

Why did Arabic Succeed where Greek Failed? Language Change in the Near East after Muhammad

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I

Some sixty five years ago, the Colt expedition carried out a series of excavations in the ruins of the late Byzantine town of Nessana, now a couple of miles inside Israel on the Negev border with Egypt.¹ The site offers an exciting example of a *cas témoin*, for it was occupied from roughly the fourth Christian century to the eighth, and the material recovered from it also covers much the same period.² It has therefore in many ways the happy potential to offer us a neat and tidy bird's eye view of what went on in this part of the world between the victory of Christianity and the victory of Islam. Among the finds were papyri containing literary texts, a large number (152) of inscriptions, as well as further papyri containing documents. The three groups of material, literary texts, inscriptions, and documents, offer varied information, and they hint at a complex linguistic situation, one about which the editors of the material offer sharply contrasting views.

The literary texts are at first sight the most exciting. They present us with Greek texts; these are mainly religious, bits of the New Testament (though nothing at all from the Old — but the overall quantity is not so large that we should feel entitled to draw any conclusions from this), and of New Testament apocrypha, as well as a few theological fragments and remains of a few legal writings. Nothing very out of the ordinary here. Alongside these, however, we have also some Latin, in the form of fragments of the *Aeneid*, from books ii to vi (Happy the town that enjoyed book iv of the *Aeneid*, even if only in fragmentary form³), together with remains of a long and detailed Latin-

¹ This paper was delivered as a lecture to the Mediterranean Studies seminar in the School of Hebrew, Biblical and Theological Studies at Trinity College, Dublin, in November 2002, and subsequently to the seminar of the Research Group on the topic 'Greeks, Romans, Jews and Others in the Near East from Alexander to Muhammad: "A Civilization of Epigraphy"', at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Jerusalem, in January 2003. I have left the lecture format essentially unchanged, but revised the text in the light of the comments and criticisms of participants in the two meetings, and added notes and bibliographical references. I am grateful to Sean Freyne and Brian McGing, the organisers of the seminar at Trinity College, Dublin, for the invitation to speak there, and also to the participants in both seminars, and to the members of the group at the Institute, for helpful and valuable discussion. Special thanks are due to the following for giving me detailed comments and criticisms: Haggai Ben-Shammai, Gideon Bohak, Sean Freyne, Hannah Cotton, Leah Di Segni, John Dillon, Robert Hoyland, Axel Knauf, Michael Lecker, Brian McGing, Shlomo Naeh, Jonathan Price, Sarah Stroumsa. That I have occasionally persisted in maintaining my position in the face of their comments no whit lessens my appreciation of them.

² The results are published in *Excavations at Nessana*, 1, ed. H. Dunscombe Colt, London 1962; 2, *Literary Papyri*, Lionel Casson and Ernest L. Hettich, Princeton 1950; 3, *Non-literary papyri*, Casper J. Kraemer, Jr., Princeton 1958.

³ Naturally the popularity of *Aen.* iv was immense. Parts of *Aen.* 4.9 were found even on a papyrus fragment on Masada, dated to shortly before the spring of 73 or 74 CE: see Hannah

to-Greek glossary to that poem, covering, now, books i-iv. Palaeographical considerations place the date of the fragments of both poem and glossary in the sixth century, the poem in the first half and the glossary in the second. This is much more exciting than the Greek material. Greek is normal, and expected; we should have been surprised by its absence. And the character of the Greek texts, too, is frankly, if disappointingly, unexceptional. Latin, on the other hand, by this stage, is much more surprising, and therefore the more welcome, the *Aeneid* still more so.⁴ Its presence points to a knowledge of Latin, though at what level (especially given the glossary) we cannot really know, at a very late period, and to an interest in poetry, otherwise quite unattested here, in this isolated outpost of the 'Roman' — but by now scarcely on that account Latin — empire. As early as the beginning of the fourth century Latin had disappeared from official communications and honorary inscriptions in Palestine.⁵ If Latin is known and attested here several centuries earlier (most famously but far from uniquely in the inscription on the Cross⁶), by this time Latin in the Byzantine empire is a frail flower indeed, and such testimonies as this are difficult to interpret: do they point to survivals (but then of what kind)? or do they point to a somewhat rarefied sort of literary taste among provincial imperial élites? or do they, even more strikingly, mean simply that the accidents of survival have brought us the remains of some Byzantine traveller's equivalent of a railway station bookstall bestseller? It would be dangerous to insist too much on any of these possibilities. But for all that, Virgil, here, then, is striking.

