-Arabic. The more important are those very few texts transliterated into Greek and Coptic characters, which reflect the vowel system of genuine Christian Arabic, i.e. its Neo-Arabic layer. J. Blau has included B. Violet's Greek-Arabic fragment of Psalm 78 in his Christian Arabic grammar<sup>74</sup>, and has extensively analysed a text in Coptic character<sup>75</sup>.

It stands to reason that Judaeo-Arabic did not arise later than Christian Arabic. It is only because of the decisive role played by the Cairo Geniza in the preservation of Judaeo-Arabic texts<sup>76</sup> that comparatively few mss. have been preserved from the first Christian millennium. As a rule, with the notable exception of certain Karaite circles round 1000 from Palestine<sup>77</sup> and some Spanish authors<sup>78</sup>, Judaeo-

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-231.

<sup>72</sup> *Verzeichnis arabischer kirchlicher Termini*<sup>2</sup>, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 147, Louvain 1954.

<sup>73</sup> *Christlich-arabische Chrestomathie aus historischen Schriftstellern des Mittelalters*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 370 (1. Band, 1. Heft: *Texte*), 376 (1. Band, 2. Heft: *Glossar*), 385 (2. Band: *Übersetzung mit philologischem Kommentar*), Louvain 1976-77.

<sup>74</sup> BLAU (N 47), e.g. p. 31. Cf. also the next note.

<sup>75</sup> *Some Observations on a Middle Arabic Egyptian Text in Coptic Characters*, in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 1, 1979, pp. 215-62, where also the Arabic part (in Coptic characters) of a bilingual charm is analysed (pp. 259-60), as well as the *imāla* in B. Violet's *Greek-Arabic Psalm fragment* (pp. 256-59).

<sup>76</sup> The role of the Geniza for the investigation of Judaeo-Arabic may be compared with that of the Monastery of St. Catherine for early Christian Arabic. It is only from the beginning of the second Christian millennium that Geniza documents become frequent.

<sup>77</sup> These circles utilized Arabic characters even for writing the *Hebrew Bible*. For details v. BLAU (N 8), pp. 42-44.

<sup>78</sup> So Moshe ben Ya'akov ibn Ezra's *Kitab(!) al-Muḥāḍara wal-Mudhākara, Liber Discussionis et Commemoracionis (Poetica Hebraica)* (ed. A. S. HALKIN, Jerusalem 1975) was, it seems, originally written in Arabic characters, v. J. DANA, *Tarbiz* 47, 1977-78, pp. 104-06, J. BLAU, *A Grammar of Mediaeval Judaeo-Arabic*<sup>2</sup> (in Hebrew), Jerusalem 1980, p. 291.

Arabic texts are written in Hebrew, rather than Arabic, characters<sup>79</sup>. The transliteration of the Arabic letters into Hebrew characters, in the period of the «Classical» Judaeo-Arabic literature, which, till about 1400, was characterized by the incorporation of Jewry into Muslim civilization<sup>80</sup>, was surprisingly uniform<sup>81</sup>. As far as possible, Arabic letters were marked by the phonetically corresponding Hebrew letters, including letters denoting allophones which phonetically resemble Arabic phonemes<sup>82</sup>. When, however, no correspondence between Arabic and Hebrew existed, perforce the Arabic orthographic method is applied<sup>83</sup>. The Arabic definite article is, as a rule, as in Arabic spelling, morphophonetically spelt with *alif-lamed*, although the *alef* disappears in sentence middle and the *lamed* is assimilated to certain consonants. The Arabic use of vowel letters is, more or less, taken over, with the notable exception of *w*, which, in accordance with later Hebrew spelling, often marks short *u*. It is only in cases of exceptional alienation from Arabic orthography that a different system of transliteration, totally dependent on Hebrew, is used<sup>84</sup>. On this background of uniform spelling it is quite surprising that unlitary papyri from the eighth and ninth centuries also use the system of spelling totally dependent on Hebrew<sup>85</sup>: Arabic letters without phonetic correspondence in Hebrew are represented by Hebrew letters which are pronounced in a partially similar way<sup>86</sup>; the definite article is often not spelt morphophonetically; and the use of vowel letters is quite erratic. *Prima facie*, it seems that the Judaeo-Arabic standard transliteration existed from early times, but it was not known except to men of letters<sup>87</sup>, whereas unlitary documents, written by

