THE DAMASCUS PSALM FRAGMENT

MIDDLE ARABIC AND THE LEGACY OF OLD ḤIGĀZĪ

AHMAD AL–JALLAD

The Damascus Psalm Fragment

****

Late Antique and Medieval Islamic Near East (LAMINE)

The new Oriental Institute series LAMINE aims to publish a variety of
scholarly works, including monographs, edited volumes, critical text
editions, translations, studies of corpora of documents—in short,
any work that offers a significant contribution to understanding the
Near East between roughly 200 and 1000 CE

****

The Damascus Psalm Fragment

Middle Arabic and the Legacy of Old Ḥigāzī

by

Ahmad Al-Jallad

with a contribution by

Ronny Vollandt

The Oriental Institute, Chicago

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LATE ANTIQUE AND MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC NEAR EAST • NUMBER 2

For Victor "Suggs" Jallad
my happy thought

Table of Contents

Preface

I have been thinking about the Damascus Psalm Fragment for nearly ten years. I was first introduced to the text and the great debates surrounding its date and linguistic register in Professor Wolfhart Heinrichs' seminar on the History of the Arabic Languages. It was, at the time, the earliest Arabic text written in Greek letters, and as such, provided the clearest window into the pronunciation of Arabic in the first few Islamic centuries. The fragment formed the basis of a question that would guide my research for the next decade: what would the history of Arabic look like if we based it on documents such as these—early texts that exist free from the prescriptive influence of Classical Arabic norms? One article—and perhaps one of the most influential on me—centers this text in the quest for Arabic's early history, M. C. A. Macdonald's "Literacy and Identity in an Oral Environment." In this excellent essay, Macdonald makes a compelling case for a pre-Islamic date of the fragment. Could it be that this text, so "Neo-Arabic" in its character, dated to a century before the spread of Islam? At the moment, there was only one other corpus of pre-Islamic Graeco-Arabic texts that could be compared to the document: the Arabic vocabulary in Greek transcription from the Petra Papryi. While these words and phrases did not provide enough linguistic material to establish with any certainty a relationship with the Psalm Fragment, they did prove conclusively that so-called "neo-Arabic" features, like the loss of final-short vowels, appeared before the Arab Conquests. The case for a pre-Islamic date seemed defensible.

The Psalm Fragment and the Petra Papyri brought into relief the value of transcriptions for the understanding of the history of Arabic. In 2013, I identified a large corpus of neglected material that could bear on this question - the copious transcriptions of pre-Islamic Arabic anthroponyms in Greek from the Levant dating to the early first millennium CE. These "Graeco-Arabica" have never been studied on their own terms and so had yet to contribute to the history of Arabic (morpho-)phonology (anthroponyms could provide little information about other aspects of morphology and syntax). I established a four-part project aiming to study this material in a comprehensive way: Part I "the southern Levant," Part II "Palmyra," Part III "Dura Europos, Hatra, and Miscellaneous," and Part IV "The Damascus Psalm Fragment." Part I has already appeared (Al-Jallad, Graeco-Arabica I); part II and III are still in preparation. This book grew out of my work on part IV.

I returned to the study of the Damascus Psalm Fragment after I completed a comprehensive study of the pre-Islamic Graeco-Arabic from the Levant, the Arabic names and terms in Greek transcription from the first Islamic century (from Nessana and Egypt), and a comprehensive study of the bilingual Greek-Safaitic texts known till the time. These provided an important context for situating the language and writing system of the fragment. While the text was certainly unique in the Islamic period, it found no counterpart, no relatives, in the pre-Islamic period either—in almost every measurable way, its writing system and language differed from the pre-Islamic Graeco-Arabica.

This book studies all aspects of the Damascus Psalm Fragment in microscopic detail in an attempt to understand the origin of its language, its writing system, and how it fits into Arabic's linguistic history. The book views the language of the Damascus Psalm Fragment as

a bridge between the pre-Islamic and Islamic periods of Arabic. It reflects a dialect closely related to that of Quranic orthography and Umayyad period documents and transcriptions—Old Ḥigāzī. From here, I offer a new hypothesis on the relationship between early forms of Arabic and the origins of what we conventionally call "Classical Arabic."

The book concludes with two appendices. The first, by Professor Ronny Vollandt, covers the scribal and translational context of the Psalm Fragment, using these neglected dimensions to relate the text to other, relatively early Christian Arabic translations of the Bible. The second appendix collects bilingual Arabic (Safaitic)-Greek inscriptions in one place as a point of comparison with the Psalm Fragment. These texts are followed by a fresh commentary, modifying some readings and interpretations.

I first owe gratitude to Professor Ronny Vollandt for contributing his excellent chapter to this book. I thank the many readers who have given me helpful comments and corrections on this manuscript: Professor Michael C. A. Macdonald, Professor Holger Gzella, Professor Aaron Butts, Professor Ronny Vollandt, Karolina Jaworska, Dr. Marijn van Putten, Dr. Hythem Sidky, Dr. Benjamin Suchard, and Dr. Emily Cottrell.

Ahmad Al-Jallad
Columbus, Ohio
October 2019

Abbreviations

CE	Common Era
ca.	*circa,* about, approximately
CAr	Classical Arabic
ch(s).	chapter(s)
col(s).	column(s)
ed.	edition, editor
e.g.	*exempli gratia,* for example
esp.	especially
FS	Feminine singular
ibid.	*ibidem*, in the same place
i.e.	*id est*, that is
MS	Masculine singular
n(n)	note(s)
no(s).	number(s)
OCIANA	Online Corpus of the Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia
P	plural (in verb)
PF	Damascus Psalm Fragment
QCT	Quranic Consonantal Text
S	strong verb
s.v.	*sub verbo*, under the word
trans.	translation, translator
v(v).	verse(s)
I-ʾ	initial hamzah verb
I-w	initial wāw verb
II-w/y	medial weak (hollow) verbs
III-ʾ	final hamzah verb
III-w/y	final weak verbs
1	first person
2	second person
3	third person

List of Tables and Figures

Bibliography

Abullif, Wadīʿ. "al-Asʿad Ibn al-ʿAssal, introduzioni alla traduzione dei Quattro Vangeli." *Studia Orientalia Christiana* 34 (2006): 47–120.

———. *Dirāsa ʿan al-Muʾtamin b. al-ʿAssāl wa-kitābihi "majmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn" wa-taḥqīquhu.* Cairo/Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1997.

Agius, Dionisius A. *Siculo Arabic.* Library of Arabic Linguistics 12. New York: Routledge, 1996.

Alexander, Philip S. "The Targumim and the Rabbinic Rules for the Delivery of the Targum." *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 36 (1985): 14–28.

Al-Jallad, A. "The Arabic of the Islamic Conquests: Notes on Phonology and Morphology Based on the Greek Transcriptions from the First Islamic Century." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 80/3 (2017): 419–39.

———. "Aṣ-Ṣādu llatī sa-s-Sīn—Evidence for an Affricated Ṣād in Sibawayh?" *Folia Orientalia* 51 (2014): 51–57.

———. "The Earliest Stages of Arabic and Its Linguistic Classification." In *Routledge Handbook of Arabic Linguistics*, edited by Elabbas Benmamoun and Reem Bassiouney, 315–30. New York: Routledge, 2018.

———. "Echoes of the Baal Cycle in a Safaito-Hismaic Inscription." *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions* 15 (2015): 5–19.

———. "Graeco-Arabica I: The Southern Levant." In *Arabic in Context: Celebrating 400 Years of Arabic at Leiden University*, edited by Ahmad Al-Jallad, 99–186. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

———. "On the Genetic Background of the Rbbl Bn Hfʿm Grave Inscription at Qaryat Al-Fāw." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 77/3 (2014): 445–65.

———. "On the Voiceless Reflex of *ṣ́ and *ṭ in Pre-Hilalian Maghrebian Arabic." *ZAL* 62 (2015): 88–95.

———. *An Outline of the Grammar of the Safaitic Inscriptions.* SSLL 80. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

———. "Pre-Islamic "Ḥamāsah" Verses from Northeastern Jordan: A New Safaitic Poetic Text from Marabb Al-Shurafāʾ, with Further Remarks on the ʿĒn ʿAvdat Inscription and KRS 2453." *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 47 (2017): 117–28.

———. "Safaitic." In *The Semitic Languages*, 2nd ed., edited by H. Huehnergard and N. Pat-El, 342–66. New York: Routledge, 2019.

———. "Was It Sūrat Al-Baqárah? Evidence for Antepenultimate Stress in the Quranic Consonantal Text and Its Relevance for صلوه Type Nouns." *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 167/1 (2017): 81–90.

———. "What Is Ancient North Arabian?" In *Re-engaging Comparative Semitic and Arabic Studies*, edited by Naʾama Pat-El and Daniel Birnstiel, 1–45. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018.

———. "Yusapʿil or Yuhapʿil, That Is the Question: Two Solutions to the Sound Change *s¹ > h in West Semitic." *ZDMG* 165/1 (2015): 27–39.

Al-Jallad, Ahmad, Robert Daniel, and Omar al-Ghul. "The Arabic Toponyms and Oikonyms in 17." In *The Petra Papyri II*, edited by Ludwig Koenen, Maarit Kaimo, and Robert Daniel, 23–48. Amman: ACOR, 2013.

Al-Jallad, Ahmad, and M. C. A. Macdonald. "A Few Notes on the Alledged Occurence of 'Ghassān' in a Safaitic Inscription." *Archiv für Orientforschung* 53 (2015): 152–57.

Al-Jallad, Ahmad, and Ali al-Manaser. "New Epigraphica from Jordan I: A Pre-Islamic Arabic Inscription in Greek Letters and a Greek Inscription from North-Eastern Jordan." *Arabian Epigraphic Notes* 1 (2015): 51–70.

———. "New Epigraphica from Jordan II: Three Safaitic-Greek Partial Bilingual Inscriptions." *Arabian Epigraphic Notes* 2 (2016): 55–66.

Al-Jallad, Ahmad, Younis Shdaifat, Zeyad al-Salameen, and Rafe Harahsheh. "An Early Christian Arabic Graffito Mentioning 'Yazīd the King.'" *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 28/2 (2017): 1–10.

Al-Jallad, Ahmad, and Marijn Van Putten. "The Case for Proto-Arabic and Proto-Semitic Case: A Reply to Jonathan Owens." *Romano-Arabica* 17 (2017): 87–117.

Allen, W. Sidney. *Vox Graeca: A Guide to the Pronunciation of Classical Greek*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.

Al-Rousan, M. "Nuqūš Ṣafāwiyyah min Wādī Qaṣṣāb bi-l-ʾUrdunn." PhD dissertation. Riyadh: Ğāmiʿat al-Malik Saʿūd, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2005.

Ansary, A. R al-. *Qaryat Al-Fau: A Portrait of Pre-Islamic Civilisation in Saudi Arabia*. Riyadh; London: University of Riyadh; Croom Helm, 1982.

Arnold, Werner, and Peter Behnstedt. *Arabisch-Aramäische Sprachbeziehungen in Qalamūn (Syrien). Eine dialektgeographische Untersuchung mit einer wirtschafts- und sozialgeographischen Einführung von Anton Escher*. Semitica Viva 8. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1993.

Avner, Uzi, Laïla Nehmé, and Christian J. Robin. "A Rock Inscription Mentioning Thaʿlaba, an Arab King from Ghassān." *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 24/2 (2013): 237–59.

Bailey, Kenneth E. "Hibat Allah Ibn al-ʿAssāl and his Arabic Thirteenth-century Critical Edition of the Gospels (with Special Attention to Luke 16:16 and 17:10)." *Theological Review* 1 (1978): 11–26.

Bandt, Cordula, and Arndt Rattmann. "Die Damaskusreise Bruno Violets 1900/1901 zur Forschung der Qubbet el-Chanzne." *Codices Manuscripti* 76/77 (2011): 1–20.

Barr, James. *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1979.

Barthélemy, Dominique. *Les devanciers d'Aquila*. Leiden: Brill, 1963.

Bauer, H. "Mitteilungen zur semitischen Grammatik." *ZDMG* 66 (1912): 103–14.

Baumstark, Anton. "Der älteste erhaltene griechisch-arabische Text von Psalm 110 (109)." *Oriens Christianus* 31 (1934): 55–66.

———. "Minbar = Thron, und älteste arabische Psaltertexte." *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung* 46 (1943): 337–41.

Beeston, Alfred F. L. "Languages of Pre-Islamic Arabia." *Arabica* 28/2–3 (1981), Numéro Spécial Double: Études de Linguistique Arabe: 178–86.

———. "Nemara and Faw." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 42/1 (1979): 1–6.

Beeston, A. F. L. "Antecedents of Classical Arabic Verse?, " In *Festschrift Ewald Wagner zum 65. Geburtstag. Bd. 1. Semitische Studien unter besonderer Berücksichstigung der Süd-semitistik*, edited by W. Heinrichs and G. Schoeler, 234–43. Beiruter Texte und Studien 54. Beirut: OIB, 1994.

Behnstedt, Peter. *Dialect Atlas of North Yemen and Adjacent Areas*. HdO 114. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

———. *Die Dialekte der Gegend von Ṣaʿdah (Nord-Jemen)*. Semitica Viva 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1987.

———. *Die nordjemenitischen Dialekte Teil 2: Glossar Alif-Dāl*. Jemen-Studien 3. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert, 1992.

Bell, Richard, and William Montgomery Watt. *Introduction to the Qurʾān*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970.

Bellamy, James A. "A New Reading of the Namara Inscription." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 105/1 (1985): 31–48.

Binggeli, André. "Les trois David, copistes arabes de Palestine aux 9e-10e s." In *Manuscripta Graeca et Orientalia, Mélanges monastiques et patristiques en l'honneur de Paul Géhin*, edited by André Binggeli, Anne Boud'hors, and Matthieu Cassin, 79–117. Leuven: Peeters, 2016.

Blau, Joshua. *The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic: A Study of the Origins of Neo-Arabic and Middle Arabic*. 3rd revised edition. Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1999.

———. *A Grammar of Christian Arabic Based Mainly on South-Palestinian Texts from the First Millennium.* 2 vols. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium 267. Leuven: Peeters, 1996.

———. *A Handbook of Early Middle Arabic.* Jerusalem: Max Schloessinger Memorial Foundation and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2002.

———. "Some Observations on a Middle Arabic Egyptian Text in Coptic Characters." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 1 (1979): 215–62.

Blau, Joshua, and Simon Hopkins. "On Early Judaeo-Arabic Orthography." *ZAL* 12 (1984): 9–27.

Blois, François de. "Review of *Die Syro-Aramäische Lesart des Koran. Ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache.*" *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 5/1 (2003): 92–97.

Bollandus, Joannes. *Acta Sanctorum Martii.* Paris and Rome: Apud Victorem Palmé, 1865.

Briquel-Chatonnet, F., A. Desreumaux, and A. Binggeli. "Un cas très ancien de garshouni ? Quelques réflexions sur le manuscrit British Library Add 14644." In *Loquentes Linguis: Studi linguistici e orientali in onore die Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti*, edited by P. Borbone, A. Mengozzi, and M. Tosco, 141–47. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2007.

Brixhe, C. "Linguistic Diversity in Asia Minor during the Empire: Koine and Non-Greek Languages." In *Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, edited by Egbert J. Bakker, 228–52. Malden: Blackwell, 2010.

Brock, Sebastian. "Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity." *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 20 (1979): 69–87.

———. "Greek and Latin in Syriac Script." *Hugoye* 17/1 (2014): 33–52.

Burmester, O. H. E. "Further Leaves from the Arabic MS. in Coptic Script of the Apophthegmata Patrum." *Bulletin de la Societe d'archeologie Copte* 18 (1965–66): 51–64.

Butts, Aaron Michael. *Language Change in the Wake of Empire: Syriac in Its Greco-Roman Context.* Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016.

———. "Reduplicated Nominal Patterns in Semitic." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 131/1 (2011): 83–108.

Carter, M. G. *Sibawayhi.* London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004.

Clark, Kenneth W. *Checklist of Manuscripts in St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai.* Washington: Library of Congress, 1952.

Cohen, Mark. "Geniza for Islamicists, Islamic Geniza, and the 'New Cairo Geniza'." *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 7 (2006): 129–45.

Cook, Michael. "The Opponents of the Writing of Tradition in Early Islam." *Arabica* 44/4 (January 1, 1997): 437–530, https://doi.org/10.1163/1570058972582317.

Corriente, Federico. "From Old Arabic to Classical Arabic through the Pre-Islamic Koiné: Some Notes on the Native Grammarians' Sources, Attitudes and Goals." *Journal of Semitic Studie*s 21 (1976): 62–98.

———. "The Psalter Fragment from the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus: A Birth Certificate of Nabaṭī Arabic." In *Eastern Crossroads: Essays on Medieval Christian Legacy*, edited by Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, 303–20. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2007.

Déroche, François. "In the Beginning: Early Qur'ans from Damascus." In *The Art of the Qur'an: Treasures from the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts*, edited by Massumeh Farhad and Simon Rettig, 61–75. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2016.

Diem, Werner. "Some Glimpses at the Rise and Early Development of Arabic Orthography." *Orientalia*, n.s., 45 (1976): 251–61.

———. "Untersuchungen zur frühen Geschichte der arabischen Orthographie: I. Die Schreibung der Vokale." *Orientalia* n.s. 48 (1979): 207–57.

———. "Untersuchungen zur frühen Geschichte der arabischen Orthographie: II. Die Schreibung der Konsonanten." *Orientalia*, n.s., 49 (1980): 67–106.

———. "Untersuchungen zur frühen Geschichte der arabischen Orthographie III. Endungen und Endschreibungen." *Orientalia*, n.s., 50 (1981): 332–83.

D'Ottone, Arianna. "Manuscripts as Mirrors of a Multilingual and Multicultural Society: The Case of the Damascus Find." In *Negotiating Co-existence: Communities, Cultures and Convivencia in Byzantine Society*, edited by Barbara Crostini and Sergio La Porta, 63–88. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2013.

D'Ottone, Arianna, and Paolo Radiciotti. "I frammenti della Qubbat al-Khazna di Damasco. A proposito di una scoperta sottovalutata." *Nea Rhōmē* 5 (2008): 45–74.

Evelyn-White, Hugh Gerard. *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrûn: New Coptic Texts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1926.

Fiema, Zbigniew T., Ahmad Al-Jallad, Michael C.A. Macdonald, and Laïla Nehmé. "Provincia Arabia: Nabataea, the Emergence of Arabic as a Written Language, and Graeco-Arabica." In *Arabs and Empires before Islam*, edited by Greg Fisher, 373–433. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Fischer, Wolfdietrich. *A Grammar of Classical Arabic: Third Revised Edition*. Translated by Jonathan Rodgers. 3 revised sub edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

Gardthausen, Viktor Emil. *Catalogus codicum graecorum sinaiticorum*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1886.

Géhin, Paul. "Manuscrits sinaïtiques dispersés I: Les fragments syriaques et arabes de Paris." *Oriens Christianus* 90 (2006): 23–43.

Genequand, Denis, and Christian Julien Robin, editors. *Les Jafnides : Des rois arabes au service de Byzance*. Paris: De Boccard, 2015.

Gignac, Francis T. *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods: Phonology*, vol. 1. Milan: Istituto editoriale cisalpino–La goliardica, 1976.

Graf, Georg. *Die christlich-arabische Literatur bis zur fränkischen Zeit [Ende des 11. Jahrhunderts]:Eine literarhistorische Skizze*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1905.

———. *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*. 5 vols. Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1944–53.

———. *Verzeichnis arabischer kirchlicher Termini. Zweite, vermehrte Auflage*. Louvain: Imprimerie Orientalis, 1954.

Griffith, Sydney H. *The Bible in Arabic: The Scriptures of the "People of the Book" in the Language of Islam*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Grohmann, Adolf. "Allgemeine Einführung in die arabischen Papyri, nebst Grundzügen der arabischen Diplomatik." In *Corpus Papyrorum Raineri Archiducis Austriae III*, edited by Adolf Grohmann, vol. 1.1. Series Arabica. Vienna, 1924.

Gzella, Holger. *A Cultural History of Aramaic: From the Beginnings to the Advent of Islam*. Lam edition. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

Haddad, Rachid. "La phonétique de l'arabe chrétien vers 700." In *La Syrie de Byzance à l'Islam: VIIe-VIIIe siècles; Actes du Colloque International Lyon-Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen, Paris–Institut du Monde Arabe, 11-15 Septembre 1990*, edited by Pierre Canivet and Rey-Coquais Jean-Paul, 159–64. Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1992.

Harahsheh, R., and Y. M. Shdeifat. "Nuqūš ṣafawiyyah muʾarraḫah ilà ḥukm aġrībā al-ṯānī (19/50—92/93 m)." *Maǧallat muʾtah li-l-buḥūṯ wa-ʾl-dirāsāt (silsilat al-ʿulūm al-insāniyyah wa-ʾl-iǧtimāʿiyyah)* 20/6 (2006): 111–29.

Ḥarfūš, Ibrahim. "The Library of Our Maronite Denomination in the Protected City of Aleppo." *Al-Mashriq* 1 (1914): 21–29.

Harlfinger, Dieter. "Beispiele der Maiuscula Ogivalis Inclinata vom Sinai und aus Damaskus." In *Alethes philia: Studi in onore di Giancarlo Prato*, edited by Marco d'Agostino and Paola Degni, 2:461–78. Spoleto: Fondazione Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2010.

Harlfinger, Dieter, Diether Reinsch, and Joseph A. M. Sonderkamp. *Specimina Sinaitica: Die datierten griechischen Handschriften des Katharinen-Klosters auf dem Berge Sinai, 9. bis 12. Jahrhundert*. Berlin: D. Reimer, 1983.

Hasselbach, Rebecca. *Case in Semitic: Roles, Relations, and Reconstruction.* Oxford Studies in Diachronic and Historical Linguistics. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

———. "Demonstratives in Semitic." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 127/1 (2007): 1–27.

Hatch, W. H. P. "An Uncial Fragment of the Gospels." *Harvard Theological Review* 23 (1930): 149–52.

Hayajneh, Hani, and Mohammad I. Ababneh. "The 'God of Ġ¹sn' in an Ancient North Arabian Inscription from the Ḥarra Region - Northeastern Jordan." In *Les Jafnides: Des rois arabes au service de Byzance (VIe Siècle de l'ère Chrétienne)*, edited by Denis Genequand and Christian Julien Robin, 259–76. Paris: Éditions de Boccard, 2015.

Healey, J. "Lexical Loans in Early Syriac: A Comparison with Nabataean Aramaic." *Studi Epigraphici e Linguistici* 12 (1995): 75–84.

Heath, Jeffrey. *Jewish and Muslim Dialects of Moroccan Arabic*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Heijer, Johannes den. "Introduction: Middle and Mixed Arabic, A New Trend in Arabic Studies." In *Middle Arabic and Mixed Arabic: Diachrony and Synchrony*, edited by Liesbeth Zack and Arie Schippers, 1–25. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Hiersemann, Karl W. *Katalog 500. Orientalische Manuskripte. Arabische, syrische, griechische, armenische, persische Handschriften des 7.-18. Jahrhunderts.* Leipzig: Karl W. Hiersemann, 1922.

Hjälm, Miriam L. "A Paleographical Study of Christian Arabic Manuscripts in the Early Islamic Period," forthcoming.

Holes, Clive, editor. *Arabic Historical Dialectology: Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Approaches*. Oxford Studies in Diachronic and Historical Linguistics 34. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

———. "From Palestine to Damascus to Berlin: Early Christian Arabic texts from the Qubbat al-khazna in the Violet collection." In *The Damascus Fragments: Towards a History of the Qubbat al-khazna Corpus of Manuscripts and Documents*. Beiruter Texte und Studien. Orient-Institut Beirut, forthcoming.

———. "The 'Mixed' Arabic of the Letters of the 19th and Early 20th Century Gulf Rulers." In *Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Middle Arabic and Mixed Arabic Throughout History, Louvain-La-Neuve 11-14 May 2004*, edited by Jérome Lentin and Jacques Grand'Henry, 193–229. Leuven: Peeters, 2008.

Holton, D., and I. Manolessou. "Medieval and Early Modern Greek." In *Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, edited by Egbert J. Bakker, 339–63. Malden: Blackwell, 2010.

Hopkins, Simon. *Studies in the Grammar of Early Arabic: Based Upon Papyri Datable to Before 300 A.H./912 A.D.* London Oriental Series 37. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Hoyland, Robert G. "The Language of the Qur'an and a near Eastern Rip van Winkle." In *A Life with the Prophet? Examining Hadith, Sira, and Qur'an in Honor of Wim Raven*, edited by Albrecht Fuess and Stephan Weninger, 17–43. Bonner Islamstudien 36. Berlin: EB Verlag, 2017.

Huehnergard, John. "Arabic in its Semitic Context. " In *Arabic in Context: Celebrating 400 years of Arabic at Leiden University*, edited by A. Al-Jallad, 3–34. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

———. "Asseverative *la and Hypothetical *lu/Law in Semitic." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103/3 (1983): 569–93.

———. "Features of Central Semitic." In *Biblical and Oriental Essays in Memory of William L. Moran*, edited by A. Gianto, 155–203. Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1995.

———. *An Introduction to Ugaritic*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2012.

Hyvernat, Henry. "Pourquoi les anciennes collections de manuscrits coptes sont si pauvres." *Revue Biblique*, n.s., 10 (1913): 422–28.

Ibn Abī Shaybah, ʿAbd-Allah. *Al-Muṣannaf.* Edited by Muḥammad ʿawwāmah. Jeddah: Dār al-Qiblah, 2010.

Ingham, Bruce. *Najdi Arabic: Central Arabian*. Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994.

Isserlin, B. "The Nessana Papyri. The Greek Transcriptions of Arabic." *The Annual of Leeds University* 7 (1969): 17–31.

Janssens, Gerard. *Studies in Hebrew Historical Linguistics Based on Origen's Secunda*. Orientalia Gandensia 9. Leuven: Peeters, 1982.

Jeffery, Arthur. *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān*. Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938.

Jumaili, Amir A. al-. "Naqš ʿarabi ğadīd li-tamīmah mina l- Ḥīrah li-ʿAbd al-Masīḥ bin Buqaylah Al-Ghassānī mina l-qarn al-awwal al-hiğrī." *Maǧallat Al-Siyāḥah wal-Āthār* 28/1 (2016): 23–31.

Kahle, Paul. *Die arabischen Bibelübersetzungen: Texte mit Glossar und Literaturübersicht*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1904.

Kashouh, H. *The Arabic Versions of the Gospels: The Manuscripts and Their Families*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010.

Khan, Geoffrey. "Middle Arabic." In *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, edited by Stephan Weninger, Geoffrey Khan, Michael Streck, and Janet Watson, 817–35. Handbücher Zur Sprach- Und Kommunikationswissenschaft 36. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011.

———. "Orthography and Reading in Medieval Judaeo-Arabic." In *Arabic in Context*, edited by Ahmad Al-Jallad, 395–404. SSLL 89. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

King, Geraldine M. H. "Early North Arabian Hismaic." PhD dissertation. University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1990.

Kropp, Manfred. "The ʿAyn ʿAbada Inscription Thirty Years Later: A Reassessment." In *Arabic in Context*, edited by Ahmad Al-Jallad, 53–74. SSLL. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

Larcher, Pierre. "In Search of a Standard: Dialect Variation and New Arabic Features in the Oldest Arabic Written Documents." In *The Development of Arabic as a Written Language*, edited by Michael C. A Macdonald, 103–12. Supplement to the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies 40. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2010.

Legendre, Marie. "Perméabilité linguistique et anthroponymique entre copte et arabe: Exemple de comptes en caractères coptes du Fayoum fatimide, en Annexe: Répertoire des anthroponymes arabes attestés dans les documents coptes." In *Coptica Argentoratensia, Conférences et documents de la 3e université d'été en papyrologie copte, Cahiers de la Bibliothèque Copte*, edited by A. Boud'hors, A. Delattre, C. Louis, and T. S. Richter, 325–440. Paris: De Boccard, 2014.

Liebrenz, Boris. *Die Rifāʿīya aus Damaskus: Eine Privatbibliothek im osmanischen Syrien und ihr kulturelles Umfeld*. Leiden: Brill, 2016.

Luxenberg, Christoph. *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran: ein Beitrag zur Entschlüsselung der Koransprache*. Berlin: Verlag Hans Schiler, 2000.

Macdonald, Michael C. A. "Ancient Arabia and the Written Word." In *The Development of Arabic as a Written Language*, edited by Michael C. A. Macdonald, 5–27. Supplement to the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies 40. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2010.

———. "Clues to How a Nabataean May Have Spoken from a Hismaic Inscription." Forthcoming.

———. *Literacy and Identity in Pre-Islamic Arabia*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2009.

———. "Old Arabic." In *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, edited by Kees Versteegh. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

———. "Reflections on the Linguistic Map of Pre-Islamic Arabia." *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 11 (2000): 28–79.

Macdonald, M. C. A., M. Al Muʾazzin, and L. Nehmé. "Les inscriptions safaïtic de Syrie, cent quarante ans après leur découverte." *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1996): 435–94.

Mango, Cyril. "Greek Culture in Palestine after the Arab Conquests." In *Scritture, libri e testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio: Atti del seminario di Erice (18–25 settembre 1988)*, edited by Guglielmo Cavallo, Giuseppe de Gregorio, and Marilena Maniaci, 149–60. Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1999.

Maniaci, Marilena. "Greek Codicology. 8.3.2: The Composition of the Quires." In *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies: An Introduction*, edited by Alessandro Bausi et al., 196–97. Hamburg: Tredition, 2015.

Mascitelli, Daniele. *L'Arabo in epoca preislamica: formazione di una lingua*. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2006.

Mavroudi, Maria. "Arabic Words in Greek Letters: The Violet Fragment and More." In *Moyen arabe et variétés mixtes de l'arabe à travers l'histoire*, edited by Jérôme Lentin and Jacques Grand'Henry, 321–54. Louvain: Peeters, 2008.

———. "Greek Language and Education under Early Islam." In *Islamic Cultures, Islamic Contexts: Essays in Honor of Professor Patricia Crone*, edited by Behnam Sadeghi et al., 295–342. Leiden: Brill, 2015.

Mayer, H. E. "Abū ʿAlīs Spuren am Berliner Tiergarten." *Archiv für Diplomatik* 38 (1992): 113–33.

Meimaris, Yiannis. *Katalogos tōn neōn aravikōn cheirographōn tēs Hieras Monēs Aikaterinēs tou Orous Sina*. Athens: Ethnikon Hidryma Ereunōn, 1985.

Meïmaris, Yiannis E., and Kalliope I. *Kritikakou-Nikolaropoulou. Inscriptions from Palaestine Tertia*, vol. 1b, *The Greek Inscriptions from Ghor Es-Safi, Byzantine Zoora*. Meletēmata 41. Athens: Research Centre for Greek and Roman Antiquity, National Hellenic Research Foundation, 2008.

Mengozzi, A. "The History of Garshuni as a Writing System: Evidence from the Rabbula Codex." In *CAMSEMUD 2007: Proceedings of the 13th Italian Meeting of Afro-Asiatic Linguistics, Held in Udine, May 21st–24th, 2007*, 297–304. History of the Ancient Near East/Monographs 10. Padova: S.A.R.G.O.N. Editrice e Libreria, 2010.

Milik, Joseph T. "Notes d'épigraphie Orientale." *Syria* 27 (1960): 94–98.

———. "Une bilingue araméo-grecque de 105/104 avant J.-C." In *Hauran II: Les installations de Si' 8: Du sanctuaire à l'établissement viticole*, edited by J. Dentzer-Feydy, J.-M. Dentzer, and P.-M. Blanc, 1:269–75. Beyrouth: Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient, 2003.

Mingana, Alphonse. *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts: Now in the Possession of the Trustees of the Woodbrooke Settlement, Selly Oak, Birmingham*. Cambridge: W. Heffer, 1933–85.

Moawad, Samuel. *Al-Asʿad Abū al-Faraǧ Hibat Allāh ibn al-ʿAssāl: Die arabische Übersetzung der vier Evangelien*. Cairo: Alexandria School, 2014.

Mouton, Jean-Michel, Dominique Sourdel, and Janine Sourdel-Thomine. *Gouvernance et libéralités de Saladin d'après les données inédites de six documents arabes*. Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 2015.

———. *Mariage et séparation à Damas au Moyen Âge: Un corpus de 62 documents juridiques inédits entre 337/948 et 698/1299*. Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 2013.

Nasser, Shady. *The Transmission of the Variant Readings of the Qurʾān: The Problem of Tawātur and the Emergence of Shawādhdh*. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Negev, Avraham. *Personal Names in the Nabatean Realm*. Qedem 32. Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1991.

Nehmé, Laïla. "Aramaic or Arabic? The Nabataeo-Arabic Script and the Language of the Inscriptions Written in This Script." In *Arabic in Context: Celebrating 400 Years of Arabic at Leiden University*, edited by Ahmad Al-Jallad, 75–89. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

———. "New Dated Inscriptions (Nabataean and Pre-Islamic Arabic) from a Site near Al-Jawf, Ancient Dūmah, Saudi Arabia." *Arabian Epigraphic Notes* 3 (2017): 121–64.

Nicolopoulos, Panayotis G. *Holy Monastery and Archdiocese of Sinai: The New Finds of Sinai*. Athens: Ministry of Culture, Mount Sinai Foundation, 1999.

Orsini, Pasquale. "La maiuscola ogivale inclinata. Contributo preliminare." *Scripta* 9 (2016): 89–116.

Ostoya-Delmas, S. "Notes préliminaires à l'étude des parlers de l'arrondissement de Philippeville." *Revue Africaine* 82 (1938): 60–83.

Owens, Jonathan. *A Linguistic History of Arabic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Petrantoni, Giuseppe. "La traslitterazione Greca del Salmo 78,77 di Damasco e la diglossia nel mondo Arabo." *Rivista di cultura classica e medioevale* 53/2 (2011): 285–307.

Pigulevskaya, N. "Greko-siro-arabskaya rukopis' IX veka" [A Greek-Syriac-Arabic Manuscript of the Ninth Century]. *Palestinskii Sbornik* 63 (1954): 59–90.

Pollock, James W. "Two Christian Arabic manuscripts in the Bryn Mawr Library." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110 (1990): 330–31.

Prochazka, Theodore. *Saudi Arabian Dialects*. Library of Arabic Linguistics 8. London; New York: Kegan Paul International, 1988.

Putten, Marijn van, and Phillip W. Stokes. "Case in the Quranic Consonantal Text." Forthcoming.

Rabin, Chaim. *Ancient West-Arabian*. London: Taylor's Foreign Press, 1951.

———. "The Beginnings of Classical Arabic." *Studia Islamica* 4 (1955): 19–37.

Rahlfs, Alfred. *Septuaginta-Studien*, vol. 2, *Der Text des Septuaginta-Psalters*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1907.

Rahlfs, Alfred, and Detlef Fraenkel. *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2004.

Retsö, Jan. *The Arabs in Antiquity: Their History from the Assyrians to the Umayyads*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Robin, Christian J. "Ghassān en Arabie." In *Les Jafnides : Des rois arabes au service de Byzance (VIe s. è Chr.)*, edited by Denis Genequand and Christian J. Robin, 79–120. Orient & Méditerranée 17. Paris: De Boccard, 2015.

———. "Les Arabes de Ḥimyar, Des 'Romains' et Des Perses (IIIe-VIe Siècles de l'ère Chrétienne)." *Semitica et Classica* 1 (2008): 167–202.

———. "Les inscriptions de l'arabie antique et les études arabes." *Arabica* 48/4 (2001): 509–77.

Robin, Christian J., and Iwona Gajda. "L'inscription Du Wādī ʿAbadān." *Raydān* 6 (1994): 113–37.

Robin, Christian J., A. I. al-Ghabbān, and S. F. al-Saʿīd. "Inscriptions antiques de la région de Najrān (Arabie séoudite méridionale) : nouveaux jalons pour l'histoire de l'écriture, de la langue et du calendrier arabe." *CRAI* no. 3 (2014): 1033–1128.

Ryckmans, G. *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum: Pars Quinta, Inscriptiones Saracenicae Continens: Tomus I, Fasciculus I, Inscriptiones Safaiticae*. Paris: E Reipublicae Typographeo, 1950.

Sadan, Joseph. "Genizah and Genizah-like Practices in Islamic and Jewish Traditions." *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 43 (1986): 36–58.

———. "Ritual Purity, Impurity and the Disposal of Books in Islam and Judaism" [in Hebrew]. *Peʿamim* 70 (1997): 4–22.

———. "Storage and Treatment of Used Sacred Books (Genizah) in the Muslim Tradition and Jewish Parallels" [in Hebrew]. *Kiryat Sefer* 55 (1980): 398–410.

Samir, Samir Khalil. "La version arabe des Evangiles d'al-Asʿad Ibn al-ʿAssāl. Étude des manuscrits et spécimens." In *Actes du premier Congrès International d'Études Arabes Chrétiennes (Cambridge, Septembre 1992)*, edited by Samir Khalil Samir, 441–551. Kaslik: Université Saint-Esprit, 1994.

Sauget, J. M. "Vestiges d'une Célébration Gréco-Syriaque de l'anaphore de Saint Jacques." In *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Professor Albert Van Roey for His Seventieth Birthday*, 309–45. Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 18. Leuven: Peeters, 1985.

Schiettecatte, Jérémie, and Mounir Arbach. "The Political Map of Arabia and the Middle East in the Third Century AD Revealed by a Sabaean Inscription." *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 27/2 (2016): 176–96.

Schoeler, Gregor. *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*. Edited by J. E. Montgomery. Translated by U. Vagelpohl. New York: Routledge, 2006.

———. "The Relationship of Literacy and Memory in the Second/Eighth Century." In *The Development of Arabic as a Written Language*, edited by Michael C. A. Macdonald, 121–29. Supplement to the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies 40. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2010.

Schulthess, Friedrich. *Christlich-palästinische Fragmente aus der Omajjaden-Moschee zu Damaskus*. Berlin: Weidmann, 1905.

Scragg, D. G. *A History of English Spelling.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974.

Socin, Albert (Karl Baedeker). *Palästina und Syrien: Handbuch für Reisende.* Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1880.

von Soden, Hermann. "Bericht über die in der Kubbet in Damaskus gefundenen Handschriftenfragmente." *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philologisch-historische Klasse* 39 (1903): 825–30.

———. *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt hergestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte.* 4 vols. Berlin: Arthur Glaue, 1902–13.

———. "Ein Weihnachtsgeschenk des Sultans an die deutsche Wissenschaft." *Die christliche Welt* 15 (1901): 1247–49.

———. *Reisebriefe nach Palästina.* Berlin: Julius Springer, 1901.

Sourdel, Dominique, and Janine Sourdel-Thomine. *Certificats de pèlerinage d'époque Ayyoubide.* Paris: Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 2006.

Sourdel-Thomine, Janine, and Dominique Sourdel. "A propos des documents de la Grande Mosquée de Damas conservés à Istanbul: Rêsultats de la seconde enquête." *Revue des études islamiques* 33 (1965): 73–85.

———. "Nouveaux documents sur l'histoire religieuse et sociale de Damas au Moyen Âge." *Revue des études islamiques* 32 (1964): 1–25.

———. "Trois actes de vente damascains du début du IVé/IXé siécle." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 8 (1965): 164–85.

Stein, Peter. "Ancient South Arabian." In *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, edited by Stephan Weninger, Geoffrey Khan, Michael Streck, and Janet Watson, 1042–72. Handbücher Zur Sprach- Und Kommunikationswissenschaft 36. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011.

———. "The 'Himyaritic' Language in Pre-Islamic Yemen." *Semitica et Classica* 1 (2008): 203–12.

Steiner, Richard C. "On the Dating of Hebrew Sound Changes (*ḫ>ḥ and ġ > ʿ) and Greek Translations (2 Esdras and Judith)." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 124/2 (2005): 229–67.

Strothmann, Werner. *Das syrische Fragment des Ecclesiastes-Kommentars von Theodor von Mopsuestia: Syrischer Text mit vollständigem Wörterverzeichnis.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1988.

Stumme, Hans. Maltesische Studien. *eine Sammlung prosaischer und poetischer Texte in maltesischer Sprache nebst Erläuterungen.* Leipziger semitistische Studien 1/4. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1904.

Suchard, Benjamin. "The Hebrew Verbal Paradigm of Hollow Roots: A Triconsonantal Account." *ZDMG* 166/2 (2016): 317–22.

Swanson, Mark N. "Solomon, Bishop of Mount Sinai (Late Tenth Century AD)." In *Studies on the Christian Arabic Heritage: In Honour of Father Prof. Dr Samir Khalil Samir S.I. at the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, edited by Rifaat Ebied and Herman Teule, 91–111. Leuven: Peeters, 2004.

Tarras, Peter. "Building a Christian Arabic Library: Thomas of Fustat and the Scribal Workshop of Saint Catherine's Monastery." Forthcoming.

Tené, David. "Hashyaʾat ha-leshonot beʾezor ha-dibbur ha-ʿaravi ba-meʾot ha-ʿasirit ve-aḥat-ʿesreh la-minyan ha-meḳubbal." In *Hebrew Language Studies Presented to Professor Zeev Ben-Hayyim*, edited by Moshe Bar-Asher et al., 237–87. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1983.

Testen, David. "Literary Arabic and Early Hijazi Contrasts in the Marking of Definiteness." In *Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics XI: Papers from the Eleventh Annual Symposium on Arabic Linguistics*, edited by Niloofar Haeri, Mushira Eid, and Elabbas Benmamoun, 209–25. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2005.

Thompson, Edward M. *An Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1911.

Tobler, Adolf. "Bruchstücke altfranzösischer Dichtung aus den in der Kubbet in Damaskus gefundenen Handschriften." *Sitzungsberichte der Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philologisch-historische Klasse* 43 (1903): 960–76.

Tobler, Titus, and Augustus Molinier. *Itinera Hierosolymitana et descriptiones Terrae Sanctae.* Geneva: J.-G. Fick, 1879.

Treiger, Alexander. "From Theodore Abū Qurra to Abed Azrié: The Arabic Bible in Context." In *Senses of Scripture, Treasures of Tradition*, edited by Miriam L. Hjälm, 9–57. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

Treu, K. *Majuskelbruchstücke der Septuaginta aus Damaskus.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1966.

Van Putten, Marijn. "The Development of the Triphthongs in Quranic and Classical Arabic." *Arabian Epigraphic Notes* 3 (2017): 47–74.

———. "The Feminine Ending as a Diptote in the Qur'anic Consonantal Text and Its Implications for Proto-Arabic and Proto-Semitic." *Arabica* 64 (2017): 93–120.

———. "Hamza in the Quranic Consonantal Text." *Orientalia* 86/3 (forthcoming).

Van Putten, Marijn and Phillip Stokes. "Case in the Qurʾānic Consonantal Text." *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 108 (2018): 143–79.

Versteegh, Kees. *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought*, vol. 3, *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition.* New York: Routledge, 1997.

Villeneuve, F., C. Phillips, and W. Facey. "Une inscription latine de l'archipel Farasān (sud de la mer Rouge) et son contexte archéologique et historique." *Arabia* 2 (2004): 143–90.

Violet, Bruno. "Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment aus Damascus." *Orientalistische Litterature-Zeitung* 10–11 (1901): 384–423, 425–88.

Voigt, Rainer M. *Die infermen Verbaltypen des Arabischen und das Biradikalismus-Problem.* Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GMBH, 1988.

Vollandt, Ronny. *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch: A Comparative Study of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Sources.* Leiden: Brill, 2015.

Vollers, Karl. *Volkssprache Und Schriftsprache Im Alten Arabien.* Strasburg: K. J. Trübner, 1906.

Wansbrough, John. *Quranic Studies: Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation.* Translated by Andrew Rippin. 1st edition. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004.

Webb, Peter. *Imagining the Arabs: Arab Identity and the Rise of Islam.* 1st edition. Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press, 2016.

Winnett, F. V., and G. Lankester Harding. *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns.* Near and Middle East 9. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978.

Wood, Phillip, and Greg Fisher. "Arabs and Christianity." In *Arabs and Empires before Islam*, edited by Greg Fisher, 276–372. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Yardeni, Ada. "A List of the Arabic Words Appearing in Nabataean and Aramaic Legal Documents from the Judaean Desert." In *Scripta Classica Israelica, Yearbook for the Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies, Rome Judaea, and Its Neighbors: Special Issue in Honor of Hannah M. Cotton*, edited by R. F. Vishnia, R. Zelnick-Abramovitz, and Werner Eck, 301–24. Jerusalem: The Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies; Magnes Press, 2014.

Zaiyāt, Ḥ. *Khazāʾin al-kutub fī Dimashq wa-ḍawāḥī-hā.* Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Maʿārif, 1902.

Zipser, Barbara. "Griechische Schrift, arabische Sprache und graeco-arabische Medizin: ein neues Fragment aus dem mittelalterlichen Sizilien." *Mediterranean Language Review* 15 (2003/2004): 154–66.

Zwettler, Michael. "Maʿadd in Late-Ancient Arabian Epigraphy and Other Pre-Islamic Sources." *Wiener Zeitschrift Für Die Kunde Des Morgenlandes* 90 (2000): 223–309.

Chapter 1
The History of Arabic through Its Texts

Early Muslim society felt a degree of discomfort with the written word. Its highest form of literature—poetry—was oral, and writing it down was deemed unnatural. The Quran, widely regarded as Arabic's first book, began as an oral text. According to tradition, the Caliph ʿUthmān faced considerable resistance when he decreed that it be put into a standardized written form. Even as late as the eighth century, a great debate raged: Was it permissible to commit to writing the Hadith, the oral sayings about the life and times of the Islamic Prophet?[1] While its proponents won the day, it was a hard-fought battle, and the attitude of oral supremacy persisted. Writing was ultimately involved in teaching and lecturing, but it was always regarded as a supplementary tool. The written word could serve as a memory aid, but was certainly not the primary source of knowledge.[2]

The Arab grammarians, in their description of the language, thus did not turn to the copious documents available at their time, nor did they draw on the conventions of the scribal schools or chancelleries. Rather, the Arabic that concerned them was its oral form—the language of Arabian tribesmen, in particular those who were in possession of "reliable" Arabic, and their oral literature.[3] While the grammarians never made clear what their criterion for reliable Arabic was, it is safe to assume that they meant varieties that still inflected for nominal case and verbal mood. Although there are a few skeptical voices,[4] most specialists regard the data contained in the corpus of Arabic grammatical literature as authentic examples of select eighth- and ninth-century vernacular usage.