The inscriptions are mostly undated, but those that are dated run from 464 to 630 CE. All (apart from a tiny handful of undated less formal graffiti in Nabataean Aramaic)

M. Cotton and Joseph Geiger, *Masada II: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963-1965, Final Reports, The Latin and Greek Documents*, Jerusalem 1989, 31-4, No. 721, with valuable discussion and further references. As the editors point out (*ibid.* and p. vii), it is likely that this was produced for a Roman soldier involved in the siege of Masada.

- ⁴ For Latin in this part of the world see Joseph Geiger, 'How much Latin in Greek Palestine?' in *Aspects of Latin, Papers from the Seventh International Colloquium on Latin Linguistics, Jerusalem, April 1993*, ed. Hannah Rosén, Innsbruck 1996, 39-57; *id.*, 'The Latin language in Roman Palestine', *Cathedra* 74, December 1994, 3-21 (in Hebrew); it is noteworthy that we do not seem to have much available for the later period. See, most recently, from a large literature, Jonathan Price, 'The Jews and the Latin language in the Roman Empire', in *Jews and Gentiles in the Holy Land in the Days of the Second Temple, the Mishnah and the Talmud, A collection of articles*, ed. Menahem Mor, Aharon Oppenheimer, Jack Pastor and Daniel R. Schwartz, Jerusalem 2003, 165-80.
- ⁵ See Hannah M. Cotton, 'The Roman *Fasti* of Judaea/Syria Palaestina', in *Memorial for Menachem Stern*, Jerusalem 2002 (Hebrew), 55-69.
- ⁶ See Joseph Geiger, 'Titulus Crucis', *Scripta Classica Israelica XV (Studies in Memory of Abraham Wasserstein, I)*, 1996, 202-07. Far more important than this isolated item of essentially symbolic interest are the great mass of inscriptions from Caesarea and Aelia Capitolina; see, e.g., Fergus Millar, 'Latin in the Epigraphy of the Roman Near East', in *Acta Colloquii Epigraphici Latini, Helsingiae 3.-6. Sept. 1991 habiti*, ed. Heikki Solin, Olli Salomies, Uta-Maria Liertz, Helsinki (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum, 104) 1995, 403-19; Werner Eck, 'The Language of Power: Latin in the inscriptions of Judaea/Syria Palaestina', in *Semitic Papyrology in Context, A Climate of Creativity, Papers from a New York University conference marking the retirement of Baruch A. Levine*, ed. Lawrence H. Schiffman, Leiden (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East, vol. 14) 2003, 123-44.

are in Greek, which, at least at first glance, might seem to point to a wholly Greek-speaking community, and less uncertainly to a wholly Greek-writing community (when it wrote at all) — the writers of Nabataean Aramaic need not have been from the town. On the other hand, many of the names in the inscriptions are linguistically Arabic, and this fact was held by the editors of the inscriptions, George Eden Kirk and C. Bradford Welles, to mean that ‘it is clear that the bulk of the population was Arabic’. They conclude from this that ‘Although neither Arabic inscriptions nor pre-conquest Arabic papyri have been found, it is probable that Nessana was peopled largely by the native Bedouin group accustomed to town life’, with the leading citizens, military and ecclesiastical in particular, an imported minority. These will have been removed or discouraged (their wording) after the Arab conquest, with the result that ‘the rest of the population reverted by degrees to its former state’.⁷ It is possible to disagree with them about the linguistic meaning to be attributed to the use of particular types of names, and, from a statistical point of view, too, the presence of a great many names with no Arabic character at all must also raise a counter-question here.⁸ However we read the significance of the onomastics we have no evidence (other than the Nabataean scribblings) to suggest that writing activity here took place in languages, or scripts, other than those of Greek. As to the language(s) of speech, on the other hand, Kirk and Welles clearly favour something close to Arabic; but it has to be noted that they have no basis for this other than the character of some of the names that we have in the inscriptions, and it seems to me that that should not weigh too heavily against the rest of our material.