<sup>79</sup> V. BLAU (N 8), pp. 41-42, *idem*, *JQR* N.S. 67, 1976, pp. 185-94. A different, in my opinion, unwarranted view was expressed by L. Nemoy, *JQR* N.S. 66, 1976, pp. 148-59. Cf. also J. BLAU, *Hebrew Elements and Hebrew Script in Mediaeval Judaeo-Arabic*, *Proceedings of the 4th World Congress of Jewish Studies ii*, Jerusalem 1968, Hebrew Section, pp. 107-08.

<sup>80</sup> V. G. VAJDA, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*<sup>2</sup>, s.v. *Judaean-Arabic Literature*, p. 303b.

<sup>81</sup> For details v. Blau (N 78), p. 46.

<sup>82</sup> Therefore e.g. *خ* is spelt כ (כ), *غ* ג (ג). Cf. BLAU (N 8), pp. 34-35.

<sup>83</sup> Therefore *ض* is spelt צ, ..... ב. Cf. BLAU (N 8), p. 34.

<sup>84</sup> This is the case with a very exceptional Geniza document TS Arabic 18(1).113. Its writer, being aware of using a quite uncustomary way of spelling, which impeded its proper understanding, vocalized his writing, in order to make it more intelligible. See J. BLAU - S. HOPKINS, *A Vocalized Judaeo-Arabic Letter from the Cairo Geniza*, to be published in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*.

<sup>85</sup> J. BLAU - S. HOPKINS are preparing a study of the orthography of these papyri.

<sup>86</sup> Therefore *ض / ظ* are transliterated by ט (rather than by צ/ב in accordance with Arabic spelling).

<sup>87</sup> As Isaac Israeli (d. ca. 950) or Daniel al-Qumisi.

unlettered people, were spelt in the «Hebrew way». It was only after the time of papyri, i.e. in the tenth century, that the standard Judaeo-Arabic spelling became generally known. It seems reasonable that it was due to an outstanding literary work that even people not erudite became acquainted with the standard spelling, presumably due to Saadya ben Joseph al-Fayyûmi's (882-942) Pentateuch translation, which quickly became generally used by the Judaeo-Arabic public.

Contrary to Ancient South-Palestinian Christian Arabic, «classical» Judaeo-Arabic literature is by no means a vehicle for translations from other languages; it rather teems with original works of highest level in various fields, both general (as philosophy) and particular to Jewish culture, with the notable exception of poetry, which was composed almost exclusively in Hebrew. Not only did not most Jewish poets master the active usage of the highest level of Classical Arabic, necessary for the composition of Arabic poetry, but, apart from the lingual difficulties, the very atmosphere of the Arabic poems, reflecting the ideals of the Bedouin society, were quite alien to the urban Jews. Moreover, no religious poetry existed in Arabic. Therefore, Jewish poets turned to their time-honoured tradition of religious poetry in Hebrew. In Spain, where the knowledge of Classical Arabic was much better than in the East, the love for the holy tongue and the desire to clothe poetry in the forms of the sacred language played an important role. Therefore, Jewish poetry remained, as a rule, outside the range of Arabic<sup>88</sup>.

A plethora of introductions, which, as a rule, contain linguistic notes as well, exist to Judaeo-Arabic texts. A.S. Yahuda published his introduction to his edition of Baḥya's *Duties of the Heart* as a separate work<sup>89</sup>. As a rule, however, these introductions form a part of the text edition. We shall mention the most important ones; as those of S. L. Skoss to his edition of 'Alî ibn Sulaymân's commentary to Genesis<sup>90</sup>, and to his edition of David al-Fâsi's Bible dictionary<sup>91</sup>; S. D. Goitein's scattered linguistic notes in his widespread publications, especially his important linguistic introduction to A. H. Freimann's

<sup>88</sup> For details see Blau (N 8), pp. 22-24.

<sup>89</sup> *Prolegomena zu einer erstmaligen Herausgabe des Kitāb al-hidāja ilā far'īd al-qulūb ... von Baḥja ibn Josef ibn Paqada...*, Berlin 1904.