The Arabic grammatical tradition was a synchronic endeavor, lacking an explicit historical dimension. Therefore, the Arabic documented and prescribed as correct in the late eighth and early ninth centuries was not chronologically fixed to that era. On the contrary, it was regarded as representative of the language of Arabia's tribespeople from time immemorial, and it first experienced change once non-Arabic speakers began to acquire it following the Arab conquests. Within this conceptual framework, only two types of Arabic can exist—the pre-Islamic varieties of pure Arabic, characterized by a fully functioning nominal case system,[5] and

---

[1] Cook, "Opponents."

[2] See Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written*, on the relationship between the oral and written in early Islam; for a summary of these views and further ideas, see Schoeler, "Literacy and Memory."

[3] For an excellent overview of the Arabic grammatical tradition, see Versteegh, *Landmarks in Linguistic Thought*, vol. 3. On the methods of Sibawayh and his selection of data, see the thorough discussion in Carter, *Sibawayhi*.

[4] Owens, A Linguistic History of Arabic, p. 93, for example, has argued that there are no pure data to be found in the Kitāb of Sibawayh and that everything he writes or observes is filtered through his grammatical thinking. This extreme view, however, remains a minority position.

[5] In the literature these varieties are often referred to as *fuṣḥā* "purest," Classical Arabic, or sometimes even Old Arabic.

Ahmad Al-Jallad

post-conquest varieties usually termed "Neo-Arabic," the result of imperfect second-language acquisition, and characterized by a reduced morphology and substandard pronunciation.

Like so many of its inheritances from Muslim tradition, a certain distrust of the written is also a characteristic of the enterprise of Arabic philology and linguistics, and this has had a profound influence on the reconstruction of Arabic's history. Modern scholars have generally taken for granted the antiquity and universality of the Arabic of the grammarians. Earlier written texts, such as the papyri from the seventh and early eighth centuries CE and the Quran, the earliest manuscripts of which precede the grammatical tradition by more than a century, are conventionally interpreted according to much later norms, without the need for justification. Any reader of these texts will notice that the oral component differs from the written in significant ways. To illustrate, consider the word ملكه in Q66:6. All reading traditions instruct that this word should be pronounced as [malāʔikatun]; these traditions go back to the middle of the eighth century at the earliest, while the true seventh-century form is the written artifact, *mlykh,* lacking the final syllable *tun.* In the same vein, the word بروا in Q60:4 is read unanimously as *buraʔāʔu,* while at least two syllables are missing in the spelling.[6] Despite the fact that the written in these cases is demonstrably older than the reading traditions, the oral is given default preference, and the differences are *a priori* reduced to orthographic convention.[7] Indeed, most scholars have assumed that the language behind the most ancient component of the Quran, its Consonantal Text (QCT), is more or less identical to the language recited in the halls of Al-Azhar today. It is only in very recent years that the QCT has enjoyed study as an epigraphic document, interrogating the text for linguistic facts rather than assuming them. These efforts have led to a radically different view of the language of its composition.[8]

In the same way, Arabic-language documentary texts from the first Islamic century are generally assumed to be "Classical Arabic." And when they deviate, the irregularities are taken as examples of a diglossic situation comparable to the present day, where speakers of "Neo-Arabic" err in their writing of the Classical standard. Thus, these early texts are regarded as mixed between the two essential varieties of Arabic, the Classical language and Neo-Arabic, rather than representing a language variety in their own right. The anachronistic nature of this approach is rarely appreciated.

The distrust of the written and the timelessness of the oral have greatly reduced the value of the early Arabic documentary evidence. Ancient texts are forced into the model of Classical Arabic, thus losing any opportunity to contribute to our understanding of Arabic's earliest

---

[6] The earliest reading traditions date from the 730s, but most come from the late eighth and early ninth centuries; see Bell and Watt, *Introduction to the Qurʾān,* p. 49. On the transmission of the readings and their characteristic features, see Nasser, *Transmission.*

[7] This approach is characterized by Diem's articles on Arabic orthography ("Glimpses"; "arabischen Orthographie I, II, III"). Some of the Quranic reading traditions contain forms that more closely match the orthography of the texts, yet since the Arabic of the grammatical tradition is given the most weight, these are still interpreted as secondary. For example, the realization of the *alif-maqṣūrah* in the tradition of Warsh ʕan Nāfiʕ is [ē], a better fit for its spelling in the QCT as ى. Nevertheless, this is conceptualized as a secondary development, *ā > ē, the result of so-called *imālah.* Indeed, despite the graphic congruity, Diem, "arabischen Orthographie III," insists that the realization of this glyph in the Quran was [ā]. For a convincing argument for an original ē-value, see Van Putten, "Triphthongs."

[8] On this approach, see chapter 4.

stages independently. Consider Bellamy's rendition of this fourth-century Levantine Arabic text, the Namārah inscription,[9] into the standardized variety of the ninth century:

Reading: *ty npš mrʾlqyš br ʿmrw mlk ʾl-ʿrb*

Bellamy: *tī nafsu mriʾi l-qaysi bar ʿamrin maliki l-ʃarabi*

"this is the funerary monument of Mrʾlqys son of ʿmrw king of the Arabs"

The Namārah Inscription contains many features unknown in standard Classical Arabic, and rare in the works of the Arabic grammarians, such as the demonstrative *tī*, the word *nafs*, for funerary monument, and the adverbial particle *ʿkdy*. Other aspects that are equally linguistically informative are overlooked, such as the fact that the definite article is written as *ʾl* in all contexts, even before coronal consonants: *ʾltg* = *ʔal-tāg* and not *at-tāg* or *ʾlšʿwb* = *ʔal-šuʕūb* rather than *aš-šuʕūb*. While this is a spelling convention by the eighth century, how can we be certain it was simply that centuries earlier? After all, spelling conventions usually have their origin in an earlier stage of the language.[10]

The filter of Classical Arabic creates an artificial uniformity across space and time. Differences in texts and genres are explained away as orthographic peculiarities or simply the result of putting into writing an unwritten language.[11] Beeston proclaims that the Namārah inscription and the grave inscription of Rbbl son of Hfʿm from Qaryat al-Fāw[12] express a nearly identical idiom and are "drafted in what is recognizably almost pure 'Classical Arabic.'"[13] This view can only be maintained if one ignores the written text itself. If one takes the orthography seriously, as they were composed before there was an Arabic orthographic standard to imitate, the two texts differ in almost every comparable way.[14]

The illusion of uniformity is no doubt aided by the defective nature of the Semitic writing systems. Most texts composed in a Semitic alphabet lend themselves to numerous interpretations. The absence of the graphic representation of short vowels has rendered most of the ancient epigraphic material silent on some of the major questions in Arabic historical

---

[9] Bellamy, "A New Reading of the Namara Inscription." The Namārah inscription, named after the area in southern Syria in which it was discovered, is the epitaph of a *mrʾlqyš br ʿmrw* (Mar-al-Qays son of ʿAmro), who is called "king of all the Arabs." Dated to 328 CE, it is one of the earliest examples of Arabic prose written in the Nabataean script. For the most recent discussion of the text, see Macdonald's contribution to Fiema et al., "Provincia Arabia."

[10] To illustrate this point, consider the case of English *night* [naɪt], the orthography of which provides evidence for an earlier fricative, although it has been lost in pronunciation (cf. German *nacht*). On the history of English spelling, see Scragg, *English Spelling*.

[11] On this practice, see Macdonald, "Written Word." I would argue that it is precisely because Arabic was not associated with a single script that the spellings of the language in this earlier period are to be regarded as phonetic as there was no target orthography for the writer to imitate.

[12] This inscription, in the Ancient South Arabian script but in a "North Arabian" idiom, comes from the excavations at Qaryat al-Fāw in south central Saudi Arabia, with an excellent photograph in al-Ansary, *Qaryat Al-Fau*. The text is undated, but scholars have speculated that it could be as old as the first century BCE. It has been discussed by a number of scholars, most notably, Beeston, "Nemara and Faw"; Robin, "arabie antique"; Macdonald, "Old Arabic"; Al-Jallad, "Genetic Background."

[13] Beeston, "Languages of Pre-Islamic Arabia," p. 83.

[14] For example, the grave epitaph of Qaryat al-Fāw has *mimation* and assimilates the coda of the article while these features are absent in the Namārah inscription. The vowel of the 3ms pronoun seems to be long, *hw*, in the former, while short or absent altogether in the latter, etc. On the features of this inscription and its classification, see Al-Jallad, "Genetic Background."

Ahmad Al-Jallad

linguistics—the fate of the Proto-Semitic case system, syllable structure, vowel quality, and so on. Moreover, scholarly transcription practices generally convey a great deal of uniformity where it is not found in the actual documents. The use of Classical Arabic transcription conventions such as *ḍ* and *ẓ* for Arabian glyphs representing the reflex of the same phonemes can imply that they were pronounced in the same way, although the scripts themselves offer no evidence for this.

One corpus has brought into relief the methodological pitfalls of reading ancient Arabic texts as Classical Arabic—the so-called pre-Islamic Graeco-Arabica. From the turn of the Common Era to the sixth century CE, a copious amount of Arabic is attested in the form of anthroponyms transcribed in Greek from southern Syria and Jordan. These documents not only provide data about the vowels, but shed important light on the realization of the consonants and morphophonology. But only if one asks the right questions.

The thousands of Greek transcriptions, many informal graffiti, allow the careful linguist to form a detailed picture of Old Arabic phonology. From these we learn, for example, that the coda of the definite article did not in fact originally assimilate to coronals, that the most common realization of the high vowels was [o] and [e] rather than [u] and [i], final short high vowels had dropped off, and that the entire emphatic series was voiceless.[15] These texts come from the same region and the same time period as the Namārah Inscription and therefore would naturally be the first port of call for the vocalization of this text, rather than the Arabic documented in the eighth and ninth centuries by grammarians in Iraq.

Table 1. Namārah Inscription vocalized according to Classical
Arabic phonology versus northern Old Arabic

Classicized Namārah Inscription (Bellamy, "A New Reading of the Namara Inscription")	Northern Old Arabic vocalization
tī nafsu mriʔi l-qaysi BAR ʕamrin maliki l-ʕarabi kulli-hi [*sic*], ḏū ʔasara t-tāǧa	tī napʰs mar-ʔal-qays BAR ʕamro malk ʔal-ʕarab koll-ah, ḏū ʔasara ʔal-tāǧa

Until 2015, the Damascus Psalm Fragment was regarded as the earliest example of the Arabic prose written in Greek letters.[16] In the fall of 2014, my colleague and collaborator Ali al-Manaser shared with me the photograph of a so-far unique Greek graffito. The photograph was taken by Professor Sabri al-Abbadi in the early 2000s in the northeastern Jordanian Ḥarrah. Since then, it had been circulated among Hellenists, who regarded it as garbled nonsense by a barely literate person. As I examined the text, the last two lines immediately struck me. They contained a variant of a phrase I had encountered many times, and in many forms, in the Safaitic inscriptions: *w rʕy bql b-knn* "and he pastured on fresh herbage during Kānūn." This Graeco-Arabic rendition, however, gives precious information not contained in the consonantal Safaitic writing: (α)ουα ειραυ βακλα βιΧανου[ν] = [wa yirʕaw baqla bi-kānūn] "and they pastured on fresh herbage during Kānūn." The prefix conjugation contained an [i] vowel, *yirʕaw* rather than Classical Arabic *yarʕaw*. The accusative case was simply [a] or [ā], *baqla/baqlā*, without nunation—a context form not known from Classical Arabic. Earlier in the

---

[15] For a comprehensive discussion of the linguistic features of pre-Islamic Arabic transcribed in Greek, see Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I."

[16] Earlier examples of isolated words and anthroponyms have been published; see, for example, the study of Isserlin, "Nessana Papyri."

inscription, the verb "he came," Classical Arabic *ʔatā*, is spelled αθαοα [ʔatawa], a form not known from Classical or Modern Arabic but hinted at in Arabic orthography. On paleographic grounds, this inscription predates the fourth century CE.

Table 2. A1 in light of later forms of Arabic

A1[17]	Safaitic	Classical Arabic Orthography	Classical Arabic
αθαοα	ʾtw/ʾty	<ʾty> اتى	ʔatā
βακλα	*bql* (acc.)	<bqlʾ> بقلا	baqlan
ειραυ	yrʕ	<yrʕwʾ> يرعوا	yarʕaw

This text helps confirm what Safaitic[18] and Arabic orthography already strongly implied: the orthography of Arabic has its basis in a real dialect, and so the practice of reading all texts prior to the grammatical tradition as Classical Arabic is indefensible. This realization presents a new question: When did these phonetic spellings become orthographic conventions?

The careful and dispassionate study of Arabia's ancient epigraphy reveals a picture quite dissimilar from that presented in Muslim historical sources. The Arabic of the grammarians is not met with; instead, the peninsula displays a dazzling degree of linguistic diversity. The Old Arabic dialects differ in ways not recorded by the grammarians, while features that figure prominently in the grammatical manuals are nowhere to be found. Consider nunation (*tanwīn*)—this is a standard feature of Classical Arabic, but in the consonantal South Semitic writing systems, Greek transcriptions, and the Graeco-Arabic inscription A1, the feature is completely absent. While the absence of nunation in Arabic orthography is usually written off as a convention, there is no reason to assume such conventions when Arabic is written in other scripts, much less before the development of the Arabic script itself. These attestations can mean only one thing: nunation had disappeared in most forms of Old Arabic.

The study of the pre-Islamic epigraphic record brings into relief a methodological flaw in the study of early Islamic documents. How can we be sure that the earliest Islamic Arabic texts, like the administrative papyri from the first Islamic century or the QCT, were aiming at Classical Arabic, especially considering that no evidence for such a standard is found in the pre-Islamic period? How can we know, for example, that a spelling such as فانفعل in a first-century AH document was meant to be pronounced as *fanfaʕala* as in Classical Arabic, rather than *fa-ʔanfaʕel* as in the Psalm Fragment?[19] Can we be certain that early attestations of "sub-standard" forms like *lam yakūn* are hypercorrect literary syntagms rather than a reflection of living speech? Judgments of Arabic's earliest written documents have proceeded on the assumption that the Classical Arabic standard is timeless, but the facts now show the opposite.

The previous pages have made the case against privileging the language of the Arabic grammatical tradition or the modern spoken dialects over written testimonies of the past. While this is relatively uncontroversial in the pre-Islamic period, I would argue that the same

---

[17] The *editio princeps* of this text is Al-Jallad and al-Manaser, "New Epigraphica I," which is re-edited in appendix 2 of this book.

[18] For example, Safaitic, which does not employ vowel letters, indicates that III-y/w verbs terminated in a consonant, *ʾty* "he came," *bny* "he built," etc., corresponding to the *alif-maqṣūrah* in standard Arabic orthography. See Al-Jallad, *Outline*, pp. 37–39, on the orthography of Safaitic.

[19] Compare with Psalm Fragment v. 57, ανκαλεβου [ʔanqalebū] "they rebelled."

Ahmad Al-Jallad

principle is true for early Islamic texts as well. This book investigates Arabic's transformative historical phase, the passage from the pre-Islamic to the Islamic period, through a new approach. I ask: What would Arabic's history look like if we wrote it based on the documentary evidence rather than exclusively the oral? I frame this question through the linguistic investigation of the Damascus Psalm Fragment (PF)—the longest Arabic text composed in Greek letters and the earliest from the Islamic period. This document affords us a glimpse of the phonology and morphology of the Arabic of its time—likely the mid- to late ninth century but possibly earlier. More importantly, a study of its structure and *raison d'être* shows that its language must be regarded as the translation register of the vernacular, rather than the type of Middle Arabic described by Blau, where features from Classical Arabic mix with later varieties.[20] Its linguistic features, I argue, cast important light on the pre-grammarian Arabic of the early conquests, and indeed on the dialect from which it likely sprung: Old Ḥigāzī.

The book begins with a detailed linguistic description of the PF on its own terms. Using the facts gained from this investigation, we will enter a discussion on its date, transcription system, and purpose. As a witness of early vernacular Arabic, we then move to understand its relationship with the early Arabic papyri, characterized by Blau as early Muslim Middle Arabic,[21] and the QCT. Here, I fully articulate the hypothesis of Old Ḥigāzī, an idea that I have presented in a few earlier works, and outline a scenario for the emergence of standard Classical Arabic as the literary language of the late eighth century and beyond.

---

[20] Blau, *Handbook.*
[21] Blau, *Emergence*, pp. 123–32.

Chapter 2

The Psalm Fragment:
Script, Phonology, and Morphology

In 1900, Bruno Violet discovered in a polyglot depository of no-longer-used books in the Umayyad Mosque of Damascus a parchment bifolium containing two, thirty-three-line columns of facing Greek texts.[22] This document, unique among the others reported in the discovery, is a literal translation of Psalm 77, according to the LXX (78 in the Masoretic tradition), into Arabic written in Greek letters.[23] The *editio princeps* was published in 1901, with a tracing of the text from the original. The document was sent for further study to Germany in 1903 and was lost on its return journey to Damascus in 1909. Violet announced his intentions to publish the photograph of the PF at a future date and did so in a *Berichtigter Sonderabzug* of the original article.[24] The publication is extremely rare; I had the privilege of studying a xerox of Professor H. Gzella's personal copy, which he kindly supplied. Unfortunately, the published photographs are of such low quality that they are virtually useless for verifying the transcription of the text. The study of the PF experienced a major advance with the rediscovery of the original photographs of the document, published by Mavroudi in 1999. After four years of inquiry, she was able to locate them in the Orientabteilung of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz.[25] The photographs reveal that the document was damaged in the time between Violet's transcription and its photographing, as some sections that are present in Violet's copy are missing in the surviving images.

The document consists of four folios, numbered 58–61 by authorities in Damascus.[26] The neatness of the surviving folios varies, but as Macdonald emphasizes, it is not a tidy production.[27] The separation of the columns is very irregular, and in each folio the text runs into the middle margin. Only the verso of the second leaf (fol. 60) is ruled. The text is written in the uncial hand, in a script known as Maiuscula Ogivalis Inclinata,[28] and it consistently employs accents and breathing marks in the Greek component. In addition to this, it uses the elongated Iota in the *nomen sacrum* ΙΗΛ = Ισραήλ (v. 21) and in the name Jacob, ϳακώβ = Ιακώβ (v. 21). For a full description of the artifact, see appendix 1.

---

[22] The Damascus Psalm Fragment is sometimes called the Violet fragment in honor of its discoverer; see Bandt and Rattmann, "Die Damaskusreise Bruno Violets," on the history of the fragment's discovery.

[23] The Arabic text is often called a gloss, but while the translation follows closely the Greek, it is not a word-for-word gloss of the sort usually found interlinearly in early Quranic translations and in Western glosses of the Bible.

[24] Violet, "Psalmfragment," col. 429n1.

[25] Call number MS *Or. sim.* 6.

[26] Mavroudi, "Arabic Words in Greek," p. 322.

[27] Macdonald, *Literacy and Identity*, 1:100.

[28] I thank Ronny Vollandt for this information.

Previous Studies

Violet's original edition remains the most comprehensive. A description of the document and the circumstances of its discovery are followed by a careful tracing of both the Greek and Arabic language columns. The Arabic is rendered into Arabic letters and then given an idiomatic translation into Classical Arabic so that the reader can compare the linguistic differences between the two. Violet's reconstruction is based on the translation of Abdallah ibn al-Faḍl, the tenth-century Melkite Christian, available to him in print form. This translation is related to the one found in the PF but not identical to it.[29] In cols. 425–41, Violet discusses the transcription system and speculates on the *raison d'être* of the document. The text was re-edited by Kahle in 1904, based on his work with the actual document.[30] His study re-arranged the Greek into an interlinear gloss, with a few philological notes. Kahle did not re-edit the entire fragment, but only those parts that remained substantially intact. Its study was taken up again by Blau, nearly a century later, in his handbook on early Middle Arabic.[31] Following Kahle, it is a limited re-edition, covering verses 20–30 and 56–60. Blau uses the document in formulating generalizations about the grammar of early Middle Arabic, so that many of the notes on its linguistic features are to be found in pages 29–57 of his book. The document's linguistic significance was further recognized and discussed by Haddad,[32] Corriente,[33] and most recently Petrantoni.[34] Corriente provides linguistic and philological notes on almost every verse and enters a lengthy discussion on the document's importance for the development of the modern dialects of Arabic, an issue I will take up later in this book. Hopkins makes extensive use of the linguistic features of the PF in his grammar of early Arabic, but does not offer an explicit opinion about its origin or register.[35] Mavroudi published the re-discovered photographs and offered a paleographic dating of the text.[36]

The previous studies remark in various detail on the linguistic character of the PF, but all treat it in one way or another as dependent upon conventionalized Classical Arabic. For this reason perhaps, no systematic study of its language or writing system, on its own terms, has yet been carried out. This will be the goal of the present chapter.

The Writing System

The Arabo-Greek script of the PF operates according to the following orthographic principles: every Arabic phoneme is represented by a single Greek letter; no consonantal digraphs are employed in the representation of the consonants, and the vowels are represented by their closest Greek equivalents. The Arabic is represented phonetically, with full notation of allophony.

---

[29] See Vollandt (appendix 1) for details on the translation method.

[30] Kahle, *Die arabischen Bibelübersetzungen*.

[31] Blau, *Handbook*.

[32] Haddad, "La phonétique."

[33] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment."

[34] Petrantoni, "traslitterazione."

[35] Hopkins, *Studies in the Grammar of Early Arabic*.

[36] Mavroudi, "Arabic Words in Greek," pp. 342–45, for the plates of the PF.

Arabic phonemes for which there are no direct Greek equivalents are approximated first by manner and then by place. When a Greek phoneme has two conditioned allophones, it can be used to approximate an Arabic consonantal equivalent of only one of those, without reproducing the conditioning environment. To illustrate, Greek Chi is realized as [ç] following an i/e-vowel, but as [x] in other contexts. The transcription system draws on this polyphony to transcribe Arabic ḫ and ḥ in all situations, such as ελσιχεβ [el-siḥēb], even though this environment in Greek would trigger a palatal fricative [ç]. This demonstrates that the transcription system was conventional rather than being completely spontaneous based on the rules of Greek spelling.[37]

Orthography

The spelling conventions employed in this text suggest that it was based on a late Koiné Greek pronunciation (> fourth century CE). Vowel-length distinction and aspiration were most likely lost, and the formerly aspirated consonants φ, θ, and χ were now pronounced as [f], [θ], and [x]/[ç], respectively. The voiced stops β, δ, and γ also became fricatives [β], [ð], and [ɣ]/[j]. The pitch accent of Classical Greek was realized as stress.[38] These facts form the basis of the Arabo-Greek script used in this document.

Table 3. The vowel system of late Koiné Greek

	Front		Back
	unrounded	rounded	rounded
closed	[i] ι, ει, η	[y] υ, οι, υι	[u] ου
mid	[e] ε, αι		[o] ο, ω
open	[a] α		

Vowel Length and Stress

Vowel length is most often represented by an acute accent or a circumflex on digraphs. Thus, ά renders long [ā], long [ē] by έ, long [ī] by í, and long [ū] by οῦ. The scribe is not perfectly consistent, and about half the time the accents are ignored. Stressed short vowels are also sometimes represented by an acute, so αφσέλ /ʔafsél/ "he abhorred" (v. 59).

The Elongated Iota

The elongated Iota with a rough-breathing mark, represented in transcription here with <j>, is used to represent word-initial [(ʔ)i] and the glide [y], possibly with a following [i] vowel. This practice distinguishes its consonantal value from the [i] vowel, for which the normal Iota

---

is used, and seems another indication of an established scribal tradition of rendering Arabic in the Greek script.

Hypsilon and the Rough Breathing

Hypsilon (Ypsilon with the rough breathing, ὑ) is used to represent the consonant [h] and the consonant+vowel sequence [hu]. In two isolated cases, the rough breathing is placed on a vowel to represent a combination of [h] and a vowel: καδσό [qadsoh] or [qads-ho] and ἁ (δα) [hāḏā] (both in v. 54).

Gemination

Gemination is usually represented by the doubling of the consonant, but in word-final position and with the glides [y] and [w], it is not represented graphically: ϳουύεϳει, CAr yuheyyiʔ; κουετύ, CAr quwwat-uh; λεγαλ, CAr laʕall (pause); ελ-ραβ, CAr ar-rabb (pause). The non-representation of geminate and word-final glides is common to the pre-Islamic Graeco-Arabica as well, and so it probably should not be used to argue for the simplification of geminates. Their non-representation may be due to the Greek writing system—two Iotas and two sequences of Omicron-Ypsilon do not seem to convey the idea of gemination. The matter of word-final geminates is more difficult to interpret. It may be the case that word-final position caused degemination or that the acoustic difference between word-final and word-medial geminates caused the scribe to interpret the latter as single consonants.[39]

Word/Syllable Dividers

The scribe inconsistently uses a single dot to separate words and syllables:

Words

v. 29: φα•ακελου•οα•χεβιγου•γεδ//δα• [fa•ʔakelū•wa•šebiʕū•ǧeddā] "they ate and were completely sated"

Syllables

v. 28: φα•οα•καγ•ατ [fa•wa•qa•ʕat] "and it fell"

The Influence of Arabic Orthography

Arabic orthography does not seem to be an influencing factor in the transcription system. Prepositions that are written separately in Arabic are proclitic in the PF: φιλβαχερ [filbašer] "among man" versus في البشر. The representation of the consonants is guided by phonetic similarity rather than the similarity of glyphs in the Arabic script; for example, *sīn* is represented

---

[39] Blau, *Handbook,* p. 29, interprets this as a genuine case of degemination. Note also the tendency to avoid the representation of some geminates in Greek transcription: A1 αδαυρα= [ʔad-dawra], Al-Jallad and al-Manaser, "New Epigraphica I" and αβδεραμαν (P.Ness 92-43) = [ʕabd-erraḥmān].

by Sigma while Chi transcribes *šīn*.[40] Gemination, for the most part, is indicated by writing the consonant twice. The only case in which the influence of Arabic orthography might be seen is the uniform writing of the definite article as ελ, the coda of which remains unassimilated before coronals. But considering that patterns from Arabic orthography are not found elsewhere, we might entertain the possibility that this reflects a phonetic reality (see "Linguistic Features" in chapter 3).[41] The representation of the *tā-marbūṭah* with Hypsilon cannot be regarded as an imitation of Arabic orthography, but likely reflects a pronunciation with a true [h]. This is the pronunciation in Classical Arabic, despite the fact that Western Arabists tend to transcribe the ending simply as *a*, and of many Arabic dialects, both modern and ancient (see "Nominal Morphology: The Feminine Ending" in chapter 2).

---

[40] Phonetic spelling of this sort is typical of early Judaeo-Arabic, while Classical Judaeo-Arabic is based more on Arabic orthography. For example, ḍ was written with Daleth in early Judaeo-Arabic but in the classical period, Tsade with a superscribed dot represents the phoneme, an imitation of the Arabic glyph ض; see Blau and Hopkins, "On Early Judaeo-Arabic Orthography"; Khan, "Orthography and Reading."

[41] Note also that in early Judaeo-Arabic, which employs phonetic writing, the assimilation of the article is represented graphically, so אשמס "the sun" = aššams (الشمس); Khan, "Orthography and Reading."

Ahmad Al-Jallad

Table 4. Greek-Arabic correspondences in the orthography of the PF[42]

α	[a], [ā]	ν	ن [n]
β	ب [b]	ξ	NA
γ	ج [ǧ] غ [ġ] ع [ʕ]	o	و [w]
δ	د [d] ذ [d̠] ض, ظ [ḍ]	ρ	ر [r]
ε	ˊ [e] ا [ē]	σ	س [s] ص [ṣ]
ζ	ز [z]	τ	ت [t] ط [ṭ]
η	ˌ [i] ي [ī]	υ	ˊ [u]
θ	ث [t̠]	φ	ف [f]
ι	ˌ [i] ي [ī]	χ	ح [ḥ] خ [ḫ] ش [š]
κ	ك [k] ق [q]	ψ	NA
λ	ل [l]	ω	NA
μ	م [m]	ὑ	ﻫ [h] هُ [hu]
		j	ي [y(i)] ا [(ʔ)i]

αj	ˊ ي [ay]	αυ	ˊ و [aw]
εj	ˊ ي [ey]	ευ	ˊ و [ew]
ου	ˊ و [ū]		

⁴² See also the script charts in Violet, "Psalmfragment"; Kahle, *Die Arabischen Bibelübersetzungen*; Blau, *Handbook.*

Linguistic Description

Phonology

Short Vowels

The three short vowels of Old Arabic—*u, *i, and *a—are kept separate, and each vowel has two allophones.

*a

Etymological short *a is realized as ε = [e] unless it is contiguous with *ṣ, ḍ, ṭ, ẓ, q, ḫ, ġ*, and then it is realized as [a] = α; raising is sometimes blocked by the labials, *b, f, m, w*,[43] but this is not consistent.[44] One may entertain the possibility that the realization of *a was closer to [æ] in non-backed environments, and it was approximated freely with Alpha and Epsilon. Examples:[45]

> γασκερ [ʕasker] "camp" <*ʕaskarun; γανεμ [ġanem] "goats" < *ġanamun; οελευδιεύ [wel-ʔewdiyeh] "and the valleys" < *wa(l)-ʔawdiyatu; σεμα [semā] <*samāyun "sky, heaven"; μεσκεν [mesken] < *maskanun "dwelling"; χεύοετύμ [šehwet-hum] < *śahwatahum "their desire"; γέβελ [ǧebel] < *gab-alun "mountain."

The pharyngeals ʕ and ḥ block raising when preceding the *a but not following it, compare: μυγνεχαύ [muǧneḥah] "winged" to φατεχ [fateḥ] "he opened" < *fataḥa; γαλα [ʕalā] "on" to εχτεγαλετ [ʔešteʕalet] "it kindled."

Word-initial *a often remains [a], for example, ατε [ʔatē] "he came" rather than **ετε. Its shift to ε seems to be motivated in some cases by contact with a sibilant: εσκεν [ʔesken] "he dwelt" < *ʔaskana and εχτεγαλετ [ʔešteʕalet] "it kindled" < *ʔaštaʕalat, a sound change also attested in Aramaic.

*i

Etymological short *i remains intact in all environments and is rendered by ι and η = [i]. The sequence [yi] is possibly written with a single elongated Iota with rough breathing in two cases: μάjδεύ [māyideh] "table" < *māyidatu; αβαjύμ [ābāyihum] "their fathers" < *ʔaʔbāyihum.[46] On the other hand, it is possible that *i was syncopated in this environment, yielding the long diphthong āy. The latter hypothesis is perhaps supported by the spelling

---

[43] Hopkins, *Studies in the Grammar of Early Arabic*, pp. 4–5.

[44] Blau, *Handbook*, p. 29, regards the shift of a > e as more or less random; Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," does not remark further on this phenomenon, but correctly dismisses Haddad's, "La phonétique," attribution of it completely to Syriac influence.

[45] Reconstructed forms are Proto-Arabic.

[46] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 304, correctly rejects Blau's *Handbook*, p. 69, suggestion that the diphthong of μάjδεύ be vocalized as [mīda], as diphthongs are completely preserved in the text ("Phonology: Diphthongs" in chapter 2).

of the word μελεικε. If the use of the short Iota is the result of carelessness, then it could suggest that the present sequence was in fact a diphthong rather than a triphthong, that is, [melēike] and not [melēyike]. If the Iota here simply reflects the glide, then we can posit the loss of the short *i in an open syllable after the stressed long *ā: *malāyikah > *malēyikah > *malēykah > melēykeh.

In closed syllables, *i is rendered by Iota, while in open syllables it tends to be rendered by Eta (see "Nominal Morphology: Prepositions" in chapter 2). This may suggest a slight qualitative difference between the two environments, perhaps a tense versus lax distinction.

*u

The value of short *u is dependent upon the phonetic interpretation of Ypsilon. The phoneme is most often written with Ypsilon in unstressed environments and Omicron-Ypsilon in stressed environments:

Table 5. The spelling of Arabic *u in Greek

Stressed	Unstressed
χουβζ /ḫúbz/	λυχουμ /luḫū́m/
jουγτι /yú\ʕṭī/	τυραβ /turáb/
jουγδεμου /yú\ʕdemū/	γαλειύμ /\ʕaléyhum/

This could suggest that Ypsilon and Omicron-Ypsilon represented different allophones of *u, and that in unstressed environments the vowel was reduced, perhaps to the lax [ʊ]. Evidence for reduction might be found in the spelling τηουρ [ṭiyūr] from *ṭuyūr, where the unstressed vowel assimilates to the following glide. The single example of unstressed /u/ written with Omicron-Ypsilon occurs after β, βουχουρ [buḫūr], which could reflect progressive assimilation of the vowel to a more rounded quality. What this reduced value of Ypsilon might have been is impossible to know,[47] but synchronically it is clear that [ú] and [ū] were spelled with ου, while [u] was represented with Ypsilon. This distinction parallels the Iota-Eta pattern for the representation of *i.

Long Vowels

*ī and *ū*

Both long ī (= ι and η) and ū (= ου) remain stable in all environments and do not seem to have conditioned allophones.

ā

The shift of *ā to [ē] follows the same pattern as the raising of short *a to [e].

---

[47] Dr. B. Suchard informs me that a similar phenomenon seems to be at play in the Roman play *Poenulus*, which contains transcriptions of spoken Punic. There, Ypsilon is used to represent reduced vowels. I thank him for this information.

Table 6. The representation of reflexes of Arabic *ā in Greek

ē (=έ)	ā (=ά)
σέλετ [sēlet]	φάδατ [fāḏat]
ελσιχεβ [el-siḥēb]	μἀјδεύ [māyideh]
ατε [ʔatē]	ελναρ [el-nār]
χηέμ [ḫiyēm]	γαλα [ʕalā]
γεβ [ǧēb]	χαλασυ [ḫalāṣ-uh]
κεν [kēn]	αβοαβ [ʔabwāb]
јλέ [ʔilē]	ελσεμα [el-semā]

The Diphthongs

As Corriente correctly observed, the diphthongs obtain in the dialect of this document.[48]

**aw*

There can be no doubt that *aw was preserved as it is consistently spelled with Alpha-Ypsilon: αυραθ [ʔawraṯ] "he caused to inherit"; ελκαυς [el-qaws] "the bow"; φαυκ [fawq] "above"; χαυλ [ḫawl] "around." The first mora of the diphthong is raised to [e] when the conditions for *a > e apply: αβτελευ [abtelew] "they tempted"; λεјτεμέλλευ [leyteméllew] "in order that they be sated"; οελευδιεύ [wel-ʔewdiyeh] "the valleys."

**ay*

The diphthong *ay is also preserved in all environments. The coda is in all cases but one spelled with the elogated Iota, clearly indicating a consonantal value. Two allophones are apparent, the first with the raising of the first mora to [e], written with Epsilon, and the second preserving the original [a], written with Alpha. The first value is attested four times and the second once: γαλεјύμ [ʕaley-hum] "upon them"; τεјμ(αν) [teyman] "south wind," but χαјμετ [ḫaymet] "tent of."[49] These examples are not enough to discover a distribution.

---

[48] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 304. Note also that there is no evidence for the collapse of diphthongs in the pre-Islamic period Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," §4.2.4; and in the Greek transcriptions of the first Islamic century, the diphthongs clearly obtain" Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests," pp. 422–23. In the latter case, the diphthong [ay], which had no equivalent in Greek, was spelled sometimes explicitly, e.g., Καεις [qays].

[49] While Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," claims that the value of Epsilon-Iota cannot be ascertained because it is used to represented both the etymological diphthong and [ī], this misses the fact that the diphthong is almost always spelled with the elongated aspirated Iota, while the two cases in which Epsilon-Iota represent an i-class vowel (χειγβύј and јουύεјει), the short Iota is used.

The Triphthongs

*awa and *aya

Both of the Proto-Arabic triphthongs have collapsed to long ā, as in Classical Arabic, as op-posed to Old Arabic and the QCT.[50] The phonetic realization of ā is determined by the rules for raising *ā to ē; thus, we have ατε [ʔatē] < *ʔatawa "he came" versus γαττα [ġaṭṭā] < *ġaṭṭaya "he covered." The triphthong in medial-weak roots has also collapsed to [ā] and is realized as [ā] or [ē], depending on the environment.[51]

In addition to these, the sequence āy in word-final position is also realized as [ā]. This change agrees with Classical Arabic and the QCT against Old Arabic, ελσεμα [el-semā] < *samāyun.[52] The disappearance of the glide probably went through the intermediate stage found in Classical Arabic, where it shifts to ʔ in this environment, and was then lost together with the etymological glottal stop.

Consonants

Stops and Interdentals

The voiceless dental-alveolar stop *t and interdental *ṯ have not merged, μιθλ [miṯl] "like" versus ατε [ʔatē] "he came." The status of the voiced interdental *ḏ is unclear, as Greek has no way of distinguishing the sound from *d* in transcription. While it stands to reason that [ḏ] would survive if [ṯ] did, early Christian Arabic documents give some evidence that *ḏ and *d merged to [d] independently of the *ṯ-*t merger.[53] Interestingly, the same phenomenon is witnessed over a millennium earlier in the Old Arabic of the Hismaic inscriptions, where one occasionally encounters etymological ḏ spelled with *d*, while there is no evidence for the loss of the voiceless interdental.[54]

The Velar and Pharyngeal Fricatives

In Maltese and Cypriot Arabic, both dialects separated from the mainland in early times, the velar fricatives ḫ and ġ have merged with their pharyngeal counterparts to the pharyngeal value.[55] At least in the case of Maltese, this sound change seems to post-date the isolation of

---

[50] See Van Putten, "Triphthongs,"on the outcome of triphthongs in the QCT; in Safaitic, see Al-Jallad, *Outline*, p. 121, and on the issue in a broader Arabic context, see Al-Jallad, "Genetic Background," §3.1.

[51] Verbs of this class are reconstructed with two types of medial triphthongs: *qawuma "he arose" and *zay-ida "he increased"; these collapsed in Arabic, giving rise to two stems depending on the stress, *qáwuma > qāma but *qawúmtu "I arose" > qumtu; *záyida > zāda but *zayídtu "I increased" > zidtu, Bauer, "Semitischen Grammatik," p. 111. See Van Putten, "Triphthongs," pp. 49–50, on medial triphthongs in the QCT, Al-Jallad, *Outline*, pp. 119–20, for Safaitic, and Voigt, *Die infermen Verbaltypen*, pp. 142–48, for a general overview for Ar-abic. It is clear that Rabin's (*Ancient West-Arabian*, pp. 110–11) idea that medial-weak verbs contained a fourth Proto-Semitic monophthong *ē is untenable.

[52] For a discussion on this change, see Al-Jallad, "Genetic Background," pp. 11–12.

[53] Blau, *Grammar of Christian Arabic*, 1:106–8.

[54] For a few examples, see King, *Hismaic*, §3.2a. Ugaritic experiences the same pattern of merger, Huehnergard, *An Introduction to Ugaritic*, p. 26.

[55] In Cypriot Arabic, however, ḫ and ḥ merge to ḥ, probably under the influence of Greek. The mergers of the pharyngeal and velar fricatives occurred in Aramaic and Hebrew reading traditions as well; see the conclusive

that dialect from the mainland, as some dialects of Gozo apparently maintain a distinction between ġ and ʕ.[56] It is impossible to determine whether this merger took place in the PF, as both pairs are represented by a single set of glyphs.

The Status of *ğīm*

All pre-Islamic attestations of Arabic *g make use of Greek Gamma, but in the early Islamic period, transcriptions with γι begin to emerge, suggesting a palatal pronunciation.[57] Coptic transcriptions from the eighth and ninth centuries indicate that an affricate pronunciation was present in Egypt.[58] A palatal- or velar-stop realization was also present in the early Levantine dialects.[59] The exact realization of *g in the PF is impossible to untangle. Gamma in this system of transcription has clearly advanced to the stage of a voiced palatal fricative before high vowels. If voice was given preference over place and manner, then it would be suitable for the transcription of [g]. However, if place and manner were more salient, then one would expect the transcription of [g] with Kappa. The same arguments would support the transcription of the sound were it [ǧ] or even [ž], which is common to urban Levantine dialects today. Thus, I will transcribe *g in the PF as ğ for purely conventional purposes.

The Status of *šīn*

The equivalent of Arabic [š] is represented with Chi, which at first impression suggests a pronunciation similar to that described by Sibawayh, an ich-laut [ç]. However, since no exact equivalent of [ʃ] existed in Greek, Chi, pronounced as [ç], would have certainly been the closest approximation.[60] As such, the palato-alveolar sibilant realization, common to many modern dialects of Arabic and the conventional pronunciation of Classical Arabic, cannot be ruled out. I employ the neutral š transcription of the sound.

The *ṣād*

The *ṣād* is transcribed with Sigma, as was the practice in pre-Islamic times and, with the exception of a few post-conquest Nessana spellings, in the first Islamic century as well. While I have argued that the early *ṣād* was an affricate in Arabic,[61] the *ṣād* of this document was more

---

study of Steiner, "Hebrew Sound Changes," on the dating of this development.

[56] Stumme, *Maltesische Studien*, 79–81, was the first to observe the merger of the pharyngeal and velar fricatives in Maltese. Recently, Dr. M. Klimiuk and M. Lipnicka discovered a dialect in Gozo that retained the Old Arabic distinction between these phonemes, indicating that the aforementioned merger was something that happened at the post-Proto-Maltese stage. Their results were presented at the AIDA 2017 meeting, entitled "Preliminary Remarks on the Gozitan Dialect of Għarb, Malta."

[57] For example, γιαφαρ for [ğaʕfar]; on this phenomenon, see Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests."

[58] Legendre, "Perméabilité linguistique et anthroponymique," pp. 332.

[59] Some loans into Western Neo-Aramaic from Arabic reflect an original [g] pronunciation, ġmōʕča "people" < Arabic [gamāʕah]; see Arnold and Behnstedt, *Qalamûn*, p. 53.

[60] While Greek transcriptions of Aramaic and Phoenician use Sigma for š, this is likely due to chronological factors—those transcriptions pre-date the shift of [kʰ] to [ç] in Greek. This point is discussed in further detail in "The Nature of the Transcription System and Its Date" in chapter 3.

[61] This was based on spellings such as Νεστανα = نصان and εξαρ = عصر; see Al-Jallad, "Ṣād."

likely a pure sibilant, [sˤ], otherwise, the Greek affricate ξ would have perhaps made a better approximate for transcription.

The ḍ and ḏ (= ẓ)

Both of these phonemes are represented by Greek Delta, φάδατ = *fāḏat "it emptied" and λαμ jεχφαδου = *lam yeḥfaḏū "they did not keep." The use of Delta is also found in the Islamic-period papyri from Nessana and Egypt,[62] and a parallel is found in early Judaeo-Arabic with the use of Daleth.[63] It is impossible to determine whether these sounds had merged or remained distinct, and if they were distinct, whether a lateral realization of ḍ was preserved. The transcription system in place does not make use of digraphs, and so Delta [ð] would have been the closest approximation to ḏ [ðˤ] and would have certainly been suitable for a lateral ḍ [ɮˤ]. Nevertheless, evidence from pre-tenth-century CE Christian Arabic indicates that ḍ and ẓ had merged,[64] yet their outcome, whether a plosive or an interdental, remains hard to ascertain.

The qāf

All documents unanimously spell the reflex of *q with Kappa in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods, suggesting the realization [q], if not [k'].[65] The same holds true in the PF: καδςó [qads-oh] "his holiness" (v. 54) and ανκαλεβου [ʔanqalebū] "they rebelled" (v. 57).

The Velarized l

The velarized l is known in the divine name "Allah" in Classical Arabic. This word appears to be velarized in the PF as well, as ā is not raised in its vicinity: compare ελjλέύ [el-ʔilēh] to αλλάύ [ʔallāh]. The velarized allophone may be conditioned by the presence of a low vowel: compare ατε [ʔatē] to γαλα [ʕalā]. Given that *ā is realized as [ē] unless there is an emphatic, post-velar, or labial consonant, a velarized reflex of l could explain the difference between these two words.

---

[62] Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests."

[63] Khan, "Orthography and Reading," p. 397, illustrates this with אלארד "the ground" = الارض. The use of Daleth suggests that the sound was voiced, and likely an interdental or stop, so [dˤ] or [ðˤ].

[64] Blau, *Grammar of Christian Arabic*, 1:113–14.

[65] Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests," pp. 426–27.