The documents are rather different. Here we have remains, sometimes quite extensive, of some two hundred documents. The dated ones run from the start of the sixth century to the autumn of 689 CE, a little under some two hundred years, and the undated ones may well cover a longer period even than that. These are in a mix of languages, as we should expect from the pattern offered by the general Near Eastern context:⁹ the earlier ones are all in Greek, but in the second half of the seventh century Arabic begins to appear, shortly after the Arab conquest. The earliest dated Arabic document is from late 674, and is a requisition of wheat and oil from the inhabitants of the town. The onomastic evidence of the documents, Greek and Arabic, taken together with that in the inscriptions, suggests a population which either was Christian or was becoming so: we have names like Aws alongside names like Flavius Stephanus — these were actually two brothers;¹⁰ Khalaf Allah alongside his two brothers (I have of course not chosen them

⁷ *Nessana* (n. 2), I, 132.

⁸ See especially M.C.A. Macdonald, ‘Some reflections on epigraphy and ethnicity in the Roman Near East’, *Mediterranean Archaeology* 11, 1998, 177-90, esp. 187ff.

⁹ H.M. Cotton, W. Cockle and F. Millar, ‘The Papyrology of the Roman Near East: A Survey’, *Journal of Roman Studies* 85, 1995, 214-35.

¹⁰ Flavius in the present context is not to be seen as a personal name, but rather as a status indicator; see J.G. Keenan, ‘The Names Flavius and Aurelius as Status Designations in Later Roman Egypt’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 11, 1973, 33-63; 13, 1974, 283-304, esp. 301-03; id., ‘An Afterthought on the names Flavius and Aurelius’, *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 53, 1983, 245-50; for examples of the use of the title in Petra, closer in time and in space to Nessana, see Ludwig Koenen, ‘The Decipherment and

wholly at random), called Victor (written Βικτωρ) and Sergius. Linguistically Arabic names coexist alongside, and in the same families as, names that we can categorise broadly as Christian; and they also occur in different orders in the genealogical lists, family trees, that we have or that we can reconstruct from the documents. That is to say, not only may a man with an Arabic name give his son, clearly a Christian, a Greek, Christian name, but a man with a Greek, Christian name may equally give his son an Arabic name.¹¹ Thus we have genealogies like Stephen b. Abraham b. Qurz (a Greek son, a Christian father and a Arabic grandfather), alongside al-Ubayy (Arabic) b. George (a priest — could this be a religious name?) b. Phesanes (Greek), and Zunayn b. Dorotheus b. Zunayn (where we see a traditional naming-pattern in place).¹² Clearly Sergius is just as likely as his brother Khalaf Allah to have spoken Arabic, and Khalaf Allah is just as likely as his brother Sergius to have been a Christian. In other words, the name ‘Khalaf Allah’ does not indicate an Arab, in the sense of someone who was neither Christian nor a user of Greek, just as a name like ‘Victor’, in the case of this particular man’s brother, does not indicate a Christian, in the sense of someone who was not a user of Arabic. Names, and certainly names shorn of context, cannot easily be an infallible indication of very much. But the names here, and their context, do seem to indicate that the area was going through a process of change, which involved not only religious acculturation, christianization, but also broader cultural, even ethnic, changes.¹³ Did it also include linguistic change from Arabic, or some other Semitic language, to Greek? The answer to this is obscure, not least because of the distinction that we have to make between the spoken and the written, but it seems to be positive:¹⁴ the post-conquest documents in this collection that are in Arabic all emanate from the rulers and are addressed to the local inhabitants (and it is worth noting here that there are no documents only in Arabic: all Arabic documents exist also in Greek in the same document). But by no means all documents sent by the Arab rulers to the locals are in that language: a good proportion are in Greek (e.g. nos. 72-73). We have nothing at all from the locals written in Arabic, even when addressing the rulers. On the contrary, what we find in petitions (e.g. no. 54, not actually from Nessana but from the vicinity), and documents addressed by locals to other locals in the vicinity, asking for cooperation in

Edition of the Petra Papyri: Preliminary Observations’, in *Semitic Papyrology in Context* (n. 6), 201-26, at 204-05, 216 (and in the papyri themselves, now available in *The Petra Papyri*, I, ed. Jaakko Frösén, Antti Arjava and Marjo Lehtinen, Amman 2002).

¹¹ There seems to be a slight inconsistency here: an Arab name is held NOT necessarily to represent an Arabic-speaker; but a ‘Christian’ name IS held to represent a person of Christian faith. Despite the formal inconsistency, in practical terms this does not worry me unduly.

¹² *Nessana* I (n. 2), 174, no. 95; 166 no. 73; and 168 no. 80, respectively.