<sup>90</sup> *The Arabic Commentary of 'Alî ben Suleimân the Karaite on the Book of Genesis*, Philadelphia 1928, pp. 64-82.

<sup>91</sup> *The Hebrew-Arabic Dictionary of the Bible Known as Kitāb Jāmi' al-Alfāz (Agrôn) of David ben Abraham al-Fāsi the Karaite...*, Yale Oriental Series, Researches XX, XXI, New Haven 1936-45, I, pp. CXL-CLI.

edition of Abraham Maimuni's responsa<sup>92</sup>; B. I. Joel's introduction to the prayerbook of Saadya Gaon, edited by Davidson and Assaf<sup>93</sup>; the scattered linguistic notes in the many textual publications of D. H. Baneth, who, in some respects, may be regarded as the founder of strictly philological treatment of Judaeo-Arabic texts; we especially mention his introduction to H. S. Davidowitz's edition of Maimonides's essay on felicity<sup>94</sup> as well as the important linguistic remarks contained in his edition of letters of Maimonides<sup>95</sup>; I. Friedlaender's linguistic introduction to his selection of Maimonides's writings<sup>96</sup>; Z. Ben-Hayyim's description of the linguistic usage of the Arabic of the Samaritans<sup>97</sup>; and J. Blau's exposition of the language of Maimonides's responsa and the questions addressed to him in his edition of Maimonides's responsa<sup>98</sup>.

Among papers relating to Judaeo-Arabic two fundamental papers of D. H. Baneth have especially to be emphasized. In a comparatively short review of eight (!) pages<sup>99</sup> on J. Obermann's edition of R. Nissim's *Ḥibbūr yāphē min hayyeshū'ā*<sup>100</sup>, he not only succeeded in presenting the text from a new vantage point and correcting many unclear passages, but also established in an authoritative way the special character of Judaeo-Arabic, reposing on its syntactic features and autographs; and in another paper<sup>101</sup> he first applied geographical and chronological criteria to the study of Middle Arabic. A. L. Motzkin wrote some notes on the language of 13th century Geniza documents<sup>102</sup>. J. Blau published

<sup>92</sup> Abraham MAIMUNI, *Responsa*, ed. A. H. FREIMANN - S. D. GOITEIN, Jerusalem 1937, pp. XXIII-XXXVII.

<sup>93</sup> I. DAVIDSON, S. ASSAF, B. I. JOEL, ed., *Siddur R. Saadya Gaon*..., Jerusalem 1941, pp. 53-58.

<sup>94</sup> *De beatitudine capita duo R. Mosi ben Maimon adscripta*, editio H. S. DAVIDOWITZ, textum recognovit ... D. H. BANETH, Jerusalem 1939, pp. XXII-XXV.

<sup>95</sup> MOSES BEN MAIMON, *Epistulae*, Fasc. I, Jerusalem 1946.

<sup>96</sup> *Selections from the Arabic Writings of Maimonides*..., Semitic Study Series XII, Leiden 1909, pp. XIV-XXIII. Without knowing of Friedlaender's study, E. MAINZ, *Islamica* 5, 1932, pp. 556-72, analysed Maimonides's language as well.

<sup>97</sup> In the introduction to his monumental *The Literary and Oral Tradition of Hebrew and Aramaic amongst the Samaritans*, Jerusalem 1957-77, i, pp. LXXIV-LXXVIII.

<sup>98</sup> R. MOSES BEN MAIMON, *Responsa*..., Jerusalem 1957-61, III, pp. 59-116.

<sup>99</sup> *Kirjath Sepher* 11, 1934, pp. 350-57.

<sup>100</sup> *The Arabic Original of Ibn Shāhin's Book of Comfort, Known as the Ḥibbūr Yāphē of R. Nissim b. Ya'aqobh*, Yale Oriental Series, Researches XVII, New Haven 1933.

<sup>101</sup> *The Tanwin and its Development into a Separate Word in Judaeo-Arabic*, in *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society* 12, 1945-46, pp. 141-53. Cf. also J. BLAU (N 8), Appendix III, Vestiges of Tanwin in *Judaeo-Arabic and Modern Bedouin Dialects*, pp. 167-212.