Nominal Morphology

The following patterns are attested:

Table 7. Noun patterns attested in the PF

CāC

Arabo-Greek	Normalization	Classical Arabic	Translation
οελναρ (v. 21)	[weɪ-nār]	wan-nāru	"and the fire"
φαὺὺμ (v. 30)	[fāh-hum]	NA, = CAr ʔafwāhihim	"their mouths"

CaCC

βαχρ (v. 53)	[baḥr]	(al-)baḥri	"sea"
χειγβύj (v. 20)	[šiʕb-ih] (?)	šaʕbihī	"his people"

II-weak

ελ-καυς (v. 57)	[el-qaws]	al-qawsu	"bow"
χαυλ (v. 28)	[ḥawl]	ḥawla	"around"
φαυκ (v. 23)	[fawq]	fawqi	"above"

Geminate

ελ-ραβ (v. 21)	[el-rab]	ar-rabbu	"the lord"
γεδδα (v. 29)	[ǧeddā]	ǧaddan	"very, much"

CaCCah

σαχρ ύ (v. 20)	[saḥr(a)h]	saḥratun	"rock"
[χ]ευοετύμ (vv. 29, 30)	[šehwet-hum]	šahwatahum	"their desire"

II-weak

χαjμετ (const.) (v. 60)	[ḥaymet]	ḥaymati	"tabernacle"

CaCCāʔ

ελ-γαυγέ (v. 57)	[el-ʕawǧē]	al-ʕawǧāʔi	"crooked"

CuCC

χουβζ (v. 21)	[ḥubz]	ḥubzan	"bread"
ρυγζ (v. 21)	[ruǧz]	ruǧzun	"wrath"

CuCaC

(ε)λ-ουμε(μ) (v. 55)	[el-ʔumem]	al-ʔumama	"the nations"

CuCCah

κουετύ (v. 26)	[quwwet-uh]	quwwatahu	"his power"

CaCaC

γανεμ (v. 52)	[ġanem]	ġanaman	"goats"
οασατ (v. 28)	[wasaṭ]	wasaṭi	"center"
γέβελ (v. 54)	[ğebel]	ğabali	"mountain"

CāCiC

| ελγασιφ (v. 26) | [el-ʕāṣif] | al-ʕāṣifi | "the southwest wind" |

II-weak

| μάjδεύ (v. 20) | [māy(i)deh] | māʔidatan | "table" |

III-weak

| ελγαλη (v. 56) | [el-ʕālī] | al-ʕāliyya | "the high" |

CaCāC

ελσιχεβ (v. 26)	[el-siḥēb]	al-saḥāba	"the clouds"
ελσεμα (v. 26)	[el-semā]	as-samāʔi	"heaven"
χαλασυ (v. 22)	[ḫalāṣ-uh]	ḫalāṣihī	"his salvation"

CiCāC

| χηέμύμ (v. 28) | [ḫiyēm-hum] | ḫiyāmi-him | "their tents" |
| ελjλέύ (v. 56) | [el-ʔilēh] | al-ʔilāha | "the god" |

CaCīC

| jεμ[ινύ] (v. 54) | [yemīn-uh] | yamīnu-hū | "his right hand" |

CuCūC

λυχουμ (v. 27)	[luḫūm]	luḫūman	"flesh"
ελβουχουρ (v. 27)	[el-buḫūr]	al-buḥūri	"seas"
τηουρ (v. 27)	[ṭiyūr]	ṭuyūran	"birds"

CaCCaC

| γασκερ-ύμ (v. 28) | [ʕasker-hum] | ʕaskari-him | "their camp" |

ʔaCCāC

αβαjύμ (v. 57)	[ābāy(i)hum]	ʔabāʔi-him	"their fathers"
αυθάνjύμ (v. 58)	[ʔawṯānihum]	ʔawṯāni-him	"their high places"
αβοαβ (v. 23)	[ʔabwāb]	ʔabwāba	"doors"

CiCCān

| ινσέν (v. 25) | [ʔinsēn] | ʔinsānun | "man" |

maCCaC

| μεσκεν (v. 60) | [mesken] | maskanun | "tent, dwelling" |

maCCūC

| μενχουτέτηὑμ (v. 58) | [menḥūtētihum] | manḥūtāti-him | "their graven images" |

miCCāC

| ελμιρε[θ] (v. 55) | [el-mīrēṯ] | al-mīrāṯa | "inheritance" |

CaCāʔiCah

| ελ ᵐᵉελεικε (v. 25) | [el-melēyke(h)] | al-malāʔikati | "the angels" |

Final Short Vowels

All final short vowels and nunation have been lost, consistent with the evidence from seventh- and eighth-century Nessana and Egypt.[66]

> Χουβζ [ḫubz] < *ḫubzan "bread"
>
> φατεχ [fateḥ] < *fataḥa "he opened"
>
> σεμιγ [semiʕ] < *samiʕa "he heard"
>
> κεν [kēn] < *kāna "he was"
>
> αμταρ [ʔamṭar] < *ʔamṭara "he rained"
>
> βιλλαὑ [billāh] < *billāhi "by God"

As a result, case distinction in much of the nominal system was obliterated. There are no attestations of the dual, sound masculine plurals, or of the five nouns,[67] so it is impossible to determine whether this inflectional category survived in those contexts, as it did in the QCT.[68]

---

[66] Several scholars have noted the absence of a functioning case system in documents from the early Islamic era, e.g., Hopkins, *The Grammar of Early Arabic*, pp. 2–4; Blau, *Handbook*, pp. 44–45, a conclusion based largely on the facts provided by the PF. The disappearance of the case system is difficult to date, and certainly impossible to date for all areas. In the third or fourth century CE, at least some dialects of Arabic retained the accusative ending (Al-Jallad and al-Manaser, "New Epigraphica I"). The ʿEn ʿAvdat inscription attests a living case system, but the inscription is impossible to date precisely; see Macdonald in Fiema et al., "Provincia Arabia," p. 339, and Kropp, "ʿAyn ʿAbada Inscription" for a discussion on the dating of this text. On the evidence for case in Old Arabic, see Al-Jallad, "Earliest Stages of Arabic."

[67] That is nouns such as ʔabun "father" and ʔaḫun "brother," which have long case vowels in construct, e.g., ʔabū, ʔaḫū, respectively.

[68] Van Putten and Stokes, "Case in the Quranic Consonantal Text," argue convincingly that the case system in the language of the QCT was distributed differently than in Classical Arabic, exhibiting full inflection in the above-mentioned categories but lacking in the vast majority of singular nouns. This point is discussed in further detail in chapter 4.

Vestiges of Case

adverbial -a

The adverbial ending -a is attested twice in the word γεδδα [ǧeddā] "very," and it is no doubt a reflex of the old indefinite accusative [ā] < *an. As in many of the modern dialects of Arabic, this morpheme has been semantically narrowed to an adverbial marker, which was only one of its many original functions.[69] On its form, Corriente compares it with many modern dialectal forms, such as Moroccan ḥaqqa "truly" and *abada* "never," and regards the final [a] as the only true reflex of the adverbial accusative in the modern dialects, the [an] variant, as in *šukran* "thank you!," being a loan from Classical Arabic.[70]

The Genitive Case

The deletion of final short vowels in theory would not have affected the expression of case in nouns with pronominal clitics, but a very natural analogical change would have leveled both forms to a caseless stem.[71] In most cases, forms with pronominal suffixes do not take a case vowel:

> v. 22 γαλα χαλασύ [ʕalā ḫalāṣ-uh]
>
> v. 26 βη κουετύ [bi-quwwet-uh]
>
> v. 28 χαυλ χηέμύμ [ḥawl ḫiyēm-hum]
>
> v. 29 χευοετύμ [šehwet-hum]
>
> v. 56 χευαδ[α]τύ [šehādāt-uh]

However, three examples exhibit an i-vowel between the stem and the pronominal suffix, all before a plural suffix.[72]

> v. 58 βη αυθάνjύμ [bi-ʔaṯwāni-hum]; CAr bi-ʔawṯāni-him
>
> v. 58 βη μενχουτέτηύμ [bi-menḥūtēti-hum]; CAr bi-manḥūtāti-him
>
> v. 57 μιθλ αβαjύμ [miṯl ʔābāy(i)-hum]; CAr miṯla ʔābāʔi-him

A single example attests an [i] vowel after the pronominal clitic, λιχειγβύj [li-šiʕb-uh/-ih] (v. 20).[73]

---

[69] See Hasselbach, *Case in Semitic*, on the functional range of the Proto-Semitic accusative.

[70] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 310.

[71] Al-Jallad and Van Putten, "Proto-Arabic Case," p. 111.

[72] Blau, *Handbook*, p. 44, considered the phrase φηφαύύμ (v. 30) to be an example of a hypercorrect usage of the accusative of mouth fā in a context requiring the genitive. This seems to be the result of a transcription error on Blau's part, as he gives the word as φα. ύμ in his edition, while Violet's tracing and Kahle, who saw the actual document, both give φαύύμ. Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 311, correctly rejects this interpretation and connects it with Andalusian Arabic *fah* "mouth." This form is no doubt a backformation from the plural ʔafwāhun, where the third consonant *h* is non-etymological and fills the place of the third radical in this plural pattern.

[73] Both Kahle, *Die arabischen Bibelübersetzungen* and Blau, *Handbook*, read χαλασυι (v. 22), but on Violet's tracing, the final Iota is barely visible, represented only by a small dot. The photographs show that this dot is nothing

The interpretation of these examples is not easy. We can, however, rule out some sort of epenthesis to break up the cluster, as the language of the PF seems to tolerate CC consonant clusters, μιθλ [miθl], βαχρ [baḥr], ρυγζ [ruǧz], and so on. These isolated examples may suggest that the genitive case survived optionally before pronominal suffixes, an environment where it would not have been subjected to deletion, and perhaps only on certain plural forms; three out of a total of seven examples of a plural pronominal suffix following a noun attest this feature. If this suggestion is correct, then it would reflect a very advanced stage of analogical leveling, where caseless unbound forms are beginning to replace case-bearing bound forms. That the genitive is the only case to survive is in line with typological expectations,[74] and one finds a parallel in the Phoenician language.[75] The final elongated Iota in λιχειγβύj (v. 20) is probably an error, but if it is not, then it may represent the genitive followed by the suffix pronoun, *ih*. The rendering *uhi* is unlikely, as is Corriente's appeal to Aramaic orthographic influence.[76]

A second interpretation would appeal to diglossia. The writer of this text decided to insert the case endings from the literary register Classical Arabic into his transcription. That this only occurs with the genitive is curious, but beyond this, there is no reason to assume the intrusion of classicisms in other cases, and so this explanation, while possible, also runs the risk of being circular. Moreover, it is curious that these forms, which would supposedly be imitations of Classical Arabic, do not display vowel harmony in the clitic pronoun.

The Feminine Ending

The feminine ending *-at has clearly shifted to [ah], [eh], with a true consonantal coda consistently spelled with Ypsilon: μυγνεχαύ [muǧneḥah] "winged"; οελευδιεύ [wel-ʾʕewdiyeh] "and the valleys." In Classical Arabic, the pausal form of *at* is *ah*, with a true [h][77] and the form *eh*, with a true [h] as well, is encountered in several dialects of the Arabian Peninsula.[78]

At least once, this ending is spelled without the Hypsilon, suggesting the weakening of [h] in word final position, ελ<<με>>ελεικε [el-milēy(i)ke] "the angels."[79] As in all forms of Arabic, in construct the original *-t of the feminine ending is preserved: χαjμετ σεjλουμ [ḫaymet seylūm] (v. 60) "the tabernacle of Shiloh."

---

but a word divider, and therefore the reading must be amended to χαλασυ. Kahle restores an Iota following κουετύ (v. 26), and this is followed by Blau, but this restoration cannot be supported by the photograph—the word is simply κουετύ.

[74] Hasselbach, *Case in Semitic*, §3.

[75] The 3ms clitic pronoun has two allomorphs: Ø [o] following nouns in the nominative and accusative and y [ya] following nouns in the genitive, suggesting the survival of the genitive case *-i*.

[76] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment."

[77] Fischer, *A Grammar of Classical Arabic*, p. 34.

[78] Prochazka, *Saudi Arabian Dialects*, p. 19.

[79] Note, however, that this word was originally misspelled, omitting the first syllable /mi/. The scribe inserted it supralinearly. It is therefore possible that the author forgot to write the rough-breathing mark over the Epsilon. Admittedly this is not the normal way to represent word final [h], but finds a parallel in the 3ms suffix.

The Definite Article

The definite article is consistently ελ [el], without assimilation to coronals.[80] All previous editors have taken this as an imitation of Arabic orthography, but this need not be the case. Arabic orthography is in fact based on an Old Arabic dialect that did not assimilate the coda of the article, and this feature is well attested in the Old Arabic of the southern Levant.[81] Not only this, but the non-assimilating article survives into some modern dialects of Arabic as well.[82] There is one fragmentary word that could suggest that the spelling ελ is based on Arabic orthography, the word βερρί in verse 53, which translates Greek ελπίδι "hope." Violet interpreted the word as a fragment of Arabic [bir-rağāʔ], which, as R. Vollandt informs me, is found in all other Greek-Arabic bilingual Psalm translations of this type (see appendix 1). Nevertheless, the present document diverges in other ways from other comparable translations,[83] so Violet's inference is reasonable but certainly not proven. While the reconstruction as بالرجاء is possible, it creates several problems. From the photograph, it is clear that the Iota is accented, suggesting according to the orthography of this document that it reflects a long vowel. The second is the raising of [a] to [i] following [r], which contradicts the raising rules observed elsewhere. Alternatively, it is possible to see the word as complete, rending Arabic *birrun* "goodness, beneficence," although this would not be the obvious translation of Greek ἐλπίδα. Given the word's broken context, it is impossible to say for certain what this example reflects. So, to conclude, the vast majority of cases suggest that the coda of the definite article did not assimilate to the following coronal, but a single fragmentary example *could* suggest that this was an orthographic convention or that assimilation was optional, and non-assimilated forms were more common.

The onset of the article is normally elided before a preposition: φιλβαχερ [fil-bašer] "among men" (v. 60).

Plurals

Only the feminine sound plural ending is attested, āt/ēt. The broken plural system is active and shows no signs of breaking down. The following plurals are attested:

ʔaCCāC

Arabo-Greek	Normalization	Classical Arabic	Translation
αβαϳὺμ (v. 57)	[ʔābāy(i)hum]	ʔābāʔi-him	"their fathers"
αυθάνϳὺμ (v. 58)	[ʔawṯānihum]	ʔawṯāni-him	"their high places"
αβοαβ (v. 23)	[ʔabwāb]	ʔabwāba	"doors"

---

[80] The ελ article appears for the first time in the pre-Islamic period in the sixth-century CE Petra Papyri, and there it alternates with αλ, e.g., ελδαργαθ [el-dargāt] "the terraces" (544 CE) compared to αλσουλλαμ [al-sullam] "the terrace" (505–537 CE) (Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," §5.5.1).

[81] Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," §4.

[82] For example, l-zwāyil "the beasts of burden" or l-tānya "the second layer of (extracted) cork" in the rural dialects east of Collo in Algeria, Ostoya-Delmas, "Notes préliminaires," p. 70. Conversely, this case can also be the result of secondary levelling of the al-form to all situations.

[83] For example, the translation of κατεκλύσθησαν as φαδατ in this document but امتلت or جرت in other comparable translations (see appendix 1).

-āt, external plural

| μενχουτέτηὑμ (v. 58) | [menḥūtētihum] | manḥūtāti-him | "their graven images" |

CaCā̄ʔiCah

| ελᵐελεικε (v. 25) | [el-melēyke(h)] | al-malāʔikati | "the angels" |

CuCūC

λυχουμ (v. 27)	[luḥūm]	luḥūman	"flesh"
βουχουρ (v. 27)	[buḥūr]	buḥūri	"seas"
τηουρ (v. 27)	[ṭiyūr]	ṭuyūran	"birds"

Pronouns

The Clitic Pronouns

Two clitic pronouns are attested:

| ὑ | [(u/o)h(u/i)] | hu/hi | "his" (3ms) |
| ὑμ | [hum] | hum | "theirs" (3mp) |

3ms

The interpretation of the vocalization of the 3ms is complicated by the fact that ὑ can represent the consonant [h] without a vowel: jουὑεjει /yuheyyī/ (v. 20) "he prepares"; ελjλέὑ [el-ʔilēh] (v. 56) "the lord." This may suggest that the 3ms pronominal suffix was simply a clitic *h* with no vowel: κουετὑ [qowwet-h] (v. 26) "his power"; χαλασὑ [ḫalāṣ-h] "his holiness."[84] The spelling of the 3mp suffix pronoun as ὑμ [hum], however, suggests that Hypsilon can also stand for the sequence [hu], and so the pronoun could have been realized as [hu]. Corriente suggests that ὑ could have represented [uh], but provides no orthographic reason for this.[85] In one case, the 3ms clitic is spelled ό, καδ•σό (v. 54) "his sanctuary," which could support Corriente's proposal. If the divider reflects accurately the division of a syllable, then one could suggest the vocalization [qadsoh]. In early vocalized Judaeo-Arabic, we find the pronominal suffix often spelled as [uh], with a Qibbuts and a Hē.[86]

The following table provides all of the possible pronunciations of the clitic pronoun. For conventional purposes, I will adopt the form *uh*, which is best supported by the comparative evidence.

Table 8. Possible realizations of the 3ms clitic pronoun

| χαλασὑ | [ḫalāṣ-h] | [ḫalāṣ-uh] | [ḫalāṣ-hu] |

---

[84] The 3ms pronominal suffix without a vowel, *-h*, is known in several Arabian dialects; see Prochazka, *Saudi Arabian Dialects*, p. 126.

[85] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 307.

[86] Khan, "Orthography and Reading," p. 397.

3pl

The pronunciation of the 3mp can only be [hum]; no vowel ever intervenes between the Hypsilon and the Mu. Unlike Classical Arabic, the vowel of the pronoun does not harmonize with the preceding [i] vowel: *baytuhum* "their house" versus *baytihim* "their house." The pronoun retains its shape ὑμ in the two cases following the genitive: αυθάνιὑμ [ʔawṯāni-hum] "their high places"; μενχουτέτηὑμ [menḥūtēti-hum] "their graven images" (v. 58). This feature is attested in the Ḥigāzī dialect as known to the Arabic Grammarians and is common in the modern dialects as well.[87]

Table 9. Demonstratives

Proximal ms	Distal ms
ἁ (δα) [hā(ḏā)]	δέλικ [ḏēlik]

The proximal demonstrative is attested once in fragmentary form: (ελ)γέβελ ἁ (δα) = [(el)-ğebel hā(ḏā)] (v. 54). The actual demonstrative element is missing, but the *hā* prefix is clearly attested with the rough breathing on the Alpha. While many Arabic dialects allow for the optional marking of the demonstrative element with *hā*,[88] the QCT only knows forms with a prefixed *hā*: هذه, هذا, and so on. The Old Arabic of the north seems to have allowed forms without the *hā* prefix, as the demonstrative is written simply as *dʾ* in the Ḥarrān inscription (568 CE).[89]

The distal demonstrative is attested as part of the conjunction "therefore" λιδέλικ [li-ḏē-lik] (v. 21). This is the normal form in the QCT *dlk* and the commonest form for Classical Arabic, but is otherwise unknown in the modern dialects.

Table 10. Relative pronoun

ms
ελλεδι [elleḏī]

The relative pronoun is attested twice as ελλεδι [elleḏī] (vv. 54, 60), both times with a masculine-singular antecedent, and so it is impossible to say whether this form was invariable or declined in the Classical Arabic/QCT fashion. While the use of *elleḏī* is usually regarded as a classicism in Middle Arabic texts,[90] there is no *a priori* reason to assume that it is not a dialectal

---

[87] Rabin remarks that, according to Sibawayh, the Ḥigāzī dialect had forms such as bi-ġulāmi-hū and bi-ġulāmi-hum, Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, p. 99. In Levantine Arabic, for example, the form *hum* is stable: ʿalē-hum "on them."

[88] For example, Najdi Arabic has a *ha* by-form of each demonstrative pronoun, e.g., ḏā and hāḏā "this.ms," Ingham, *Najdi Arabic*, p. 55.

[89] The text reads *bnyt dʾ ʾl-mrṭwl* "I built *this* martyrion"; see Macdonald in Fiema et al., "Provincia Arabia," p. 414. The same is attested in an unpublished pre-Islamic Arabic-script inscription from the area of Tabūk, *dʾ qysw* "This is Qays-w."

[90] Blau, *Handbook*, p. 55.

form. Several modern Arabic dialects employ an invariable *allaḏī* as a relative pronoun[91] and some Maghrebi dialectal variants seem to go back to this form, for example, *iddi*.[92]

The Prepositions

The following prepositions are attested in the document. Proclitic prepositions are written without a space when followed by the article but are otherwise written as independent words.

bi "in, with"

When independent the vowel of the preposition is spelled with Eta but when proclitic to the article it is represented by Iota. As discussed above, this may betray a slightly different realization of these two vowels.

> βιλλαυ [billāh] "in God" (v. 22)

> βηκουετύ [bi-quwwet-uh] "with his power" (v. 26)

ʕalā "upon, concerning"

Only the long form of the preposition is attested, γαλα [ʕalā] (v. 22), matching QCT and Classical Arabic,[93] in contrast to the short form *ʕal* found in the modern dialects.

li / la "to, for"

The allomorphy in the dative pronoun, *li-* before nouns and *la-* before pronouns, is partially attested. The preposition has the form λι before the demonstrative, λιδέλικ "therefore" and nouns, λιϳϲρα[ηλ] [li-ʔisrāil] "against Israel," but [a] or [e] before the pronouns, λαύμ [la-hum] (v. 25) vs. λεύμ [le-hum] (v. 24).

min "from, because of"

The preposition μιν [min] (v. 24) exhibits no assimilation of the *n*, something typical of the Old Arabic of this region and some modern dialects. It is attested once as a component of the compound preposition μιν•φαυκ [min fawq] (v. 23) "above," which is known from the modern dialects and Middle Arabic documents.[94] Compound prepositions with *min* are also attested in Old Arabic, Safaitic *mn qbl* "facing."[95]

---

[91] Many contemporary Yemeni varieties employ an invariable ʔallaḏī as a relative pronoun Behnstedt, *Die nordjemenitschen Dialekte*, p. 31, and there is no reason to assume that this usage was not more widespread in former times before giving way to the common dialectal form *illi*.

[92] On these forms, see Heath, *Moroccan Arabic*, p. 461.

[93] This form is also attested in the Jebel Says Inscription (528/529 CE); see Macdonald in Fiema et al., "Provincia Arabia." The relevant line reads *ʾrsl-ny ʾl-ḥrt ʾl-mlk ʿly ʾsys* "Al-Ḥāreth the king sent me to Usays."

[94] Blau, *Handbook*, p. 43.

[95] Al-Jallad, *Outline*, p. 152.

miṯl "like"

This preposition appears twice as μιθλ [miṯl] (v. 27).

fī "in, at"

Like *bi-*, this preposition is spelled with an Eta when independent and an Iota when proclitic to the definite article: φη οασατ γασκερύμ [fī wasaṭ ʕasker-hum] (v. 28) "in the midst of their camp" versus φιλβαχερ [fil-bašer] "among men" (v. 60). Its treatment in an identical way to *bi* may suggest that its final vowel, which was originally long, had been shortened.

ʔilē "to"

Attested as jλέ (v. 54), this form has disappeared in nearly all modern dialects, but is identical to the form in the QCT and the Jebel Says Inscription, *ʾly* (see n90).

Conjunctions

The common Arabic conjunctions are attested: οα [wa] "and" (v. 23), έυ [ʔew] "or" (v. 20); v. 22 λιεν(ναύ)μ [li-ʔen(na-hu)m] "because (they)"; φα [fa] "so, then" (v. 21). In addition to this, the translator uses λεγαλ [laʕal] (v. 20), CAr *laʕalla* "perhaps," as a translation of Greek μὴ. Its syntax reflects Greek usage rather than the Arabic. Finally, the conjunction "when" is attested as γινδμα [ʕindmā] (v. 30). While *ʕnd* is attested in the QCT and in Old Arabic,[96] the construction with *mā* is not found in either corpus. It is, however, attested in Middle Arabic and Classical Arabic.

The Verb

Three genders and numbers are attested: 3ms, 3fs, and 3mp. The 3ms is unmarked, while the 3fs terminates in ετ [et], ατ [at], as expected, and the masculine plural in ου [ū]. In III-weak roots, however, the ending is ευ [ew].[97]

Possible merger of III-ʔ and III-y/w

The loss of the glottal stop could have led to the merger of final glottal stop and final glide roots. This can be seen in the plural ending on the prefix conjugation of √mlʔ, /ew/ rather than /ū/: λεjτεμέλλευ [ley(i)teméllew] "in order that they be filled" (v. 25) rather than λεjτεμέλλεjου [leytemelleyū]. This change is attested in early Middle Arabic[98] and in the modern dialects, for example, Qǝltu *yǝqrā* "he reads" but *yǝqraw* "they read." Nevertheless, it

---

[96] Al-Jallad, *Outline,* pp. 152–53.

[97] This development would seem to have occurred at the Proto-Arabic; its earliest attestation, to my knowledge, is found in A1 (third/fourth century CE), ειραυ [yirʕaw] "they pastured": Al-Jallad and al-Manaser, "New Epigraphica I."

[98] See the discussion under tD-stem on this verb.

is possible that the original form *yatamallaʔū* collapsed simply to *yatamallaw* following the loss of the glottal stop without resulting in the full-scale merger of the two root classes.

G-stem

The strong suffix conjugation has two stems, the transitive and intransitive, distinguished by a low (a) and high (i,u) vowel in the second syllable, respectively. These stems are kept separate in the dialect of the PF, for example, αμαρ [ʔamar] "he commanded" versus χεβιγου [šebiʕū] "they were sated." The stress of this verb form was on the first syllable of the stem, as indicated in βάγαθ (v. 25) [báʕaṯ] "he sent."

Weak Roots

I-w/y

One verb of this class is attested and exhibits no exceptional behavior, οακαγατ [waqaʕat] "it fell."

II-w/y

Medial weak verbs collapse the medial triphthong to ā, as in the QCT and Classical Arabic, but unlike Old Arabic. The particular allophone of this phoneme is determined by the emphatic qualities of the root—in non-emphatic roots, it is [ē], while in emphatic ones it is [ā], for example, σέλετ [sēlet] "it flowed" versus φάδατ [fāḍat] "it emptied."

III-w/y

As with medial weak verbs, the original triphthong collapsed to ā, which is realized as [ē] in non-emphatic environments and [ā] in emphatic ones, for example, ατε [ʔatē] "he came" versus γαττα [ġaṭṭā] "he covered" (D-stem).

Table 11. G-stem verbs attested in the PF

Grammatical form	Arabo- Greek/normalization	Translation
S; 3mp	γαδαρου [ġadarū] (v. 57)	"they acted treacherously"
II-w/y; 3ms	κεν [kēn] (v. 30)	"he was"
II-w/y; 3fs	φάδατ [fāḍat] (v. 20)	"it emptied"
II-w/y; 3fs	σέλετ [sēlet] (v. 20)	"it flowed"
S; 3ms	σεμιγ [semiʕ] (v. 21)	"he heard"
S; 3ms	σαγ(αδ) [saʕad] (v. 21)	"it went up"
S; 3ms	αμαρ [ʔamar] (v. 23)	"he commanded"
S; 3ms	φατεχ [fateḥ] (v. 23)	"he opened"
S; 3ms	(ακ)ελ [ʔakel] (v. 25)	"he ate"

S; 3ms	βάγαθ [baʕaṯ] (v. 25)	"he sent"
III-w/y; 3ms	ατε [ʔatē] (v. 26)	"he came"
S; 3mp	χεβιγου [šebiʕū] (v. 29)	"they were sated"
I-w; 3fs	ουακαγατ [waqaʕat] (v. 28)	"it fell"
S; 3fs	α[χα]δετ [ʔaẖaḏet] (v. 54)	"it took"

Prefix Conjugation

The preformative vowel of the prefix conjugation is invariably ε [e], suggesting that the Barth-Ginsberg distribution of Proto-Central Semitic and Proto-Arabic[99] was leveled to the [a] value, as [e] is an allophone of *a, and not *i.[100]

It is impossible to say anything about the existence of modal inflection, as this distinction would mainly appear in the masculine plural and feminine singular of the prefix conjugation following the loss of final short vowels. Only the masculine plural is attested and always following the negator *lam*, which requires the jussive, and this is the form encountered. However, without a comparable indicative example, it is impossible to know whether this reflects the survival of mood inflection when it is expressed consonantally or the leveling of the subjunctive/jussive form for all purposes, as happened in most modern Levantine dialects.

Table 12. Mood inflection in the prefix conjugation

Grammatical form	Arabo- Greek/normalization	Translation
S; 3ms	ϳεκδιρ [yeqdir] (v. 20)	"he is able"
I-ʾ; 3mp	Λια(κυλο)υ [liyā(kul)ū] (v. 24)	"in order to eat"
S; 3mp	ϳεγζα(γου) [yeǧzaʕū] (v. 53)	"they feared (not)"
S; 3mp	ϳεχφαδου [yeḥfaḏū] (v. 56)	"they kept (not)"

G-internal passive

The internal passive is attested once with the distinctive [u] vowel of the prefix conjugation.[101]

S; 3mp	ϳουγδεμου [yuʕdemū] (v.30) < *yuʕdamū	"they were (not) denied"

---

[99] Barth-Ginsberg's law states that the preformative vowel is *a* if the stem vowel is high and *i* if the stem vowel is *a*, so *yaqtul/yaqtil* but *yiqtal*. This distribution is reconstructable for Arabic based on the Najdi dialects, where it is still active, *yaktib* vs *yismaʕ*; see Ingham, *Najdi Arabic*, pp. 22–23. Barth-Ginsberg's law may have been operative in the Old Arabic of the Levant based on Greek transcriptions; see Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," §5.11.

[100] *Pace* Hopkins, *The Grammar of Early Arabic*.

[101] While Blau, *Handbook*, p. 70, takes this is an active *yuʕdimū*, without justification, the passive in the Greek original supports the passive reading given by Kahle, *Die arabischen Bibelübersetzungen*, p. 35. Violet, "Psalmfragment," p. 394, gives the Arabic without vocalizing the difference between active and passive voices. Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 311, supports Kahle's reading, and suggests that the verb was originally *yaʕdamū* "they did not missed [sic] their satiation," as he believes a C-stem passive is unlikely in the present "Neo-Arabic" context, but this already assumes the linguistic identity of the text.

D-stem

The D-stem is attested only in weak verbs and exhibits no remarkable behavior.

Table 13. D-stem verbs

III-w/y	γαττα [ġaṭṭā] (v. 53)	"he covered"
II-w/y; III-ʾ	jουύεjει [yuheyyī] (v. 20)	"he prepares"
I-w	(jουα)κκελου [yuwakkelū] (v. 22)	"they rely (not) upon"

tD-stem

This stem is attested once in a very unusual form: *leyteméllew* "in order that they be sated." Kahle reads this word as λεjτεμέλλεύ(ι) based on the study of the document in Damascus and states that the photograph is unreliable in this area.[102] Violet rendered the word as the noun, ﻞﻌﺟ, but this leaves the first j unexplained.[103] Corriente struggles with the orthographic difference in rendering the combination of the preformative prefix and the dative preposition, λι /li/ in λιακ[υλ]ου but λεj here.[104] He, however, overlooks the spelling with the elongated Iota with rough breathing. This can reflect consonantal [y] or the sequence [ʔi] or [yi], which gives us two options in interpreting the phonetic realization of this word: [leyiteméllew] or [leyteméllew], with the deletion of the vowel of the preformative prefix. Both cases disagree with the standard situation in the modern dialects, where the vowel of the t-morpheme is deleted, *yitmallū*, and in the QCT, where occasional assimilation patterns suggest a similar phenomenon: *ydkr* = yaḏḏakkar < *yatḏakkar < *yataḏakkar (Q 7:26).

III-ʾ	λεjτεμέλλευ /ley(i)teméllew/ (v. 25)	"in order that they be filled"

C-stem

The C-stem appears to be a productive category, but several verbs that take the G-stem in Classical Arabic are attested in the C here: ακσα "he went away," CAr *qaṣā ʕan* and εσκεν "he dwelt," CAr *sakana*.[105] Corriente interprets these instances as hypercorrections, a sign that the C-stem is moribund.[106] Unlike Classical Arabic, but like Hebrew and Gəʕəz, this stem was stressed on the second syllable αφσέλ /ʔafsél/ (v. 59) "he despised." This is also suggested by the spelling of the C-passive participle μυγνεχαύ [muǧneḥah] "winged" with Ypsilon rather

---

[102] Kahle, *Die arabischen Bibelübersetzungen*, p. 33n10.

[103] Violet, "Psalmfragment," p. 394.

[104] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," pp. 308–9.

[105] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 308, also considers the verb αφσέλ an example of this phenomenon, equivalent ultimately to Arabic *faṣala*. The spelling of the second *a with Epsilon argues against the presence of an emphatic consonant in the root. To support his connection with √fṣl, he claims that the root √fsl provides no suitable equivalent to Greek ἐξουδένωσεν "he treated with contempt, despised." The basic meaning of the √fsl, *fasula* "he was, or became, low, base, ignoble…"(Lane 2398c), however, provides an excellent match. C-stem would then mean "to render contemptible," which I think is a most suitable rendering of the Greek.

[106] At least one vestige of this stage seems to be preserved in the modern Levantine dialects: the verb "to come" is usually *iǧa*, which must derive from the C-stem *ʔaǧāʔa.

than Omicron-Ypsilon. As will be recalled, Ypsilon renders unstressed *u, implying that the accent was on the penultimate syllable, thus [muǧnéḥah]. Like the G-stem, the triphthong of medial-weak verbs collapses to a long vowel, /ā/.

Table 14. Suffix conjugation of the C-stem

S; 3ms	αμταρ [ʔamṭar] (v. 24)	"he rained"
III-w/y; 3ms	αγτάυμ [ʔaʕtā-hum] (v. 24)	"he gave them"
II-w/y; 3ms	αὐάγ [ʔahāǧ] (v. 26)	"he drove"
II-w/y; 3ms	αjαδ [ʔahad] (v. 53)< *ʔahad[ā](!)	"he guided"
S; 3ms	αδχ(αλ) [ʔadḫal] (v. 54)	"he made enter"
S; 3ms	αχραγ [ʔaḫraǧ] (v. 55)	"he brought out"
I-w	αυραθ [ʔawraṯ] (v. 55)	"he made inherit"
S; 3mp	ασχατουύ [ʔasḫaṭū-h] (v. 58)	"they insulted him"
II-w/y	αγαρουύ [ʔaġārū-h] (v. 58)	"they drove him to jealousy"
III-w/y	ακσα [ʔaqṣā] (v. 58)	"he removed"
S; 3ms	αφσέλ [ʔafsél] (v. 59)	"he despised"

The /u/ vowel of the prefix conjugation is preserved.[107]

Table 15. Prefix conjugation of the C-stem

III-y; 3ms	jουγτι [yuʕṭī] (v. 20)	"he gives"
Iʔ; 3mp	jουμι(νου) [yūmi(nū)] (v. 22)	"they believed (not)"

Lt-stem

S; 3ms	τεγάφελ [teǧāfel] (v. 59)	"he rose to anger"

Gt-stem

As in some modern and medieval Arabic dialects,[108] the vowel of the first syllable appears to be [a], perhaps with a true glottal stop, as there seems to be a hiatus between it and the preceding vowel of the conjugation in the following phrase: φααμτεναγ [fa-ʔamtenaʕ] "and he grew angry" (v. 21).[109] The stable *alif* in the QCT *ʾftʕl* may suggest that it too had a true glottal stop, and perhaps an a-vowel, in these stems.

---

[107] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 304.

[108] For example, southern Ḥigāzi *ʔáḥtarag* "it burned down," Prochazka, *Saudi Arabian Dialects*, p. 44, and is a "hallmark" of Andalusi Arabic, Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," n13.

[109] Blau, *Handbook*, p. 39; Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," pp. 305–6.

Table 16. Suffix conjugation of the Gt-stem

S; 3ms	αμτεναγ [ʔamtenaʕ] (v. 21)	"he grew angry"
S; 3fs	εχτεγαλετ [ʔešteʕalet] (v. 21)	"it kindled"
III-w/y	αβτελευ [ʔabtelew] (v. 56)	"they tempted"

N-stem

The N-stem is also realized with an /a/ vowel, and possibly a glottal stop, in the first syllable, contra Classical Arabic and Old Arabic, which have *-in and *na-, respectively.[110]

Table 17. Suffix conjugation of the N-stem

S; 3mp	ανκαλεβου [ʔanqalebū] (v. 57)	"they rebelled"

Q-stem[111]

Table 18. Suffix conjugation of the Q-stem

S; 3mp	μαρμαρου [marmarū] (v. 56)	"they provoked"

Negation

The negation of the past tense is attested only in the construction *lam* + short prefix conjugation. While this construction is unknown in the modern dialects, it was widespread in the Old Arabic period, found in the QCT, Safaitic, and even perhaps in the substrate influence on the Haramic Sabaic inscriptions north of al-Jawf, Yemen, and so there can be no doubt that this was a living feature of Old Arabic.[112] There is therefore no reason to assume that this is a classicism in a text this early rather than a survival from the ancient period.[113]

v. 22	λ(αμ) (ϳουα)κκελου γαλα χαλασυ	"they did not trust in his holiness"
v. 56	οα χεύαδ(α)τύ λαμ ϳεχφαδου	"they did not keep his commandments"

Mood

As mentioned earlier, only the n-less form of the masculine plural prefix conjugation is attested. The syntactic environments in which these verbs occur, however, all require the n-less

---

[110] On the vocalization of the n-stem as *nafʕala* in the Safaitic inscriptions, see Al-Jallad, *Outline*, pp. 134–35. Like the Gt-stem, the N-stem also has the vocalization of *ʔánfaʕal* in some of the the Ḥigāzī dialects today; see Prochazka, *Saudi Arabian Dialects*, p. 44.

[111] On the terminology of reduplicated forms in Semitic, see Butts, "Nominal Patterns."

[112] For example, in Safaitic we have *lm yʕd* [lam yaʕod] "he did not return" or *lm tmṭr* [lam tomṭar] "it was not rained upon" Al-Jallad, *Outline*, p. 154; in "Haramic," we have *lm yġtsl* "he did not bathe"; Mascitelli, *L'Arabo in epoca preislamica*, pp. 98–102.

[113] *Pace* Blau and Hopkins, "On Early Judaeo-Arabic Orthography."

form, that is, after *lam* and after the purpose clause marker *li-*, thus we cannot be sure if the old indicative terminating with the *n* remained intact or was lost.

One serial verb construction is attested: οαχουβζ ϳεκδιϱ ϳουγτι [wa-ḫubz yeqdir yuʕṭī] "and he will be able to give bread." Such constructions are rare in the QCT, restricted to a few verbs, for example *lā yakādūna yafqahūna ḥadīṯan* "they can barely understand speech" (Q 4:78), but are the norm in the modern dialects. This particular syntagm, however, might have been employed to match the Greek, which lacks a subordinating particle.

Syntax

Only a few modest remarks can be made about syntax, as the text often follows the word order of the Greek.[114] In terms of agreement, the feminine singular–inanimate plural concord is observed. This pattern of agreement is not purely a feature of Classical Arabic, but is found in the modern dialects as well, in the QCT and in Safaitic.[115]

οελευδιεύ   φάδατ

and the valleys.pl   emptied.3fs

Otherwise, the syntax of the text follows the regular translation idiom, closely matching the word order and wording of the Greek, down to the selection of the prepositions. This point is discussed in more detail in appendix 1, "Translation Techniques."

---

[114] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 304.
[115] On the Safaitic examples, see Al-Jallad, *Outline*, p. 141, but note that the 3mp is sometimes observed as well in concord.

Chapter 3

Dating and Localizing the Document, Writing System, and Language

The PF consists of five dateable and localizable components, three of which I will deal with in this chapter and two of which will be handled by R. Vollandt in appendix 1. The three that presently concern us are the Greek hand, the transcription system, and the Arabic language itself. Vollandt will treat the quire-structure and translation style. The ability of the translation style to act as a dating method is dependent upon surviving manuscripts, and so it cannot serve as a *terminus post quem* in and of itself. Even though the PF shares a common style and vocabulary with Biblical translations from the eighth and ninth centuries, it is impossible to know how old such traditions are.[116] The debate so far has centered on the surviving document, and so we will begin our discussion here.

Dating the Document

Any hope of an absolute dating of the document (C14) has been lost with the artifact itself, and so scholars have taken several indirect approaches to establish its chronological point of origin. These have ranged from trying to locate the sociolinguistic context that would most likely motivate the production of such a text to paleography. Until Mavroudi's rediscovery of the photographs, there was a general consensus that the document could not be much older than 800 ce. The following section will discuss the major opinions on the dating of the PF.

Violet

Violet, having studied the original document, came to the conclusion based on the letter shapes that it must have been produced in the late eighth or early ninth century ce. As for its purpose, he proposed that it was made for a Greek-speaking priest with an Arabic-speaking congregation at a time when Greek was no longer widely understood in the Near East.[117]

---

[116] A lively debate rages between those who see the Arabic Bible translations of the eighth century as the beginning of a tradition and those who regard it as the consolidation of a pre-existing one. Kashouh, *Arabic Gospels*, supports the latter view, while Griffith, *The Bible in Arabic,* is skeptical.

[117] Violet, "Psalmfragment," co. 386, 488.

Blau

Blau considers the PF an example of early Middle Arabic and follows Violet's eighth-century dating, though he never makes it explicit why he rules out a ninth-century possibility.[118] He offers no opinion as to its purpose.

Haddad

R. Haddad in a short article dates the Psalm Fragment to the early eighth century as well, but rather than invoking paleography, he argues that this is the latest period in which the text could have been produced, as Greek disappeared in the Middle East around this time.[119] He, moreover, argues for a substantial Aramaic impact on the Arabic language itself.[120]

Macdonald

In an essential article on literacy in an oral context, Macdonald dates the text based on its *raison d'être.*[121] He hypothesized that the text, owing to its humble production, could not have been a Psalter but rather a more personal document, meant to help improve an Arabic speaker's knowledge of Greek. Since Arabic-speaking Christians were using the Arabic script in Syria at least 120 years before the appearance of Islam, Macdonald cogently, and very cautiously, suggested that the only time in which an Arabic gloss in Greek letters would have made sense is prior to the period during which Arabic had a script. For the author of this document, Arabic was purely a spoken language, with no associated writing tradition, and this was an ad-hoc attempt to write it in the alphabet of the language he was accustomed to reading and writing. Macdonald responds to the paleographical argument of Violet by stating that Greek uncial letters are extremely difficult to date and were in use as early as the fourth century CE, only being replaced in the tenth century by the miniscule hand.[122] There would, therefore, be no *a priori* reason to date the document to the Islamic period on the basis of paleography. Following the rediscovery of the photographs of the document and Mavroudi's paleographic dating, Macdonald retracted his view that it was pre-Islamic.[123] Nevertheless, I find his argumentation sound, and it will be taken up again in the following discussion.

Corriente

Corriente states that he follows Violet's dating, but then asserts that the document can be dated securely to about fifty years after the Arab conquest of Damascus in 639 CE.[124] He provides no arguments for this considerably earlier date. As for its language, he considers it to be a continuation of the pre-Islamic variety spoken in the area, which he terms "nabaṭī Arabic."

---

[118] Blau, *Handbook*, pp. 68–69.

[119] Haddad, "La phonétique."

[120] See Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," n22, for an important response to Haddad's opinion on this matter.

[121] Macdonald, *Literacy and Identity*, 1:101–3.

[122] Thompson, *An Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography*, pp. 191–94.

[123] Macdonald, "Old Arabic."

[124] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 314.

Mavroudi

Mavroudi carried out a new paleographic study of the text based on the photographs.[125] She concluded that it was produced in the late ninth or even the tenth century. Her dating is based on the following points:

> 1. Pre-eighth-century uncial manuscripts tend not to employ accents or breathing marks, while the PF makes consistent use of these.
>
> 2. The shape of the breathing marks are angular in the pre-ninth-century uncial manuscripts, while they are round in the Psalm Fragment, which suggest a later date.
>
> 3. Bilingual manuscripts associated with the PF, but with the Arabic component written in Arabic characters, date to the late ninth or early tenth century.
>
> 4. The hand of the Psalm Fragment is very close to that of a dated Greek manuscript (862 CE) from the Palestinian monastery of St. Sabbas.

Her examination of the transcription system, moreover, suggested that the document was produced by an Arabic speaker, but not for practical purposes. It was rather a declaration of a cultural attachment to Greek, akin to Judaeo-Arabic and Garshuni (Arabic written in the Syriac script).[126] The document, moreover, was meant to be read by someone who knew the Arabic language, as several Greek glyphs are polyfunctional, representing more than a single Arabic sound. Thus, one would have to know Arabic in order to choose the correct realization of a given letter.[127] Mavroudi therefore correctly dismisses Violet's view that the text was meant to be read by a Greek-speaking clergyman.

Vollandt

Vollandt follows Mavroudi's dating and suggests that the document was intended as an *aide mémoire* to assist its creator in the study and possibly public performance of the Greek Psalms.[128]

Discussion

Mavroudi's paleographic dating is convincing and, at its latest, is about a century later than Violet's original dating. However, since all of the paleographic arguments are circumstantial, a few caveats should be made clear. The first is that while pre-eighth-century uncial

---

[125] Mavroudi, "Arabic Words in Greek."

[126] Mavroudi, "Arabic Words in Greek," pp. 328–29.

[127] Mavroudi, "Arabic Words in Greek," pp. 325, suggests that the inventor of this system knew how to read and write Arabic as well. This position is less easy to defend. While it is true that many of the letters of the script are polyphonic, this is no indication that knowledge of another script was required to decipher the text. In fact, the Arabo-Greek script employed in this document is no more ambiguous than the pre-Islamic Arabic script. One could, in fact, argue that the presence of vowels in the Arabo-Greek script often helps to disambiguate words that are otherwise identical in the consonantal Arabic script.

[128] Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, pp. 55–58.

manuscripts rarely employ accents and breathing marks, if the text was produced as a learning aid, or even for a person who had a less-than-perfect command of Greek, this may have motivated the writing of accents and breathings to a greater extent. This fact would make the feature less relevant for dating. As for the breathing marks, both round and angular shapes are present, and given that the hand is not entirely careful, it is difficult to determine if this should be a decisive factor. Finally, while it is significant that the text was found in a store with other documents written in what appears to be a similar hand, the great diversity of texts contained therein argues against the assumption that they all originated from the exact same period. In fact, the hand of the PF seems to be less heavy and compact when compared to the other uncial manuscripts from the same repository. Nevertheless, Mavroudi supplies a number of comparable uncial samples from the ninth and tenth centuries, bolstering the case for such a date.[129] Enough comparable examples from the eighth century exist to prevent us from completely ruling out a late eighth- or early ninth-century date, as Violet originally hypothesized, but the case for a late ninth-century date is certainly stronger. A pre-Islamic date, if paleographically possible at all, carries a heavy burden of proof.