¹³ I realise of course that much depends on the boundaries which one chooses to give to one’s sample. A glance at Avraham Negev’s *The Greek Inscriptions from the Negev*, Jerusalem 1981, shows that a broader geographical scope than Nessana alone would give a different result. My intention here is not to draw a detailed picture and analysis of the linguistic situation in the region as a whole, but rather to point to the specificity of the particular, though without allowing the particular to be so small as to be without significance for the whole.

¹⁴ See S. Schwartz, ‘Language, Power and Identity in Ancient Palestine’, *Past and Present* 148, 1995, 3-47, at 13.

seeking relaxation of tax burdens and the like, is all written in Greek. This need not mean that the locals did not know Arabic; it *need* not mean that they did not speak Arabic; but, in a context where Arabic was in use among the rulers, both as a spoken and as a written language, it would be strange to find that it was not in use as a written language among the locals if they knew it as a spoken language and if they were in contact with rulers who used that language more or less exclusively.¹⁵ The question of literacy appears here to be secondary, for it would apply at least equally to Greek (though there may still have been families of professional scribes writing in Greek from long before). Kraemer, who edited the documents, came to a similar conclusion, though he does not express it so radically, and perhaps did not fully understand it or appreciate its implications: 'the great majority of [Nessana's] papyrus documents', he tells us, 'are in Greek and the tombstones of its dead, to say nothing of the scribblings of its living on the walls of the church, are almost without exception in Greek'; and he adds that 'even [in Nessana] the people who were making a special study of [Vergil] had as their regular tongue not Syriac but Greek'. Despite this, he adds that Nessana's 'native population certainly knew Arabic and Syriac'. The support available for this latter proposition seems to boil down to little (i.e., nothing) more than a mixture of the apparent testimony offered by the names in our material and some wishful, or conventional, woolly thinking.

As can be seen, the different editors of the different bodies of material reached different conclusions from them about language use in Nessana. To me it seems rather that this material suggests that Greek was deeply implanted in Nessana, and probably also widespread in southern Palestine.¹⁶ The fact that Nessana was a military base on the desert border of the empire is of relevance here, both for the strength of Greek and for the presence of people with Arabic names, but it cannot be taken as evidence for the presence of Arabic. As a corollary to this, our material suggests that Arabic was not, at the time of the conquest by the Muslim Arabs, deeply implanted or widespread in this area. What the documents should show, but in fact do not, is also that by the time the place was abandoned, some time in the eighth century, Arabic had supplanted Greek. This may well indeed be, almost certainly is, in some sense, the case, but we cannot show it, both because the place was abandoned and because we have no further material from there.¹⁷ What the Nessana discoveries do nevertheless show us, in dramatically documented form, is the beginnings of the process, longer in some areas, more rapid in others, complete in some areas, incomplete in others, by which Arabic came to supplant all the other languages of the communities living in the areas of the early Islamic conquests.

¹⁵ This is so despite the fact that Greek was still the language of the bureaucracy in the 670s.

¹⁶ I do not mean by this that Greek was the exclusive language of speech in the area: clearly not, nor was it necessarily implanted in every area to the same degree. The argument that the survival of Aramaic forms of place-names into Arabic points to Aramaic as the main language of speech strikes me as attractive rather than convincing; see E.A. Knauf, art. 'Toponyms and Toponymy', in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6, 601-05, with further references.

¹⁷ In a slightly less narrow sense, this is of course not true: see for example Y. Nevo, *Ancient Arabic Inscriptions of the Negev*, Jerusalem 1993.

I have insisted on the Nessana case so much partly because of its location, right next to the Arabian Peninsula, and one of the earliest places conquered for Islam in the 630s, and partly because we actually do have the material. This is broadly not the case for other areas.¹⁸ But the fact of linguistic change following the Islamic conquests of the mid-seventh century and after is universal. Nonetheless, if we can point to example after example of this, we cannot always point to easy explanations for it. I should like in what follows to ask questions rather than to offer explanations, and to identify problems more than to resolve difficulties. It seems to me that in some degree we have tended in this area occasionally to see the chicken, of Arabic, and to assume an egg that may not always be there.