<sup>102</sup> *Some Aspects of Judaeo-Arabic in the Thirteenth Century*, in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 15, 1970, pp. 56-62.

several papers on Middle Arabic in general and Judaeo-Arabic in particular, as on mediaeval Judaeo-Arabic dialects<sup>103</sup>; on the status of Judaeo-Arabic<sup>104</sup>; on the numerals in Judaeo-Arabic<sup>105</sup>; on the dual in Judaeo-Arabic<sup>106</sup>; on the Hebrew elements in Judaeo-Arabic<sup>107</sup>; on the character of Judaeo-Arabic<sup>108</sup>; a comparative treatment of Judaeo-Arabic and Christian Arabic<sup>109</sup>; on Judaeo-Arabic in its linguistic setting<sup>110</sup>; on the state of research in Middle Arabic in general and in Judaeo-Arabic in particular<sup>111</sup>; philological notes on the Bible based on mediaeval Judaeo-Arabic<sup>112</sup>; on traces of the Qur'ân in Judaeo-Arabic<sup>113</sup>; on the problem of the synthetic character of Classical Arabic as against Judaeo-Arabic (Middle Arabic)<sup>114</sup> on the rendering of *nâ* into Judaeo-Arabic in Biblical translations<sup>115</sup>; on Judaeo-Arabic as a Jewish language<sup>116</sup>; and the linguistic analysis of the rather vulgar language of a philosophical poem from Seville from the fourteenth century<sup>117</sup>.

In the field of lexicography<sup>118</sup>, first comes I. Friedlaender's lexicon on

<sup>103</sup> *Orbis* 7, 1958, pp. 159-67 (in German; a Hebrew version of this paper appeared in *Tarbiz* 27, 1957-58, pp. 83-92). Cf. also BLAU, 'Hebrew Elements and Hebrew Script' (N 79).

<sup>104</sup> *The Status of Arabic as used by Jews in the Middle Ages*, in *The Journal of Jewish Studies* 10, 1959, pp. 15-23.

<sup>105</sup> *Tarbiz* 23, 1953-54, pp. 27-35.

<sup>106</sup> *The Dual in Judaeo-Arabic and its Linguistic Background*, in *Tarbiz* 30, 1960-61, pp. 130-38.

<sup>107</sup> *Leshonenu* 22 (1957-58), pp. 183-96. Cf. also BLAU (N 8), pp. 133-66, further *idem*, *On the Status of Hebrew and Aramaic among Arabic speaking Jews in the First Centuries of the Islam*, in *Leshonenu* 26, 1961-62, pp. 281-84.

<sup>108</sup> *Tarbiz* 28, 1958-59, pp. 362-74.

<sup>109</sup> *On Some Convergent and Divergent Features in Judaeo-Arabic and Christian Arabic*, in *Tarbiz* 33, 1963-64, pp. 131-40.

<sup>110</sup> *American Academy for Jewish Research* 36, 1968, pp. 1-12.

<sup>111</sup> *A. N. Braun Memorial Volume*, Jerusalem 1969, pp. 464-69; *Proceedings of the 5th World Congress of Jewish Studies IV*, Jerusalem 1973, Hebrew Section, pp. 107-08.

<sup>112</sup> *Shnaton, An Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies* 1, 1975, pp. 27-31; 3, 1978-79, pp. 198-203.

<sup>113</sup> *Tarbiz* 40, 1970-71, pp. 512-14.

<sup>114</sup> *Jewish Quarterly Review* N. S. 48, 1972, pp. 29-38.

<sup>115</sup> *On General and Specific Features in Judaeo-Arabic, Te'uda i, Cairo Geniza Studies*, Tel-Aviv 1980, pp. 185-92 (English summary p. XXVII).

<sup>116</sup> H. H. PAPER, ed., *Jewish Languages, Theme and Variations*, Cambridge, Mass., 1978, pp. 121-31 (with the responses of E. A. Coffin, *ibid.*, pp. 133-36, and N. A. STILLMAN, *ibid.*, pp. 137-44). J. BLAU, *Classical Judaeo-Arabic, Pe'amim* 1, 1979, pp. 45-49.