This late dating, however, must still be explained in light of Macdonald's arguments for a pre-Islamic origin, which remain valid even if the chronology is no longer feasible. Why, in the late ninth century, would an Arabic text, a learning or memory aid no less, be written in the Greek script? Mavroudi's idea that the text was a symbol of cultural attachment to Greek as a language of Christianity, akin to Judaeo-Arabic and Garshuni,[130] is challenged by two issues: i) its humble composition (was this text meant to be seen by anyone other than its author?) and ii) the fact that the Arabic script had become a symbol of Arab Christianity even in the pre-Islamic period.[131] It appears alongside Greek in the Ḥarrān inscription (568 CE) and Greek and Syriac in the Zebed inscription (512 CE), and a number of pre-Islamic Arabic graffiti from Arabia bear crosses and Christian expressions.[132] Indeed, two Christian inscriptions from the first century of Islam in Arabic indicate that a written Christian Arabic continued into the seventh century CE.[133]

Since the purpose of the Arabic component of the PF was to clarify the Greek text to its reader, it is surely the last place to experiment with writing Arabic in an unconventional way.

---

[129] To her examples may be added: a small volume of hymns in the British Museum, Add. MS 26113, of the eighth or ninth century (Cat. Anc. MSS i. pl. 14; Pal Soc. ii. pl. 4); the Bodleian Genesis (Gk. Misc. 312), of the ninth century (Pal. Soc. ii. pl. 26); a Dionysius Areopagita at Florence, also of the ninth century (Vitelli and Paoli, Facsim. Paleogr., tav. 17); and a Lectionary in the Harleian collection, of the end of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century (Cat. Anc. MSS i. pl. 17).

[130] While written Judaeo-Arabic is old, with the earliest documents dating to the early tenth century, the systematic writing of Arabic written in Syriac letters (= Garshuni) seems to be a much later phenomenon. The earliest literary manuscripts copied in Garshuni date to the fourteenth century, but an isolated example of writing Arabic in Syriac letters—a marginal note—dates to the mid-twelfth century; for a discussion, see Mengozzi, "The History of Garshuni as a Writing System: Evidence from the Rabbula Codex." Mengozzi brings to our attention an Arabic note written in Syriac letters discussed by Briquel-Chatonnet, Desreumaux, and Binggeli, "Un cas très ancien de garshouni ? Quelques réflexions sur le manuscrit British Library Add 14644," that could be earlier, although Blau, *Emergence*, p. 42n1, expresses some reservations.

[131] Macdonald, *Literacy and Identity*, vol. 1, n167.

[132] On these, see Robin, al-Ghabbān, and al-Saʿīd, "Inscriptions antiques de Najrān" and Nehmé, "Dated Inscriptions from Dumah."

[133] A Christian Arabic inscription discovered near Qasr Burquʿ in Jordan most likely comes from the end of the seventh century CE; Al-Jallad et al., "Yazīd the King." Another interesting text comes from the excavations of al-Ḥīrah; it bears a cross and a blessing for a certain Abd al-Masīḥ. The authors date this text to the seventh century CE, but the paleography could suggest a later date; al-Jumaili, "Abd Al-Masīḥ."

Any educated Arabic speaker of the ninth century would have certainly been comfortable with the Arabic script, and the impromptu rendering of the translation into the Greek script would have caused a greater degree of interpretive ambiguity. Mavroudi brings to our attention a fascinating document, also from Damascus and dated to the tenth century, that underscores this point. The fragment is a bilingual rendition of a liturgy, the Anaphora of Saint James, with the Greek portions transcribed in Syriac script.[134] The readers seem to have been more acquainted with Syriac, and therefore this practice helped elucidate the pronunciation of the Greek. If the same was true of the PF, it would suggest that the intended audience was more acquainted with Greek writing rather than Arabic, and thus would point to an earlier date, but not necessarily pre-Islamic.

The Melkite communities of the Near East adopted Arabic quickly following the conquests, no doubt owing to the fact that large parts of the southern Levant and the Sinai were already Arabic speaking and that the early Muslim state integrated Melkites into the government.[135] Vollandt provides several anecdotes indicating that, by the end of the eighth century, even Melkite monks had a diminished command of Greek.[136] This was surely preceded by a situation when members of this community had become Arabic speaking but still used Greek as a literary language. Indeed, by the late ninth century, the anonymous author of the *Summa Theaologiae Arabica* stated that his motivation for composing the text in Arabic was that it "was a clear language that ordinary people understand."[137] We may, therefore, suggest that a spoken command of Arabic preceded the adoption of the language as a literary standard by the Melkite community. The transcription of Arabic in Greek letters would fit this transitional moment, when Arabic was a widely spoken but perhaps not commonly written among members of the church. Since by the end of the eighth century, Christian Arabic texts were produced by the Melkites, it is possible that this, perhaps short-lived, transitional period can be dated slightly earlier.

Limits of Paleography

Paleographic dating has an important limitation not discussed by either Mavroudi or Violet—it dates the copy. A tenth-century date for the fragment that has reached us does not imply that the language of the translation or its transcription system originates in that period. Vollandt's suggestion that the document was meant to facilitate an understanding of the Greek Psalms is convincing, but its transcription system suggests that it was not an impromptu invention of the author. Unlike other examples of ad-hoc transcriptions of Arabic into Greek, the PF presents a well-thought-out and planned system, one that probably went through a more rudimentary experimental phase. As such, the transcription system likely belonged to a tradition of writing Arabic in Greek letters rather than being the result of spontaneous creativity, opening up the possibility that the surviving document, like the Greek of its Greek portion, was a copy.

---

[134] See Sauget, "l'anaphore de Saint Jacques"; Brock, "Greek and Latin in Syriac."

[135] Gzella, *A Cultural History of Aramaic*, pp. 325–26, gives evidence for Arabic substrate in Christian Palestinian Aramaic, suggesting to him that the language no longer functioned as "a pragmatically prominent idiom" by the mid-ninth century.

[136] Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, pp. 28–29.

[137] Griffith, *apud* Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, p. 28.

Ahmad Al-Jallad

The Nature of the Transcription System and Its Date

The ad-hoc transcriptions of Arabic names in the Greek papyri of Nessana and Egypt from the first Islamic century (i.e., the first century of the Islamic conquests, < 750 CE) exhibit variation in the representation of consonants, the inconsistent use of digraphs, a hesitation in the writing of the diphthong [ai], and many of the post-velar sounds with no equivalent in Greek are simply left unnoted.[138] Such variation suggests that no convention for the transcription of Arabic into Greek was in place; scribes more or less rendered phonetically what they heard.

The absence of a codified transcription system is clear in a later informal Arabo-Greek text, a medical recipe written in the margins of a medical manuscript from southern Italy or Sicily produced in the eleventh century. Following Mavroudi's interpretation of the text,[139] Arabic [q] is represented by both Greek Chi (δουχ = [ḏūq] "taste") and Kappa (μουνέκκα = [muneqqa] "cleaned," منقى). The writing of Arabic [i] alternates randomly between Iota and Eta, μιθκὰλ = /miṯqāl/ "measure" versus μὴλχ = /milḥ/ "salt"; word-initial [y] is represented in different ways: ἠουλαδ = [yūlad] "it is produced" versus ἴαριγ = [iyāriǧ], ايرج. Arabic [ʕ] is entirely unrepresented in the writing system, for example, ροβο = [roboʕ] "quarter."

This type of inconsistency matches the methods of transcribing Arabic into Greek from the twelfth-century ǧarāʾid of Sicily.[140] Variation in the representation of almost every consonant not found in Greek is encountered. For example, a number of methods to represent Arabic [ǧ] are attested: τζ <tz>, τζέπερ = [ǧēber]; γζ <gz>, λαραγζ = [l-aʕraǧ]; ζ <z>, φαραζ = [faraǧ]; γ <g>, επιν ελγητίτ [ebin el-ǧidīd];[141] [ʕ] can be rendered by Gamma γίτζιλις [ʕiǧil(is)] or Chi τζαχφαρες [ǧaʕfar(es)].[142]

The transcription system of the PF differs from the previously discussed examples, as it is more or less regular, and reflects an intentional design, yet at the same time is independent of the Arabic script. All Arabic consonants are consistently represented by a single Greek glyph—no digraphs are employed—and the Greek vowels are consistently used to represent their closest phonetic counterpart in Arabic. In this section, we will compare the transcription system to other instances of transcribing Arabic into Greek letters in light of what is known about Greek historical phonology in an attempt to triangulate the most likely period in which it was devised.

The particular values of the Greek glyphs can provide some insight into the dating of the transcription system, but as we shall see, even this cannot be definitive. If the Greek of the transcription system reflected the day-to-day register of its original author, then two of its remarkable features could imply a rather early date: the phonetic reality of the rough breathing and the rounded value of the Ypsilon, used to represent Arabic [u]. Aspiration is thought to have been lost in spoken Greek around the fourth century CE, but one must naturally admit a reasonable margin of error when it comes to such developments, especially in peripheral areas.[143] That its phonetic realization survived in the Greek of the Near East

---

[138] For examples, see Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests."

[139] Mavroudi, "Arabic Words in Greek," pp. 334–40. This text was originally edited and published by B. Zipser, *graeco-arabische Medizin*

[140] These are administrative documents in Arabic, Greek, and Latin from Norman Sicily; see Agius, *Siculo Arabic*, on their linguistic features.

[141] Agius, *Siculo Arabic*, p. 411.

[142] Agius, *Siculo Arabic*, p. 417.

[143] On the loss of aspiration, see Allen, *Vox Graeca*, pp. 50–53.

before this period is evident in the transcription of Greek aspiration with *h* in loanwords into Semitic languages. For example, Greek loans in Syriac from around the mid-third century usually represent the rough breathing with *h*, for example, *hpws* for Greek ἱππεύς and *hpty* for Greek ὑπατεία.[144] Likewise, Greek aspiration is reflected in Safaitic as *h*, attested in the name *hrdṣ* (=Ἡρὼδης).[145] The loss of aspiration was already underway in the first century BCE in Egyptian Greek.[146] In all of the pre-Islamic material, only two cases are known to me of Hypsilon being used to represent a post-velar fricative, both times *ḥ*. The first is in a fragmentary bilingual Nabataean-Greek inscription from Muʿarribeh, Syria, where Nabataean name *ḥplw* is rendered as Υφφαλ[ος], and the second comes from P.Petra III 23, 8 (544 CE) in the Arabic toponym Υναυελθα(ι)ς = [ḥinaw el-ṭays] "the bending part (of the valley) Tays."[147] Admittedly, both examples could reflect an unconventional attempt to write an initial vowel, as Hypsilon represents a CV-sequence in both cases.

The significance of this transcription practice is brought into relief once we consider the rendering of Arabic [h] into Greek in the Siculo-Arabic material. In both the Graeco-Arabic recipe and the *ǧarāʾid* documents, Chi is used to transcribe Arabic [h], for example επιν τάχερ [ebin ṭāher],[148] indicating that after the loss of the rough breathing, the velar fricative was considered the closest approximation of this sound in Greek. The absence of any graphic representation of [h] in the pre-Islamic Graeco-Arabica may be due to the medium—most of this material comes from rock inscriptions, where accents and breathing marks are never employed. It is therefore entirely possible that in these early periods, aspiration obtained and was used to mark Arabic [h], as well as other post-velar sounds, but the surviving media do not afford us an opportunity to see it graphically represented.

The history of the vowel represented by Ypsilon is not entirely clear either. The vowel is almost never used to represent Arabic vocalism in the pre-Islamic Graeco-Arabica, suggesting that the sound it represented was entirely foreign to Arabic, so probably ü. There is at least one example where Ypsilon is used to represent the coda of the Arabic diphthong [ai], φοσευαθη /foṣeyyat/.[149] While the final disappearance of the rounded quality of Ypsilon in the Greek mainland is dated to the ninth–tenth centuries at the very latest,[150] evidence from transcription of spoken Greek indicates that this might have occurred much earlier in the Near East. Such can be seen in the borrowing of Greek ecclesiastical terms into Arabic. Mavroudi already points out the fact that the rough breathing is completely omitted, but it should be added that Ypsilon is also consistently represented with Arabic ي or unrepresented (i.e., borrowed with a short vowel), for example ايوذياكون ὑποδιάκονος; بوليخرونيون πολυχρόνιον.[151] In fact, the earliest surviving Arabic papyrus from the Islamic era (642 CE),[152] found in Egypt, attests

---

[144] See Healey, "Lexical Loans," p. 81; for more examples of Greek loans into Syriac, see Butts, *Language Change in the Wake of Empire*, pp. 75–80.

[145] This inscription is dated to the first century CE; see Harahsheh and Shdeifat, "aġrībā al-ṯānī," #5, and Al-Jallad, *Outline*, p. 251.

[146] Gignac, *Grammar of Greek Papyri*, 1:137–38.

[147] Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," pp. 126–27.

[148] Agius, *Siculo Arabic*, p. 420.

[149] The inscription is number 301 in Meïmaris and Kritikakou-Nikolaropoulou, *Palaestina Tertia*, and is undated. For a more detailed discussion of this name and spelling, see Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," pp. 140–41.

[150] Holton and Manolessou, "Medieval and Early Modern Greek," p. 544.

[151] Graf, *Termini*, pp. 17, 27.

[152] This is the famous PERF 558, Grohmann, "Allgemeine Einführung."

this same pattern of borrowing. The Arabic of this bilingual Greek-Arabic document renders the name Ἀπἀκύρος as ابوقير, which, aside from indicating that the Arabs had reanalyzed the first part as the word for father,[153] reveals that Ypsilon may no longer have been rounded, thus merging with [i].[154]

At face value, these transcription practices would suggest that the system was contrived sometime prior to the seventh century. However, the Syriac-Greek fragment of the Anaphora of Saint James, mentioned earlier, attests a similar phonological situation.[155] Greek Ypsilon is transcribed with Syriac *w* and Hypsilon as *hw*. Mavroudi importantly adds that the rough breathing is only represented in the Syriac transcription of Hypsilon (word-initial Y).[156] She concludes that it was not a living feature of the language, but artificially preserved in this predicable context. These facts suggest that the liturgy of the East, or at least this specific liturgy, was relatively archaizing in terms of its pronunciation of Greek, as both the loss of rough breathing and the merger of Ypsilon and Iota appeared to have taken place by this time. The Syriac spellings could reflect an artificial register of liturgical Greek rather than the spoken Greek of the period.

While the transcription system of the PF employs ὑ for Arabic [h] and [(u)hu], matching the Syriac transcriptions mentioned above, the rough breathing is far from a linguistic relic. It is used to indicate consonantal *h* before other vowels as well, such as ἁ(δα) = [hā(ḏā)] or καδσό [qads-ho]~[qads-oh]. In addition to this, it is used in conjunction with the elongated Iota to indicate consonantal [y]. This indicates that the inventor of this transcription system understood the phonetic value and function of the rough breathing independently of its predictable position on Hypsilon. Mavroudi, however, suggests another possible source for this practice: knowledge of Greek grammar.[157] Grammatical manuals of Greek were copied and studied throughout late antiquity and into the Classical Islamic period, and therefore the inventor of this system could have divined the function of the rough breathing from the study of such works as late as the ninth century.[158]

In addition to the value of Hypsilon, the transcription of the Arabic consonants can also be compared to the abundant pre-Islamic and first-Islamic-century transcriptions. The Greek letters are used to represent the following Arabic phonemes.

---

[153] On the re-analysis of απα as the accusative of "father" *abā*, and the backformation of *abū*, see Larcher, "In Search of a Standard," pp. 107–9.

[154] Alternatively, Greek ü could have been regarded closer to Arabic [i], but I find it difficult to see how the roundedness of the vowel would have been ignored.

[155] Sauget, "l'anaphore de Saint Jacques."

[156] Mavroudi, "Arabic Words in Greek. p. 323.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Dr. A. Butts informs me of an interesting anecdote where Jacob of Edessa (d. 703) encourages scribes in a letter to stop using Syriac *h* for the Greek *spīritus asper* because it was "old-fashioned"; Butts, *Language Change in the Wake of Empire*, p. 5n37.

Table 19. Comparison of Greek transcriptions methods in pre-Islamic
inscriptions/papyri, first-Islamic-century papyri, and the PF

	Pre-Islamic	Papyri from first Islamic century	Psalm Fragment
χ	*k, rarely *ẖ	*k, sometimes *ẖ	*ḥ, *ẖ, *š
θ	*t, *ṯ	*t, *ṯ	*ṯ
κ	*q	*q	*k, *q
τ	*ṭ, *ẓ	*ṭ	*t, *ṭ
γ	*g, rarely *ġ	*g, *ġ	*g, *ġ, *ʕ
δ	*d, *ḏ	*d, *ḏ, *ḍ, *ẓ	*d, *ḏ, *ḍ, *ẓ
σ	*s, *š, *ṣ, *ḍ	*s, *š, *ṣ	*s, *ṣ
j (elongated Iota with rough breathing)	NA	NA	*y(i), or possibly *ʔi
ὑ	once for *ḥu; once for *ḥi	NA	*h, *hu, possibly *uh

It is clear that the PF employs a more progressive pronunciation of the Greek voiceless velar and dental aspirated stops, χ [kʰ] and θ [tʰ], respectively. In all of the pre-Islamic material and in the transcriptions of the first Islamic century, these phonemes remained aspirated occlusives. The transcription system of the PF reflects a completely different phonetic alignment of Greek, closer to the Greek transcriptions of Sicily. While pre- and early Islamic writers associated the unaspirated stops with the Arabic emphatics[159] and used the aspirated stops to render the plain consonants, the inventor of the transcription system of the PF did not have this option. In his Greek, there was only one set of voiceless stops, κ and τ, and, therefore, no distinction for emphasis could be made. The formerly aspirated stops had become fricatives and were used to represent the corresponding Arabic fricatives, if only roughly in the case of Chi and Gamma. Nevertheless, the PF is perfectly systematic, in contrast to the Sicilian Arabo-Greek transcriptions, where, for example, ʕ is represented haphazardly by both Gamma γίτζιλις [ʕiǧil(is)], and Chi τζαχφαρες [ǧaʕfar(es)].[160]

Dating this change in Greek is difficult. Allen asserts that the fricative pronunciations were well established in the Byzantine period. The Coptic alphabet, devised in the third century CE, was based on a Greek with aspirated rather than fricative realizations of χ and θ, and the same is true of Armenian, some two centuries later.[161] However, Allen importantly notes that in the tenth century, Armenian begins to transcribe Chi with its *x* and *š* glyphs, matching

---

[159] The equivalence between the unaspirated stops and the Arabic emphatics was made on the basis of the absence of aspiration in both sets. See Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," pp. 114–27, for a comprehensive discussion on the phenomenon.

[160] Agius, *Siculo Arabic*, p. 417.

[161] Allen, *Vox Graeca*, p. 23.

the values in the PF. Nevertheless, the fact that Greek δραχμή is loaned as [dirham], attested already in the Quran (e.g., Q12:20), suggests that by the seventh century, in at least in some registers, Chi was realized as a fricative.[162]

The representation of Arabic *šīn* in the PF contrasts with the early and pre-Islamic situation. The pre-Islamic material represents all of the voiceless Arabic sibilants with Sigma, obscuring the pronunciation of the phoneme. This situation holds in the first Islamic century transcriptions from Nessana, but in Egypt, the digraph Sigma-Zeta is occasionally employed, for example Σζεριχ (PL4 1383, 1; 709 CE) = [šerīk], suggesting that Chi did not have a palatal allophone. In Siculo-Arabic transcriptions, we seem to encounter Sigma when Arabic /š/ follows a low vowel and Chi when it follows a high vowel, matching the allophonic realizations of the Greek consonant, Sigma: ενναγκας [en-naqqāš] versus Chi: βουρήχ [bū-rīš].[163]

The PF uses only χ for the representation of š, which indicates that the underlying Greek had two allophones, [x] but [ç] before *i* and *e*, and that its use was conventional, rather than phonetic (see pp. 8–9), as Chi is used for š even after [a]. There is, however, no positive evidence as to when this change took effect[164]—that is, whether it co-developed with the shift of Chi to a fricative or was a subsequent transformation. In the Syriac transcription of the liturgy of Saint James, the palatalized allophone of Chi is given by Syriac š, and the same is true of tenth-century Armenian transcriptions of Greek. These suggest the tenth century as a *terminus ante quem* for the development of this allophone, at least in the Near East.

In the Siculo-Arabic material as well as the PF, vowel length is often represented by accents. In the PF it is consistently the acute, or the circumflex with the digraph Omicron-Ypsilon, while in the Arabo-Greek recipe, the grave is sometimes used. It is impossible to compare this to the pre-Islamic transcriptions, as accents are never represented in inscriptions. The association of the accent with length is the result of the loss of contrastive vowel length in Greek, something well established by the Common Era.[165]

One overlooked fact supports the artificial, and at the same time intelligently designed, nature of the PF transcription system—in no forms of Greek for which we have independent evidence do the aspirated consonants shift to fricatives *before* the loss of the rough breathing. The existence of a productive rough-breathing mark in the PF suggests that it was introduced, as Mavroudi suspected, from knowledge of Greek grammar and not the spoken register. And while Mavroudi makes a compelling case that this would have been possible in the ninth or tenth century, it would have been equally possible earlier as well, and so again cannot be used to determine the period in which the transcription system was devised.

Finally, the rationale of the transcription system does not betray any influence from Arabic orthography and indeed seems to be based on a purely oral model of Arabic. The graphic similarity of a letter in Arabic does not necessarily affect its transcription in the Arabo-Greek script, for example س is represented by Sigma while ش is given with Chi. Independent prepositions are often written proclitically, even if they are not so in the Arabic script, φιλβαχερ /fil-bašer/ "among men" versus في البشر, while proclitic prepositions are sometimes written

---

[162] Jeffery, *Foreign Vocabulary*, p. 129, suggests the word was borrowed from Persian, which seems likely as the Syriac retains the /k/, *drkm'*. The Persian form can be derived from **drahm.* The representation of Greek Chi with a fricative can only mean that it was, at this point, realized as [x], as Persian had the means to represent an aspirated k.

[163] Agius, *Siculo Arabic*, p. 415.

[164] Brixhe, "Linguistic Diversity in Asia Minor," p. 235.

[165] Allen, *Vox Graeca*, §3.

separately, βη κουετύ [bi-quwwet-uh] "with his might" CAr. بقوته. Dots are used to divide not only words, but sometimes even syllables, strongly suggesting that no written model was in mind when devising this script. This contrasts with Classical Judaeo-Arabic and Garshuni, both of which were designed on the basis of the Arabic script.[166]

The facts reviewed so far point in various directions. The Arabo-Greek script of the PF is just that—a Greek-based writing system for Arabic, and is not comparable as a system with other examples of writing Arabic in Greek from the Islamic period. It is consistent, and in some ways conventional, in its representation of Arabic phonology, especially with regard to the transcription of phonemes absent in Greek.

What the transcription system can tell us about the date of its invention depends on the weight we give to competing pieces of circumstantial evidence. When compared to pre-Islamic methods of transcribing Arabic into Greek, it becomes clear that the script is based on a completely different model of Greek phonology. In some ways, the seventh- and eighth-century transcriptions appear to be a midway point between the pre-Islamic situation and what is found in the PF, at least when it comes to the representation of the post-velar consonants, but nothing in the way of a steady development can be proposed. These similarities likely stem from linguistic commonalities shared between the conquest dialect and the dialect of the PF against the local pre-Islamic varieties; we will return to this issue in the next section.

The transcriptions of Arabic into Greek, even as late as the middle of the eighth century, suggest that an archaic pronunciation of Greek, comparable to New Testament Greek, survived in administrative circles in the Near East. If the transcription system was devised in the middle of the ninth century, it would suggest that the phonetic system of Greek experienced a major upheaval in just the span of one hundred years, aligning it more closely with the Greek of the mainland. Perhaps more likely is the case that the Greek of the administrative documents from Petra and Nessana, and of the earlier epigraphy, is not directly comparable to the contemporary liturgical register, and the latter may have been closer to mainland Greek. The most liberal range of dating the transcription system based on the values of the Greek consonants suggests a *terminus post quem* of the fourth century CE. The first concrete evidence for a fricative realization of χ comes from the Greek δραχμή as dirham in seventh-century Arabic. On the other hand, its palatal allophone is only proven after the tenth century CE in the Near East, and so this could suggest a late point of origin, nearly contemporary with the paleographic date.

The conventions of the transcription system rule out a direct connection with the pre- and early Islamic transcriptions: the Arabo-Greek script employed in the PF is not the maturation of the habit of writing Arabic in Greek letters from the pre-Islamic period.

---

[166] In Classical Judaeo-Arabic, for example, the *ḍād* is represented by a *tsade* with a supralinear dot, mimicking the graphic relationship between ص and ض; Khan, "Orthography and Reading," p. 397; both Judaeo-Arabic and Garshuni add two supralinear dots to the *he* when it represents the feminine ending, an imitation of the Arabic *tāʾ marbūṭah*. Mengozzi, "The History of Garshuni," p. 299, characterized Garshuni as simply the Arabic writing system in Syriac dress.

Dating and Localizing the Language

The PF's value for the linguistic history of Arabic has been widely recognized, but there does not seem to be any consensus as to what register its language reflects. Blau,[167] followed by Khan,[168] regards it as an example of Middle Arabic, a register in which classical, post-classical, Neo-Arabic, and pseudo-correct features alternate freely.[169] Hopkins discusses the document extensively as a point of comparison with the papyri, which form the main subject of his study, but he never states explicitly what the relationship between the two is. He seems to follow Blau in interpreting some of its features as pseudo-corrections, thus implying that the language of the document was aiming at the classical literary register.[170]

Corriente convincingly argues that a scenario in which a person attempted to write Classical Arabic in Greek letters makes little sense. He therefore regards the language of the PF as identical with the colloquial, that is, the spoken register of Arabic used and understood by Christians of the area. Divergences only occur when the author attempts to adhere to the Greek wording or syntax, but never in an attempt to imitate a higher register of Arabic.[171] The orthographic dimension, discussed above, lends further support to Corriente's hypothesis. Thus, the phonology and morphology of the PF reflect the contemporary vernacular, while its syntax follows the Greek, a common phenomenon in these types of translations.

Corriente goes on to identify the type of Arabic vernacular reflected in the PF as "nabaṭī."[172] From my reading, it seems that by *nabaṭī* he means not the Arabic of the ancient Nabataean kingdom, but rather a hypothetical variety of Arabic that developed in the northern Ḥigāz, Iraq, and Syria in the two centuries before the rise of Islam.[173] The hallmark feature of this form of Arabic was absence of case inflection. For him, Nabaṭī Arabic is the immediate forerunner of the modern dialects, and the PF would be an example of a pre-Islamic northern dialect recorded in the eighth century.

When Corriente formulated this hypothesis, relatively little was known about the Old Arabic of the Levant. Categories such as Nabaṭī Arabic were the product of theorization rather than evidence-based investigation. In a series of studies over the last five years,[174] I have attempted to synthesize an image of these pre-Islamic dialects based on Greek transcriptions, Nabataean and ancient North Arabian epigraphy of the area. A fragmentary, but nevertheless

---

[167] Blau, *Handbook*, p. 14.

[168] Khan, "Orthography and Reading."

[169] I critique this definition in chapter 4.

[170] Hopkins, *The Grammar of Early Arabic*, p. 64n6.

[171] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 316.

[172] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," pp. 316–20.

[173] For a deeper elaboration of the views expressed in his 2007 piece on the PF, see Corriente, "From Old Arabic to Classical Arabic." In this work, Nabaṭī Arabic is the ʾiʿrāb-*less* forerunner of Middle Arabic, and was localized in the urban areas of the Levant and Iraq, before spreading into the Arabian Peninsula following the conquest (p. 88). While there can be no doubt that there were ʾiʿrāb-less dialects of Arabic in the pre-Islamic period, and indeed that these were spoken in the Levant, the transcriptions from the first century AH papyri also show that the Arab conquerors, for the most part, spoke a dialect of Arabic with a reduced case system as well; see Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests."

[174] On the Greek transcriptions, see Al-Jallad, Daniel, and al-Ghul, "The Arabic Toponyms and Oikonyms in 17; Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I"; Al-Jallad and al-Manaser, "New Epigraphica I"; Al-Jallad and al-Manaser, "New Epigraphica from Jordan II"; on Safaitic, see Al-Jallad, *Outline*. For a preliminary synthesis of these features, Al-Jallad, "Earliest Stages of Arabic."

clear, picture of these varieties is now available to compare with the PF in order to test Corriente's hypothesis, in turn allowing us to localize the language of this text.

Linguistic Features

The PF differs from the attested ancient Levantine dialects in almost every comparable way, siding with the dialect of Arabic introduced by the Arab conquerors but not identical to it.

The Lateral ḍ and Emphatic Interdental ẓ

Greek transcriptions of Old Arabic before the sixth century CE represent ḍ with Sigma and ẓ with Tau, suggesting voiceless realizations of both.[175] This is found even as late as 568 CE, in the Ḥarrān inscription, where the Arabic طلمو = CAr ظالم is rendered in Greek as ταλεμου.[176] By the sixth century, the scanty evidence from Petra and Nessana suggests that they had become voiced, and both were realized with Zeta, which points away from an interdental pronunciation.[177] Both phonemes in Arabic names introduced by the conquering Arabs are represented in Greek transcription with Delta, which is the method employed in the PF. I have carefully suggested that the writing with Delta implies a voiced dental or interdental realization of the two, and perhaps even their merger to the value of the emphatic interdental, thus [ðˤ].[178] As argued in chapter 2 ("Consonants: The *ḍād* and *ḏāʔ*"), the PF transcription likely reflects an emphatic voiced interdental, thus matching the conquest variety rather than the ancient Levantine type.

The Reflex of Triphthongs

Word Final

In the dialect upon which Arabic orthography was based, the sequence *aya either survived or collapsed to an i-class vowel, likely [ē]. In Classical Arabic, however, the triphthong collapsed to [ā]. The mismatch between orthography and pronunciation therefore gave rise to the convention that certain <y> glyphs must be pronounced as [ā] in word-final position,[179] resulting in the so-called *alif-maqṣūrah*.

---

[175] This is discussed extensively in Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," pp. 131–37.

[176] For the latest discussion of the Ḥarrān Inscription, see Macdonald's discussion in Fiema et al., "Provincia Arabia," pp. 414–15. For a discussion on the significance of the possible survival of this voiceless realization in the modern dialects of the Maghreb, see Al-Jallad, "Voiceless Reflex."

[177] In the Negev and at Nessana, examples of names based on the root ẓnn abound, and are written with Zeta, e.g., ζοναιν- /ẓonayn/, ζαννν- /ẓann/, the latter corresponding clearly with Nabataean צננו and transcriptions from Syria in the form of ταννν-. The Petra Papyri furnish only a single example, in the microtoponym αλμαζεκα, which likely corresponds to Classical Arabic المضيقة; for a complete discussion, see Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," pp. 135–37.

[178] Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests," 427–28.

[179] Note that there was no graphic difference between the early ي and ,ى as dots were rarely employed, and even so, never written on word-final ي.

Ahmad Al-Jallad

In all of the pre-Islamic material in transcription, the original triphthong either survives or collapses to [ē].[180] The same appears to be the case in the transcriptions from the first Islamic century; *alif-maqṣūrah* is consistently given with Eta or Epsilon, but there is barely any evidence for the raising of long *ā to [ē] in other environments.[181] In a splendid study by Van Putten, he demonstrates that the *alif-maqṣūrah* in the QCT has the value of [ē] as well, matching the first-century transcriptions.[182] Therefore, the [ē] vowel is strictly the reflex of the earlier triphthong rather than the result of a secondary raising of long [ā].

In this respect, the PF differs from the pre-Islamic evidence, the QCT, and the first-Islamic-century Greek transcriptions. Final triphthongs behave just like the reflex of long [ā], that is, they are realized as [ā] in backed and labial environments, but as [ē] otherwise. Consider the comparison with the QCT below.[183]

Table 20. Comparison of III-weak verbs and the quality of *ā in the QCT an PF

Proto-Arabic	QCT	PF
*ʔaʕṭaya[184]	اعطى	αγτα
*ʔatawa	اتى	ατε
*ʕāṣipun	عاصف	γασιφ
**ḏālika[185]	دلك	δέλικ

---

[180] On the other hand, some evidence for the collapse of triphthongs to long vowels is found in Nabataean. In the ʕEn ʕAvdat inscription, the word *fdʾ* can only be vocalized as [pʰedā] or [pʰedē], from earlier *pedaya. Note that the quality of the vowel represented as ʾ can be either [ā] or [ē] in Nabataean, e.g., *dwšrʾ* = Dusares = Hismaic *ḏs²ry*. In addition to this lexeme, the Naḥal Ḥever papyri attest a few more words that may fall into this category, so *ṣpʾ* "to be or become clean" √ṣfw; *wlʾ* "to follow" (?) √wly; for a list of Arabic vocabulary from these documents, see Yardeni, "Arabic Words in Nabataean Papyri." Further afield, it should be noted that the collapse of triphthongs to [ā] is sporadically attested in Dadanitic, in the Ḥigāz; e.g., the divine name *ʕuzzayV* is spelled both as *ʕzy* and *ʕzh*, the latter pointing toward the collapse of the final triphthong to [ā]. The grave inscription of Rbbl bn Hfʕm from Qaryat al-Fāw also attests this feature, as *banaya is spelled *bn* [banā]; Al-Jallad, "Genetic Background," §3.1.

[181] For example, consider μαυλε [mawlē] or ιαλε [yaʕlē], both with *alif-maqṣūrah* in Arabic orthography, while *ā remains [ā], even in the vicinity of [i] or [y]: Ναειβ [nāyib]; Σουφιαν [sufyān]. A few cases of raising are attested, but these constitute the exception, while *alif-maqṣūrah* is *always* spelled with an e-class vowel; see Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests," p. 431.

[182] Van Putten, "Triphthongs."

[183] Note that in an early Arabic inscription, most likely from the early decades of Islam, posted on Twitter (https://twitter.com/mohammed93athar/status/1047196644553515008, accessed 5/19/2019), the phrase صلا الاى is attested, indicating that the verb *ṣallaya "to bless, pray" was pronounced as [ṣallā].

[184] It seems that III-w and III-y verbs in the C-stem had already merged at the Proto-Arabic stage, as this distinction is not found in the QCT or the pre-Islamic epigraphy, e.g., Safaitic *ᵓly* "to raise" < √ʕlw. I thank Dr. Marijn van Putten for this suggestion.

[185] This is a hypothetical Proto-Arabic form, as the pronoun *ḏālika* cannot be reconstructed to the Proto-Arabic stage, in my opinion.

[186] The long [ā] of this pronoun is never written plene in the QCT. If, however, it had the same value as the *alif-maqṣūrah*, it would have been written internally with a *y*. Thus, we can be sure that the first syllable was pronounced as [ḏā] rather than [ḏē].

The Relative Pronoun

The relative pronoun is attested twice in the document as ελλεδι, which matches the earliest Arabic papyri following the conquests,[187] the earliest Middle Arabic,[188] and the QCT. The document does not provide a context in which to observe whether gender or number concord was active. From the vista of the pre-Islamic epigraphy, the *ʔalla*-based relative pronouns are unknown in the Levant. The Namārah inscription attests *dw* [ḏū],[189] and Safaitic attests a declinable *ḏ*-based series, although neutralization of agreement is common.[190] Only a single *ʔalla*-form is attested, in a Dadanitic inscription discovered at Hegra (present-day Madāʾin Ṣāliḥ, Northwest Ḥigāz): the feminine singular *ʾlt* /ʔallatī/.[191] This small piece of evidence combined with the QCT and Umayyad era documents led me to suggest that this particular relative pronoun was an innovation characterizing the Old Ḥigāzī dialect.[192] Its presence in this document, therefore, suggests that the dialect was not a direct continuation of the pre-Islamic variety of the region, but may have its origins in the Arabian Peninsula. I will discuss this further in the next section.

The Definite Article

In nearly all the pre-Islamic attestations of the definite article in the north, the coda does not assimilate to the following coronal consonant.[193] Moreover, until the sixth century CE, the vowel of the article is consistently noted with Alpha, suggesting an [a] or [ʔa] pronunciation. It is not until the mid-sixth century that we begin to encounter forms spelled as ελ in the Petra Papyri.[194] In the dialect brought in by the conquerors, the definite article ελ is the norm, and assimilation is attested as well.[195] This is contradicted by the orthography of the QCT, which provides no evidence for the assimilation of the article. It is, however, unclear whether this was simply an orthographic convention or a true reflection of its dialect. Assimilation of the definite article is attested in transcription in the Graeco-Arabic inscription A1 (pre-fourth century CE), for example αδαυρα = [ʔad-dawra] "the region.ACC" (< *ʔal-dawra), but this text is certainly exceptional; nearly all other examples of the article from this region do not exhibit assimilation.

One may argue that the plene spelling of the coda of the article in the PF is an indication of the influence of Arabic orthography, but considering that early Judaeo-Arabic orthography,[196]

---

[187] Hopkins, *Studies in the Grammar of Early Arabic*, pp. 240–41.

[188] Blau, *Grammar of Christian Arabic*; note also that this form is often indeclinable.

[189] See Macdonald's contribution to Fiema et al., "Provincia Arabia," for the latest discussion of this famous text.

[190] Al-Jallad, *Outline*, pp. 85–88; Al-Jallad, *Safaitic,* p. 349.

[191] This text is also discussed in Macdonald's contribution to Fiema et al., "Provincia Arabia," and more extensively in Mascitelli, *L'Arabo in epoca preislamica*, pp. 117–18.

[192] Al-Jallad, *Outline*, pp. 12–14.

[193] The linguistic reality of the non-assimilating article was first recognized by Macdonald, "Reflections on the linguistic map of pre-Islamic Arabia," p. 51, discussed thoroughly in Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," pp. 167–70.

[194] In the Petra Papryi, this occurs mostly in the later documents, from the second half of the sixth century, and mainly in the subscriptions Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," p. 169.

[195] For example, the anthroponym αβδεραμαν= [ʕabder(r)aḥmān] (P.Ness 3 92, 43).

[196] On documents written in early Judaeo-Arabic orthography, see Blau and Hopkins, "On Early Judaeo-Arabic Orthography."

which also appears to be void of Arabic orthographic influence, noted the assimilation of the article, it seems much more likely that its shape in the PF reflects a phonetic reality.

Thus, with the absence of assimilation and the raised quality of the vowel, the definite article finds its closest parallel with the sixth-century CE dialect of Petra and possibly the QCT.

Vowel Quality

The quality of the short high vowels was slightly lower in the pre-Islamic dialects of the Levant, including Nabataean and the nomadic dialects like Safaitic. These vowels are almost always transcribed with Epsilon and Omicron, and in contexts where an appeal to some scribal convention cannot be made.[197] Thus, northern Old Arabic distinguished long and short vowels by quality as well as length. In the post-conquest transcriptions, the same vowels are transcribed with Iota and Omicron-Ypsilon, respectively, resembling more the conventional pronunciation of Classical Arabic. The exact quality of these vowels in the QCT is impossible to determine. The PF agrees with the post-conquest transcriptions, as short *i and *u are almost always transcribed with Iota and Omicron-Ypsilon.

Table 21. Comparison of short vowel qualities in the pre-Islamic
inscriptions/papyri, first-Islamic-century papyri, and the PF

	Pre-Islamic	Post-Conquest	PF
*i	ε = [e]	ι = [i]	ι = [i]
*u	o = [o][198]	ου = [u]	ου = [u]

The pre-Islamic situation obtains even in the latest bilingual Arabic-Greek epigraph, the Ḥarrān Inscription (568 CE).

The Raising of *a to [e]

There is so far no evidence from the pre-Islamic period for the unconditioned raising of short *a to [e]. Occasionally, one encounters raising when *a is contiguous with a sibilant, a sound change typical of Aramaic and likely the result of Aramaic influence. In the sixth century, some evidence for pre-tonic raising is found at Petra.[199] In the post-conquest transcriptions from Nessana and Egypt, however, conditioned a-raising is clearly attested. The reflex of *a is often spelled with Epsilon when it is in a pre-tonic open syllable not contiguous with an emphatic or back consonant, including /r/.[200] This situation is not directly comparable to the PF, as I have shown.

---

[197] This includes Greek graffiti produced by Arabic speakers, such as the bilingual Safaitic-Greek graffiti from the Syro-Jordanian Ḥarrah (see appendix 2). For a full discussion of the vowels, see Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," §4.

[198] The realization [u], however, is encountered sometimes in stressed closed syllables Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," p. 145.

[199] Only one dated example is known to me: Σευδα [sewdā] = CAr *sawdāʔ*, from the Negev, 411 CE. The raising of *a to [e] in pre-tonic open syllables, however, is commonly encountered in the Petra Papyri, e.g., αλμεναμ / al-menām/ = CAr *al-manāmu*; see Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica," pp. 143–44.

[200] Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests," pp. 420–21.

The raising of long [ā] is even more rarely encountered. It is entirely unknown in the pre-Islamic material.[201] Only a few examples of the conditioned raising of *ā to [ē] are found in the first-Islamic-century Greek transcriptions, always resulting from a neighboring i-vowel: for example, Ζηεδ [ziyēd], Μελεχ [mēlek], Αβδελεση [ʕabdelʕēṣī], late seventh to early eighth centuries ce.[202] Coptic transcriptions provide some more evidence of this phenomenon, but these are usually a little later, dating from the late eighth century onward, for example, Αβουθεβιτ= [ʔabū-ṯēbit].[203] The PF again shows a different situation: *ā is realized as [ē] unless there is an inhibiting factor, that is, an emphatic or a labial.

The Feminine Ending

The raising of *a to [e] gives the feminine ending its distinctive Levantine shape of [eh]. This realization is unknown in all of the pre-Islamic material and the post-conquest transcriptions.[204] In the latter, the ending is always α, but whether it was followed by an [h] is impossible to tell.[205] The shift of *at to [ah] in non-construct position probably set in by the second century bce in some dialects, but was preserved much longer in the nomadic varieties.[206]

Prothesis

Most forms of Arabic employ some manner of vowel or consonant + vowel prosthesis on the suffix conjugation of the Gt- and N-stems, the imperative of the G-stem, and in several biradical words, such as the reflex of *bin "son." In Classical Arabic, the prothetic element is vocalic and is elided when preceded by a clitic, so *inqalaba* but *fanqalaba* "it overturned." Safaitic appears to follow this pattern, for example, *w-s²tky* or *qttl*.[207] While verbs of this stem are not attested in the Arabic inscriptions written in the Nabataean script, the spelling of the word "son" as ʔbn in Nabataean personal names would suggest that a similar strategy of prosthesis was in place, but that the prothetic syllable was ʔV.[208] This matches the situation in the QCT, where such words are virtually always written with an *alif*.[209] No N- or Gt-stems have yet been securely identified in the Dadanitic inscriptions, so it is unclear if prothesis

---

[201] The raising of ā to ē is often identified in ASA to explain the writing of the dual ending on the verb with the *y* glyph: Stein, "Ancient South Arabian," p. 1049; however, it is equally possible to view this as the generalization of the *-ay variant of the dual, which is present on the pronouns as well, to the verb.

[202] Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests," p. 424.

[203] These comes from *CPR* II 117 = *CPR* IV 111, 1, 3; see Legendre, "Perméabilité linguistique et anthroponymique," on the transcription of Arabic names in Coptic.

[204] Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," p. 156.

[205] For example, γεμηλα [ǵemīlah] or Ουμαια [ʔumayyah], both from 685 ce Nessana, Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests," p. 432.

[206] Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," pp. 157–58.

[207] Al-Jallad, *Outline*, p. 52.

[208] To illustrate, *ʔbn-ʔlqyny* [ʔebno-ʔal-qayne]; *ʔbn-qwmw* [ʔebn-qawmo], Negev, *Personal Names*, p. 9; note also that these names seem to be concentrated in the Sinai. The consonantal reality of the first *alif* is confirmed by the spellings of such names in Safaitic with a glottal stop, thus *ʔbnklbt* for Nabataean *ʔbn-klbt*, Al-Jallad, *Outline*, p. 52.

[209] The consonantal reality of this *alif* is perhaps confirmed by the fact that it remains stable even when preceded by a proclitic, so فانقلبوا (Q 3:17) "so they returned" [fa-ʔanqalabū] rather than [fanqalabū]. Marijn van Putten brings to my attention one example of the disappearance of the *alif* following a proclitic particle, لتخذت "you surely could have taken" (Q 18:77), which may suggest that the situation was becoming unstable. How-

was operative there; however, for what it is worth, the word for son is consistently written as *bn* rather than *ʾbn*.[210]

Now, unlike most Arabic dialects and Classical Arabic, the PF seems to employ a true ʔa-syllable as the prothetic element, matching the QCT and, possibly, southwestern varieties of Nabataean. True *ʔa*-prothesis is found in some modern dialects of the Ḥigāz as well, for example, *ʔáḫtarag* "it burned down."[211]

Reviewing the Linguistic Facts

The evidence presented above leads to only one conclusion: the PF was not written in an ancient Levantine dialect of Arabic. It shares much more in common with the dialect(s) of the first-Islamic-century Greek transcriptions and the orthography of the QCT. This being the case, it would seem most likely that the document was composed in a dialect originally hailing from the Ḥigāz. One caveat, however, merits consideration: the Arab conquests did not mark the first time a dialect from the Ḥigāz was introduced to the Levant.