II

The early Arab conquests brought the area from the Pyrenees to the western borderlands of present-day India, and from Aswan, in southern Egypt, nearly as far north as Grozny, in Chechnya, in the Caucasus, under Arab rule. None of this area, outside the Arabian Peninsula itself and some adjacent territory, was Muslim or Arabic-speaking in the year 632; today most of it is Muslim, much of it Arabic-speaking and, when literate, Arabic-writing. The death of Muhammad and the beginning of the great Arab conquests outside the peninsula in the name of Islam mark the dividing line between the non-Islamic, non-Arabic past and the Islamic, Arabic future. Naturally, there had been penetration of Arabic on the edges of the peninsula before the death of Muhammad; this should not surprise. Quite the contrary, the absence of such inter-penetration of speakers of different languages would be a cause for wonder. Arabs lived in southern Palestine and in western Iraq before Muhammad. The problem is not how to account for the slow and gradual expansion of Arabic near the Arabian Peninsula. What is of concern here is the changes that occurred, affecting areas as far away from Arabia as northern Spain and the Maldives. We tend to look back and assume, without really thinking about it, that the linguistic inter-penetration round the Arabian Peninsula of the period before 632 was in some way the natural precursor of the immense changes that came later. It was not. There is no link between these two processes. These latter changes were the product not of the continued development of the gradual inter-penetration of the pre-Muhammadan period but of the conquests. There is here a dramatic contrast with the earlier expansion of Latin, the language of Rome and the language of her rulers, and, far more, of Greek in this area. Latin in the Roman Near East never went beyond the limits of central government and the colonies.¹⁹ Greek became a vastly important language of administration, of culture and of religion for a thousand years after Alexander; it was everywhere. But it never reached all those levels of society to which Arabic later managed to penetrate; it never became a major language of speech here. Arabic replaced Greek and all

¹⁸ Egypt is a striking exception, but it has not yet been studied from this point of view.

¹⁹ See for example Hannah M. Cotton and Werner Eck, 'A New Inscription from Caesarea Maritima and the Local Elite of Caesarea Maritima', in *What Athens Has To Do With Jerusalem. Essays on Classical, Jewish, and Early Christian Art and Archaeology in Honor of Gideon Foerster*, ed. L.V. Rutgers, Leuven (Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion, 1) 2002, 375-91.

the other languages not only at the levels of the social elite, in administration and in culture and religion. It replaced them also in the speech of virtually everyone in the region.

The fringes of this great new world-empire, and what happened there, are of interest, but they are less important than the central areas, which became the Arab world and Iran of today. It is the linguistic changes in these areas that I want to concentrate on here. Arabic became the great language of this entire area. In some areas it seems to have done so remarkably fast: as Sidney Griffith has shown,²⁰ Arabic was in literary use, for religious and religious-literary purposes, among Christians in southern Palestine, very early (though as the recent excavations at the Christian convent next to Shoham, not far from Lod, demonstrate, there were also Christian communities of the eighth century which were innocent of Arabic).²¹ In other areas it was slower and less complete. Aramaic and Kurdish have survived, the former barely the latter in very large numbers, in Iraq; Coptic survived in Egypt till at least the thirteenth century;²² in Persia Arabic failed to establish itself as the dominant language of speech; in Spain its success appears to have been similarly limited, though it is difficult to estimate this with any precision.²³ But the overall picture is one of expansion of Arabic, quickly or more slowly, wholly or not, in different areas of the early conquests. If we juxtapose this with the situation at Nessana, where Arabic seems to have been largely absent at the time of the conquest, then we have to ask not only how such a change, unimposed and unnecessary for the vast bulk of the population (Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt demonstrates this for Greek as against Egyptian, later Coptic), could have occurred, but also how it could have occurred so fast. Arabic was after all the language of Islam, characterized by Lévi-Strauss as an 'uncouth clumsiness';²⁴ Greek was the language of Plato and Homer, of

²⁰ See, e.g., the studies collected in Sidney H. Griffith, *Arabic Christianity in the Monasteries of Ninth-Century Palestine*, Aldershot 1992.

²¹ There is a methodological problem here: Syria may appear to have been penetrated by Arabic very fast, by comparison with other areas; but it is also possible to regard Syria as part of the great fringe of the Arabian Peninsula, where Arabic had penetrated long before Islam and the political expansion of the Arabs. A term like 'Arabian Peninsula' tends to make us think that the Arabs were confined to that area before Islam, and to forget that the territory where Arabs lived before Muhammad was in fact much larger, and more complicated, with much fuzzier boundaries. For a fairly tidy definition, see Robert G. Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*, London 2001, 11.