<sup>117</sup> *Divre Ha'academya hal'umit hayisra'elit l'mada'im* VI, 3, Jerusalem 1978-79, pp. 27-58.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. also S. L. SKOSS's general remarks (in *Suggestions for Further Studies in Judaeo-Arabic Literature*, in: S. LÖWINGER, A. SCHEIBER, J. SOMOGYI, ed., *Ignace Goldziher Memorial Volume*, Jerusalem 1958, pp. 42-49), pp. 43-46; *ibid.*, p. 43, n. 4 Skoss corrected some errors that have crept into Dozy's Judaeo-Arabic references. Cf. n. 123.

the linguistic usage of Maimonides<sup>119</sup>. Most text editions contain lexicographical notes as well; the most important ones are the glossary in D. S. Margaliouth's edition of Yefet ben 'Ali's commentary of Daniel<sup>120</sup> and that of L. Nemoy in his edition of Qirqisāni's code of law<sup>121</sup>. G. Vajda<sup>122</sup> made not only important corrections to Dozy's *Supplément*<sup>123</sup>, but the introduction to his short article may, in want of anything better, serve, in spite of Vajda's modest claims, as a statement of the *status quaestionis*. A profusion of lexicographic material is contained in S. D. Goitein's various publications<sup>124</sup>, especially in his masterly books on mediaeval Arabic speaking Jews as a mediterranean society<sup>125</sup>. J. Blau is preparing a dictionary of «classical» Judaeo-Arabic, planned as addition to the existing dictionaries (but still containing words adduced by Dozy only); yet this undertaking is still in its very beginnings.

In 1892, H. Hirschfeld published the first Judaeo-Arabic chrestomathy<sup>126</sup>; many of Hirschfeld's readings, however, are not quite accurate. Recently<sup>127</sup>, J. Blau published another Judaeo-Arabic chrestomathy, which pays special attention to deviations from Classical Arabic on the one hand, and to the method of editing on the other.

J. Blau published two general works on mediaeval Judaeo-Arabic, a grammar, which has now appeared in a second, enlarged edition<sup>128</sup>, and a comprehensive study of the linguistic background of Judaeo-Arabic, including the origins of Middle Arabic<sup>129</sup>, which is now being published in a second enlarged edition.

So far we have dealt with «classical» Judaeo-Arabic, which constitutes a part of Muslim civilization. Quite different is the status of Judaeo-Arabic, especially in the Maghrib (less in Yemen), from the 15th century

<sup>119</sup> *Der Sprachgebrauch des Maimonides ... I. Lexikalischer Teil...*, Ein Nachtrag zu den arabischen Lexicis, Frankfurt 1902 (no more was published).

<sup>120</sup> *A Commentary on the Book of Daniel by Jepheth Ibn 'Ali*, Oxford 1889, pp. 89-96.

<sup>121</sup> *Kitāb al-Anwār wa-l-Marāqib, Code of Karaite Law by Ya'qūb al-Qirqisāni*, New York 1939-43, v, pp. 043-049.

<sup>122</sup> *Gloses Judéo-arabes en marge du Supplément de Dozy*, in *Arabica* XXVI, 1980, pp. 144-57.

<sup>123</sup> As did already Skoss in a short note, v. above, n. 118. For another correction to Dozy v. BLAU (N 112), 3, p. 203.

<sup>124</sup> As in his *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*, Princeton 1973.

<sup>125</sup> *A Mediterranean Society*, Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1967 ff.

<sup>126</sup> *Arabic Chrestomathy in Hebrew Characters*, London 1892.

<sup>127</sup> *Judaeo-Arabic Literature, Selected Texts*, The Max Schloessinger Memorial Series, Texts 4, Jerusalem 1980.

<sup>128</sup> BLAU (N 78) (362 pages).