Excursus: Dialect of Ghassān

The Ghassānids are the most widely known Arabic-speaking group in the pre-Islamic Levant. While traditional histories regard them as immigrants from ancient Yemen, these tales must be understood within the context of ethnic myth-making in the Islamic period. Yemenite origin myths likely reflect the political constellations of the eighth century CE rather than historical reality.[212] The earliest references to the Ghassānids come from the South Arabian inscriptions.[213] Schiettecatte and Arbach locate the homeland of the Ghassānids based on these attestations in the north-central Ḥigāz.[214] Robin identifies their territory as stretching from just south of al-ʿUlā to the wells of Sijā, 380 km north of Mecca, with the oasis of Yathrib as their possible capital.[215]

---

ever, some reading traditions take it as *la-taḫiḏta,* from a secondary verb *taḫiḏa.* I thank him for the reference and information.

[210] This need not mean that the verbal stems did not exhibit prothesis; Hebrew realizes the word for "son" as *ben* but the tD stem as *hitpaʕʕel*, with *hi*-prothesis.
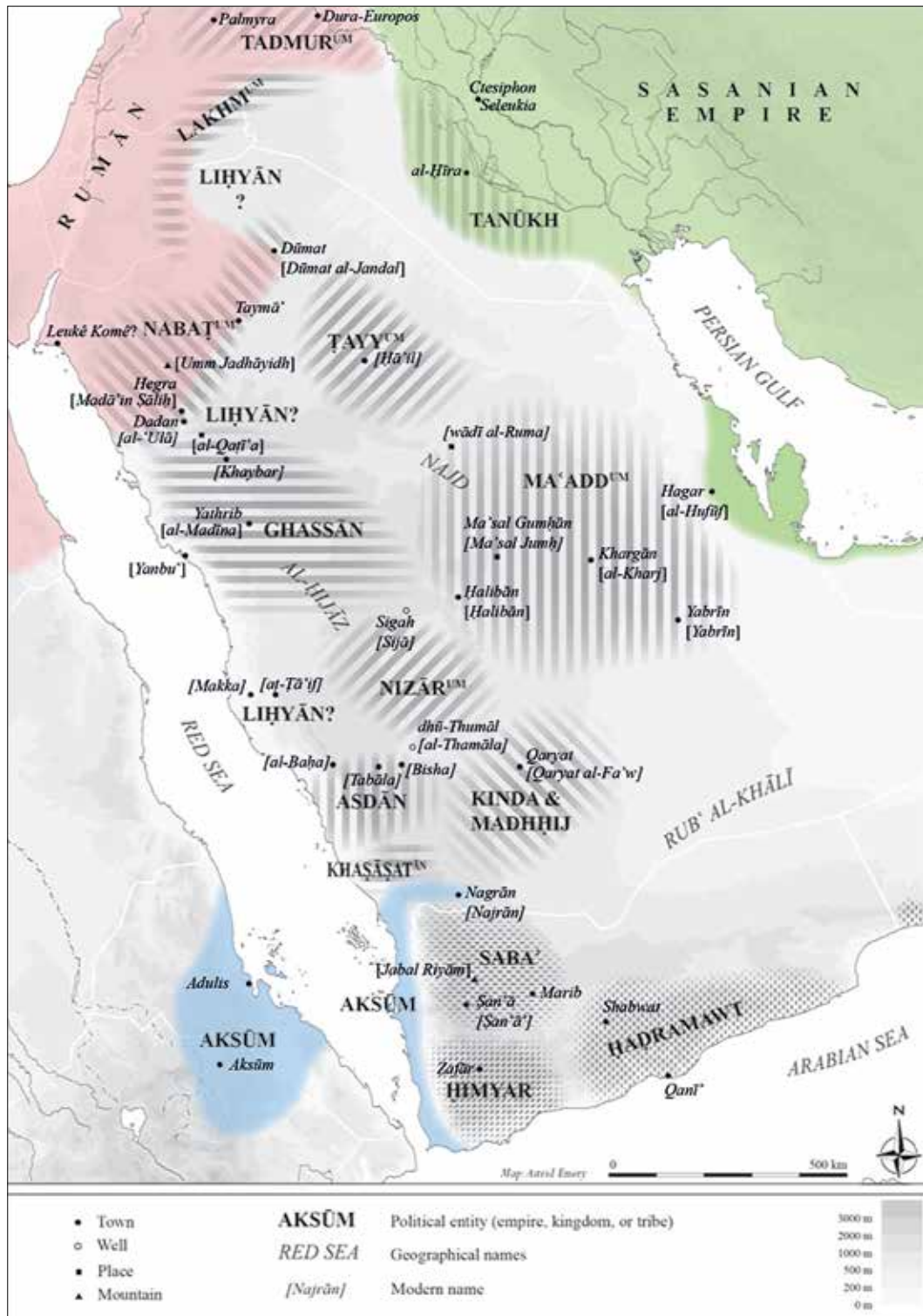
[211] Prochazka, *Saudi Arabian Dialects*, p. 44.

[212] On this subject, see the interesting book of Peter Webb, *Imagining the Arabs.* For an excellent overview of the Ghassānids (=Jafnids), see the papers in Genequand and Robin, *Les Jafnides.*

[213] The inscription ZI 75 (c. 235–55 CE) records the sending of an embassy to the king of Ghassān, while Abadān 1 (360 CE) mentions *ʾrḍ ġs¹n* "the land of Ghassan," Robin and Gajda, "L'inscription du Wādī ʿAbadān"; Hayajneh and Ababneh, "God of Ġsn," published a Safaitic inscription allegedly containing the god of "Ghassān," but Al-Jallad and Macdonald, "Notes on Alledged Ghassān," show that this is based on a misreading of the inscription.

[214] Schiettecatte and Arbach, "Political Map." Robin, "Les Arabes de Ḥimyar," p. 191, has tentatively connected the Κασσανιτῶν of Ptolemy (*Geogr.* VI.7.6), situated on the Yemeni Tihāmah, but it should be stressed that Semitic [ɣ] is never transcribed with Greek Kappa, and the Sigma can reflect Semitic *ṣ, s¹, s², s³,* and *ḍ,* and so the margin of error here is great. Schiettecatte and Arbach, "Political Map," p. 17, have suggested a connection with the *gentes Casani* mentioned by Pliny (*Nat.Hist.* VI.32.8), but Villeneuve, Phillips, and Facey, "Une inscription latine de Farasān," p. 159n78, make a convincing case for the connection with the toponym *gīzān.*

[215] Robin, "Ghassān en Arabie," pp. 99–102.

Map 1. Political map of Arabia and the Middle East showing the tribes and kingdoms
mentioned in inscription Jabal Riyām 2006–17 (© A. Émery & J. Schiettecatte,
2015; thanks to J. Schiettecatte for allowing me to reproduce this map)

Ahmad Al-Jallad

In the fifth century CE, Ghassān broke up into small groups, and by the end of that century, an elite family of the tribe, the Banī Jafnah, moved to the southern Levant and entered into the service of Byzantium.[216] This migration provides first demonstrable example of the movement of Ḥigāzī dialects of Arabic into the area. Relatively little is known about the dialect of the Ghassānids, however. The following fragments are the only examples of their Arabic known to me; all, with the exception of one, come from the sixth century:[217]

1. The Thaʿlabah inscription from Eilat, mentioning a king of Ghassān; undated, but probably fifth century.[218]

2. The Jabal Usays Inscription (528 CE), mentioning Al-Ḥārith the king.[219]

3. The Sammāʾ lintel containing a prayer of protection for the phylarch Abū-Karib (*SEG* 43.1089).[220]

3. *P.Petra* IV.39 containing the name of Abū-Karib, phylarch of Palestine (dated to 574 CE).

4. The Al-Mundhir Building at Ruṣāfa (*SEG* 7.188).[221]

5. The mosaic inscription from Tall al-ʿUmayrī mentioning al-Mundhir.[222]

6. The al-Mundhir martyrion from al-Burj (*Wadd.* 2562c).[223]

These fragments offer us a tiny glimpse of the dialect of Ghassān in the sixth century. They obviously used the *al*-article, as shown by the Eilat and the Jebel Says inscription, both of which attest the word ʾl-mlk "the king."[224] The writing of the article in the name Al-Mundhir in Greek confirms, however, that it was pronounced as [al] rather than [el], but this may be simply on account of its utterance initial position. The Jebel Says inscription is in all ways identical in its orthography to the QCT—the word "upon," "to," CAr ʿalā, is spelled with a final *y*, ʿly; the feminine ending *at* is written with *h*, as it is in the Thaʿlabah inscription. Following Larcher,[225] this could be taken as evidence for the loss of final short vowels, which

---

[216] Robin, *Ghassān en Arabie*, pp. 103–7.

[217] I have excluded literary sources from our consideration because the path of transmission is not entirely clear and words would have had much more opportunity to be mutilated by the time they are recorded as compared to documentary texts. I have also excluded from consideration here the Zabad and Ḥarrān inscriptions, as nothing in them explicitly connects them to the Ghassanids.

[218] Avner, Nehmé, and Robin, "Thaʿlaba."

[219] Fiema et al., "Provincia Arabia," pp. 412–13.

[220] Wood and Fisher, "Arabs and Christianity," pp. 325–25.

[221] Wood and Fisher, "Arabs and Christianity," pp. 330–31.

[222] Wood and Fisher, "Arabs and Christianity," pp. 333–34.

[223] Wood and Fisher, "Arabs and Christianity," pp. 347–48.

[224] Given that this form of the article is attested from northwest to south-central Arabia, it is not a suitable feature, on its own, to localize the language. However, the *al*-article is notably absent in the present-day dialects of the Tihāmah, the Ghassānid homeland according to Islamic-era sources, where *am* and *im* articles are heard. It is entirely possible, of course, that the *al*-article spread to Ghassānid speakers of Arabic once they left the Tihāmah, but given that our first evidence of the Ghassānids comes from the northern Ḥigāz, this is yet another piece of evidence that undermines a prehistoric Yemeni origin for this group.

[225] Larcher, "In Search of a Standard," p. 107.

must precede the change of *at* to *ah* in non-pausal positions. All of these features, however, are also found in the older Nabataean layer of Arabic and so they, on their own, cannot stand as evidence for the introduction of a new dialect.

The clearest difference between the dialect attested in the sixth-century Ghassānid monuments and references and the old Levantine type comes in the realization of the vowels. The multiple transcriptions of the name Abū-Karib record a higher realization of the *a vowel of Karib:

P.Petra IV 39.165:	Αβουχηρηβος
P.Petra IV 39.488:	Αβουχερεβου
Sammāʾ lintel:	Αβουχιριβ

The various attestations of the phylarch Al-Mundhir also confirm that the realization of *u was [u] rather than [o]. Given, however, that it occurs in a stressed closed syllable, this realization can also be found in other pre-Islamic varieties.[226]

Al-Mundhir building:	Αλαμουνδαρος[227]
Tall al-ʿUmayrī mosaic:	Αλμουνδαρον

The transcription of stressed short *a in Abū-Karib with an i/e-class vowel is not witnessed in the other pre-Islamic material, nor is it found in the first-Islamic-century material either. The earliest text in which we find this practice is the PF, for example, χεριβου [šeribū] "they drank" or γέβελ [ǧebel] "mountain," where it is clearly stressed. While such a connection is enticing, it must also be remembered that the change of a to e is typologically very common and could here reflect a parallel development.

None of the features discussed above contradict a Ḥigāzī origin for the Arabic of the Ghassānids, but the diagnostic features to prove it are not attested. The distinction between their dialect and the pre-sixth-century Arabic dialects of the region rests on the realization of short *a in one word—an interesting phenomenon to be sure, but hardly enough to make overarching claims. Nevertheless, if the Ghassānids brought in a new variety of Arabic, it seems that it would have been restricted to their family group, as the transcriptions at Nessana and Petra show that the earlier Levantine varieties persisted.

Bringing It All Together

Bringing these separate aspects of the PF together to form a coherent narrative is challenging. Let us summarize the facts so far: the paleographic argument suggests that the document was likely produced sometime in the ninth century CE. The transcription system as well implies a late origin, though any time after the fourth century CE is within the realm of possibility, although a post-eighth-century date is best supported by the evidence. Given the fact that the transcription system is well thought out and reflects a degree of linguistic thinking about Arabic independently of the Arabic script, it is unlikely an ad-hoc production but more probably

---

[226] Al-Jallad, "Graeco-Arabica I," p. 145.

[227] The extra Alpha between the article and *munḏar* likely has to do with Greek phonetics rather than the Arabic. The final Alpha, which is consistent in all attestations, suggests that the phylarch's name was actually *al-munḏar*, a passive form.

reflects a tradition of writing Arabic in Greek letters. As such, the document before us does not necessarily have to be the original, but could be a copy of an earlier text. The language of the text is certainly not a pre-Islamic Levantine variety, but rather is closest to the variety attested in the first-Islamic-century Greek transcriptions. One of its unique features, the realization of stressed *a as [e], is attested in the dialect of the Ghassanids.

At this point, we may venture a hypothesis for the development of an Arabo-Greek script. Let us return to Macdonald's line of reasoning once more: the invention of this writing system makes best sense in a context when literacy in Arabic could not be assumed for Arabic-speaking Christians—the pre-Islamic period is certainly a possibility, but faces difficulty in light of the phonology of the Greek of the transcription system. A more likely date, suggested briefly above, is the middle of the eighth century CE, when Christians of the southern Levant were becoming increasingly Arabophone. In the earliest period, knowledge of written Arabic may have been lacking, and so Arabic-speaking Christians could have attempted to render their vernacular in a script they already knew, Greek. This is comparable to early Judaeo-Arabic, where it seems that communities of Arabic-speaking, yet not Arabic-writing, Jews drew up documents in their Arabic vernacular written in Hebrew letters, the alphabet to which they were accustomed.

The systematic and conventional nature of this transcription system suggests that it belonged to a tradition of writing Arabic in Greek, rather than being a one-off attempt. It is impossible to know how long such a tradition may have existed. By the ninth century, both written and spoken Arabic gained at the expense of Greek. Knowledge and use of the Arabic script in a Christian context seem to have put an end to the Arabo-Greek script at its embryonic stage. The PF, unique among the documents in the repository in which it was discovered, may reflect the very end of a short-lived Arabo-Greek writing tradition. This script, used or copied perhaps for the last time here, ultimately gave way to glosses/translations in the Arabic script proper. If this line of reasoning is correct, then the best date for the invention of the writing system, and perhaps the original copy of this text, would have been the middle or late eighth century, while the document itself would come from about a century later.[228]

The language of the document suggests that these early Christian communities adopted (one of) the dialect(s) of the Arab conquerors, rather than a pre-existing Levantine variety of Arabic. It is possible that the dialect of the Ghassānids, spoken in the region before the conquests, was similar to the Arabic of the conquests on account of their shared geographic origin, but more evidence is needed to conclusively demonstrate this. What language the Christian communities of the southern Levant were switching from is impossible to know. Christian Palestinian Aramaic is certainly likely, but we cannot exclude that large numbers of Christians were speaking pre-Islamic Levantine dialects of Arabic, and switched to the dialect of the conquerors just as Aramaic speakers did.

One may also suggest that the transcription system was devised during the same period in which the document was produced, that it does not belong to a tradition. While certainly possible, this hypothesis is challenged by the structural features of the script. No other examples of impromptu renderings of Arabic in Greek letters show such uniformity and conventionalization. Thus, I find the former scenario to account both for the features of the script and the purpose of the document.

---

[228] The transcription system may be compared to the Greek transcription system of Hebrew in the Hexapla, which is consistent in many ways and which continued to be copied over the centuries. On its linguistic features, see Janssens, *Studies in Hebrew Linguistics.*

Chapter 4
Olḍ Arabic, Midḍle Arabic, anḍ Olḍ Ḥigāzī

The language of early Christian Arabic translations has never been regarded as a pure reflection of the vernacular. Blau goes so far to state that these texts "are so awkward and literal that they are hardly worth being called Arabic at all."[229] While this has mostly to do with a strict adherence to the syntax and wording of the original languages, Blau also considers these early texts as layered, containing features from Classical Arabic, Middle Arabic, and Pseudo-Classical elements. In a way, this proclamation does not begin from the data, but from preconceived notions of what a variety of Arabic can be. The very idea, however, that writers were aiming at a higher register and failing seems to undermine the purpose of the earliest Christian Middle Arabic materials—to be in "a clear language that ordinary people understand" (see "Dating the Document" in chapter 2).

In this light, the most intriguing insight of Corriente's discussion is his proposal that the language of the PF reflected a vernacular form of Arabic, at least in terms of its phonology and morphology.[230] And while the discussion of its linguistic features more or less rules out Corriente's "Nabaṭī" hypothesis, the orthography and purpose do support the fact that it is based on a spoken model. Its linguistic profile, in light of Old Arabic, calls us to reconsider "Middle Arabic" as a diachronic conceptual category.

Middle Arabic is generally regarded as a sociolinguistic phenomenon, referring to a kind of Arabic that sits somewhere intermediate between Classical Arabic and the spoken dialects,[231] regardless of their location in space or time.[232] Thus, the category encompasses some 1,400 years of Arabic's history—from the earliest written documents, such as documentary papyri from the first Islamic century, to spoken forms of Modern Standard Arabic. The definition itself rests on an essentialistic identification of what constitutes a spoken dialect. Most scholars have worked on the assumption that vernacular Arabic was, since the beginning of Arabic's recorded history, more or less identical with the modern vernaculars. In contrast, the written variety was always the same as the codified literary register of Islamic civilization. This anachronistic approach does not give the capacity for older spoken forms of Arabic to differ in significant ways from the present-day counterparts, even though over a millennium has passed between the two. Thus, any form of Arabic that is not, on the one hand, identical to a modern dialect, often of the same

---

[229] Blau, *Grammar of Christian Arabic*, 1:54.

[230] Corriente, "From Old Arabic to Classical Arabic."

[231] Khan, "Middle Arabic."

[232] Hopkins, "The Earliest Texts in Judaeo-Middle Arabic," p. 241, presents a more flexible view of Middle Arabic, suggesting that it has a vertical and horizontal dimension. Vertically, it refers to a historically intermediate stage between Old Arabic and Neo-Arabic, similar to Corriente's *Nabaṭī Arabic*, while horizontally it has the sociolinguistic sense advocated by Khan.

region in which a particular texts was composed, or Classical Arabic, on the other hand, is considered an artificial "lect" rather than a true, living variety of Arabic.

To illustrate, let us consider two common grammatical constructions: the negative preterite construction *lam yafʕal* and the relative pronoun *ʔallaḏī*. Both of these are usually regarded as (pseudo-)literary elements in Middle Arabic texts, namely, features from the literary register used either correctly or incorrectly alongside vernacular features. Such *a prioristic* reasoning always results in the conclusion that their presence in a text is due to the influence of or the aiming at the Classical Arabic literary standard—meaning both of these features could have never been part of the spoken language. When forms are encountered that do not perfectly match their Classical Arabic counterparts, they are considered hypercorrections, imperfect approximations of the literary register. The latter interpretation applies, for example, to instances where the incorrect mood is used following the *lam* negative adverb. According to Classical Arabic grammar, the jussive of the imperfect should follow *lam*. However, the ancient mood distinctions in the verb were eventually lost in all Arabic dialects, and so there is nothing to rule out an intermediate stage where a generalized imperfect was used following *lam*, before the entire construction was completely replaced by the competing *mā faʕala* syntagm.

Likewise, one often encounters in "Middle Arabic" texts a generalized relative pronoun *ʔallaḏī*, which does not decline for gender or number. The declension of the relative pronoun is lost in nearly all Arabic dialects,[233] and so could we not here be witnessing a stage in which this has happened in the vernacular? Indeed, the generalized *ʔallaḏī* is met with in several spoken varieties of Arabic even today, and these must have gone through a stage in which the original declension broke down.

There can be no doubt, especially in later texts and certainly in spoken Modern Standard Arabic, that hypercorrections and borrowing from the literary register are responsible for the features not found in the contemporary dialects.[234] However, there is little reason to assume this for ancient times. In fact, the emerging picture of Old Arabic from documentary sources proves that such an assumption cannot be maintained. No texts in Classical Arabic, as such, have been encountered in the pre-Islamic period. Instead, the entire corpus Old Arabic, across all scripts, would qualify as "Middle Arabic" according to the present definition. Yet the very idea that authors in the first century CE were aiming at a language codified in the eighth or ninth century and falling short underscores the anachronistic nature of this linguistic category. If, however, we admit that features that are typical of the modern dialects can mix with features typical of Classical Arabic in a natural variety in the pre-Islamic period, why could this not be the case in the early centuries of Islam as well? This is in fact what is witnessed in Safaitic. The dialects of these inscriptions lack nunation, have lost final short vowels in most cases, posseses a 3ms clitic pronoun [oh] and feminine singular [ah] (all typically "Neo-Arabic" features), but makes use of the *lam yafʕal* construction as a negative preterite, a hallmark feature of Classical Arabic. In an Arabic inscription from the Ḥigāz in the Dadanitic script, the relative pronoun *ʾlt* (= *ʔallatī*) is attested alongside the 3fs verb form, *bnh* (banah < *banat), a

---

[233] The most common form of the relative pronoun in the modern Arabic dialects is *illi*, the etymology of which is uncertain, but could certainly derive from *ʔallaḏī*. Reflexes of older forms are found in the Maghreb, *d-*, which is most reasonably derived from the Old Arabic relative pronoun *ḏV*. Ḏ-forms are also found in South Arabia today; Behnstedt, *Die Dialekte von Ṣaʕdah*, p. 84; Behnstedt, *Dialect Atlas of North Yemen*, p. 74.

[234] For a clear example of this, see the early to mid-ninteenth- to twentieth-century letters by Gulf rulers, edited by Holes, "Letters of Gulf Rulers."

dialectal feature found today in Yemen.[235] An Old Arabic inscription in the Hismaic script from Wādī Ram attests a living case system and the merger of the voiced interdental fricative and dental stop.[236] The examples go on.

The pre-Islamic situation bears witness to a great deal of Arabic dialectal diversity, but this diversity does not match the features typical of the Arabic dialects today. Using only the modern dialects and Classical Arabic, therefore, to understand the component features of an eighth- or ninth-century text seems to me to be the wrong approach. To properly situate not only these early texts, but the QCT as well, into the history of Arabic, I believe we should also approach the material from the opposite chronological direction. In other words, we must ask: how do the features of the first-Islamic-century documents and the QCT compare to the pre-Islamic epigraphic record, which extends right up to the sixth century? Only in this context can we understand the linguistic position of the PF and related early Middle Arabic documents.

The QCT and First-Islamic-Century Documents:
Taking Orthography Seriously

Medieval and modern scholars have generally taken the reading traditions (*qirāʔāt*) as more or less a close representation of the pronunciation of the language in which the Quran was originally composed. A few skeptics have appeared, but the radical revisions to the history of the text they proposed have not won many followers, as their scenarios have failed to find the proper degree of substantiation in the evidence itself.[237] It is nevertheless clear for any reader to see that the pronunciation of the Quran diverges in many important ways from its orthography. Points where the text and orthography disagree are usually understood as the result of orthographic conventions.[238] Orthographic conventions, however, do not spontaneously emerge at random. In most of the world's languages, these reflect either an older stage of the language or the adaptation of a writing system from another language.

David Testen in 2005 produced a fundamental article ("Literary and Hijazi Arabic") that introduced a fresh way of thinking about the Quranic text. He attempted to extract facts about the pre-Islamic dialect of the Ḥigāz, not from the remarks of eighth-century Arabic Grammarians, but from the orthography of the Quran itself. While not explicitly spelled out, the paper

---

[235] See Behnstedt, *Dialect Atlas of North Yemen*, p. 269.

[236] On this text, see Macdonald, "Clues." Al-Jallad, *Madaba* line 1.

[237] For example, Vollers, *Volkssprache*, proposed a theory in which the Quran was composed in a type of Neo-Arabic without case endings altogether and was then later corrected to the high variety with case endings. No independent evidence of this Neo-Arabic Quran exists, and the orthography of the Quran does exhibit case inflection; see Van Putten and Stokes, "Case in the Quran." Even more drastic is the theory of Luxenberg, *Die syro-aramäische Lesart des Koran*, which claimed that much of the Quran has been entirely misread by Muslim tradition and was in fact originally composed in a Syro-Arabic hybrid. This view has been rejected by most scholars. See the important review of de Blois, "Review of Die syro-aramäische Lesart."

[238] Traditionally, scholars have attempted to explain these obvious divergences through a phenomenon called "pausal spelling," that is, all words are written as if they were in utterance final position and therefore lost final short vowels and nunation. The strongest advocate of this view is Diem, "arabischen Orthographie III." For a brilliant refutation of pausal spellings, see van Putten and Stokes, "Case in the Quranic Consonantal Text." Moreover, it should be pointed out that not all divergences in spelling and pronunciation of the Quran can be chalked up to pause—the pronunciation of the *alif-maqṣūrah*, original *y*, for example, as ā has nothing to do with pause.

offers this important methodological intervention: the QCT should be regarded as a language in its own right and its orthography studied as such, rather than assuming orthographic conventions at every point of disagreement. This approach has been spear-headed by Marijn van Putten and others, who have produced several articles, laying out the key features of the QCT's phonology and morphology. The results form our most complete record of the Arabic dialect of the pre-Islamic Ḥigāz, which had long been buried under Classical Arabic pronunciations. Even if we assume that the QCT represents an archaizing register, it is still far, in its pronunciation, from Classical Arabic. The main substantive points from the studies carried out so far follow:

> The triphthongs of the QCT do not collapse to [ā], but rather: *aya > [ē] and *awa > [ā].[239]

> Final short vowels had disappeared, but the case system remained intact otherwise.[240]

> The feminine ending was realized as [ah] in context and not just pause.[241]

> The glottal stop obtained in some environments, but was lost in others.[242]

> The stress was penultimate.[243]

In addition to these points, I would add that the prothetic syllable of the N-stem and Gt-stem had the shape ʔa rather than i, reflected in the QCT orthography as ı. The phonetic reality of this spelling has been argued for above (Chapter 2, "The Verb").

Beyond the orthography, three grammatical features seem to be unique to the QCT and the first-Islamic-century papyri, and they are also attested exclusively in the epigraphy of the Ḥigāz.

1. The ʔalla-Based Relative Pronoun:

The ʔalla-based relative pronoun only occurs in one inscription in the Dadanitic script from the Ḥigāz. This pronoun was originally a demonstrative form, cognate with Hebrew *hallāz(e)*,[244] and I would suggest possibly Ugaritic *hnd*. Given the absence of this feature in the Levant, south-central Arabia and the Yemen in ancient times,[245] I have placed this innovation in the Ḥigāz.

---

[239] Van Putten, "Triphthongs."

[240] Van Putten and Stokes, "Case in the Quran."

[241] Van Putten, "Feminine Ending."

[242] Van Putten, "Hamza in the Quranic Consonantal Text."

[243] Al-Jallad, "Sūrat al-Baqárah."

[244] Huehnergard, "Arabic in Its Semitic Context," p. 17; Huehnergard, "Features of Central Semitic," p. 186.

[245] While texts in the Arabic language proper have not yet appeared in southwest Arabia, the Arabic-like inscription of Rbbl bn Hfʿm at Qaryat al-Fāw attests the plural relative pronoun *ḏw*, but in a formulaic context: *ḏw ʾl ġlwn* "those of the lineage of Ġlwn"; see Al-Jallad, "Genetic Background," on the features of this text.

2. The Construction *ʔan yafʕala:*

The verbal complement in the Old Arabic of the Levant and North Arabia takes the form of an infinitive.[246] This construction has been mainly replaced in the QCT by a subordinated clause introduced by *ʔan*. I would identify *ʔan* as the reflex of the definite article, which can introduce subordinated clauses in Arabic and in other Semitic languages.[247] Again, in the ancient epigraphy, the feature is attested only in the Ḥigāz, in a single, fragmentary Dadanitic inscription from al-ʕUlā:

> AH 203
>
>> 1: *hm ---- [ḏ]–*
>> 2: *ġbt/ʔ{n}/yk{n}----*
>> 3: *l- -h/{w}ld/f rḍy [-h] ----*
>> 4: *w ʔḫrt -h {ḏ}----*
>
> "[PN made an offering for] Ḏū Ghaybat **that he may have offspring**
> so satisfy him and his progeny"

I would therefore consider this a Ḥigāzī innovation as well. In most modern dialects, however, a serial verb construction is used rather than the infinitive or the *ʔan yafʕala* construction. In some Naǧdī dialects, the infinitive still seems productive: *b-yirǧiʕ-k al-ġārah* "he intends to come back to you to raid,"[248] suggesting that perhaps the *ʔan yafʕala* construction had not spread to the east.

3. The Distal Forms *ḏālika, tilka*

The Proto-Arabic proximal demonstratives were likely **ḏā* and **tī*, attested as such in the Ḥarrān inscription (ᴍs *dʔ* [ḏā]) and the Namārah inscription (ғs *ty* [tī]) and possibly in the Safaitic inscriptions, although the vocalization is not recoverable.[249] The Proto-Semitic deictic element *k* is appended to these forms to create the distal in most varieties of Arabic, and such forms are mentioned by the Arabic Grammarians.[250] Distal pronouns are not attested in northern Old Arabic varieties, but one very tentative attestation of the form *tk* in Safaitic may suggest a form with a simple *k* suffix.[251]

The QCT along with the first Islamic century papyri attest a form with an *l*-element between the demonstrative base and the distal particle, producing from the original proximal set *ḏālika* and *tilka*. The *l*-element has traditionally been regarded as a reflex of the asseverative

---

[246] Al-Jallad, *Outline*, pp. 112–13.

[247] The original form of the article **han* would yield *ʔan* in Arabic, Al-Jallad, "Yusapʕil or Yuhapʕil." I would argue that as the definite article form *ʔal* diffused across Arabic, replacing other attested variants (namely *hā(n)* and *ʔa(n)*, both reflected in the Safaitic inscriptions), older forms survived in positions that were not transparently analyzable as the definite article. For the full argument, see Al-Jallad, "What Is ANA?"

[248] Ingham, *Najdi Arabic*, p. 121.

[249] Al-Jallad, *Outline*, pp. 79–85.

[250] For a list, see Fischer, *A Grammar of Classical Arabic*, §275. Note also that in the QCT, addressee agreement is sometimes observed, e.g., *ḏālikum* when referring to a plural. This is certainly a secondary development based on the homophony between the distal element *ka* and the 2ms clitic pronoun *ka*.

[251] Al-Jallad, *Outline*, p. 84; Al-Jallad, *Safaitic*, p. 349.

la-.[252] While this is certainly possible, I would like to suggest a second interpretation—these forms are related to the Aramaic distal form *znk*. The *n* in the Arabic demonstrative, however, shifted to *l* before the distal particle, a sound change paralleled in the definite article.[253] This interpretation is supported by the distal dual, which has the shape ms *ḏānnika* and fs *tānnika* in the nominative.[254] I parse these as follows:

ḏ	ān	ni	ka
DEM	DUAL.NOM	NI	DISTAL

If this interpretation is correct, then I would propose the following reconstruction:

ḏā-n-ka   >   ḏānka   >   ḏalka   >   reanalysis   >   ḏālika

t-n-ka   >   tīnka   >   tīlka   >   tilka

The attested masculine-singular form is obtained once *ḏalka* is reanalyzed on account of its phonetic similarity to the nominal pattern CāCiC. Alternatively, the long *ā* could have been restored from the singular *hāḏā*, and an epenthetic vowel *i* subsequently inserted to break up the super-heavy syllable, *ḏalka > ḏālika*. The appearance of an i-vowel for this purpose is found in the dual paradigm described above. The reason why such a reanalysis was not possible for the feminine singular is that the proximal demonstrative was too distinct to permit leveling, *tilka* but *hāḏih(i)*.[255]

Regardless of their developmental paths, such distal forms with an intermediate *l* seem to be unique to Arabic, and from the vista of the pre-Islamic inscriptions, to the QCT and the first-Islamic-century material.[256] This picture accords with the statements of the early Arab grammarians, who regarded the demonstrative form *ḏālika* as a Ḥigāzī feature while *ḏāka* was considered to be Tamīmī (eastern) isogloss.

In addition to these innovations, a few shared grammatical developments can be identified in the QCT and possibly in the first-Islamic-century papyri. The first is that nunation and final short vowels were lost, leading to a reduced case system.[257] This contrasts with the northern Old Arabic that, at least for a while, retained the accusative on definite nouns as well.[258] The feminine ending had shifted to *ah* following the loss of final short vowels—the form

---

[252] Huehnergard, "*lu/law in Semitic," argues that the *l-* is a reflex of the asseverative *la-*, but does not provide an explanation for its realization as *li* in the masculine singular and simple as *l* in the feminine singular. Hasselbach, "Demonstratives in Semitic," p. 21, suggests that it is a distinct demonstrative element *li,* which also forms the second syllable of the Hebrew plural *ʔellê,* yet she does not explain the final diphthong (Hebrew word-final ê < *ay), and that while the element supposedly marks a degree of the distal in Arabic, it has no such function in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Akkadian.

[253] The original form of the definite article **han* would have yielded *ʔan* in Arabic. The Classical Arabic form of the article can be explained through irregular assimilation of the *n* to coronals and dissimilation to *l* in other environments.

[254] Note that Hasselbach, "Demonstratives in Semitic," p. 10, attributes the doubled *n* to irregular assimilation, *ḏānlika* to *ḏānnika.*

[255] I thank Dr. Marijn van Putten for pointing out this dissimilarity as a possible obstacle for the restoration of the long vowel.

[256] While distal forms are missing in most of the central Arabian material, no such *l*-forms are found in South Arabia.

[257] Van Putten and Stokes, "Case in the Quran."

[258] Al-Jallad and al-Manaser, "New Epigraphica I."

at obtains throughout Arabia, including in the north, with the exception of the Nabataean dialect.[259] Finally, I would argue that the emphatic interdental and lateral were realized as voiced, in contrast to the Old Arabic of the north, where they were voiceless. This latter point cannot be proven for the QCT, but it is certainly the case in the first-Islamic-century papyri, as evidenced by transcriptions.[260]

The features discussed above form the linguistic profile of Old Ḥigāzī, as late as the seventh century ᴄᴇ.[261]

From the QCT to the First-Islamic-Century Material and Beyond

Now, the Old Ḥigāzī of the QCT, based on its consonantal skeleton, attests a very unstable situation. The case system exhibits a high degree of paradigmatic asymmetry following the loss of final short vowels, something that would have also affected the verbal mood system. Its language, therefore, seems to capture a transitional moment between a case-bearing and fully caseless variety of Arabic. The following tables are based on Van Putten and Stokes, "Case in the Qur'an."

Table 22. The case system of the QCT

Triptotes

	Indefinite	Definite	Construct
Nominative	faʕl	al-faʕl	faʕl(u)
Genitive	faʕl	al-faʕl	faʕl(i)
Accusative	faʕlā	al-faʕl	faʕl(a)

Five nouns

	Indefinite	Definite	Construct
Nominative	ʔab	al-ʔab	ʔabū
Genitive	ʔab	al-ʔab	ʔabī
Accusative	ʔabā	al-ʔab	ʔabā

[259] In Safaitic and Hismaic, the ending is *t* in all contexts while Nabataean shows reflexes of both forms. The sound change is not known in South Arabia or in the Thamudic inscriptions from the Najd, although the extant texts may not reflect varieties of Arabic at all. In the transitional material attested across North Arabia, but concentrated in the northern Ḥigāz, the sound change of *at > ah* appears to have operated; see Nehmé, "Arabic or Aramaic?"

[260] In the first-Islamic-century transcriptions, both *ẓ* and *ḍ* are given with Delta, e.g., Ανδαλα [ḥanẓala] and Αλχαδρα [al-ḫaḍrāʔ]; Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests," pp. 427–28.

[261] There are more features to be sure, but these will be discussed in detail in a future publication.

Diptotes

	Indefinite	Definite	Construct
Nominative	faʕl	al-faʕl	faʕl(u)
Genitive	faʕl	al-faʕl	faʕl(i)
Accusative	faʕl	al-faʕl	faʕl(a)

Feminine ending

	Indefinite	Definite	Construct
Nominative	faʕlah	al-faʕlah	faʕlat(u)
Genitive	faʕlah	al-faʕlah	faʕlat(i)
Accusative	faʕlah	al-faʕlah	faʕlat(a)

Sound Masculine Plural

	Indefinite	Definite	Construct
Nominative	faʕlūn	al-faʕlūn	faʕlū
Genitive/ Accusative	faʕlīn	al-faʕlīn	faʕlī

Dual

	Indefinite	Definite	Construct
Nominative	faʕlān	al-faʕlān	faʕlā
Genitive/ Accusative	faʕlayn	al-faʕlayn	faʕlay

Feminine Plural

	Indefinite	Definite	Construct
Nominative	faʕlāt	al-faʕlāt	faʕlāt(u)
Genitive/ Accusative	faʕlāt	al-faʕlāt	faʕlāt(i)

While Van Putten and Stokes do not discuss the verbal mood system, the phonological developments, according to their reconstruction, would have created a similar degree of syncretism in the mood system of the QCT. The jussive, for example, would only be distinguished from the indicative and subjunctive throughout the paradigm in weak roots, comparable to Hebrew.

Table 23. The mood system of the QCT

	strong roots		medial weak		final weak	
	3ms	3mp	3ms	3mp	3ms	3mp
Ind	yafʕal	yafʕalūn	yakūn	yakūnūn	yabnī	yabnūn
Sub	yafʕal	yafʕalū	yakūn	yakūnū	yabnī	yabnū
Jus	yafʕal	yafʕalū	yakun	yakūnū	yabn	yabnū

These features, I would argue, suggest that the papyri and the QCT belong to the same linguistic strain, to the exclusion of previously attested forms of Arabic. The first-Islamic-century papyri exhibit all of the isoglosses of Old Ḥigāzī I discussed in the previous section. In addition to this, they share with the QCT some substandard and non-Classical forms. For example, the jussive of *kāna* is often spelled without a *nūn*, so QCT 16:120, ولم يك من المشركين "and he was not one of the heretics," which is also found in the early papyri: فان لم يك له ابن "and if he does not have a son."[262] These are rarely encountered in later texts, poetry aside.

Yet, while the QCT is perfectly consistent in its deployment of mood and case according to the system described above, the language of the papyri shows some inconsistencies. The mood of the verb following *lam* is sometimes a long imperfect (either indicative or subjunctive) rather than the jussive. Consider this example from 700 CE:

ولم يكون عندنا بعده[263]

"and we have nothing more after this"

The traditional explanation of such a form is that the author was a speaker of Neo-Arabic and incorrectly produced a Classical Arabic syntagm. I think a more plausible explanation is that we are beginning to witness the breakdown of the living mood system of Old Ḥigāzī, where a generalized imperfect can be used following the negative adverb *lam*. In other words, this highly assymetrical system was beginning to give way to analogical leveling, producing a more uniform paradigm, but ultimately resulting in the elimination of older morphological categories. Inconsistencies in the document reflect changes in a living language. This would also apply to other occasional differences, such as the absence of the indefinite accusative and the use of *ʔallaḏī* as a generalized relative pronoun. Thus, the papyri from the first Islamic century reflect a later, changed form of Old Ḥigāzī.

This brings us back to the PF. In all the ways discussed above, the PF shares the same isoglosses with Old Ḥigāzī that the early papyri do. Yet unlike those texts which were written within the context of an Arabic scribal tradition, the PF reflects the vernacular manifestation of this dialect. In other words, it documents a spoken variety of Old Ḥigāzī, likely a direct development of the prestige dialect spread during the Arab conquests.

The Islamic conquests were a multilingual affair, but the ruling elite hailed from the Ḥigāz; the QCT was produced in a form of Old Ḥigāzī, and its linguistic features substantiate that. The first-Islamic-century papyri belong to the same linguistic stream, and so I

[262] P.Heid.Arab. I 4 .7.
[263] P.Ryl.Arab. I I 5 = P.World p. 171 .20.

would argue that the prestige spoken register, and its closely related written register, in the Umayyad period were Old Ḥigāzī. This would have been the variety that non-Arabic speaking communities adopted as both a spoken and written language in the earliest periods.

Later dialects, like those documented in Judaeo- and Christian Arabic texts, may also stem from this variety of Arabic. While even further removed in some ways,[264] they do exhibit several of the hallmark features of Old Ḥigāzī, most notably, the realization of the prothetic syllable in Gt- and N-stems as a true ʔa syllable:

קַד אַנְכַּסַר קַלְבִּי [qad ʔankasar qalbī] "my heart had been broken"[265]

While Khan, noticing that this same phenomenon occurs in the PF, attributes it to an orthographic pseudo-classicism,[266] according to our scenario, this could be interpreted as evidence that both texts have the same dialectal origin. Thus, it is possible that the earliest "Middle Arabic" could reflect the latest stage of Old Ḥigāzī, a continuation of the language of the first-Islamic-century papyri.

I should now state two things clearly: I am not arguing that Old Ḥigāzī is the source of all modern dialects of Arabic. On the contrary, I would view the present dialect map as the accumulation of centuries of migration and mixing, and that the current dialects do not reflect a monogenetic past at all.[267] Yet, in the first Islamic century and shortly after, there was naturally far less dialectal diversity outside of Arabia and Syria, and the extant early texts could reflect a monogenetic descent from Old Ḥigāzī. This is not to say that only Old Ḥigāzī spread following the conquests, but that it was the prestige dialect adopted by non-Arabic speakers and was the source of the pre-grammarian literary register.

No dialect identical in its entirety to Old Ḥigāzī survives today, but this should not be surprising given that over 1,300 years have passed. The old syntagms associated with the mood system have completely disappeared, replaced by prevalent pre-verbal marking and serial verb constructions. The only surviving case, the accusative, has been reanalyzed as an adverbial marker. The relative pronoun ʔallaḏī has been reduced to *illi* or replaced by it, if this relative pronoun has another etymological source. The spread of *illi* at the expense of other relative pronouns is a phenomenon that continues in the Maghreb and South Arabia. Whether this was the result of dialect leveling over the centuries or true dialectal replacement through subsequent migrations from the peninsula remains to be sorted out, but is beyond the scope of the present discussion.[268]

---

[264] See the dissertation of Phillip Stokes (UT-Austin) on the development of the case system in these varieties, which differs from Classical Arabic and Old Ḥigāzī, as reflected in the QCT and in the documents from the Umayyad period.

[265] Quoted from Khan, "Orthography and Reading," p. 402, from MS T-S Ar. 8.3 fol. 16ᵛ.

[266] Khan "Orthography and Reading," p. 402.

[267] The excellent studies published in Holes, *Historical Dialectology*, demonstrate this fact beyond a doubt.

[268] The areal spread of later dialectal features across the Arabic-speaking world can give the impression of an ancient origin. Consider, for example, the verb šāf "to see," which is nearly pan-Arabic today. This verb, however, must have a rather late origin, as it is absent in Maltese, while in Tunisian Arabic it is the normal verb for "to see." This indicates that it spread to Tunisia after Maltese split off. The same is true of the Levant. The verb is not known in Cyprus, but is common throughout the present-day Levantine dialects. The older verb to see qašaʕ is frozen as a presentative šaʕ <*ʔšaʕ. The persistence of spoken forms of Old Ḥigāzī to a late point might be reflected in the thirteenth-century Arabic manuscripts in Coptic letters from Egypt; on its linguistic features, see Blau, "Middle Arabic Egyptian Text."

Second, I am not arguing against Middle Arabic as a sociolinguistic phenomenon.[269] There are mixed texts, to be sure, but here chronology is key. Before the emergence of Classical Arabic in late eighth and ninth centuries, it makes little sense to characterize variation of the type discussed above as the result of aiming at a standard that did not yet exist. Moreover, many of the previous features, such as the *ʔa*-prothetic syllable, do not make sense in the context of aiming toward a Classical Arabic standard from a Neo-Arabic starting point.

Old Ḥigāzī in the Grammatical Sources

The Ḥigāz was one of the main taxonomical categories for the Arabic Grammarians, and for this reason, one cannot take for granted that the features subsumed under it always reflect true Ḥigāzī speech. The division of dialectal features between Ḥigāzī (western) and Tamīmī (eastern) often seems to have been purely conventional. This adds to the general problem of the traditional grammatical and lexographical method: the ancient spoken dialects were never recorded for their own sake. Indeed, as Rabin has astutely pointed out, we possess not even a single sentence in pure dialect; all that we have is filtered through the lens of the language of the poems.[270]

Nevertheless, some of the features attributed to the Ḥigāzī dialect by the Arabic grammarians align with our reconstruction of Old Ḥigāzī.

1. The eastern dialects were characterized by the elision of unstressed short vowels, while these were maintained in the Ḥigāz, so eastern *faʕla* vs. Ḥigāzī *faʕila*.[271] The PF sides with the latter, displaying forms like χεβιγου [šebiʕū].

2. The third-person-suffix pronouns did not harmonize with the genitive case vowel, as in the PF.

3. The realization of *alif-maqṣūrah* was [ai], and so the Ḥigāzī supposedly said *ḥublay* for *ḥublā* and *ʔaffay* for *ʔaffā*.[272] Such forms are directly witnessed in the first-Islamic-century papyri (cf. μαυλε [mawlē]).[273]

4. The loss of the glottal stop, at least in certain environments, is something that characterized the Ḥigāzī dialects for the Arabic Grammarians,[274] and is also found in the PF and the first-Islamic-century papyri.

5. The *ʔalla*-based relative pronouns were in use.[275]

There are a few less certain features collected by Rabin that could be interpreted in a way to

---

[269] For an excellent discussion on this topic, see den Heijer, "Middle and Mixed Arabic."

[270] Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, p. 6.

[271] Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, p. 97.

[272] Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, p. 116.

[273] Al-Jallad, "Arabic of the Islamic Conquests," p. 423.

[274] Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, p. 130.

[275] Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, p. 154.

suggest that a linguistic system similar to the PF was their source. It is reported that some Ḥigāzī dialects employed both allophones of the dative preposition before pronominal suffixes, so *lika* and *laka*.[276] This is reminiscent of the situation in the PF, which has both λευμ [le-hum] and λαυμ [la-hum]. It is possible that the grammarians would have interpreted the former as *li* through the lens of Classical Arabic phonology.