²² See art. 'Coptic Language, Spoken', in *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, ed. A.S. Atiya, 2, 604-07 (by Emile Maher Ishaq).

²³ Cf. David J. Wasserstein, 'The language situation in al-Andalus', in A. Jones and R. Hitchcock (eds.), *Studies on the Muwassah and the Kharja*, Reading 1991, 1-15 (repr. in M. Fierro and J. Samsó [eds.], *The Formation of al-Andalus, Part 2: Language, Religion, Culture and the Sciences*, Aldershot [The Formation of the Classical Islamic World, vol. 47] 1998, 3-17).

²⁴ C. Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, Paris, 1955, 472-73, Eng. trans. J. and D. Weightman, Harmondsworth, 1976, 536-37; cited at D.J. Wasserstein, 'Greek Science in Islam: Islamic scholars as successors to the Greeks', *Hermathena* CXLVII, 1989, 57-72, at 57; see also 71 n. 2.

Sophocles and, for many, of the Bible. Why should anyone have given it up, and for Arabic? Why did Greek not survive, and swamp Arabic?

The change did not happen uniformly all over the empire. Nor, for that matter, was the linguistic map of these territories uniform at the time of the conquests. If Greek was the principal written and a major spoken language of much of the Byzantine empire, there were certainly territories there and in the west where Greek was unimportant or non-existent: in the greater Syrian area Syriac and other Aramaic dialects were of varying degrees of distribution and penetration, both for speech and for writing; Egypt, where Greek seems to have been, for all its antiquity and its cultural centrality there, essentially the language of a thin ruling crust, and Coptic was the language of the bulk of the population; north Africa, where Latin was of some, especially literary, significance (though how much spoken Latin there was, and how late it survived, is still open to question²⁵) and Berber of much spoken but no written importance;²⁶ Spain, where Latin (in some form) was the principal, probably for all practical purposes the only, language. In the east too, in the former Persian empire, Middle Persian was important, but it was far from being the only language: Aramaic was significant, not only among Jews, and Hebrew and Avestan as well as other Iranian languages were in use too.

What is striking in our context is, however, a different fact: in the territories of the early conquests, we can draw a line separating the subsequent two great linguistic divisions of Arabic and (New) Persian. It follows, very roughly, the frontier between the old Byzantine and Persian empires of the pre-Islamic period, and also, very roughly, the geographical division between Semitic and non-Semitic languages in the region. Arabic has taken over the territories which were once Greek-ruled, and in part Greek-writing, and in part Greek-speaking, along with the former Latin-using areas of the old Roman empire; Persian, now New Persian, has taken over, or regained, depending on how one wishes to look at it, the territories which were once the Persian empire.²⁷ This very rough approximation in itself is not, perhaps, very surprising: other things being equal, New Persian was ever unlikely to take over former Byzantine territories, and the border between Byzantium and Iran might easily, therefore, come to be the border between Arabic, as the successor to Byzantium, and New Persian. What is surprising here is something else: in all these territories we see tremendous growth and expansion of Arabic. We might have expected Arabic either to dominate everywhere or, like Greek before it, not to dominate much at all beyond a fairly thin ruling crust, if it even

²⁵ Serge Lancel, 'La fin et la survie de la latinité en Afrique du Nord: Etat des questions', *Revue des Etudes Latines* 59, 1981 (1982), 269-97. Punic by this time can safely be left out of account.

²⁶ For some minor languages and cultures here see F. Millar, 'Local cultures in the Roman Empire: Libyan, Punic and Latin in Roman Africa', *JRS* 58, 1968, 125-51 (= Ch. 12 in Fergus Millar, *Rome, the Greek World and the East*, II: *Government, Society and Culture in the Roman Empire* (Collected Papers), eds. Hannah M. Cotton and Guy M. Rogers, Chapel Hill and London, forthcoming).