<sup>129</sup> BLAU (N 8) (the first edition has 227 pages).

onward, because of the rift between the Arabic speaking Jewish community and Muslim culture<sup>130</sup>. Therefore, Hebrew became the only language of culture, Arabic (i.e. Judaeo-Arabic) being only used in answer to the needs of the less educated layers of the Jewish population, including popular, liturgical and paraliturgical, poetry. This Arabic had a much more pronounced dialectal basis than «classical» Judaeo-Arabic. Because of the rift with Arabic culture, even texts written in «classical» Judaeo-Arabic were no longer intelligible and had to be retranslated into the more vulgar variety of Judaeo-Arabic<sup>131</sup>. On the other hand, the rift with «classical» Judaeo-Arabic was not complete even in the Maghrib, as demonstrated by the continuation of a feature as 'n preceding an indefinite attribute<sup>132</sup> or the translation of Biblical *nā* by words denoting «now»<sup>133</sup>.

The number of linguistic works dealing with late Judaeo-Arabic is restricted. Since, however, it is fashionable nowadays to look for «roots» in modern Judaeo-Arabic, it is to be hoped that linguistic research, too will profit from it. Again, it was H. L. Fleischer who already in 1864 published a Maghrebine poem with linguistic notes<sup>134</sup>. S. D. Goitein, in his edition of a Yemenite Judaeo-Arabic text from 1870, ably described the language used<sup>135</sup>. A. D. Corré added to his Arabic paraphrases of Jeremiah 8.13-9.23 notes dealing with both their grammar and vocabulary<sup>136</sup>. H. Blanc's paper *Notes on the Literary Idiom of the Baghdadi*

<sup>130</sup> See VAJDA (N 80).

<sup>131</sup> So BAHYA'S *Duties of the Heart* had to be translated into late Judaeo-Arabic, v. BANETH (N 101), p. 145, item XXIII, VAJDA (N 80). It was therefore that, with the notable exception of Yemen, Saadya's «classical» Pentateuch translation could no longer be used in synagogues and was replaced by more vernacular *shurūh*; v. e.g. D. DORON, *Issachar ben Susan al-Maghribi's Arabic Pentateuch Translation*, Doctoral Thesis Ramat Gan 1980, p. 23.

<sup>132</sup> V. BANETH (N 101), *passim*; cf. especially the late texts enumerated *ibid.*, pp. 144-45, and BANETH'S conclusion, p. 153, that this phenomenon in late texts reflects traditional orthography.

<sup>133</sup> V. BLAU (N 115), especially p. 191.

<sup>134</sup> Later published in his *Kleinere Schriften* (N 37), III, pp. 425-39. For other Judaeo-Arabic Maghrebine poems cf. e.g. E. MAINZ, *Quelques poésies judéo-arabes du Manuscrit 411 de la bibliothèque du Vatican*, in *Journal Asiatique* 237, 1949, pp. 51-83. Genuine dialectal popular poetry, no longer exhibiting Middle Arabic, is already outside the scope of this paper.

<sup>135</sup> *Travels in Yemen, an Account of Joseph Halévy's Journey to Najran in the Year 1870 Written in San'ani Arabic by His Guide Hayyim Habshush*, Jerusalem 1941, pp. 72-81 (grammar), 82-96 (glossary).

<sup>136</sup> *The Daughter of My People, Arabic and Hebrew Paraphrases of Jeremiah 8.13-9.23*, Leiden 1971, pp. 66-80.



*Jews*<sup>137</sup> contains many important insights into the idiom analysed in particular and late Judaeo-Arabic in general. Recently, D. Doron has ably analysed a 16th century Bible translation<sup>138</sup>. A.D. Corré is preparing a computerized dictionary of late Judaeo-Arabic.

It is to be hoped that additional studies will further our knowledge of Middle Arabic, one of the preliminary conditions for creating a historical grammar of Arabic<sup>139</sup>. We expect to learn more on Neo-Arabic from the Neo-Arabic elements contained in Middle Arabic texts, to understand even the history of Classical Arabic better, to study the fascinating way of how Classical Arabic and Neo-Arabic features interact in Middle Arabic, and to be able, by the better understanding of Middle Arabic, to fathom Middle Arabic texts of great cultural importance, as scientific works and «classical» Judaeo-Arabic literature.

---

<sup>137</sup> In: *For Max Weinreich on His Seventieth Birthday*, The Hague 1964, pp. 18-30.

<sup>138</sup> DORON (N 31).

<sup>139</sup> As recognized e.g. by SPITALER (N 25), p. 128.