The Ḥigāzī dialects are reported to have had a more limited case system than their eastern sisters—the dual was supposedly indeclinable, as were certain diptotes such as *faʕāli* nouns.[277] One may carefully suggest that this distribution reflects the influence of the spoken Ḥigāzī form on the poetic register. In other words, when these data were recorded, Old Ḥigāzī may have already advanced to the stage of the PF, where case was basically non-existent. Speakers therefore erred in the production of the poetic register, especially in rare forms such as diptotes. The non-declension of the dual is more difficult to explain, and occurs only clearly once in the Quran, so in the famous words of Pharaoh's magicians, *ʔinna hāḏāni la-sāḥirāni* "these two are indeed sorcerers."[278] I will return to this construction in the next section.

Another intriguing possibility is the reflex of the ā-vowel reported for certain medial-weak roots, so *ḫēfa, mēta, ǧēʔa, hēba, ṣēra,* and so on.[279] These seem to be examples of unconditioned raising of ā to ē; since Rabin could not locate a conditioning factor, he attempted to reconstruct the vowel ē for Proto-Semitic. Nothing, however, in the Semitic languages motivates the reconstruction of a fourth long vowel, and medial-weak roots are almost certainly reconstructable as strong, with a medial glide, for Proto-Semitic.[280] The ē vowel here can therefore be the outcome of two things: it may constitute a different reflex of the collapsed triphthong, so medial *ayi* collapsing to ē, *ḫayifa > ḫēfa,* or it may reflect a situation similar to the PF, where the reflex of *ā is conditioned by environment. In support perhaps of the first solution is the fact that the ē vowel occurs after backed consonants in the tokens collected by the grammarians, which would not be possible in the PF. However, we must remember that the data are not completely trustworthy and are entirely decontextualized—we do not know what the original phonological context of such words was. The safest judgment is to say that the philologists noticed that some medial weak verbs contained ē.

Colloquial Features in Direct Speech in the QCT?

The neutralization of the dual in the QCT occurs in the speech of Pharaoh's magicians after Moses and Aaron bested them in the contest of sorcery (Q 20:63). The fact that the Quran in all other cases inflects the dual correctly may suggest that a certain colloquial register was intended in this context. Another example of this phenomenon may be found in the speech of the women of Pharaoh's city: upon seeing Joseph for the first time, they declare, in awe of his beauty: *mā hādā bašarā* (Q 12:31). The use of the accusative in the predicate of a negative

---

[276] Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, p. 159.

[277] Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, pp. 156–57, although note that the absence of case declension in *faʕāli* nouns is likely original.

[278] Other philologists have explained this through the interpretation of the presentative as *ʔin*, which does not license the accusative case. One wonders if this byform, however, was simply created as an exegetical device and then became a part of the classical language. Ibn Hishām suggested this dialectal solution to the verse quoted above; see Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian,* p. 156.

[279] Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian,* p. 111.

[280] Voigt, *Die infermen Verbaltypen*; Suchard, "Hebrew Hollow Roots."

nominal sentence was considered by the grammarians a typical Ḥigāzī feature,[281] and it could in fact reflect a progressive form that had not penetrated the literary register. The PF does not possess a functioning accusative, and the first-Islamic-century papyri require more investigation to determine whether such forms are present. Nevertheless, it is possible that the appearance of both oddities in direct speech in the Quran reflects either a subtle distinction between the literary and spoken register or micro-regional variation that communicated some sociolinguistic information no longer accessible.

The connection between the Arabic Grammarians' Ḥigāzī and our Old Ḥigāzī is impossible to prove, but is certainly not contradicted by the evidence. Indeed, it would seem that the grammarians were picking up signals of a language quite similar to what we have reconstructed so far, but, because they never considered a dialect an independent linguistic system, nor did they permit the absence of case and mood inflection, many of its distinctive features were never documented.

Whence Classical Arabic? A Proposal

The picture of Arabic that I have drawn so far has one glaring omission: Classical Arabic. To anyone reading the QCT or the first-Islamic-century papyri, the difference between its language and the language of Classical Islamic civilization is, in some ways, negligible. Nevertheless, I would stress that calling it Classical Arabic is anachronistic. Before entering into this point, we should come to some understanding of what Classical Arabic is and is not in linguistic terms. What it is *not* is the reflection of the dialect of a single group of people or of a single geographic area. In its widest sense, Classical Arabic is the sum of features the early Arabic Grammarians described as admissible. The descriptions of the Arabic Grammarians give a number of possible forms for any given morphological feature, and so the linguistic sub-classification of Classical Arabic cannot be carried out without arbitrarily giving weight to one of these forms against the other. For example, it would be incorrect to say that Classical Arabic is a form of Old Ḥigāzī because it exhibits what I have identified as a Ḥigāzī isogloss, *ḏālika*, as that is just one of many possible forms, making the category unsuitable for classification. The same is true of the relative pronoun, and almost all other features of grammar: Classical Arabic is defined by variation.

There is, however, one place in which Classical Arabic does not exhibit variation, and that is with the expression of case in the singular and the use of nunation, features that had long disappeared in Old Ḥigāzī. I will advance below a tentative scenario as to how Classical Arabic, as we see it, came to be, with the intent that this hypothesis forms the foundation of a more in-depth future research project.

I would suggest that Old Ḥigāzī as represented in the QCT was the original literary register and prestige spoken dialect of the Medinian state and subsequent Umayyad Empire. A more advanced form of the Quranic dialect is met with in the first-Islamic-century papyri, and it gives rise to early Arabic colloquials, like the one encountered in Greek transcriptions and the PF. Now, in the Umayyad period, another kind of literary form gained prestige—the metered and rhymed ode known as the Qaṣīdah. Its structure and language reflect a literary background distinct from the QCT; the Arab grammarians and philologists were in basic agreement that the language of the poems was closer to the language of the central and eastern

---

[281] Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, p. 179.

Arabian Bedouins.[282] In a fascinating and convincing study, P. Webb demonstrates that the salient label of group identity in the pre-Islamic Qaṣīdahs was Maʕadd.[283] While for certain Greek and Syriac writers, Maʕadd could refer to militarized camel-breeding nomads beyond imperial control,[284] the Namārah inscription makes it clear that it refers to a region or people, a fact confirmed by Robin's comprehensive study of the sources.[285] Between the fourth and sixth centuries, Maʕadd was centered on Maʔsal al-Ǧumḥ, in the Najd, with frontiers on the north and south.[286]

Although this argument is not made explicitly, Webb's study would further suggest that the ancient odes were composed in the the dialect of Maʕadd, or perhaps in the dialects of central Arabia in general.[287] This would imply that Maʕaddite Arabic, unlike the Old Ḥiǧāzī of the QCT and the northern dialects, did not lose nunation or final short vowels on nouns, giving it a much more archaic nominal system. On the other hand, it may have sometimes collapsed triphthongs invariably to [ā], as evidenced by the fact that, unlike in the QCT, the result of the contracted triphthong *aya (*banaya) may rhyme with the result of the con-tracted triphthong *awa (*daʕawa).

The Qaṣīdah belongs to a different literary culture than that of the Ḥiǧāz, as its form is not found in the Quran. And even though the Quran refers to poets, there nothing to suggest that these poets were producing poems belonging to the same style as the pre-Islamic Qaṣīdah.[288] In fact, the precursors to the Qaṣīdah form seem to come from South Arabia.[289] It is likely that this poetic form was introduced to Arabic speakers who came under the influence of South Arabian culture, perhaps in the period when the Himyarites expanded into central Arabia, the territory of Maʕadd. Thus, there is no reason to assume, and no inscriptional evidence to support the idea, that the Qaṣīdah was an ancient poetic form in the Ḥiǧāz, which after all never fell under Himyarite rule. When Ḥiǧāzīs took up this poetic style, they, following Rabin's suggestion, composed in the language of its source —Maʕadd.[290]

---

[282] Rabin, "Beginnings of Classical Arabic," still contains the most balanced discussion on the various views regarding the nature of Classical Arabic and its relationship to the Quran. The topic of the origins of Classical Arabic is also taken up by Wansbrough, *Quranic Studies*, §3, and Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity*, §21; I will engage with these views in the excursus at the end of this chapter.

[283] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*, pp. 75–77; while Muslim genealogists considered Maʕadd the common ancestor of most "northern" Arabs, these constellations do not reflect biological descent but rather the political and social situation of the times in which they were drawn up. Thus the groups considered part of Maʕadd by Muslim genealogists may not have considered themselves as such in pre-Islamic times; see Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*, §4, on the construction of traditional Arab genealogies.

[284] Zwettler, "Maʕadd."

[285] Robin, "Les Arabes de Ḥimyar" pp. 176–78.

[286] Schiettecatte and Arbach, "Political Map," pp. 18–20.

[287] The Hymn of Qāniya, from ancient South Arabia and in the Sabaic language, is a twenty-seven line mono-rhyme text that may reflect a similar literary style to the Qaṣīdah. It is impossible to determine the existence of a meter in this text on account of the consonantal writing system. See Stein, "'Himyaritic' Language," on the language of the text and further bibliography. It is unclear how old this style is but there is no epigraphic evidence to suggest that it was introduced from the north.

[288] None of the pre-Islamic Arabic poetic texts discovered so far belong to the Qaṣīdah model; see Al-Jallad, "Echoes"; Al-Jallad, ""Ḥamāsah" Verses." The very fact that the Quran had to tell its audience that the speaker was not a "poet" suggests a structural similarity between the text and what the audience would have considered poetry. If the Classical Qaṣīdah was the prototype, no such warning would have been necessary.

[289] For a discussion of these texts, see Stein, *"Himyaritic" Language* and Beeston, *Antecedents*.

[290] Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, p. 3.

In the Umayyad period, the Qaṣīdah was an important tool for legitimizing authority, especially that of the caliph. Given its status, its language may have begun to replace Old Ḥigāzī as the prestige dialect for public discourse and performance, although the latter persisted as the administrative language. As such, it would have only been appropriate to read the Quran in the new prestige register, rather than according to the dialect reflected in its orthography. Thus, the reading traditions, the *qirāʔāt*, emerged from the meeting of the Maʕaddite poetic language and the Old Ḥigāzī of the QCT.

Webb brings to our attention a fascinating hadith from the *Muṣannaf* of *Abī Shaybah* that explicitly connects the presence of final short vowels and nunation (*ʔiʕrāb*) to Maʕadd:[291]

<div dir="rtl">

فتفقهوا في السنة

وتفقهوا في العربية

وأعربوا القرآن فإنه عربي

وتمعددوا فإنكم معديون

</div>

Learn the proper way[292]

Make yourselves knowledgeable in Arabic

Apply final-short vowels (*ʔiʕrāb*) to the Quran, for it is Arabic

Act as Maʕadd, for you are Maʕaddites

The hadith consists of two parallelisms, with the second drawing an equivalent between being Maʕadd and applying *ʔiʕrāb* (final short vowels and nunation), a feature clearly foreign to the QCT and Old Ḥigāzī. What this hadith encapsulates is the changing of prestige registers, with Old Ḥigāzī giving way to the language of the poems. The *qirāʔāt* can therefore be conceptualized as models of adapting Old Ḥigāzī to a new, sociolinguistically prestigious register. This resulted not only in the application of full case inflection on singulars and nunation to nouns, but also to the partial restoration of the glottal stop, and the spread of foreign phonological features (such as the ā-realization of all triphthongs). The degree to which Old Ḥigāzī was modified varies from *qirāʔah* to *qirāʔah*, but all agree in the application of case and nunation.

The Arabic grammatical tradition documented a great deal of variation, but it did not standardize Arabic as such; the poetry itself could only benefit from variation. Thus, it is impossible to claim that the poems belong to a single dialect, as a poet could draw on dialectal forms as the composition required—therefore, we encounter both *ḏāka* and *ḏālika* in the ancient odes. Nevertheless, their project had a bias, when it came to nominal inflection, to the register of the Qaṣīdah, the dialect of Maʕadd. In this regard, there could be variation in the expression of case in the singular noun, but it could not be completely omitted. The full-blown case system of Maʕaddī Arabic became a hallmark of High Arabic. Nevertheless, Arabic's first administrative and literary register was set down in Old Ḥigāzī and not the poetic dialects, and this language had already been standardized. Thus, standardized "Classical

---

[291] Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Al-Muṣannaf*, 15:433 (30534) *apud* Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*, p. 171. While hadith is attributed to ʿOmar, I would argue that its content reflects the linguistic attitudes of later generations.

[292] I translate *sunnah* neutrally as a "way, course, manner" of acting (Lane, 1438b).

Arabic" emerged from the process of leveling Old Ḥigāzī toward invariable aspects of nominal inflection in the Arabic of high literature and public oration—the sociolinguistically salient features of this register. This resulted in the maintenance of most of the morphological forms and syntagms characteristic of the former, but the restoration of case inflection and nunation in the singular, where it had more or less disappeared, and some changes to pronunciation. Other grammatical categories that were on the way out already by the eighth century, such as verbal mood, were reinforced. The result was a day-to-day literary register that was more archaic than its predecessor in certain ways but still Old Ḥigāzī in most of its grammatical structure. Typical Ḥigāzī forms like *ḏālika* and *ʔallaḏī* had already become part of the scribal language and were therefore the preferred forms in normative Classical Arabic. While other forms were permissible in the poetic register and grammatical tradition, they only rarely entered Classical Arabic prose texts—normative Classical Arabic is Old Ḥigāzī in Maʕaddite garb.

In a way, this hypothesis follows Vollers's initial intuition—that the Quran was composed in a dialect other than the one in which it is read today. But the QCT was not "Neo-Arabic," rather its language reflects a separate stream of Old Arabic, which was essentially the ancestral literary register of the first-Islamic-century materials.

Old Ḥigāzī's enduring legacy is Arabic orthography. Since Old Ḥigāzī was the basis of Arabic's first true writing tradition, its phonology was transformed into the orthography of Classical Arabic, which for the most part persists to the present day.[293]

Table 24. The legacy of Old Ḥigāzī in Arabic orthography

Orthography	Old Ḥigāzī	Maʕaddī = poetic	Standard Classical Arabic	PF/first-Islamic-century transcriptions
انقلب	*ʔanqalab	inqalaba	inqalaba	ανκαλεβου /ʔanqalebū/
جدا	*gaddā	ǧiddan	ǧiddan	γεδδα /ǧeddā/
مول	*mawlē	mawlā	mawlā	μαυλε /mawlē/
مايده	*māyidah	māʔidatun	māʔidatun	μαϳδεύ /māy(i)deh/

We may end with the matter of the relationship between Maʕaddite Arabic, which gave rise to the poetry, and Old Ḥigāzī. There is no question that Ḥigāzī isoglosses, like *ʔallaḏī*, are common in the ancient poems. If such forms were native, then it could suggest that the Maʕaddite dialect was introduced to central Arabia from the Ḥigāz in prehistoric times, before the loss of nunation and nominal morphology, but after the emergence of the isoglosses characteristic of Old Ḥigāzī. As such, both Old Ḥigāzī and the dialect of Maʕadd would share a more recent common ancestor than other varieties of Arabic, a variety we may call Proto-Ḥigāzī Arabic.

One should, however, keep in mind that this classification is extremely hypothetical. The evidence for Maʕaddite sharing a common ancestor with Old Ḥigāzī is based exclusively on poetry, where interdialectal mixing is common. It is very possible that Ḥigāzī isoglosses entered this register on account of their suitability for poetic composition and stylistic factors. As such, their presence in the ancient odes, alongside other, non-Ḥigāzī features, need not

---

[293] Modifications to the Old Ḥigāzī skeleton to represent later forms of Arabic include diacritics to distinguish polyphonic consonants, the representation nunation by writing the vowel diacritic twice, and the hamza, a small supralinear ʕayn, to represent the glottal stop.

reflect the vernacular of Maʕadd. The languages of the early poems remains to be studied on its own terms, a prerequisite for answering these questions in a more definitive manner.

Excursus: ʕarabī mubīn

The Quran refers to its language, *lisān*, as ʕarabī, and many scholars have taken this as evidence that the text was produced in a linguistic variety distinct from the colloquial of the Ḥigāz. The discussion has a large bibliography, but in this short excursus, I wish to focus on two new ideas in order to advance the hypothesis that ʕarabī meant simply the local vernacular language as opposed to traditional monotheistic liturgical idioms. Retsö claims that the adjective ʕarabī was meant to be a proof of the divine nature of its message and therefore could not refer to the vernacular, but he provides no clear argumentation in support of such a conclusion.[294] Webb argues along similar lines, concluding that the Quran's ʕarabī refers to a magico-sacral language, but his reconstruction of a ritualistic "clarion koiné" used by desert soothsayers is based on no evidence that can withstand scrutiny.[295]

Both Retsö and Webb have taken comparisons to pre-Islamic soothsayers and poets (*kuhhān* and *šuʕarāʔ*) as having to do with the artificial nature of the Quran's language, a quality referred to by ʕarabī; there is nothing in these references that requires such an interpretation. For example, consider the following:

> 69:41: wa-mā huwa bi-qawli šāʕirin qalīlan mā tuʔminūn
>
> "and it is not the speech of a poet; how little faith you have!"
>
> 69:42: wa-lā bi-qawli kāhinin qalīlan mā taḏakkarūn
>
> "nor is it the speech of a soothsayer; how little you remember!"
>
> 52:29: fa-ḏakkir fa-mā ʔanta bi-niʕmati rabbika bi-kāhinin wa-lā maǧnūn
>
> "and so remind (them) that you are not, by the grace of your lord, a sooth-sayer or possessed"

None of these references, however, lay the cause of this similarity on the use of a shared artificial language, the *lisān ʕarabī*, as it were. Moreover, this expression is never applied to the soothsayers or poets. It is more likely that the similarities between the Quran and other ritualistic forms of speech stem from its content, that is, divine communications, and its stylistics, that is, its rhymed and rhythmic language. These features were very likely a component of the artistic language of soothsayers and poets, and it would have sufficed to draw a comparison. We are therefore not required to posit a sacred koiné with a separate grammar.

While Webb contends that ʕarabī is not the name of the language but rather an adjective meaning "clear," it is indisputable that the Quran was produced in a local Arabian language rather than the liturgical registers used in the north and south. This fact is remarkable and may also have caused some to compare the Prophet with the soothsayers and poets, who

---

[294] Retsö, *The Arabs in Antiquity*, p. 593.
[295] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*, pp. 115–16, 124.

would have also composed their communications in a local idiom, rather than in foreign, unintelligible languages, like Hebrew, Greek, or Gəʕəz.

Based on this suggestion, I would argue that the ʕarabī of the Quran signifies precisely the opposite of what Retsö and Webb have imagined; it is not a remote, divine register used by a special cast of holy men. On the contrary, following Hoyland, the Quran was a monotheistic message in the vernacular.[296] Indeed, the use of special ritualistic registers would have characterized monotheistic liturgies in this period, and so the Quran broke with this tradition by delivering its message in the language of ordinary people, a language called ʕarabī "Arabic." This explanation is further corroborated by Q14:4 "and we have never sent a messenger except in the language of his people." I will apply this sense to the eleven verses in which the term occurs:

ʕarabī in the Quran

12:2: ʔinna ʔanzalnā-hu qurʔānan ʕarabiyyan laʕallakum taʕqilūn

"indeed, we have sent it down as a recitation in Arabic (lit. an Arabic recitation) that you might understand [it]"

Here, the Quran is stating clearly that its language is meant to be understood by the audience. This fits well the interpretation that the current scripture is distinguished from its predecessors by the fact that it is in an intelligible vernacular and does not require the intercession of a holy man to decipher its meaning.

13:37: wa-kaḏālika ʔanzalnā-hu ḥukman ʕarabiyyan

"and thus we have sent it down as wisdom in Arabic (Arabic wisdom)"

The same interpretation for 12:2 applies here; the ʕarabī quality of the wisdom was to ensure that the messenger to whom it was sent could understand it and heed it. The rest of the verse suggests as much as it states that he alone is responsible for not heeding knowledge after it had come to him, suggesting that blame cannot be put on another responsible for translating it.

16:103: wa-laqad naʕlamu ʔannahum yaqūlūna ʔinnamā yuʕallimu-hū bašarun lisānu lladī yulḥidūna ʔilayhi ʔaʕǧamiyyun wa-hāḏā lisānun ʕarabiyyun mubīn

"and we indeed know that they say it is merely a man who teaches him; the language of him to whom they refer is foreign but this is Arabic, explicating"

This statement is a response to those who claim that Muhammad is being taught by a human being, who apparently was foreign, a non-Arabic speaker. The Quran states that the language (*lisān*) of that to which they refer is ʔaʕǧamī, "foreign" or "unintelligible." It is also possible that the relative pronoun ʔallaḏī refers to the the content of what was alledgedly taught, either a text or oral document in a foreign liturgical language. Thus, the Quran denies its source in such, as its language is intelligible.

---

[296] Hoyland, "The Language of the Qur'an."

20:113: wa-kaḏālika ʔanzalnā-hu qurʔānan ʕarabiyyan wa-ṣarrafnā fī-hi mina l-waʕīdi laʕallahum yattaqūna ʔaw yuḥaddiṯu lahum ḏikrā

"and thus we have sent it down as recitation in Arabic and have made clear within it matters of warning that perhaps they would believe or that it would cause them to remember (their lord)"

Here the *ʕarabī* quality of the Quran ensures that people would believe or be reminded. The warnings, no doubt referring to punishment for sinful behavior, are in a readily intelligible language and are meant to facilitate this.

26:195: bi-lisānin ʕarabiyyin mubīn

"in an Arabic language, explicating"

In the preceding verses, the Prophet had received revelation from the trustworthy spirit (*ar-rūḥu l-ʔamīn*) so that he would become one of the warners (*li-takūna mina l-munḏirīn* 26:194), "in an Arabic language, explicating." The Prophet's public, however, considers the linguistic vehicle of his communication remarkable and a cause of doubt as to his authenticity. To this skepticism, the Quran replies, *wa-law nazzalnā-hu ʕalā baʕḍi l-ʔaʕǧamiyyīn* "and if we had sent it down to some ʔaʕǧamite (foreign-language speakers)" (26:198), *wa-qaraʔa-hū ʕalayhim mā kānū bi-hī muʔminīn* "and he recited it to them, they still would not have believed" (26:199). I would argue that the Quran acknowledges here that scripture has previously been in foreign, liturgical languages, and it remarks that even if it had been sent down in such a way, its audience still would not have been satisfied. Thus, the Arabic-ness of the text is not proof of its divine nature: on the contrary, it is that very quality that makes the text seem profane.

39:28: qurʔānan ʕarabiyyan ġayra ḏī ʕiwaǧin laʕallahum yattaqūn

"it is a recitation in Arabic (lit. an Arabic recitation), without any fault, that they might believe"

The verse before this states that the people have been given every sort of example in this lesson so that they might remember or be mindful of their lord; the present verse then makes it even clearer why the people should have comprehended the message—the language of the text is in Arabic, without any faults. I would interpret "crookedness" here in the context of a foreign proselytizer attempting to communicate scripture to Arabic speakers in an accented or less-than-fluent Arabic. This message is fluent, as the Prophet was a native Arabic speaker, from among the people to whom he preaches, so there should be nothing to prevent the audience from comprehending the message and heeding it.

41:3: kitābun fuṣṣilat ʔāyātu-hū qurʔānan ʕarabiyyan li-qawmin yaʕlamūn

"A book the verses of which have been explained in a recitation in Arabic (lit. Arabic recitation) for people to understand"

In the same way, *ʕarabī* denotes the message in its intelligible form. Perhaps here *kitāb* may be understood to refer to some foreign scripture, the Hebrew Bible, or the Greek New Testament.

42:7: wa-kaḏālika ʔawḥaynā ʔilayka qurʔānan ʕarabiyyan li-tunḏira ʔumma l-qurā wa-man ḥawla-hā

"And thus we have revealed to you a recitation in Arabic for you to warn ʔumm al-Qurā and those surrounding it"

The purpose of the ʕarabī of the Quran is clearly local—to warn those of Umm al-Qurā (which traditional exegetes take as Mecca) and its surroundings. The most natural reading is that Arabic is the language of this area, and that his warning would therefore be intelligible.

43:3: ʔinnā ǧaʕalnā-hu qurʔānan ʕarabiyyan laʕallakum taʕqilūn

"we have indeed made it a recitation in Arabic that you might comprehend [it]"

See the explanation of 12:2.

46:12: wa-hāḏa kitābun muṣaddaqun lisānan ʕarabiyyan li-yunḏira llaḏīna ẓalamū wa-bušrā lil-muḥsinīn

"and this is a book confirming (what was before) in Arabic, in order to warn those who act wrongfully and to be glad tidings for those who do good"

The ʕarabī is connected to the act of warning, which again implies intelligibility among ordinary people.

41:44: wa-law ǧaʕalnā-hu qurʔānan ʔaʕǧamiyyan la-qālū lawlā fuṣṣilat ʔāyātu-hu ʔaʕǧamiyyun wa-ʕarabiyyun

"and if we had made it a recitation in a foreign language they would have said, if only its verse were explained, foreign (language) and then Arabic"

I would suggest that this verse contains some information about how Judaeo-Christian liturgy was delivered in the pre-Islamic Ḥigāz. Again, the audience protests the authenticity of the Quran because it is in the vernacular, Arabic, and not a foreign liturgical language. Yet, if the Quran were revealed in a foreign language, the audience would complain that the foreign verses should be explained in Arabic anyway. The expression *law-lā fuṣṣilat ʔāyātu-hū ʔaʕǧamiyyun wa-ʕarabiyyun* may indicate the way this was normally done. The speaker would give the verse in its original, such as Greek, Aramaic, or Hebrew, and then its explication in Arabic, thus "foreign (language) and then Arabic."

I hope to have shown that nothing in these eleven verses requires us to ascribe a magico-sacred meaning to the adjective ʕarabī. The opposite case seems to be more compelling: the Quran is in an ordinary language that everyone can understand. Webb brings up one more issue that motivates him to reinterpret the meaning of ʕarabī in the Quran, the meaning "clear, clarion" in the Classical Arabic dictionaries.[297] For him, this meaning is not reconcilable with other words derived from this root, especially the nomadic meanings. In fact, I would argue that the "clear" family of meanings naturally derives from the name of the language, ʕarabī. This type of semantic development is common in the world's languages; to give a Germanic example, consider the word in German for the name of the language, *Deutsch*, and the related

---

[297] Webb, *Imagining the Arabs*, p. 124.

adjective for "clear," "plain," *deutlich*. The latter clearly derives from the former, and both are derived from the self-designation of its speakers, ultimately from the Proto-Germanic word *þiudiskaz "of the people."

I am convinced by Webb's arguments of a largely Islamic-era construction of received pre-Islamic Arab identity, but this in no way implies that the term ʕarab was not used for the name of a language or even a group of people in the few centuries preceding the rise of Islam—it naturally would have had a different connotation. As I have argued, the simplest explanation is to take ʕarabī as the name of the Quran's language, but this does not require that its community self-identified as ʕarab, nor does it imply a connection with the ʔaʕrāb, the "outsiders antagonists" of the Quran. A perfect parallel is found in the pre-modern Arab world. A resident of Cairo or Damascus before the rise of Arab nationalism would not have referred to themselves as ʕarabī, reserving the term for nomads, but they would have certainly called the colloquial language they were speaking ʕarabī. The name of a language can obviously be different from the name of the people who speak it.[298] How the name of this language came to be ʕarabī and its connection with Nabataea and Provincia Arabia will be taken up in a future paper.

---

[298] Consider the speakers of French, English, and even Arabic today!

Chapter 5

Edition of the Arabic Columns of the Damascus Psalm Fragment

This edition is based on the reconstruction of the Arabic text by R. Vollandt (see appendix 1) in light of the facts discerned about the language of the document as discussed in chapter 2. Restorations are given in parantheses.

v.20

σαχρ(α)ύ •φασέ

λετ•μαϳάύ[1] •

οελευδιεύ•φά•

δατ•

λεγαλ•οαχουβζ

ϳεκ•διρ•ϳουγ•τι[2]

έυ•ϳου•ύεϳει•

μάϳδεύ•λιχ[3]

χειγ•βύϳ

---- ṣaḫr(a)h fa-sēlet mayyah wel-ʔewdiyeh fāḍat leʕal wa-ḫubz yeqdir yuʕtī ʔeu yuheyyī māy(i)deh li-šiʕb-hu(hi) [sic] [*li-siʕbi-h(?)]

[Forasmuch as he smote] the rock, and water flowed, and the valleys emptied; perhaps he will be able also to give bread or prepare a table for his people?

Notes

1) The other comparable manuscripts have in Arabic الامياه [al-ʔamyāh] and امياه [ʔamyāh], and while there may be space at the beginning of the word for a few letters, the Alpha following the Mu suggests a different pronunciation, akin to Levantine Arabic *mayya* and possibly Safaitic *myt* [mayyat].
2) Corriente remarks that the syntax of this line calques the Greek.[299]
3) The facsimile of Violet gives an extra Chi here, while it is not apparent on the photograph.

---

[299] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 304.

Ahmad Al-Jallad

v.21

λιδέλικ•σεμιγ

ελραβ•φααμ

τεναγ•

οελναρ•εχτεγα

λετ•φη•jαγκουβ

οα•ρυγζ¹•σαγ(αδ)

γαλα•jϲραηλ

li-ḏēlik semiʕ el-rab fa-ʔamtenaʕ wel-nār ʔešteʕalet fī yaʕqūb wa ruǧz saʕ(ad) ʕalā ʔisrāel

Therefore the Lord heard, and he was provoked. Fire was kindled in Jacob, and wrath went up against Israel.

Notes

1) Corriente identifies *ruǧz* as a loanword from Aramaic *rugzā*.[300] The other manuscripts have this form with the article.

v.22

λιεν(ναύ)μ (λαμ)

jουμι(νου) βιλλαυ

οα•λ(α) (ταουα)κκελου¹

γαλα χαλασυ•²

li-ʔen(nahum) (la)m yūmi(nū) billāh wa-lā (tawa)kkelū ʕalā ḫalā -h

Because they had no faith in God, and did not trust in his deliverance.

---

[300] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 306.

Notes

1) Violet renders this line as *wa lā tawakkalū*,[301] Kahle as *wa lā ittakalū,*[302] Blau follows Violet.[303] The other manuscripts, however, give two variants: لا توكلوا (Sinai Ms. Gr. 34 and 36) and مـ يرجون (Sinai, Ms. Gr. 35). The surviving letters can only reflect the former: the six lacunae are best restored as -αταουα-.

2) Kahle and Blau read χαλασυι (v.22), but on the tracing of Violet, the final Iota is barely visible, represented only by a small dot.[304] The photographs show that this small dot is nothing but a word divider, and therefore the reading must be amended to χαλασυ.

v.23

οα αμαρ ελσιχεβ

μιν•φαυκ

οα αβοαβ ελσε[1]

σαμα•φατεχ•

wa ʔamar el-siḥēb min fawq wa ʔabwāb el-se...samā fateḥ

And he commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven.

Notes

1) The scribe runs out of space to complete the word [semā] and so begins writing it anew on the following line. Curiously, he uses the [a] allophone of *a in his second attempt.

v.24

οα•αμ•ταρ•λεὐμ•

μ(ανν)α•λια

(κυλο)υ•[1]

(οα)(χουβ)ζ[2]•μιν•ελ

(σεμα)αγ•τάὐμ

wa ʔamṭar lehum m(ann)a liyā(kul)ū (wa) (ḫub)z min el-(semā) ʔaʕṭā-hum

[301] Violet, "Psalmfragment," p. 390.

[302] Kahle, *Die Arabischen Bibelübersetzungen*, p. 32.

[303] Blau, *Handbook*, p. 71.

[304] Kahle, *Die Arabischen Bibelübersetzungen*; Blau, *Handbook.*

And he rained Manna upon them to eat, and gave them the bread from heaven.

Notes

1) The lacunae permit the restoration of four letters, which implies that short [u] was written here with Ypsilon. The letter after the Iota is heavily damaged in the photograph, and it could plausibly be an Alpha or a Lambda. If one restores it as λιλ, then it would suggest a reading similar to Sinai, Mss. Gr. 35 and 36 بلكى. However, in Violet's copy, but not in the surviving photograph, the word terminates in an Ypsilon, favoring لياكلون as in Sinai, Ms. Gr. 34, but with a true subjunctive form lacking the nūn.

2) The lacunae permit the restoration of six letters, four for the word "bread" and two for the conjunction οα /wa/, rendering Greek και ἄρτον.

v.25

(χουβ)ζ ελ^{με}ελεικε[1]

(ακ)ελ•ινσέν[2]

(χα)βα(γ)[3] βάγαθ

λα•ύμ•λεϳτε-

μέλ•λευ-[4]

(ḫub)z el-melēyke (ʔak)el ʔinsēn (ša)ba(ʕ) baʕaṯ la-hum ley(i)temellew

Man ate angels' bread; he sent them provisions that they may be filled.

Notes

1) The scribe forgot to write the Mu then added a superscript με. The diphthong is spelled without the elongated Iota, and the feminine ending lacks the Hypsilon. It would appear that the scribe was careless in the writing of this word, transcribing it according to normal Greek orthography and leaving out the conventional use of elongated Iota and Hypsilon to represent consonantal [y] and [h], respectively.

2) The indefinite form here disagrees with all other manuscripts, which have الانسان; cf. *mayyah* (v. 20).

3) Corriente takes *šabaʕ* as an adverbial complement of the verb *ʔakal*, rendering "the men ate the angels' bread until being satiated."[305] In fact, *šabaʕ* begins a new clause and is the object of *baʕaṯ* "he sent," the entire clause being: *šabaʕ baʕaṯ la-hum lay(i)teméllew* "he sent to them provisions in order that they be sated." This renders accurately the Greek: ἐπισιτισμὸν ἀπεστειλεν αὐτοῖς εἰς πλισμονὴν.

---

[305] Corriente, "Psalter Fragment," p. 309.

4) On the spelling and rendering of this word, see Chapter 2, "The Verb."

v.26

α•ύάγ•ελ•τεjμ(αν)[1]

μιν•ελ•σεμα

οα•ατε•βη κου

ετύ•ελ•γα

σιφ[2]

ʔahāǧ el-teym(an) min el-semā wa ʔatē bi-quwwet-uh el-ʕāṣif

He removed the south wind from heaven; and by his might he brought in the south-west wind.

Notes

1) The name of the south wind in Classical Arabic is *al-ǧanūb*. The use of Teym[an] here might be an Aramaicism, *tayman* "south." An identical term is used in the Hebrew Bible, *têmān*.
2) This term for the southwest wind is unknown in Classical Arabic. The term *ʕāṣif* is applied to *rīḥ* to denote a wind that blows violently (Lane, 2064b). The term is attested in the Quran (Q 10:22).

v.27

οα•αμ•ταρ•γαλεj

ύμ•μίθλ•ελτυ

ράβ•λυχουμ

οαμίθλ•ραμλ

ελ βου•χουρ•τη

ουρ•μυγνεχαύ

wa ʔamṭar ʕaley-hum miṯl el-turāb luḥūm wa miṯl raml el-buḥūr ṭiyūr muǧneḥah

And he rained upon them flesh like dust, and like the sand of the seas winged birds.

v.28

φα•οα•καγ•ατ

φη•οασατ•γασ

κερ•ὑμ χαυλ

χη•έμ•ὑμ

fa-waqaʕat fī wasaṭ ʕasker-hum ḥawl ḫiyēm-hum

And they fell into the midst of their camp, surrounding their tents.

v.29

φα•ακελου•οα•

χεβιγου•γεδ

δα•

οα•χε•ὑοετ•ὑμ

γεβ•λαὑμ¹

fa-ʔakelūwa šebiʕū ǧeddā wa šehwet-hum ǧēb la-hum

So they ate, and were greatly filled; and he brought to them their desire.

Notes

1) The verb ǧēb "bring" is typical of the modern dialects of Arabic, derived from *ǧāʔa bi-* "to come with." The verb translates Greek ἤνεγκεν "he brought." This phrasing agrees with Sinai, Ms. Gr. 35, against *ʔatā-hum bi-šahwat-hum* in 34 and 36, and more closely matches the syntax of the Greek.

v.30

(λα)μ jουγ•δεμου•

(χ)ευοετὑμ•

οα•γινδ•μα•κεν

ελ•ταγαμ•φη

φα•ὑ•ὑμ²

(la)m yuʕdemū (š)ehwet-hum wa ʕindmā kēn el-ṭaʕām fī fāh-hum

They were not denied their desire; but when their food was in their mouth

Notes

1) Blau transcribes this word incorrectly as φαύμ.[306] The plural افواه is used in 34 and 36.

v.31

(o)α•ρυγζ•αλλάύ

(o)a ruǧz allāh

then the wrath of God [rose up against them, and slew the fattest of them, and overthrew the choice men of Israel].

v.51

τεγ•β[1]

μεσε[2]

teʕb

mese

[and smote every first-born in the land of Egypt; the first-fruits of their] labors [in the] tents [of Cham].

Notes

1) Ms.Gr. 34 and 36 have تعبهم suggesting *teʕb-hum*.
2) This fragment most likely reflects μεσεκεν/mesēken/, the plural of μεσκεν /mesken/ attested in verse 55, which is found in Ms.Gr. 34 and 35.

v.52

οα•σακ•

γανεμ

οα•ασ•γ[1]

μιθλ

---

[306] Blau, *Handbook,* p. 70.

Ahmad Al-Jallad

φιλ•β²

wa sāq

ġanem

wa aṣ

miθl

fil-b

And he drove [his people like] sheep; he led [them] as [a flock] in the wi(lderness).

Notes

1) Violet restores this word as the causative أصعد, a suitable rendition of Greek ἀνήγαγεν "he led up," and this is found in Ms.Gr. 34 and 36.

2) Violet restores this as في البرية.

v.53

οα•αjα•δ¹

βερρί²

jεγζαγ(ου)

οα•αγ•δ

γαττα

βάχρ•

wa ʔahād----

berrī----

yeğza(ʕū)----

wa ʔaʕd----

ġaṭṭā

baḥr

And he guided [them with] hope, [and] they [did not] feel fear; [and the] sea covered [their enemies].

Notes

1) Violet renders this امدادهم in Arabic, and this is found in Ms.Gr. 34 and 36, but the PF clearly attests an Alpha before the verb. This would seem to be a mixed form, with a causative prefix α and then the G-stem *had(ā)*. If this were a true causative, it would have been spelled αjδα /ʔahdā/. Less likely is the possibility that this reflects the *gahawa*-syndrome, that is, the insertion of an [a] after a guttural.

2) On this word, see the discussion in Chapter 2, "Nominal Morphology: The Definite Article." All other manuscripts differ from the PF in having على الرجا.

v.54

οα•αδ•χ(αλύμ)

jλέ•γεβ(ελ)[1]

καδ•σό (ελ)[2]

γέβελ•ά(δα)

ελλεδι•α(χα)

δετ•jεμ(ινύ)

wa ʔadḫ(al-hum)

ʔilē ǧeb(el)

qads-oh (el)

ǧebel hā(ḏā)----

ʔelleḏī

ʔa(ḫa)ḏet yemīn-uh[3]

And he brought (them) in to the mountain of his sanctuary, this mountain which his right hand had purchased.

Notes

1) The PF literally renders the Greek; the other manuscripts do not use a preposition, وادخلهم (Ms.Gr. 34, 36) and وادخلهم طور (Ms.Gr. 35). جبل

2) On the rendition of καδσό, see the discussion on pages 10 and 42.

3) Violet restored this verb as اخذت but Vollandt (appendix 1) restores استفادت (Ms.Gr. 34 and 35) from a majority reading. There does not seem to be enough space to restore the latter, however.

Ahmad Al-Jallad

v.55

οα•αχ•ραγ

---οε[1]

(ε)λουμε(μ)

Οα αυραθ

ελ•μιρε(θ)

βιλ--

οααϲ•κ

με•ϲε

κα•β(εjλ)[2]

(jϲ)ραι(λ)[3]

wa ʔaḫrağ

----oe

(e)l-ʔume(m)

wa ʔawraṯ

el-mīrē(ṯ)

bil---

wa ʔask---

mese---

qab(ēyil)

(is)rāi(l)

And he cast out the nations (from before them, and) caused (them) to inherit
by a line of inheritance, (and) made the tribes of Israel to dwell in (their)
tents.

1) Vollandt (appendix 1) restores جوههم instead of Violet's وجههم. This would be the first use of
   Omicron-Epsilon to spell ū.
2) The restoration of the elongated Iota is conjectural based on the spelling of ābāy(i)hum
   as αβαjὺμ.
3) Violet restores this verse as واسكن في مساكنهم قبائل اسرائيل. The vocalization of μεσε(κεν) has been
   discussed above (v. 51, n2) This use of Iota in the spelling of the final syllable of Israel
   here rather than Eta as earlier reflects Iotacism.

Edition of the Arabic Columns of the Damascus Psalm Fragment

v.56

οα•αβ•τε•λεῦ•οα

μαρ•μαροῦ•

ελ•j•λέύ•ελγαλη

οα•χε•ύα•δ(α)τύ[1]

λαμ•jεχ•φα•δοῦ•

wa ʔabtelew wa marmarū el-ʔilēh el-ʕālī wa šehād(ā)t-uh lam yeḥfaḍū

Yet they tempted and provoked the highest God, and kept not his testimonies.

1) Corriente (2007) reads this word as "šahādtu," a singular, against the plural Greek μαρτύρια, which it translates.[307] It is possible that the scribe omitted the Alpha by mistake, as there are no examples of the syncope of *a in this dialect. In Violet's facsimile, there is a lacuna between the Delta and Tau, where the remnants of an Alpha can be restored. The photograph is unclear in this area. All other manuscripts have شهاداته.

v.57

φα•ανκα•λε•β(ο)υ•[1]

οα•γα•δα•ρου•

μιθλ•α•βα•

j•ύμ

αν•κα•λε•βου

μιθλ•ελ•καυ•σ•ελ

γαυγέ

fa ʔanqalebū wa ġadarū miṯl ābāy(i)-hum ʔanqalebū miṯl el-qaws el-ʕawǧē

And they turned back and acted treacherously, like their fathers, they turned back, like a crooked bow.

Notes

1) All other manuscripts have ورجعوا.

---

307 Corriente, "Psalter Fragment."

v.58

οα[α]σ•χα•τοῦ•ὑ

β•αυθάν•j•ὑμ¹

οα•βη•μεν•χου•τέ•τη•ὑμ•α•

γα•ροῦ•υ

wa (ʔa)sḫaṭū-h bi-ʔawθāni-hum wa bi-menḥūtēti-hum ʔaġārū-h

And they provoked him with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images.

Notes

1) The author chose to translate βουνοίς αυτών "their hills/high places" with Arabic ʔawṭān, the plural of waṭan, an "idol," and may have been confused by the following word, γλυπτοίς. Only Ms.Gr. 36 has وثانهم.

v.59

σεμιγ•αλλάὑ•

οα•τεγάφελ•

(οα)αφ•σέλ•¹γεδ•

(δα) λι•jσρα(ιλ)

-λ-

semiʕ allāh wa teġāfel (wa) ʔafsel ġed(dā)—li-isra(il)

God heard and lightly regarded them, and greatly despised Israel.

Notes

1) On the rendering of the verb αφ•σέλ, see n106.

v.60

οα•ακ•σα•χαjμετ•

σεjλουμ•

ελ-μεσ•κεν•ελ•

λεδι•εσ•κεν¹•φιλ•

βαχερ

wa ʔaqṣā ḫaymet seylūm el-mesken elleðī ʔesken fil-bašer

and he rejected the tabernacle of Shiloh, his tent where he dwelt among men.

Notes

1) The C-stem (form IV) matches Ms.Gr. 35, 36.

v.61

οα•ασ•-ε- λιλ•

σεβ• οευ-

wa ʔas(l)e(m) lil-

seb(ī)• (q)oe(t-hum)

And he gave their strength into captivity.

Appendix 1

Beyond Arabic in Greek Letters:
The Scribal and Translational Context
of the Violet Fragment

Ronny Vollandt, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich

The Violet fragment is a bilingual Greek-Arabic fragment of Psalm 78:20–31, 51–61 (LXX 77). First published by Violet in 1901, it was found at the end of the nineteenth century in the Qubbat al-Khazna at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. All attempts to understand it have hitherto concentrated, almost exclusively, on an analysis of the phonetic transcription system from Arabic to Greek and the linguistic features it reflects. In this short contribution, I shall suggest two further, complementary, lines of investigation: the fragment's material aspects as part of a formerly complete codex, and the translation tradition it represents, considered in the wider context of Arabic versions of biblical scriptures.[308] Bruno Violet, the only scholar so far to have studied the original fragment, noted the importance of such a study. He, albeit very briefly, described its measurements, the Greek script, and the arrangement of columns and lines, and he considered that the parchment was of poor quality, having a rough surface with a visible grain.[309] He also made conjectures about the placement of the bifolium within the quire.[310] Violet, furthermore, added an observation about the Arabic version exhibited in the fragment, discerning a certain resemblance to the translation of Abū al-Fatḥ ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl, deacon of Antioch in the eleventh century, who produced an Arabic version of

---

[308] Graf, *Die christlich-arabische Literatur bis zur fränkischen Zeit*, pp. 8–9, places the fragment within the Palestinian group of texts. Later, in his *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (*GCAL*, p. 114), he suggested more specifically that its place of origin was Syria, but he does treat the Violet Fragment separate from the manuscripts at St. Catherine's Monastery. Having only had very limited access to manuscript collections in Sinai except through catalogues and edited manuscripts, Graf relied on the descriptions in Gardthausen, *Catalogus codicum graecorum sinaiticorum*. The catalogue entries did not allow a textual comparison. Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic, Based Mainly on South-Palestinian Texts from the First Millennium*, 1:31, sees the Violet Fragment as clearly distinct from the corpus of manuscripts from St. Catherine's Monastery, although he does not specify the reason for this assumption. Mavroudi, "Arabic Words in Greek Letters: The Violet Fragment and More," and Harlfinger, "Beispiele der Maiuscula Ogivalis Inclinata vom Sinai und aus Damaskus," however, were the first to point out clear scribal affinities between the Violet Fragment and some complete Greek manuscripts from Sinai, among these a number of bilingual copies of the book of Psalms; compare my *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, p. 57, where I indicate that these manuscripts contain the same translation. For more on this issue, see Treiger, "From Theodore Abū Qurra to Abed Azrié: The Arabic Bible in Context," p. 20: "Excursus B1," where Treiger connects the known copies with a number of further manuscripts.

[309] Violet, "Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment aus Damascus," col. 386, where he calls it of poor quality ("ärmlich").

[310] Violet, "Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment," col. 486.

the book of Psalms that became widely used in the Melkite Church.[311] As I will argue, both interrelated lines of investigation—considering the material aspects and the translation tradition—can help us in reconstructing the lost context of the fragment.

Provenance

The Violet Fragment, a single bifolium, was found by Bruno Violet at the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus in 1900, where it was located in what he referred to as the mosque's *genizah*.[312] The current whereabouts of the bifolium are unknown (and I am consequently basing this work on the surviving photographs).

Violet retrieved the fragment from the Qubbat al-Khazna—the "Treasury Dome"—an octagonal structure decorated with mosaics, on eight Roman columns, which is located in the mosque's courtyard. There, in a medium-sized chamber with a diameter of approximately 6.5 m, protected from harm by a heavily locked iron door, and only reachable with the help of a ladder, a pile of manuscripts—as high as one man standing upright—had found its final rest. Most of what the chamber held was old Qurans and literary texts, but there were also Hajj certificates and documents pertaining to everyday life, such as marriage and divorce contracts and deeds. The fragment had been left there, together with other "worn-out" documents, following the received practice of storing in a consigned place any sacred books and documents that were too fragile to remain in circulation or had fallen out of use. This "storing away" was not intended to allow later retrieval or to be a type of archiving, but was rather a ritualized burial resulting from an esteem for, a special care for, or a fear of desecration of the written word. The practice was shared by Muslims, Jews, and Christians.[313] Not many years before Violet was in Damascus, Schechter had unearthed the great treasures of the Cairo Genizah, so Violet deemed it appropriate to use the term *genizah* for the Qubba in the Umayyad Mosque.

The importance of this Damascus Genizah is twofold: the documents and manuscript fragments originated in Syria, likely in Damascus itself, while most other similar corpora (such as those from the Cairo Genizah or the papyri) hail from Egypt and thus reflect in content and materiality particular Egyptian customs. More importantly, the documents are part of a defined corpus with a clear provenance, whereas the vast majority of finds lack this context.

---

[311] Violet, "Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment," cols. 386 and 427–28. He identified the similarity to ibn al-Faḍl's version through an Arabic psalter containing this version, which was printed in 1899 by the Imprimerie Catholique in Beirut. Violet described the two texts, the Arabic column of the fragment and ibn al-Faḍl's version, as being closely related, even if not always identical: "sehr nah verwandt, wenn nicht mit jener Ausgabe identisch" (col. 428). He is followed in this by Graf, in both *Die christlich-arabische Literatur* and in *GCAL*, 1:114, as well as by Rahlfs, *Septuaginta-Studien*, 2:35.

[312] Violet, "Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment," col. 384: "Damascener Moschee-Genisah." This characterization is followed by modern scholars.

[313] Compare Sadan, "Storage and Treatment of Used Sacred Books (Genizah) in the Muslim Tradition and Jewish Parallels"; Sadan, "Genizah and Genizah-like Practices in Islamic and Jewish Traditions"; Sadan, "Ritual Purity, Impurity and the Disposal of Books in Islam and Judaism"; and also Cohen, "Geniza for Islamicists, Islamic Geniza, and the 'New Cairo Geniza'." Christian *genizahs* have been much less studied than Islamic and Jewish *genizahs*. However, the "New Finds" at St. Catherine's Monastery—in contrast to the "Old Finds" that were gathered by Kyr Isaias in 1734 in the library building (where they served as a functioning and living library)— were stored in a chamber of the Tower of St. George and in some niches of the church and its crypt, and this can be considered to be a *genizah* to some extent; cf. Nicolopoulos, *Holy Monastery and Archdiocese of Sinai: The New Finds of Sinai*. Similarly, the vestiges of the White Monastery Library, the largest repository of Sahidic manuscripts (none of them fully preserved), has sometimes been thought to derive from a *genizah* inside the monastery; cf. Hyvernat, "Pourquoi les anciennes collections de manuscrits coptes sont si pauvres," pp. 422–28.

The existence of the Damascus Genizah had always been known to the local population, who venerated the place and adorned it with many myths.[314] Notice of the manuscript treasures in the Qubba had also reached Hermann von Soden (1852–1914).[315] He had been working on a new edition of the Greek New Testament in Berlin and, endowed by a patron with the right means, he set out to gather new sources for textual criticism.[316] Consulting various collections en route, von Soden travelled from Egypt, through Palestine, to Syria. In Damascus it came to his ears that the British consul, Edward Thomas Rogers (1831–84), had caused a scandal about 35 years earlier, when he came into possession of fragments from the Qubba.[317] Among these was, not least, a fragment of the Greek New Testament. What is more, it was not that long since Constantin von Tischendorf, another well-travelled textual critic, had brought the Codex Sinaiticus from St. Catherine's Monastery; and the papyri of Oxyrhynchus had been discovered only a few years earlier. With feverish excitement, von Soden now imagined discoveries in the Qubba that could rival these finds.

On his initiative, the German emperor and Prussian king Wilhelm II urged the Sublime Porte by diplomatic means to allow a scholar to go through the material and study it thoroughly.[318] Wilhelm II had only just returned from a historic visit to the Holy Land and Syria, where he and his consort Augusta Victoria were shown the Umayyad Mosque and also, one may conjecture, the Qubba. This visit had strengthened the alliance between Prussia and the Ottoman Empire. Permission for a study was granted by Abdul Hamid II in the form of an *irāda*. The *irāda* also instructed Wali Nazim Pasha, governor of Damascus, to carry out and oversee the opening of the Qubba. Funding for the expedition was secured, and a young scholar, Bruno Violet, was chosen to undertake it. He arrived in Damascus on May 30, 1900, and commenced with his task. A condition of his work, as stipulated by the mosque's authorities, was simple: he was only allowed to consult non-Muslim fragments. He recounts that Muslim fragments— mostly Quranic fragments, Hajj certificates, and legal documents—were immediately taken away from him and stored in sacks. The remaining, non-Muslim, fragments were cleaned, flattened, and conserved by the modest means available to Violet. After about a year, his work

---

[314] The historian ibn Asbāt relates an incident in the year 911 AH (1505/6 CE), in which Sībāj al-Ashrafī, the Ottoman governor to Damascus, removed books from the Qubba, against the protests of the local population; see Bandt and Rattmann, "Die Damaskusreise Bruno Violets," p. 4. The Qubba was still considered a local attraction in the nineteenth century. Old postcards describe it as "un chambre des livres sacrés"; see the image in Liebrenz, *Die Rifāʿīya aus Damaskus*, p. 186. A similar postcard of the Qubba, with the words "ancienne bibliothéque," can be found in Déroche, "In the Beginning: Early Qurʾans from Damascus," p. 62. As mentioned in Liebrenz, *Die Rifāʿīya*, p. 188n221, in the 1860s Albert Socin described the Qubba as "a hoard of old books and treasures that will never be opened"; cf. Socin, *Palästina und Syrien: Handbuch für Reisende*, p. 384. The Sourdels (see note 328) and Déroche, "In the Beginning," maintained the view that most of the fragments were transferred to the Qubba only following a fire that broke out at the Umayyad Mosque in 1893. It is not unlikely that some of the books or documents damaged during the fire were then deposited at the *genizah*; however, Violet's account and the references above confirm that the Qubba had been used as a repository for centuries.

[315] von Soden, "Bericht über die in der Kubbet in Damaskus gefundenen Handschriftenfragmente," p. 825.

[316] von Soden, *Reisebriefe nach Palästina*; he describes his work on manuscripts at the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem on pp. 56–59 and 66. On his project for a new edition of the Greek New Testament, see his work *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt hergestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte*.

[317] Cf. von Soden, "Ein Weihnachtsgeschenk des Sultans an die deutsche Wissenschaft"; Zaiyāt, *Khazāʾin al-kutub fī Dimashq wa-ḍawāḥī-hā*, p. 3; Liebrenz, *Die Rifāʿīya*, p. 188n221; and Bandt and Rattmann, "Die Damaskusreise Bruno Violets," p. 4n21.

[318] This account relies on the excellent study by D'Ottone and Radiciotti, "I frammenti della Qubbat al-Khazna di Damasco. A proposito di una scoperta sottovalutata." This article sparked much of the recent interest in the Qubba. See also D'Ottone, "Manuscripts as Mirrors of a Multilingual and Multicultural Society: The Case of the Damascus Find"; and Bandt and Rattmann, "Die Damaskusreise Bruno Violets."

approached completion; it had increasingly caused suspicion and dismay among locals. Hastily, he photographed a selection of fragments before he departed for Berlin on July 2, 1901.[319]

Another *irāda* of Abdul Hamid II gave permission for the collection to be sent to Berlin as a loan. Before the fragments were dispatched, however, the whole batch was inventoried and photographed by the Ottoman authorities.[320] The number of fragments at this time was given as 1,558.[321] The collection arrived in Berlin on June 17, 1902, and was deposited at the Royal Museums; in 1904, it was moved to the State Library. It consisted mainly of Jewish, Christian, and Samaritan texts, in a variety of scripts and languages: Greek, Hebrew, Samaritan, Latin, Coptic, Syriac, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and even Armenian. Among the fragments, many were palimpsests or had been re-used as the bindings of books.[322]

The Violet Fragment was the first find from the Damascus Genizah to be announced to the scholarly public, in 1901; this was before von Soden gave his account of the success of the mission and surveyed the major discoveries, at the Prussian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, in 1903.[323] Publications on further fragments ensued until, unexpectedly after six years, the Ottomans demanded the return of the fragments in December 1908.[324] A prioritized list of fifty-four fragments, prepared by von Soden, and an almost complete Syriac codex were all that could be photographed before the collection was sent back in its entirety.[325] The Ottomans confirmed that the collection reached Istanbul; however, little is known of its

---

[319] Violet's photographs are found today in the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Science, with the shelfmark BBAW/GCS, Akz.-Nr. 481.

[320] The inventory and photographs are said to have been deposited in two places: the Foreign Ministry and the Library of the Yıldız Palace. So far I have been unsuccessful in locating them.

[321] Violet estimated that this portion made up only 0.5 percent of the entire Damascus Genizah; Violet, "Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment," col. 384. The remaining Muslim fragments, which he was forbidden to consult, filled 150 sacks; Bandt and Rattmann, "Die Damaskusreise Bruno Violets," p. 8. These estimations suggest a total of over 300,000 items. An inventory made in 1955 numbers 13,882 items, with a total of 211,603 pieces. In September 2017, Konrad Hirschler was able to confirm these numbers during a visit to the collection. I am indebted to him for this information.

[322] The practice of re-using folios as book bindings has been described by D'Ottone and Radiciotti, "I frammenti," p. 51n23, and Treu, *Majuskelbruchstücke der Septuaginta*, p. 215. The Violet Fragment itself is probably a particularly telling example of this practice (see below). Cases of re-use have also been described for Muslim fragments; see Déroche, "In the Beginning," p. 72n37. On the palimpsests, see Violet in Schulthess, *Christlich-palästinische Fragmente aus der Omajjaden-Moschee zu Damaskus*, pp. 7–10; and Treu, *Majuskelbruchstücke der Septuaginta aus Damaskus*, pp. 217–19. A number of folios contain Hebrew undertexts with a Syriac overtext, Or. Sim. 6, 39r–42r, see for example, http://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=P-PN685013049&PHYSID=PHYS_0079&DMDID=DMDLOG_0001.

[323] Violet, "Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment"; von Soden, "Ein Weihnachtsgeschenk," which introduced the cache of documents to a more general readership and to the Prussian Academy of Sciences and Humanities; cf. von Soder, "Bericht."

[324] Three fragments in Old French were published by Tobler, "Bruchstücke altfranzösischer Dichtung aus den in der Kubbet in Damaskus gefundenen Handschriften," p. 43. Schulthess, *Christlich-palästinische Fragmente*, edited the Christian Palestinian Aramaic fragments. A writ of protection by Balduin IV is seen in von Soden, "Bericht," p. 827. The biblical fragments in Greek received the greatest attention and were included in von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt hergestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte*, part 1, section 1, pp. x–xiii, 74, 118, 124–26.

[325] These photographs are kept today in two folders in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin, Or. Sim. 5 and Or. Sim. 6. The former contains a Syriac translation of Theodore of Mopsuestia's commentary on Qoheleth, which has been published by Werner Strothmann, *Das syrische Fragment des Ecclesiastes-Kommentars von Theodor von Mopsuestia: Syrischer Text mit vollständigem Wörterverzeichnis*; see the digitized photographs at https://digital. staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN730121836&PHYSID=PHYS_0005&DMDID=. Von Soden's selection, reflecting his interest in research, mostly encompasses biblical texts (see n329 below). The second folder of photographs was thought to have been lost in the turmoil of the Second World War, but resurfaced

whereabouts after that, although some of the fragments appear to have indeed returned to Damascus, where they were originally found.[326]

Violet's collection consists of a small, though significant, fraction of the Damascus Genizah. The larger part, which amounted to perhaps 99.5 percent of the Qubba's contents, was transferred to Istanbul. The majority of the fragments were housed eventually at the *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi*, the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, where the collection was called *Şâm evrakları* "Damascus papers."[327] There Dominique Sourdel and Janine Sourdel-Thomine were granted permission to study the *Şâm evrakları* and took numerous photographs.[328]

The Violet Fragment

The Qubba held many biblical fragments in a variety of languages.[329] The Violet Fragment contains the Greek Vorlage and an Arabic translation of Psalm 77:20–31, 51–61 (MT 78). Although only the photograph is available to us, the basic codicological and paleographic features can be described.[330] It consists of a parchment bifolium, with thirty-three lines on each page. The intact folio measures 23 x 18.5 cm, with 13.3 cm remaining of the second. The text is laid out in two columns, with the Septuagint on the left and an Arabic translation on the right. Both columns are written in Greek uncials in *scriptio continua*, with dots to separate words and between twelve and fourteen letters per line. The writing block measures 18 x 14 cm. Rough-breathing signs are found, and these are rounded in shape. For the script, a dating of the end of the ninth century or the early tenth century has been proposed.[331] In

---

at the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin in 1999, and the photographs are at http://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN685013049&PHYSID=PHYS_0002&DMDID= (accessed June 2017).

[326] See Hatch, "An Uncial Fragment of the Gospels"; Mayer, "Abū ʿAlīs Spuren am Berliner Tiergarten," pp. 114–15; D'Ottone and Radiciotti, "I frammenti"; and Bandt and Rattmann, "Die Damaskusreise Bruno Violets," pp. 17–18.

[327] It remains unclear when the remaining documents were transferred to Istanbul. Déroche, "In the Beginning," p. 63, believes that they were first brought to the Archeological Museum in 1911. That part of the collection that was in good condition was then transferred to the Topkapı Palace and became part of the Emanet Hazinesi collection. In 1914, the less well-preserved documents were transferred to the *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi*.

[328] Their access led to a series of articles, such as Sourdel-Thomine and Sourdel, "Nouveaux documents sur l'histoire religieuse et sociale de Damas au Moyen Âge"; Sourdel-Thomine and Sourdel, "A propos des documents de la Grande Mosquée de Damas conservés à Istanbul: Rêsultats de la seconde enquête"; and Sourdel-Thomine and Sourdel, "Trois actes de vente damascains du début du IVe/Xe siècle"; and more recently a book on pilgrimage certificates, Sourdel and Sourdel-Thomine, *Certificats de pèlerinage d'époque Ayyoubide*; and another on documents related to marriage and divorce, Mouton, Sourdel, and Sourdel-Thomine, *Mariage et séparation à Damas au Moyen Âge: Un corpus de 62 documents juridiques inédits entre 337/948 et 698/1299*; and a third book, which contains an edition, translation, and discussion of six documents related to the rule of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn: Mouton, Sourdel, and Sourdel-Thomine, *Gouvernance et libéralités de Saladin d'après les données inédites de six documents arabes*. Other scholars, including Ory, Mouton, and Déroche, also had access to the collection or to the photographs taken by the Sourdels. The fullest survey of their publications can be found in Déroche, "In the Beginning."

[329] The folder Or. Sim. 6 at the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin contains fragments from the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy (fols. 1–2), as well as Esther (fols. 3–4), in Greek, a bilingual Greek-Arabic Psalm fragment (fols. 1–3, see below), fragments from the Old and New Testaments in Christian Palestinian Aramaic (fols. 5–12), an Arabic fragment of the book of Psalms (fols. 15–16), fragments of the Gospels in Fayyumic (fol. 27), and fragments of the book of Job in Hebrew (fols. 33–42).

[330] The fragment can be seen at http://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN685013049&PHYSID=PHYS_0063&DMDID=DMDLOG_0001&view=overview-toc.

[331] Mavroudi, "Arabic Words."

Ronny Vollandt

all characteristics it conforms to the style that has been termed *maiuscula ogivalis inclinata*, an ogival inclined script for which many parallels in the corpus of ninth- to tenth-century Greek manuscripts from St. Catherine's Monastery can be adduced.[332] As to the ink, nothing can be said with certainty. Violet describes it as "brownish and not durable," which one may interpret as referring to iron gall ink.[333] Only the second folio shows ruling by a hard point to accommodate and demarcate the texts (both the Septuagint and the Arabic translation) with a perpendicular grid of lines, horizontally marking the lines of text and vertically the two columns. Ruling must have existed also on the first folio, but appears not to be visible on the photographs. Writing does not always respect the ruling. On the whole, one gets the impression of a user-produced, draft-like copy rather than a fair copy. The outer half of the second folio is severely damaged, and almost half of the Arabic translation is now missing.
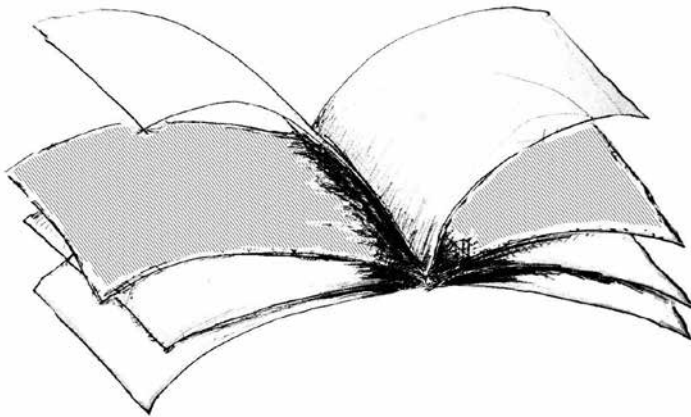
Image 1. Position of the bifolium in the quire[334]

The fragment shows signs of re-use. There is a double fold toward the center of the open bifolium, with a width of 1.5 cm, and several holes that cannot be understood as part of the original pricking. These seem to suggest a secondary use as a book binding, through which the spine of the wrapped book and additional stitching to attach it left their traces on the fragment.[335]

The absent part of the text, between the *verso* (verses 21–31) and the *recto* (verses 51–60) of the bifolium, covered twenty verses. In the extant part, each page contains either five or six verses, so an entire bifolium must have fallen out. Furthermore, given that quaternions were the standard quire structure of Byzantine parchment codices and the most commonly found in the Greek collection of manuscripts at St. Catherine's Monastery, the original place

---

[332] See Harlfinger, "Beispiele der Maiuscula Ogivalis Inclinata." The Violet Fragment is mentioned there on p. 475. For further examples of this form of script, see Harlfinger, Reinsch, and Sonderkamp, *Specimina Sinaitica: Die datierten griechischen Handschriften des Katharinen-Klosters auf dem Berge Sinai, 9. bis 12. Jahrhundert*; Mavroudi, "Arabic Words," pp. 327–28n19; and Orsini, "La maiuscola ogivale inclinata. Contributo preliminare." I refrain from a paleographic description; that should be done by a Greek paleographer. My thanks are due to Marilena Maniaci and Pasquale Orsini, who have discussed this with me and made important comments on the script and codicology of the fragment.

[333] Violet, "Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment," col. 386.

[334] I am indebted to Jonas Müller-Laackman for the illustrations.

[335] As conjectured also by Violet, "Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment," col. 426.

of the Violet Fragment in the quire can be reconstructed as the third bifolium (see image 1).[336] The hair and the flesh sides of the fragment are clearly discernible on the photograph. If the bifolium was positioned as just proposed, then hair sides must have faced hair sides and flesh sides faced flesh sides, following what is known as the Gregory Rule. It appears, as a result of this arrangement, that the outer side of the first bifolium shows the hair side. The quire thus opens with the hair side (see image 2). Although different from that followed in other Byzantine manuscripts, this custom is characteristic of the Greek codices housed today at Sinai and other Greek fragments from the Qubba.[337]
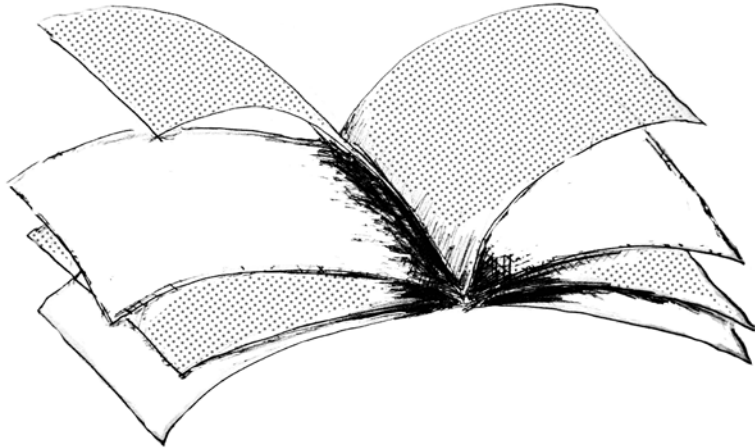
Image 2. Hair and flesh sides

The Scribal Context

Both Palestine and the Damascus area, which together constituted the province of *bilād al-shām* in first the Umayyad and later the Abbasid Caliphate, attest to the flourishing of Greek literacy after the Muslim conquests.[338] It is not only the Greek script, but also the particular arrangement of quires, that places the Violet Fragment in the same scribal context as a number of Sinaitic Greek codices.[339] This observation not only is interesting to material codicology, but also leads us to a group of additional manuscripts that reveal particular parallels when

---

[336] See Maniaci, "Greek Codicology. 8.3.2: The Composition of the Quires," pp. 196–97.

[337] Again, one can compare the specimens discussed in Harlfinger, "Beispiele der Maiuscula Ogivalis Inclinata" and Harlfinger, Reinsch, and Sonderkamp, *Specimina Sinaitica*. For example, Harlfinger, "Beispiele der Maiuscula Ogivalis Inclinata," p. 464, elaborates on the feature of hair sides opening a quire, contrary to the Gregory Rule.

[338] Cf. Mango, "Greek Culture in Palestine after the Arab Conquests"; and Mavroudi, "Greek Language and Education under Early Islam."

[339] It would be misleading to limit this context only to Sinai or the Palestinian monasteries, such as Mar Saba or Mar Chariton. In fact, it is not known whether St. Catherine's housed a productive scribal workshop at all. At least for the Arabic collection, it is clear that the vast majority of codices were produced elsewhere; cf. Tarras, "Building a Christian Arabic Library: Thomas of Fustat and the Scribal Workshop of Saint Catherine's Monastery"; and Swanson, "Solomon, Bishop of Mount Sinai (Late Tenth Century AD)." Prominent examples, including MSS Sinai, Ar. 2 and 151, come from Damascus.

it comes to content and layout. Among this group we find three complete Greek and Arabic bilingual manuscripts of the book of Psalms, ranging in date from the early ninth through the tenth centuries—Sinai, MSS Gr. 34–36—and another fragment from the Qubba photographs. A further manuscript—Moscow, Russian State Library, MS 432—contains four folios of a trilingual book of Psalms in Greek, Syriac, and Arabic, and partly overlaps with the Violet Fragment. All five of these reflect the same translation as the Violet Fragment; the main difference is that the Arabic column in these is written using Arabic letters.[340] Furthermore, three additional monolingual manuscripts with the same translation exist.

Sinai, MS Gr. 34[341]

Content: Blank (2r), Arabic introduction to the book of Psalms, ending with the Lord's Prayer (2v–4r), Greek text with Arabic translation (4v–232v), arranged in two columns with the Arabic to the right.

232 fols., corresponds to the Violet Fragment on fols. 122v–123r, 125r–126r. Ruled parchment, 19 x 18.5 cm, Greek 23–26 lines per page, Arabic 13–16 lines per page, iron gall ink,[342] 4 bifolia/quire, following the Gregory Rule and opening with the hair side, quire signatures on the opening folio in the upper-right margins in the form of Greek numerals. More recent quire signatures on the last folio were added in Arabic *abjad*. It has pen trials on the inside cover and on fol. 1r. The cardboard cover was made from discarded parchment folios that were glued together, with a layer of leather on the outside.

Script: *maiuscula ogivalis inclinata* and Abbasid book hand

Date: copied in Mar Saba, December 929 or 930 CE[343]

Sinai, MS Gr. 35[344]

Content: Greek text with Arabic translation (1r–207v), arranged in two columns with the Arabic to the left.

207 fols., corresponds to the Violet Fragment on fols. 109r–100r, 112r–113r. Ruled parchment, 24 x 16 cm, Greek 30–31 lines per page, Arabic 19–21 lines per page, iron gall ink. Fols. 1–34 and 33–44 are later replacements and exhibit unskilled writing; on these, the Arabic faces inside, whereas in the rest of the codex it is always on the left. The original codex has 4 bifolia/quire, following the Gregory Rule and opening with the hair side. Quire signatures are found on the last folio, on the lower right margin, in Greek. New quires are marked by an asterisk on the upper-left margin. The original wood cover is intact. Further folios of this manuscript, from

[340] I have consulted the Sinaitic manuscripts in the original; for the other manuscripts, I rely on digital images and secondary literature.

[341] Gardthausen, *Catalogus*, p. 11; Clark, *Checklist of Manuscripts in St. Catherine's Monastery, Mount Sinai*, p. 1. Compare also Treiger, "From Theodore Abū Qurra," p. 21.

[342] Based on an ultraviolet and near-infrared analysis by Dino-Lite Digital Microscope that I carried out *in situ* in March 2017.

[343] On the dating, see Treiger, "From Theodore Abū Qurra," p. 21n42.

[344] Gardthausen, *Catalogus*, p. 11; Clark, *Checklist*, p. 1.

the part that was later replaced, have been identified by Binggeli as the undertext of Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS L 120 sup. (bifolia 125/132 and 139/134).[345]

Script: *maiuscula ogivalis inclinata* and Abbasid book hand

Date: ninth century[346]

Sinai, MS Gr. 36

Content: Blank (1r–2v), Arabic introduction to the book of Psalms (3r–9v), Greek text with Arabic translation (10r–232v), arranged in two columns with the Arabic to the right.

200 fols., corresponds to the Violet Fragment on fols. 183v–184v, 187v–188v. Ruled parchment, 20 x 15 cm, Greek 22–23 lines per page, Arabic 14–18 lines per page, iron gall ink, 4 bifolia/ quire, following the Gregory Rule and opening with the hair side, quire signatures found on the opening folio in the upper-right margin in the form of Greek numerals. Additional parts of the manuscript are found today as Sinai, MS Gr. NF MG 9.

Script: *maiuscula ogivalis inclinata* and Abbasid book hand

Date: ninth century

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Or. Sim. 6 (fol. 2, fragment C)[347]

Content: Psalms 143:7–13 and 145:8–146:6, Greek text and Arabic translation, arranged in two columns with the Arabic to the right.

Bifolium. Unruled parchment, 16 x 14 cm, Greek 21 lines per page, Arabic 20 lines per page, fourth bifolium in the quire, opening with the hair side.

Script: *maiuscula ogivalis inclinata* and Abbasid book hand

Date: ninth century

Moscow, State Library, MS 432[348]

Content: Psalms 70:7–16; 73:4–14; 77:28–38; and 79:9–18 in Greek, Syriac, and Arabic (in this order on both recto and verso).

4 folios, parchment, partly damaged by water, ruled by lead pencil, 29 x 23 cm, three columns in Greek, Syriac, and Arabic, 35–36 lines per page. The columns were designed by the scribe to correspond to the biblical text. An *ex libris* shows that the fragments belonged to Abraham Norov (1789–1869), who was Russian minister of education in 1854 and acquired the manuscript on his journeys in Palestine. It seems to have originated in the Mar Saba Monastery.

---

[345] Binggeli, "Les trois David, copistes arabes de Palestine aux 9e-10e s."

[346] The dating of scripts, which I arrived at in consultation with Miriam L. Hjälm (who is preparing a paleographic study on early Christian-Arabic manuscripts), is mine.

[347] Rahlfs and Fraenkel, *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments,* 1:64–65. An image can be seen at http://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht?PPN=PPN685013049&PHYSID=PHYS_0005&D-MDID=DMDLOG_0001.

[348] The manuscript is described in all details, with edition and facsimiles, in Pigulevskaya, "Greko-siro-arabska-ya rukopis' IX veka." See also Treiger, "From Theodore Abū Qurra," p. 20.

Script: *maiuscula ogivalis inclinata*, Estrangelo, and Abbasid book hand

Date: ninth century

Sinai, MS Ar., NF, Parch. 4[349]

Content: Incomplete Book of Psalms.

83 fols., parchment, 134–150 x 92–98 cm, 15 lines per page. Copied by David of Ashkelon.

Script: Abbasid book hand

Date: tenth century

Birmingham, Mingana, MS Christian Arabic Add. 137[350]

Content: Psalms 1–3.

1 folio, parchment, 16.2 x 12.8 cm, 19 lines per page.

Script: Abbasid book hand

Date: ninth century

Bryn Mawr, College Library, MS BV 47

This manuscript was originally part of the Arnold Mettler-Specker collection, on loan at Zurich library MS Or. 94. It was featured in the famous Katalog Hiersemann 500 (as no. 39), auctioned in 1948, and eventually donated to Bryn Mawr College Library.[351]

Content: The book of Psalms; Psalms 1 and 2 and part of 3 are missing, but the rest of the 150 Psalms are extant and found on fols. 1r–71v. They are followed by a group of nine canticles (72r–79r), including the Song of Miriam, the Prayer of Moses, the Prayer of Hanna, the Prayer of Jonah, and the Magnificat of Mary. On fol. 79v there is a colophon by the scribe Buṭrus b. Yūsuf. It corresponds to the Violet Fragment on fols. 36v–37r and 37v–38r.

79 fols., ruled parchment, 19.7 x 13.4 cm, 20–22 lines per page.

Script: Abbasid book hand

Date: 304 AH, corresponding to 916/917 CE

---

[349] Meimaris, *Katalogos tōn neōn aravikōn cheirographōn tēs Hieras Monēs Aikaterinēs tou Orous Sina*, pl. 6. Compare also Treiger, "From Theodore Abū Qurra," p. 21; Binggeli, "Les trois David," p. 110; and Géhin, "Manuscrits sinaïtiques dispersés I: les fragments syriaques et arabes de Paris," p. 29.

[350] Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts: Now in the Possession of the Trustees of the Woodbrooke Settlement, Selly Oak, Birmingham*, 3:5.

[351] Hiersemann, *Katalog 500. Orientalische Manuskripte. Arabische, syrische, griechische, armenische, persische Handschriften des 7.-18. Jahrhunderts*, p. 19. On this manuscript, see also Pollock, "Two Christian Arabic manuscripts in the Bryn Mawr Library"; and Treiger, "From Theodore Abū Qurra," p. 20; as well as Baumstark, "Minbar = Thron, und älteste arabische Psaltertexte"; and Baumstark, "Der älteste erhaltene griechisch-arabische Text von Psalm 110 (109)." Images can be seen at http://archive.org/details/ArabicPsalterBV47BMCReduced. A missing folio of this manuscript (containing Psalms 1–2) is extant as Cadbury Research Library MS Mingana Arab. Chr. Add. 137. See Hjälm, "From Palestine to Damascus to Berlin."

The Translation

The manuscripts above place the Violet Fragment in the scribal context of ninth- to tenth-century Melkite communities. Further, they offer a text type that is much closer to it than that of Abū al-Fatḥ ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl, which had been suggested by Violet as a point of reference. Here I present a new transcription of the Violet Fragment into Arabic script, as well as a synoptic edition of Sinai, MSS Gr. 34–36 and of MS Moscow.[352] MS Bryn Mawr seems related, yet on the whole exhibits a revised translation that merits a more detailed discussion elsewhere.

---

[352] In what follows, square brackets indicate my reconstruction of the text. I give the orthography as found in the manuscripts. For the sake of clarity, the *hamza*, which as a rule remains unmarked in the manuscripts, and basic vocalization have been added in accordance with standard Arabic orthography.

Ronny Vollandt

Violet Fragment	Sinai, MS Gr. 34	Sinai, MS Gr. 35	Sinai, MS Gr. 36
(20) [fol. 1r] ... صخرة فسالت [الأ]مياه[353] والأودية فاضت لعل وخبز يقدر يعطي أو يهي مايدة لشعبه	(20) ... صخرة فسالت أمياه والأودية فاضت هل وخبز يقدر يعطي أو يُهَيِّئ مايدة لشعبه	(20) ... صخرة وسالت الأمياه والأودية امتلأت لعله وخبز يقدر يعطي أو يهي مايدة لشعبه	(20) ... صخرة فسالت الأمياه والأودية فاضت لعله وخبز يقدر أن يعطي أو يهي مايدة لشعبه
(21) ولذلك سمع الرب فامتنع والنار اشتعلت في يعقوب ورجز صعد على إسرائيل	(21) ولذلك سمع الله فامتنع والنار اشتعلت في يعقوب والرجز صعد على إسرائيل	(21) منجل ذلك سمع الرب وابطأ والنار اشتعلت في يعقوب والرجز صعد في إسرائيل	(21) ولذلك سمع الرب فابطأ والنار اشتعلت في يعقوب والرجز صعد في إسرائيل
(22) لأنهم لم يؤمنوا بالله ول[م يتو]كلوا على خلاصه	(22) لأنهم لم يؤمنوا بالله [و]لا توكّلوا على خلاصه	(22) لأنهم لم يؤمنوا بالله ولم يرجون خلاصه	(22) لأنهم لم يؤمنوا بالله لا توكّلوا على مخلصه
(23) وأمر السحاب من فوق [وأبواب السماء فتح][354]	(23) وأمر السحاب من فوق وأبواب السماء فتح	(23) فأمر السحاب من فوق وأبواب السماء فتح	(23) وأمر السحاب من فوق وفتح أبواب السماء
(24) وأمطر لهم منًّا للأ[كل][355] وخبز[356] من السماء أعطاهم	(24) وأمطر لهم منًّا ليأكلون وخبز السماء أعطاهم	(24) وأمطر لهم المنّ للأكل وخبز السماء أعطاهم	(24) وأمطر لهم منًّا للأكل وخبز السماء أعطاهم
(25) خبز الملائكة[357] أكل الإنسان شبعًا بعث [fol. 1v] لهم لتملأ	(25) خبز الملائكة أكل الإنسان ذاك بعث لهم للشبع	(25) وخبزَ الملائكة أكل الإنسان ذاك بعث لهم للشبع	(25) خبزَ الملائكة أكل الإنسانُ بعث لهم ذاك للشبع
(26) أهاج التيمن من السماء وأتى بقوته العاصف	(26) هاج التيمن من السماء وأتا بقوة العاصف	(26) وأهاج التيمن من السماء	(26) هاج التيمن السماء وأتا بقوته العاصف
(27) وأمطر عليهم مثل التراب لحوم ومثل رمل البحور طيور[358] مجنحة	(27) وأمطر عليهم مثل التراب لحوم ومثل رمل البحار طيور مجنحة	(27) وأمطر عليهم لحم مثل التراب ومثل رمل البحور طيور مجنحة	(27) وأمطر عليهم مثل التراب لحوم ومثل لحم البحور طيور مجنحة
(28) فوقعت في وسط عسكرهم حول خيامهم	(28) سقطت في وسط عسكرهم حول خيمهم	(28) فوقعت في وسط عسكرهم حول خيمهم	(28) فوقعت في وسط عسكرهم حول مساكنهم
(29) وأكلوا وشبعوا جدًّا وشهوتهم جاب لهم	(29) فأكلوا وتملّوا جدًّا وأتاهم بشهوتهم	(29) وأكلوا وشبعوا جدًّا وشهوتهم جاب لهم	(29) وأكلوا وتملّوا جدًّا وأتاهم بشهوتهم
(30) لم يعدموا شهوتهم وعندما كان الطعام في فاههم	(30) لم يعدموا شهوتهم وإذ كان الطعام في فاههم	(30) ولم يعدموا شهوتهم وحيث كان الطعام في أفواههم	(30) لم يعدموا شهوتهم وحيث كان الطعام في أفواههم
(31) ورجز الله	(31) فرجز الله	(31) رجز الله	(31) ورجز الله

[353] Violet] مياه. A hole in the fragment obscures one or two letters, so that the readings آمياه and الأمياه are equally possible. The reconstruction is based on the majority of manuscripts.

[354] This part of the text is hardly legible today on the photograph.

[355] Violet] ليأكلوا. λιλ can be clearly seen, indicating the reading للآكل as in Sinai, MSS Gr. 35 and 36.

[356] Violet] خبزا

[357] The fragment reads ελελεικε, missing the letter μ.

[358] Violet] طيورا

Violet Fragment	Sinai, MS Gr. 34	Sinai, MS Gr. 35	Sinai, MS Gr. 36
(51) [fol. 2r] [...] [تبع]هم في] مسا[كن خام359]	(51)...تبعهم في مساكن خام	(51)...عناهم في مساكن خام	(51)...تبعهم بأرض خام
(52) وساق [مثل الـ]غنم360 [شعبَه] وأصع[دهم] مثل [رعية] البر[ية]	(52) وساق مثل الغنم شعبَه وأصعدهم كرعية في البرية	(52) وساق مثل الغنم شعبه وأطلعهم مثل رعية في البرية	(52) وساق كالغنم شعبه وأصعدهم مثل رعية في البرية
(53) وهد[اهم] بالر[جاء ولم361] يجز[عوا] وأعد[اءَهم] غطى [الـ]بحُر	(53) وهداهم على الرجاء ولم يخزِوا وغطًا البحر أعداءهم	(53) ودبرهم على الرجاء ولم يتخوّفوا وغطًا البحر على أعدائهم	(53) وهداهم على الرجاء ولم يجزعوا وأعداءَهم غطا البحر
(54) وأدخ[لهم] إلى جبـ[ـل] قدس[ـه الـ]جبل هـ[ـذا] الذي ا[ستفا]دت362 يمـ[ـينه]	(54) وأدخلهم جبل مقدسه هذا الجبل الذي استفادت يمينه	(54) وأدخلهم طور قدسه هذا الطور الذي استفادت يمينه	(54) وأدخلهم جبل مقدسه هذا الجبل الذي أقبلت يمينه
(55) وأخرج [عن363 و]جوههم364 الأمم وأورذ[هم] الميرا[ث] بالـ[جبل] وأسك[ـن في] مسا[كنهم] قبا[ئل إسـ]رائيـ[ل] [fol. 2v]	(55) وأخرج عن وجوههم الأمم وأورثهم المواريث بالجبل وأسكن في مساكنهم قبائل إسرائيل	(55) وأخرج من قدّام وجوههم الأمم وأورثهم في الجبل المواريث وأسكن في مساكنهم قبائل إسرائيل	(55) وأخرج الأمم عن وجوههم وأورثهم المواريث بالجبل وأسكن في مساكنهم قبائل إسرائيل
(56) وابتلوا ومرمروا الإله العليّ وشهاداته لم يحفظوا	(56) وابتلوا ومرمروا الله العليّ ولم يحفظوا شهاداته	(56) وجرّبوا ومرمروا الله العليّ وشهاداته لم يحفظوا	(56) وبلوا ومرمروا الله العليّ ولم يحفظوا366 شهاداته
(57) فانقلبوا وغدروا مثل آبائهم انقلبوا مثل القوس العوجاء	(57) ورجعوا وغدروا كمثل آبائهم انقلبوا مثل القوس العوجاء365	(57) ورجعوا وغدروا مثل آبائهم انقلبوا مثل قوس معوجة	(57) ورجعوا وغدروا مثل ابايهم انقلبوا مثل قوس معوجة
(58) وأسخطوه بأوثانهم ومنحوتاتهم أغاروه	(58) وأسخطوه بآكامهم وبمتحويتهم أغاروه	(58) وأسخطوه بآكامهم وفي متحويتهم غاظوه	(58) واسخطوه وثانهم وبمتحويتهم اغاروه
(59) سمع الله وتغافل وأفسل جدًّا لإسرا[ئيـ]ـل	(59) سمع الله فتغافل وأرذل إسرائيل جدًّا	(59) سمع الله وتغافل وأفسل إسرائيل جدًّا	(59) سمع الله فتغافل وارذل لاسرائيل جدا
(60) وأقصى خيمة سيلوم المسكن الذي سكن في البشر وأسلـ[ـم] للسبي عزّهـ[م]	(60) وأقصا خيمة سيلوم المسكن الذي سكن في الناس وأسلم للسبي قوّتهم	(60) وأقصا رواق سيلوم الرواق الذي أسكن بين الناس وأسلم للسبي قوّتهم	(60) وأقصا خيمة سيلوم المسكن الذي أسكن في الناس وأسلم للسبي قوّتهم

---

359 حام [Violet

360 غنم]Violet

361 فلم]Violet

362 أخذت [Violet

363 Violet suggests من or قدامى من, as in Sinai, MS Gr. 34. The reconstruction here is based on the majority of manuscripts.

364 وجههم]Violet

365 [*sic*].

366 [*sic*].

Moscow, MS 432
(28) ووقع في وسط محلتهم
حول مظلاتهم
(29) وأكلوا وشبعوا جدًّا
وشهوتهم جاب لهم
(30) لم يعدموا من شهوتهم
وأيضاً إذ الطعام في فأوههم
(31) ورجز الله

The manuscript sources, edited above, contain the same text type, with minor deviations. Variation can be observed on the lexical level, as for example in v. 21, *abṭāʾ* "he held himself back" in MSS Sinai, Ar. 35 and 36, while the Violet Fragment and MS Sinai, Ar. 34 read *imtanʿa* "he refrained." In v. 59, the Violet Fragment and MS Sinai, Ar. 35 translate ἐξουδένωσεν "he abhorred [Israel]" as *afsala* "he pronounced against"; MSS Ar. 34 and 36, in contrast, have *ardhala* "he rejected." In addition to this lexical variation, there is a clear tendency, especially in the manuscripts from St. Catherine's, which are dated slightly later, to adjust the translation to the rules of Classical Arabic. Examples can be found in changes of word order or in the introduction of conjunctions (see below for both of these). In many respects, the Violet Fragment seems to be furthest from such a standardization. In addition, it shows some non-standard features on the morphological and phonological level (see chapter 2 of this book).

The manuscripts contain a translation of the book of Psalms that seems to have been current among Melkite communities in *bilād al-shām* in the ninth and tenth centuries, possibly earlier. ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl, deacon of Antioch in the eleventh century, produced an Arabic version of Psalms that, as already observed by Violet, shows clear affinities to this earlier text. His translation may in many respects be seen as a revision and standardization of the earlier version transmitted in the first group of manuscripts. Similar attempts to produce a linguistically more acceptable and textually less oscillating edition were made by Saadiah Gaon (882–942 CE) for the Arabic version of the Pentateuch in use among the Rabbanite Jewish community and by Abū Saʿīd, active in thirteenth-century Egypt, for the Samaritan Arabic version.[367] Prompted by the wish to establish a linguistically superior and textually reliable version, in 1252 al-Asʿad Abū al-Faraj Hibat Allāh b. al-ʿAssāl produced a critical edition of the Arabic gospels that was in use among the Copts.[368]

Translation Techniques

Starting from the relationship between translation and Vorlage, a study of translation techniques aims to describe the strategy employed by the translator to transfer particular structures, concepts, or ideas from the source language into the target language. As Barr puts it in

---

[367] Vollandt, *Arabic Versions*, pp. 80–84 and 87–89.

[368] See Abullif, "al-Asʿad Ibn al-ʿAssal, introduzioni alla traduzione dei Quattro Vangeli"; Abullif, *Dirāsa ʿan al-Muʾtaman b. al-ʿAssāl wa-kitābihi "Majmūʿ uṣūl al-dīn" wa-taḥqīquhu*; Samir, "La version arabe des Evangiles d'al-Asʿad Ibn al-ʿAssāl. Étude des manuscrits et spécimens"; Bailey, "Hibat Allah Ibn al-ʿAssāl and His Arabic Thirteenth-century Critical Edition of the Gospels (with Special Attention to Luke 16:16 and 17:10)." A critical edition of al-Asʿad's translation was furnished by Moawad, *Al-Asʿad Abū al-Faraǧ Hibat Allāh ibn al-ʿAssāl: Die arabische Übersetzung der vier Evangelien.*

his seminal work *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Bible Translations*, the description of converging tendencies "has to concern itself much of the time with variations within a basically literal approach; different kinds of literality, diverse levels of literal connection, and various kinds of departure from the literal."[369] He emphasizes that varying degrees of literalism on different levels need to be identified. A translation may be literal on one level but tend to greater freedom on another. In addition, Barr pointed out that a proper characterization of translation technique requires identifying the translator's specific concerns. A full understanding of the translation strategy depends on knowing the translator's motivation and must take account of the translation's intended use. Translations meant to serve communal educational needs are usually marked by greater literalism; those produced for didactic purposes in the context of the schoolhouse would differ quite naturally from those directed to an educated elite.

Concentrating on the Septuagint, Barr isolated six categories used for measuring the differences between a more literal and a less literal translation. Exploring two of these will lead us through a brief and tentative survey of the translation techniques found in the Violet Fragment and the manuscripts related to it.

Barr's first category, "the division into elements or segments," addresses the way in which the individual elements of the source text are represented in translation. It assesses the translator's underlying principle for segmenting his Vorlage into units, ranging from entire sentences or phrases to single lexical items and on to attached morphemes, particles, and conjunctions.

The Violet Fragment, as a rule, shows an uncompromising concern with rendering every individual element in the Greek Vorlage by a closely corresponding equivalent in the target language, often at the expense of the stylistic and grammatical rules of Arabic. On the syntactic level, there is a close mirroring of the Greek word order, resulting in a strict word-by-word translation. A good illustration can be found in verse 20.

| (20) ... πέτραν καὶ ἐρρύησαν ὕδατα καὶ χείμαρροι κατεκλύσθησαν, μὴ καὶ ἄρτον δύναται δοῦναι ἢ ἑτοιμάσαι τράπεζαν τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ | (20) ... صخرة فسالت الأمياه والأودية فاضت لعل وخبز يقدر يعطي أو يهي مايدة لشعبه | (20) ... a rock, so that the waters gushed out and the streams overflowed. Can he give bread or provide a table for his people? |

One can observe that word order is strictly retained. Greek μὴ καὶ ἄρτον δύναται δοῦναι, for example, is rendered as لعل وخبز يقدر يعطي. *La'lla* followed by *wa-* is not a structure of Classical Arabic and has to be regarded as an imitation of μὴ καὶ, which introduces interrogative clauses in biblical Greek. MS Sinai, Gr. 34 shows a certain discomfort with the structure and has replaced *la'lla* with *hal*. Continuing on with this segment of text, the Violet Fragment has *yaqdur yu'ṭī*, omitting a conjunction, which once again mirrors the syntax of the Greek text, δύναται δοῦναι. MS Sinai, Gr. 36, which reads *yaqdur an yu'ṭī*, has amended the text and introduced a conjunction, as would be expected in Classical Arabic.

Verse 27 furnishes further examples of the practice of imitative renderings.

---

[369] Barr, *Typology of Literalism*, p. 281.

Ronny Vollandt

(27) καὶ ἔβρεξεν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ὡσεὶ χοῦν σάρκας καὶ ὡσεὶ ἄμμον θαλασσῶν πετεινὰ πτερωτά	(27) وأمطر عليهم مثل التراب لحوم ومثل رمل البحور طيور مجنحة	(27) He rained upon them flesh like the dust and like sand of the seas winged birds.

Each unit of the source text (conjunction-verb-preposition-pronoun-preposition of similarity-noun-noun-conjunction-preposition of similarity-noun-noun-noun-adjective) is reflected, in the same order, in the translation. What is more, nouns agree in number. While the dust (χοῦν/*al-turāb*) and the sand (ἄμμον/*raml*) are in the singular, the flesh (σάρκας/*luḥūm*), the sea (θαλασσῶν/*al-buḥūr*), and the birds (πετεινὰ/*ṭuyūr*) are in the plural.

The word order is even retained in the Violet Fragment in cases where it seems very alien to Classical Arabic, where only nominal clauses are usually ordered subject - predicate. The most common word order in verbal clauses is verb - subject - object, although this sequence may be modified after certain conjunctions or particles. To retain the formal structure of the source text, in particular its chiasms, the syntactic rules of Classical Arabic are ignored. For example, in verse 23 of the Violet Fragment, the second stichos—*wa-abwāb al-samāʾ fataḥa* "and the doors of heaven he opened"—translates καὶ θύρας οὐρανοῦ ἀνέῳξεν "and the doors of heaven he opened." MS Sinai, Ar. 36, in contrast, has *wa-fataḥa abwāb al-samāʾ* "and he opened the doors of heaven," which brings the translation into alignment with the prescribed word order of Classical Arabic. A further example can be found in verse 29: καὶ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν αὐτῶν ἤνεγκεν αὐτοῖς "and their desire he gave to them" is translated by fronting the object in the Violet Fragment, giving *wa-shahawatahum jāb lahum* "and their desire he brought them." Bringing it closer to Classical Arabic, MS Sinai, Ar. 34 inverts the order, reading *wa-atāhum bi-shahawatihim* "and he brought them their desire."

Barr's second category for measuring differences between translations, "quantitative addition or subtraction of elements," looks at the quantitative divergence of a translation from the original. For example, there may be textual expansions of a theological and interpretative nature, ranging from the addition of a single word to phrases and lengthy excursuses. The opposite tendency, subtraction or omission, reflects a translator's choice to leave elements of the source text out of the translation. Neither of these, however, occurs in the Violet Fragment: it neither adds nor subtracts anything from the source text. The translation's main feature lies precisely in this uncompromising metaphrastic imitation of the Greek source text in all its details. In the words of D. Tené, the translation constructs a certain "semantic transparency" to serve a didactic purpose.[370] The ultraliteral approach, as a pedagogical tool in scholastic environments, goes back to antiquity. Aquila's famous retranslation of the Bible into Greek, often described as a mirror translation, is said to have had a didactic end.[371] Outside the Bible, another illustration can be found in a number of bilingual texts of Vergil and others, with the Latin and Greek in parallel columns.[372]

---

[370] Tené, "Hashⱱaʾt ha-leshonot beʾezor ha-dibbur ha-ʿaravi ba-meʾot ha-ʿasirit ye-aḥat-ʿesreh la-minyan ha-meḵubbal."

[371] See, for example, Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila.*

[372] Brock, "Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity."

Conclusion

From the above, a number of conclusions can be drawn. The first suggests viewing the Arabic translation in the larger context of additional manuscripts that contain the same text type with minor variations. The Violet Fragment reflects a translation that is found also in other witnesses and, hence, cannot be understood as a textual unicum or ad hoc translation. The Arabic translation, represented in the Violet Fragment and other manuscripts, shows an uncompromising concern with remaining as close as possible to the formal structure of the Greek Vorlage. It preserves the word order, number, and the chiastic arrangement, irrespective of Classical Arabic usage. Being highly literal, the translation facilitated the comprehension and memorization of the biblical text in Greek, which was found alongside its translation. The translation appears to have complemented the Greek, not only on the page but possibly also in a liturgical setting, glossing it word by word.

Unique, however, was the use of Greek letters. In this detail the scribe of the Violet Fragment differs from all other scribal embodiments of the translation and sets it apart from them. But why did the scribe copy the Arabic in Greek letters? In transcribing the Arabic phonetically, the scribe relied on the phonetic and orthographic conventions of Classical Greek, which he presumably knew from reciting the Septuagint or might perhaps have learned from handbooks of Greek grammar, as Mavroudi has shown.[373] Nonetheless, his orthography does exhibit an awareness of the pronunciation of Greek as it was spoken in his time; this can be seen, for example, in the interchangeable use of Eta and Iota to mark a short /i/ vowel. This suggests that the scribe may well have spoken both contemporary Greek and Arabic and, to put it in different words, possessed a bilingual competence. Classical Greek, the language his ecclesiastical affairs would have been conducted in, appears to have been acquired through scholastic education. The mere fact that the fragment contains the book of Psalms seems to strongly suggest a liturgical setting; however, an appropriate understanding of liturgical Greek had to be ensured by an ultraliteral translation into his and his congregation's vernacular, Arabic. This practice is reminiscent of Hebrew scriptural readings being accompanied by an Aramaic translation, the Targum, in the Jewish context. The Talmud prescribes that the Targum be recited in the synagogue by a designated individual, the *meturgeman*. The *meturgeman* had to be distinct from the person who recited the Hebrew weekly portion. Also distinct was the mode of reading: while the Torah was chanted from an unpointed scroll, the Targum had to be performed with no recourse to a written text. The distinction was necessary, so as to convey the difference in hierarchy between the Hebrew text and the oral-performative interpretation in the Aramaic vernacular.[374] In the public reading, the Hebrew Torah and the Aramaic Targum were performed verse by verse, antiphonally intermitting each other.

It is known that Arabic was used for certain parts of the liturgy, such as the scriptural readings, in many urban as well as monastic communities in the medieval Middle East. There is evidence that the Psalms were already being recited in Arabic prior to the ninth century. For example, a monk at Mar Sabas is reported to have recited the Psalms in Arabic.[375] Another

---

[373] Mavroudi, "Arabic Words," p. 323.

[374] Cf. Alexander, "The Targumim and the Rabbinic Rules for the Delivery of the Targum." The hierarchy of the two texts is also reflected in further stipulations. Whereas bodily blemishes, for example blindness, or improper clothes would disqualify a person from chanting the Torah, these are acceptable for the *meturgeman*.

[375] Bollandus, *Acta Sanctorum Martii*, 3:176.

monk astonished a Western pilgrim to Jerusalem at the beginning of the ninth century, when "he conducted his psalmody in the language of the Saracens" (*Sarracenica lingua psallit*).[376]

However, despite some use of Arabic, the traditional liturgical languages—Greek, Syriac, or Coptic—continued to be primary in liturgy. In this context, it is important to stress that the introduction of Arabic was not intended to contest the status of these elevated languages of prestige, nor were the Arabic translations intended to displace or supplant the earlier texts. Arabic remained, in comparison to the traditional languages, of a secondary rank. This is also reflected in the *mise-en-page* of many bilingual manuscripts, where the translations occupy a much smaller space than the original texts.[377] In the case of the Violet Fragment, then, one could conjecture that the scribe was attempting to transfer, via the script, some of the prestige of the liturgical language, Greek, to the translation.

There are additional sources that might suggest a similar dynamic in a Coptic-Arabic liturgical or didactic context. In the 1899 inventory of the Maronite Library of Mar Elias Church in Aleppo, for example, Ḥarfūsh lists *rasā'il Bulūs 'arabī bi-khaṭṭ qubṭī* "Arabic Pauline Epistles in Coptic script."[378] In 1926, Sohby published thirty-five folios of an Arabic text in Coptic script from the thirteenth century; this text was apparently intended for the instruction of novices, and it draws mainly upon the Sayings of the Fathers (Apophthegmata Patrum) and the Orations of Abba Isaiah of Scetis.[379]

Even though the current whereabouts of the Violet Fragment are unknown, this investigation into its material aspects, as far as they are discernible on the surviving photograph, places the fragment into a particular scribal context. This allows us to go beyond the undoubtedly important study of the linguistic features behind the Greek transcriptions and provides important contextualizing evidence. It shares its scribal context with a number of other manuscripts, some of which are fragmentary like it is, while others are complete. With some minor variation, these manuscripts contain the same text type and were produced between the ninth and tenth centuries. All of them were produced by the Melkite community before ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Faḍl, deacon of Antioch in the eleventh century, set out to provide a standardized and linguistically improved Arabic version of the book of Psalms. The unparalleled use of Greek script to write Arabic (excluding epigraphic evidence), which made the Violet Fragment famous and led to many conjectures about its dating in the past, may be linked to a liturgical setting that also can be inferred from its translation techniques.

---

[376] Tobler and Molinier, *Itinera Hierosolymitana et descriptiones Terrae Sanctae*, p. 302.

[377] As can be seen, for example, in MSS Sinai, Greek 34–36. The width of the column containing the Arabic translation unit is smaller, almost to a ratio of 2:1. This can also be observed in many additional Coptic-Arabic bilingual manuscripts.

[378] Ḥarfūsh, "The Library of Our Maronite Denomination in the Protected City of Aleppo." This manuscript is not found in Ḥarfūsh's list of Bibles, which suggests that it was probably lost after the 1899 inventory and before he compiled his Bible list. I thank Vevian Zaki for drawing my attention to this reference.

[379] Evelyn-White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'n Natrûn: New Coptic Texts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius*, pp. 234–67. On the former, compare Burmester, "Further Leaves from the Arabic MS. in Coptic Script of the Apophthegmata Patrum." See also Blau, *A Handbook of Early Middle Arabic*, pp. 155–67.

Appendix 2

Pre-Islamic Graeco-Arabic Texts

This appendix contains examples of pre-Islamic Arabic texts and anthroponyms written in Greek letters as a point of reference for the language and orthography of the PF. I have included texts that occur in either a Safaitic bilingual or geographical context.

A1

Location: Wādī Salmā, Northeastern Jordan

Editio Princeps: Al-Jallad and al-Manaser, "New Epigraphica I."

Photo: S. Abbadi; tracing: A. Al-Jallad.

ΑΥΣΟΣΟΥΔΟΥ BANAOYXAZIM MOYΑΛΙΔΑΜΙΑΘΑ OYAMIΣEIAZAΘAOEΩ BANAAAΔAYPA AOYAEIPAYBAKΛA BIXANOY	¹Αυσος Ουδου ²Βαναου Χαζιμ³ μου αλ-Ιδαμι αθα⁴ οα μι- Σεια ζαθαοε ω⁵ α Βαναα α-δαυρα6 αουα ειραυ βακλα⁷ βι-Χανου[ν]⁸	ʾAws (bin) hūḏ (?) (bin) Bannāʾ (bin) Kazim ʾal-ʾidāmiyy ʾatawa mis-seʿiʿ šatāw wa Bannāʾa ʾad-dawra wa yirʿaw baqla bi-kānūn

Translation: ʾAws son of Hūḏ (?) son of Bannāʾ son of Kazim, the ʾIdāmite, came from Sīʿ to spend the winter with Bannāʾ in this place and they pastured on fresh herbage during Kānūn

Notes

1) The author most likely identifies himself as an Edomite, Safaitic *ʾdmy*.
2) The 3ms verb corresponding to Classical Arabic ʾatā preserves the final triphthong, ʾatawa, like Safaitic *ʾtw*.
3) The accusative case is attested in baqla "fresh herbage" and in the name bannāʾa, where it follows the *wāw al-māʿiyyah*.
4) The *s² of the infinitive "to spend the winter" is spelled with a mirrored Zeta, ζαθαοε.
5) The name of the town of Sīʿ is spelled identically to its transcription in Greek inscriptions, and corresponds to Nabataean sʿyʿ and Safaitic s¹ᶜᶜ.[380] This suggests a pronunciation /seʕīʕā/.

AMGreek 1

Location: Wādī al-Ḥašād, northeastern Jordan

Editio Princeps: Al-Jallad and al-Manaser, "New Epigraphica II."

Photo: A. al-Manaser; tracing: A. Al-Jallad.

Greek	Normalized Greek	Safaitic
ΘΑΙΜΟΣΓΑΦΑΛΟΥ	θαιμος Γαφαλου	*l tm bn ġḥfl* [le-taym ben gaḥpʰal]

[380] Milik, "Une bilingue araméo-grecque."

AMGreek 2

Location: Wādī al-Ḥašād, northeastern Jordan

Editio Princeps: Al-Jallad and al-Manaser, "New Epigraphica II."

Photo: A. al-Manaser; tracing: A. Al-Jallad.
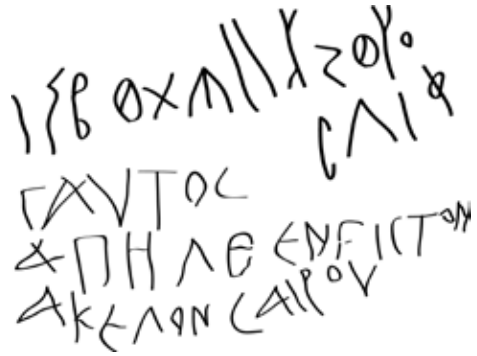
Greek	Normalized Greek	Safaitic
ΓΑΥΤΟΣ ΑΠΗΛΘΕΝΕΙΣΤΟΝ ΑΚΕΛΟΝΣΑΙΡΟΥ	Γαυτος ἀπῆλθεν [ε]ἰς τόν Ακελον Σαιρου Gawtos departed into the Akel of Sair	*l ġt w tḥll ʾfwh ʿql s¹r* [le-ġawṯ wa-taḥallala ʾapʰwāha ʿaqel sayr] By ġawṯ and he departed (this place) into the foremost part of the protected area of Sayr

Notes

1) The spelling of the name *ġṯ* in Greek contains two rare strategies: the rendering of the voiced uvular fricative with Gamma and the interdental with Tau. As argued in the editio princeps, the use of Tau cannot be interpreted as representing the loss of interdentals in the Arabic. Since plain t is usually represented by Theta (see AMGreek 1), it, instead, confirms that Greek still realized Theta as [tʰ] and so there was no direct equivalent to Arabic ṯ [θ].

AMGreek 3

Location: Tell al-ʿAbed, northeastern Jordan

Editio Princeps: Al-Jallad and al-Manaser, "New Epigraphica II."

Photo: M.C.A. Macdonald; tracing: A. Al-Jallad.

Greek	Normalized Greek	Safaitic
ΒΑΛΕΣΟΣΑΝΑΜΟΥΤΟΥΚΑΔΑΜΟΥ	Βαλεσος Αναμου τοῦ Καδαμου Bāles son of ʔanʕam son of Qadam	*l bls bn ʾnʕm* [le-bāles ben ʔanʕam] By Bāles son of ʔanʕam

WH 1860 = Greek 2

Present Location: Amman Museum (14174)

Editio Princeps: Winnett and Harding, Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns.

Photo: F.V. Winnett (OCIANA).

Greek	Normalized Greek
ΟΥΑΒΑΛΛΑΣ ΤΑΝΝΗΛΟΥΤΟΥ [] ΟΥΑΒΑΛΛΟΥ	Ουαβαλλας Ταννηλου τοῦ Ουαβαλλου Wahballāh son of Ṯannʔel son of Wahballāh

Notes

1) The Greek spelling shows that the name whblh is not wahb-lāh but wahb-allāh, with an elided glottal stop.
2) The spelling of Safaitic ṯ = ẓ with Tau suggests a voiceless realization, probably [θˤ].
3) The same three names begin the Safaitic inscription WH 1849 and was likely authored by the same man.

WH 3563 = Greek 3

Location: Northeastern Jordan.

Editio Princeps: Winnett and Harding, Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns.

Tracing: F.V. Winnett (OCIANA).

Greek	Normalized Greek	Safaitic (WH 3562)
ΜΑΝΟΣΙΑΙΘΕΟΥΜΝΗΣΘΗ	Μανος Ιαιθεου μνησθῆ May Maʕn son of Yayt̲eʕ be remembered	*l mʿn bn yt̲ʿ bn ʿt̲s¹ d̲ ʾl ġs²y [w] wld h-mʿzy w qnt̲ h-s²nʾ f h lt s¹lm* *le maʕn ben yayt̲eʕ ben ʿt̲s d̲ī ʾāl ġśy [wa-] wallada ham-meʕzaya wa qanat̲a haś-śāneʾa pʰa hā-llāt salema* By Maʕn son of Yayt̲eʕ son of ʿt̲s1 of the lineage of ġs2y and he helped the goats to give birth and feared the enemy so, O Lāt, may he be secure

Notes

1) The Greek and Safaitic clearly refer to the same person even though their content is not connected.

I1-I2; WR.C 2-3

Location: Wādī Rushaydah, Isawi, Syria

Editio Princeps: Macdonald, Al Muʾazzin, and Nehmé, "Les inscriptions safaïtic de Syrie."

Photo and tracing: M.C.A. Macdonald (OCIANA).

Greek	Normalized Greek	Safaitic (WR.C 5), associated text
ΣΑΑΡΟΣΧΕΣΕΜΑ ΝΟΥΣΑΙΦΗΝΟΣ ΦΥΛΗΣΧΑΥΝΗ ΝΩΝ	Σααρος Χεσεμανου Σαιφηνος φυλὴς Χαυνηνῶν Ṣaʕār son of Keḥsemān the ṣayfite of the lineage of Kawn	*l ʾtm bn rb [w] wgd mly śʕr* [le-ʾʔatamm ben rabb [wa] wagada malāya śaʕār] By ʔatamm son of Rabb and he found the words of Śaʕār
Greek	Safaitic equivalent	Phonetic reconstruction
ΜΑΑΙΑΝΗС	*mʕyn*	[maʕyān]
ΔΗΒΟС	*ḏʾb*	[ḏeʔb]

Notes

1) This Greek inscription was found and read by a certain ʾtm son of Rb, who recognized the Greek Σααρος as Safaitic śʕr..
2) As the *editio princeps* points out, the Greek group name Σαιφηνος must correspond to the lineage group ḏf = /ṣayf/, demonstrating again the transcription of Old Arabic *ḍ with Sigma.
3) The author of the Greek inscription likely authored inscription 1 in Al-Rousan, Nuqūš Ṣafāwiyyah min Wādī Qaṣṣāb.

J1-J2

Location: Wādī Shām, Isawi, Syria

Editio Princeps: Macdonald, Al Muʾazzin, and Nehmé, "Les inscriptions safaïtic de Syrie."

Photo and tracing: M.C.A. Macdonald (OCIANA).
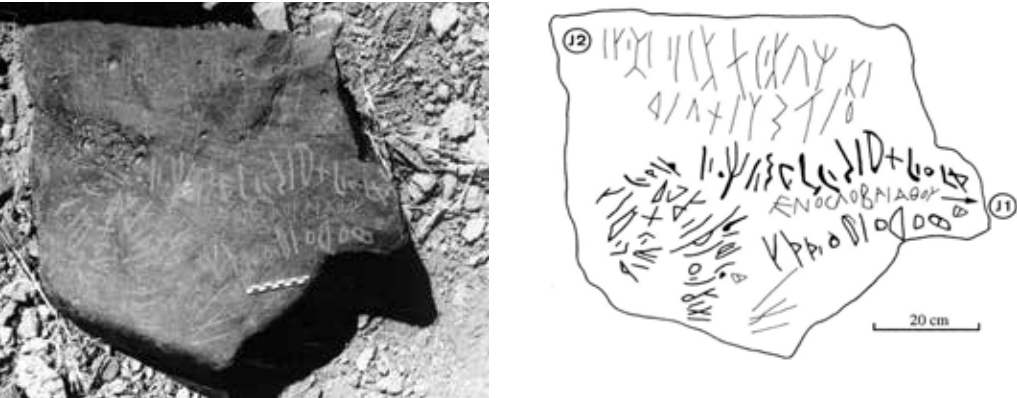
Greek	Normalized Greek	Safaitic
ΕΝΟΣ ΛΟΒΑΙΑΘΟΥ	Ενος Λοβαιαθου Henʔ son of LobayʔaT	*l hnʾ bn lbʾt bn ʾs1 ḏ ʾl mlk f h lt s¹lm* [le-henʾʔ ben lobayʾʔaT ben ʾʔaws ḏī ʾʔāl mālek pha hā-llāt salema] 'by Henʔ son of LobayʔaT son of ʔaws of the lineage of Mlk, so, O Lāt, may he be secure'

Notes

1) Notice the absence of any representation of the h or ʾ in the name hnʾ; the glottal stop is represented by a hiatus in lbʾt.

C 2823-2824 (+ Greek)

Location: Zalaf (j) In the neighborhood of Zalaf, near Wādī al-Shām; 32.9269; 37.3296

Editio Princeps: Ryckmans, CIS V. Tracing: M. Dunand (OCIANA).
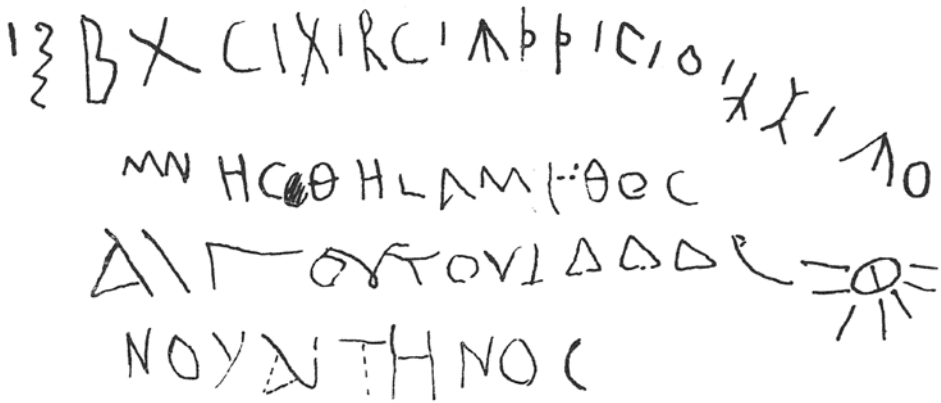
Greek	Normalized Greek	Safaitic
ΜΝΗΣΘΗΣΑΜΕΘΟΣ ΑΛΙΖΟΥΤΟΥΑΔΔ[Ι] ΝΟΥΑΓΓΗΝΟΣ	Μνησθῆ Σαμεθος Αλιζου τοῦ Αδδιδανου Αγγηνος May Śāmet son of Ḫalīṣ son of Ḥaddīdān the Ḥaggite be remembered	*l s²mt bn ḫlṣ bn ḥddn bn ʿn ḏ ʾl ḥg* [le-śāmet ben ḫalīṣ ben ḥaddīdān ben ʿayn ḏī ʾāl ḥagg]

Notes

The problematic Greek text was ingeniously restored by Milik, "Notes."
1) Note the non-representation of [ḫ] in Greek transcription in the name ḫlṣ = Αλιζου.

WR.D 3 + Greek

Location: Wādī Rushaydah, Syria

Editio Princeps: Macdonald, Literacy and Identity.

Photo: M.C.A. Macdonald (OCIANA).

Greek	Normalized Greek	Safaitic
ΜΝΗΣΘΗΝΑΣΡΗΛΟΣΑΛΟΥΟΥ	Μνησθῆ Νασρηλος Αλουου May Naṣrʔel son of ʕalw be remembered	*lnṣrʔlbn ʕlw* [le-naṣrʔel ben ʕalw] By Naṣrʔel son of ʕalw

Notes

1) Note the use of ου to represent consonantal w in word-final position in the spelling of the Safaitic ʕlw.

BRenv.A4

Location: Al-Suwaydah, Syria

Editio Princeps: Macdonald, Al Muʾazzin, and Nehmé, "Les inscriptions safaïtic de Syrie."

Photo: M.C.A. Macdonald (OCIANA).

ΒΕΑΡΟΣ ΧΕΘΙΛΟΥ	βεαρος χεθιλου [beʔār ketīl] 'Beʔār son of Ketīl'

Notes

i) The pretonic /a/ of the name katīl displays raising, as in the Petra Papyri, and could also suggest that the Epsilon of the first name could also reflect an etymological /a/, from *baʔār.[381]

---

[381] Al-Jallad, *Petra Papyri.*

BRenv.B 6

Location: Al-Suwaydah, Syria

Editio Princeps: OCIANA, unpublished.

Greek	Normalized	Phonetic reconstruction and Safaitic equivalent
ΑΟΥΑΔΗΛ	Αουαδηλ	[ʕawāḏ-ʔel] = ʿwḏʾl

Notes

1) This is one of the few examples of a non-Hellenized Arabic name from the pre-Islamic period.

GS 4

Location: Unknown

Editio Princeps: OCIANA, unpublished.

ΣΟΕΔΟΣ [X]IPIA	Σοεδος χίρια [soʕayd kiriya] (?)	Soʕayd served as a hired man (?); (by his) hands (?)

Notes

1) The first name is most likely the diminutive of sᶜd [saʕad].

2) This word [X]IPIA is difficult to interpret. It may be an attempt to render Greek χέρια "hands." The signature *ktb yd-h,* 'the writing of his hand,' is common in the Nabataean inscriptions and indeed may have been what the writer was aiming at. On the other hand, we may take it as a transcription of a verb, kry "to be a hired man," implying the type of regressive assimilation encountered in the modern Arabic dialects, [kiriya] < *kariya.

Ahmad Al-Jallad

124

The Psalm Fragment

Fascimile by Violet, "Psalmfragment"

fol. 1 r°.

ΠΕΤΡΑΝ · ΚΑΙ ΕΡΡΥ	CΑΧΡ · ỷ · ΦΑCΕ
ΗCΑΝ ΥΔΑΤΑ ·	ΛΕΤ · ΜΑjΑΫ ·
ΚΑΙ ΧΕΙΜΑΡΡΟΙ ΚΑ	ΘΕΛΕΥΔΙΕΫ · ΦΑ
ΤΕΚΛΥCΘΗCΑΝ ·	ΔΑΤ ·
5. ΜΗ ΚΑΙ ἄΡΤΟΝ	ΛΕΓΑΛ · ΟΑΧΟΥΒΖ
ΔΫΝΑΤΑΙ ΔΟΫΝΑΙ	jΕΚΔΙΡ · jΟΥΓΤΙ
Ἡ ἙΤΟΙΜΑCΑΙ ΤΡΑ	ΕΫ · jΟΥ · ΫΕjΕΙ ·
ΠΕΖΑΝ ΤΩ ΛΑΩ	ΜΑjΔΕΫ · ΛΙΧ
ἀΥΤΟΫ ·	ΧΕΙΡ ΒΫΓ
10. ΔΙΑ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΗΚΟΥ	ΛΙΔΕΛΙΚ · CΕΜΙΓ ·
CΕΝ ΚC ΚΑΙ ΑΝΕ	ΕΛΡΑΒ · ΦΑΑΜ
ΒΑΛΛΕΤΟ ·	ΤΕΝΑΓ ·
ΚΑΙ ΠΫΡ ΑΝΗΦΘΗ	ΘΕΛΝΑΡ · ΕΧΤΕΓΑ
ΕΠΙ ΤΟΝ jΑΚΩΒ ·	ΛΕΤ · ΦΗ jΑΓΚΟΥΒ
15. ΚΑΙ ΟΡΓΗ ΑΝΕΒΗ	ΟΑ · ΡΥΓΖ · CΑΓ · ·
ΕΠΙ ΤΟΝ jΗΛ ·	ΓΑΛΑ · jCΡΑΗΛ
Ὅ ΤΙ ΟΥΚ ΕΠΙCΤΕΥ	ΛΙΕΝ · · · η · · · Μ
CΑΝ ΕΝ ΤΩ ΘΩ	jΟΥΜΙ · · · ΒΙΛΛΑΥ
ΟΥΔΕ ΗΛΠΙCΑΝΕ	ΟΑ · Λ · · · · · ΚΚΕΛΟΥ
20. ΠΙ ΤΟ CΡΙΟΝ ἁΫΟΫ ·	ΓΑΛΑ ΧΑΛΑCΥ ·
ΚΑΙ ΕΝΕΤΕΙΛΑΤΟ ·	ΟΑ ΑΜΑΡ ΕΛCΙΧΕΒ
ΝΕΦΕΛΑC ΫΠΕΡ	ΜΙΝ · CΡΑΥΚ ·
ΑΝ ΩΘΕΝ ·	
ΚΑΙ ΘΥΡΑC ΟΫΝ · Υ	ΟΑ ΑΒΟ ΛΒ ΕΛCΕ
25. ΑΝΕΩΞΕΝ ·	CΑΜΔ · CΡΑΤΕΧ ·
ΚΑΙ ΕΒΡΕΞΕΝ · ·	θΑ · ΑΜΤΑΡ · ΛΕΫΜ ·
ΤΟΙC ΜΑΝΝΑ	Μ × · · Δ · ΛΙΔ
CΡΑΓΕΙΝ ·	· · · · · Υ ·
ΚΑΙ ἁΡΤΟΝ ΟΫΝ · ·	· · · · · · Ζ · ΜΙΝ · ΕΛ
30. ΕΔ ΩΚΕΝ ἁΥΤΟΙC	· · · · · ΑΓΤΑ · ΫΜ ·
ἁΡΤΟΝ ΑΓΓΕΛΩΝ	· · · · Ζ ΕΛΕΛΕ ΙΚΕ
ἐΦΑΓΕΝ ΑΝΟC	· · × · ΕΛ ΙΝCΕΝ
ἐΠΙCΙΤΙCΜΟΝΑ	· × ΒΑ · ΒΑ ΓΑΘ

Folio 1 Recto

fol. 1 v°.

ΠΕϹΤΕΙΛΕ · ΑΥΤΟΙϹ
ΕΙϹ ΠΛΙϹΜ · ΙΗΝ ·
ΑΠΗΡΕΝΝΟΤΟΝ
ΕΖΟΥΝΟΥ ·
5. ΚΑΙ ΕΠΗΓΑΓΕΝ ΕΝ
ΤΗ ΔΥΝΑΜΕΙ ΑΥ
ΤΟΥ ΛΙΒΑ ·
ΚΑΙ ΕΒΡΕΞΕΝ ΕΠΑΙ
ΤΟΙϹ ωϹΕΙ ΧΝΟΥ
10. ϹΑΡΚΑϹ ·
ΚΑΙ ωϹΕΙ ΑΜΜΟΝ
ΘΑΛΑϹϹωΝ ΠΕΤΕΙ
ΝΑ ΠΤΕΡωΤΑ ·
ΚΑΙ ΕΠΕΠΕϹΑΝ ΕΙϹ
15. · ΕϹΟΝ ΤΗϹ ΠΑ
· ΕΜΒΟΛΗϹ ΑΥΤω
· Υ · · ι, ω Τω
ϹΚΗΝω · ΑΤω
ΑΥΤω · ·
20. ΚΑΙ ΕΦΑΓΟΝ ΚΑΙ
ΕΝΕΠΛΙϹΘΗϹΑΝ
ϹΦΟΔΡΑ ·
ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΕΠΙΘΥ
ΜΙΑΝ ΑΥΤωΝ Η
25. ΝΕΓΚΕΝ ΑΥΤΟΙϹ
ΟΥ ΚΕϹΤΕΡΗΘΗϹ ·
ΑΠΟ Τ · ϲ · · · · ·
ΜΙΑϹ ΑΥΤ · ·
ΕΤΙ ΤΗϹ ΒΡ · · ·
30. ωϹ ΟΥϲ · · · · · ·
· ΤΟΜΑ · · · · ·
ΚΑΙ ΟΡΓ · · ϲΥΘ ·

λα · ὑμ · λε · τε · η
μελλευ ·
α ὑατ · ελ τε · μ
μιν · ελ · ϲεμα
θα · ατε · βη · κου
ετυ · ελ · γα
ϲι · φ ·
θα · αμ · ταρ · γαλει
ὑμ · μιθλ · ελτυ
ραβ · λυ · χουμ·
θα · μιθλ · ραμα ·
ελ βου · χουρ · τη·
ουρ · μυγνε · χαυ ·
φαθα · καπατ
φη · θαϲατ · ιαϲ·
κερ · ὑμ · χαυλ
χη · εμ · ὑμ ·

φα · α κελθυ · θα ·
χεβιγου · γεδ
δα ·
θα · χε · ὑ · θετ · ὑμ ·
ιεβ · λα · ὑμ ·

· · μ · ουγ · δεμου ·
· ε · υθετ · ὑμ ·

θα · γινδ · μα · κεν ·
ελ ταγαμ · φη
φα · ὑ · ὑμ
· α · ρυγζ · αλλαὑ ·

Folio 1 Verso

fol. 2 v°.

× × × × × ···ΑϹΑΝΚ·	ΟΑ·ΔΒ·ΤΕ·ΛΕΫ·ΟΑ
×·× × × × ·ΡΑΝΑΝ	ΜΑΡ·ΜΑΡΟΫ·
× × × × × ΓΟΝΫ	ΕΛ·ΓΛΕΫ·ΕΛ·ΓΑ
× × × × × Ν·	ΛΗ·
5. × × × × × ··· ΡΤΥΡΙ	ΟΑ·ΧΕ·ΫΑΔ·ΤΫ·
× × × × × ·ΟΥΚΕ	ΛΑΜ·ϳΕΧ·ϲΡΑ·
× × × × × ΖΗΤΟ·	ΔΟΫ·
× × × × × ·ΤΡΕϳΑ	ϲΡΑ·ΑΝΚΑ·ΛΕΒ·Υ·
× × × × × ·ΤΗϹΑΝ	ΟΑ·ΓΑ·ΔΑ·ΡΟΥ·
10. × × × × × ·ΟΙΠΡΕϹ·	ΜΙΘΛ·ΑΒΑ·
× × × × Ν·	ϳ·ΫΜ·
× × × × × ·ΡΑϲΗϹΑ	ΑΝ·ΚΑ·ΛΕ·ΒΟΥ
× × × × × ·ΟΝ·ϹΤΡΕ	ΜΙΘΛΕΚΑΫ·ϹΕΛ ⁹⁾
× × × × × ΓΑΥΓΕ·	
15. × × × × × ·ϹΟΡΗϹΑ	ΟΑ × Ϲ·ΧΑ:ΤΟΫ·Υ
× × × × ΝΕΝ·ΤΟΙϹ	Β × ΑΥ·ΘΑΝ·ϳ
× × × × × ·Ϲ·ΑΫΤΩ·	ΫΜ·
× × × × × ·ΟΙϹ·ΓΛΥΠ·	ΟΑ·ΒΗ·ΜΕΝ·ΧΘΥ
× × × × × ·ΥΤΩΝ·	ΤΕ·ΤΗ·ΫΜ·Α·
20. × × × × × ·ΗΛΩϹΑΝ	ΓΑ·ΡΫ·Υ
× × × × Ν·	
× × × × × ·ΕΝΟΘϹΚΑΙ	Ϲ·ΜΙΓ·ΑΛΛΑΫ·
× × × ···ΙΔΕ × × × ×⁾	·Δ·ΤΕΓΑ·ϲΕΛ·
× × × × × ·ΥΔΕΝΩϹ·	× × ΑϲΡ·ϹΕΛ·ΓΕΔ·
25. × × × ·ΔΡΑΤΟΝ	× × ΛΙ·ϳϹΡΑ×
× × ×	× Λ·
× × × × × × ··ΑΤΟΤΗ·	ΟΑ·ΑΚ·ϹΑ·ΧΑϳΜΕΤ·
× × × ·ΗΝϹΗΛΩΜ·	ϹΕϳΛΟΥΜ·
× × × ·ϲΜΑϲΚΑ	ΕΛ·ΜΕϹ·ΚΕΝ·ΕΛ·
30. × × × × × ·ΩϹΕΝ	ΛΕΔΙ·ΕϹ·ΚΕΝ·ϲΙΛ·
× × × × ·ΙϹ	ΒΑΧΕΡ·
× × × × ·ΡΕΔΩΚ·	ΟΑ·ΑϹ· × Ε × ΛΙΛ·
× × × × ·ΧΜΑΛΩ	ϹΕΒ·ΟϹΥ ×

Folio 2 Recto

fol. 2ʳ

ΠΟΝΟΥ ΑΥΤΩΝ:　　　　ΤΕΓ·Β
ΕΝ ΤΟΙΣ. ΣΚΗΝΩ　　　ΜΕΣΕ
ΜΑΣΙΝ ΧΆΜ··
ΚΑΙ ΑΠΗΡΕΝ ΩΣΕΙ　　ΟΑ. ΣΑΚ·
ΠΡΟΒΑΤΑ ΤΟΝ ΛΑ　　ΓΑΝΕΛ
ΟΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ
ΚΑΙ ΆΝΗΓΑΓΕΝ ΑΥ·　ΟΑ. ΑΣ. Γ
·ΟΥΣ. ΩΣΕΙ ΠΟΙΜΉ　ΜΙΘΛ·
·ΟΝ ΕΝ ΈΡΗΜΩ:　　·ϹΡΙΛ·Β·
ΚΑΙ ΩΔΗΓΗΣΕΝ ΑΥ·　ΟΑ. ΆΙΑ. Δ
ΤΟΥϹ ΕΠ ΈΛΠΙΔΙ·　　ΒΕΡΡΙ
ΚΑΙ ΟΥΚ ΕΔΙΛΙΑΣᾹ·　ϳΕΓ ΖΑ
ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥϹ ΕΧΘΡΟΥϹ·　ΟΑ. ΑΓ·Δ
ΑΥΤΩΝ ΕΚΆΛΥ　　ΓΑΤΤΑ
ΨΕΝ· Ή ΘΆΛΑϹ ·Α·　ΒΆΧΡ·
ΚΑΙ ΕΙϹΗΓΑΓ· ·ΑΥ　ΟΑ· ΑΔ. Χ
ΤΟΥϹ. ΕΙϹ. ΌΡΟϹ ΆΓΙ　ϳΛΕ.ΙΕΒ
ΆϹΜΑΤΟϹ ΑΥΤΟΥ·　ΚΑΔ·ϹΌ
ΌΡΟϹ. ΤΟΥΤΟ·Ό́Ε　　ΓΈΒΕΛ·Ᾱ
ΚΤΉϹΑΤΟ. Ή ΔΕΞΙ　ΕΛΛΕΔΙ·Ὰ
ΑΑΥΤΟΥ·　　　　　ΔΕΤ.ϳΕΝ
ΚΑΙ ΕΞΈΒΑΛΕΝ ΆΠ·Υ　ΟΑ. ΑΧ·ΡΑῙ
ΠΡΟϹΩΠΟΥ ΑΥ···　　··· ϑΕ
ΈΘΝΗ:　　　　　　·ΛΟΥΜΕ
ΚΑΙ ΕΚΛΙΡΟΔΕ···　ΟΔ ΛΥΡΔΘ
ϹΕΝ ΑΥΤΟΥϹ···　　ϹΛ. ΜΊΡΕ
ϹΧΟΙΝΙΩ ΚΛΙΡΟ　　ΒΙΛ··
ΔΟϹΙΑϹ·
ΚΑΙ ΚΑΤΕϹΚΉΝΩ　ΟΔ ΛϹ·Κ
ϹΕΝ ΤΟΙϹ ϹΚΗ　　ΜΕ·ϹΕ
ΝΩΜΑϹΙΝ ΑΥΤ··　ΚΔ·Β
ΤΑϹ··ΛΑϹ ΤΟΥ　　··ΡΑΙ
ΤΗΛ·

Folio 2 Verso

128
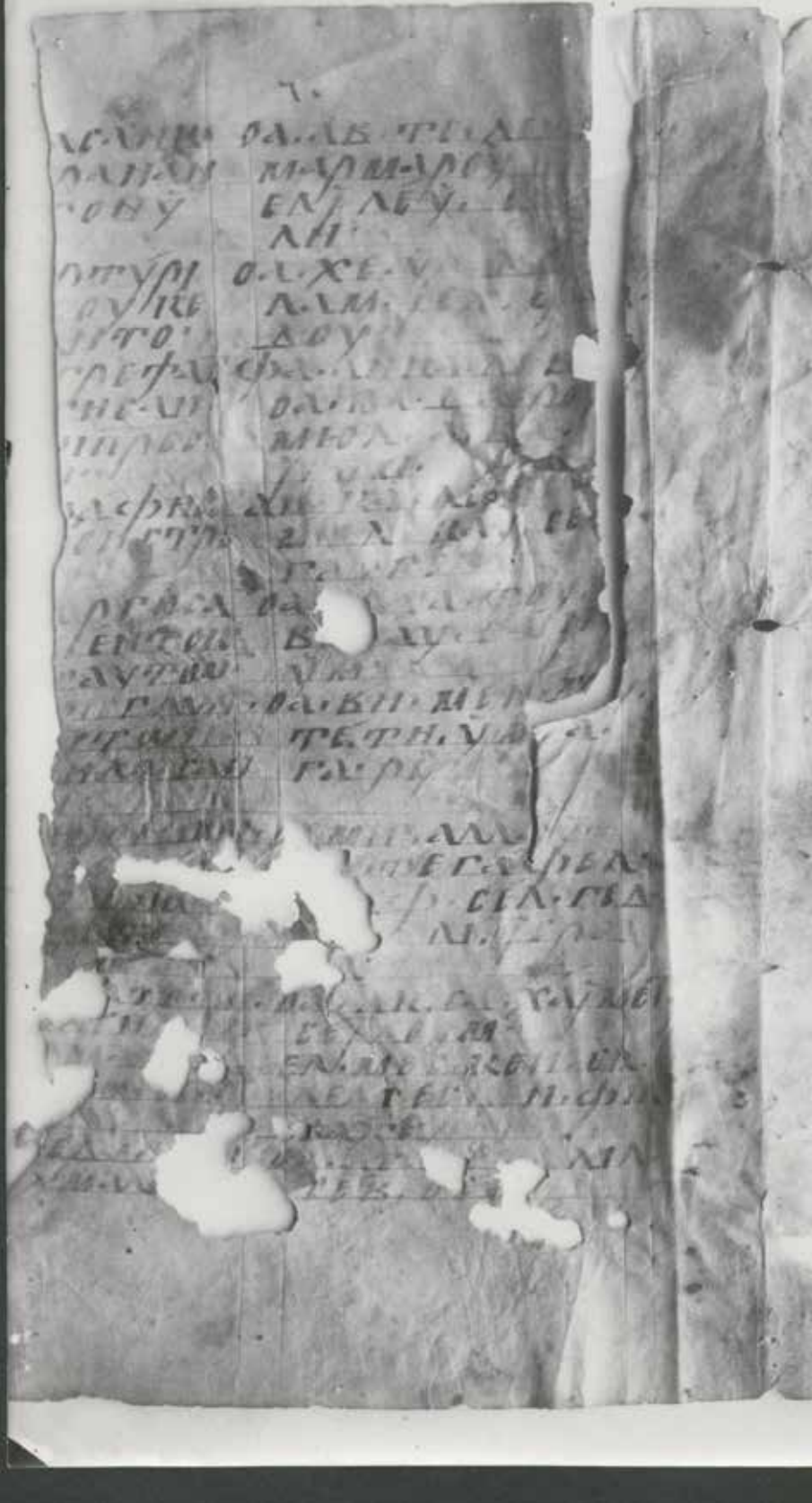
Plate 1. Photograph of the Damascus Psalm Fragment. STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN—Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orient abteilung. Mss simulata orientalia 6, fol. 60; 59 (used with permission)

Plate 2. Photograph of the Damascus Psalm Fragment. STAATSBIBLIOTHEK ZU BERLIN— Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orient abteilung. Mss simulata orientalia 6, fol. 58; 61 (used with permission)

Sub-Heading and Subject Index

General Index

Index of Pre-Islamic Arabic-Script Inscriptions

Modern Arabic Dialects and Languages