²⁷ Iraq is a special case: largely Sasanian before the coming of Islam it became for all that mainly Arabic-speaking. But it seems that large parts of the south were already Arabic-speaking, or had Arabic-speaking populations, before the coming of Islam, so it should be regarded perhaps rather as a border area of transitional behaviour. See, e.g., Michael G. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, Princeton 1984, 215-23, 229-35.

survived much beyond the generation of the conquest. In Persia, however, its space, to use a fashionable term, was contested as early as the tenth century by the re-birth, or re-emergence, of Persian; in the former Byzantine areas, by contrast, Arabic faced no challenge at all. Now we might have expected a different outcome: the conquests took a lot from Byzantium, but Byzantium itself survived and remained a significant cultural and political, not to say military and economic, force, in reality and in Islamic imaginings, for another eight centuries after the death of Muhammad. Persia, on the other hand, was wholly submerged and subsumed within the Islamic empire of the Arabs.²⁸ We might have expected that it would be Persian that would disappear into the maw of Arabic, while Greek, precisely because of the survival of the external support to its identity that was represented by Byzantium, would survive to challenge Arabic and to offer a strong cultural and, hence, linguistic alternative. Clearly there are ways of explaining the way that things in fact turned out — we can see the differing fates of the two areas as themselves in some degree the explanation: Greek was too closely identified with Christianity and external political forces to succeed,²⁹ while Persia was so completely submerged that it represented no danger to Arabic: by the tenth century the process of conversion to Islam there had advanced so far that it was clearly irreversible, and the use of a language other than Arabic will clearly no longer have appeared threatening — but this still does not sufficiently explain the puzzle of the rise of Persian — as it also does not fully explain why the challenge of Greek had to fail.³⁰

One of the reasons for the overall success of Arabic was of course that it was a *Reichssprache*, a language of empire.³¹ Like Aramaic, like Greek, like Latin before, Arabic was the language of the builders and rulers of the empire, or one of their languages; unlike them, it filtered down to virtually all sectors of the population. Greek (and Aramaic too) could not any longer compete in that field. Arabic became the major, almost the exclusive, language of speech and the major, almost the exclusive, language of writing too. In Iran, things were somewhat different, but the situation there today should not blind us to the extremely heavy arabicization characterizing that country in the medieval period. The single example of Egypt, where Greek limped on until Suez as a language of resident aliens still, 23 centuries after Alexander, seen as non-natives there, and Arabic became the universal language, demonstrates how far our traditional image of Hellenism, expressed in Greek, as a major, penetrating force in the history of the Near East may be an example of Eurocentring false projections. Alone in the far

²⁸ It should of course be noted that Persian had never stopped being a spoken language; what re-emerged in the tenth century was Persian as a literary language.

²⁹ There was a revival of Greek in Palestine and Transjordan in the eighth century, but it should equally be noted that in the long run it failed.

³⁰ The case of Irish (that is to say, the failure to maintain and, more recently, to revive it) shows that explanations of Greek and Persian in this case tend towards a *post hoc ergo propter hoc* style.

³¹ As Latin shows, this may be a necessary but it is not a sufficient condition. See above. For the case of Aramaic see Jonas C. Greenfield, 'Standard Literary Aramaic', in *'Al Kanfei Yonah, Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic Philology*, I, ed. Shalom M. Paul, Michael E. Stone and Avital Pinnick, Leiden and Jerusalem 2001, 111-20, and other articles in that volume.

west, in al-Andalus, Islamic Spain, for reasons which are not wholly clear, did a non-Arabic language, a form of Late Latin, Romance, manage to exist as a majority spoken language alongside spoken dialects of Arabic, and in north Africa we find a somewhat similar situation with Berber. What the fate of Iberian Romance would have been without the Reconquista is difficult to say.³²

Being a language of empire meant many things. Arabic was the spoken language of the rulers, and of those who associated themselves with the rulers. It also was, or became, the language of administration. When the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik, towards the end of the seventh century, decreed that Persian and Greek should no longer be used in administration, and that Arabic should replace them there and in such areas as coinage, itself re-designed and adapted to the needs of a unitary, Islamic empire, he was doing much to create the foundations of an identity for the empire, one different from those it was replacing.³³ He was also confirming trends that we have already seen at work in Nessana, where documents in Arabic were being written at least as early as the preceding decade. As a *Reichssprache*, and more generally as the language of the conquerors, it is not surprising that we also find Arabic in use as the language of the treaties, whose texts survive here and there, between the conquerors and the conquered both in the east and in Spain. What we should ask, however, beyond basic questions about the authenticity of such documents, is what they can tell us about the linguistic behaviour of those involved in creating and using them, at the critical moment of conquest. In the case of al-Andalus, Hispania, for example, where we have a famous example of such a treaty, as early as the year 713, all in Arabic, we are bound to wonder, not whether the Spanish could have understood it — it is clear that they could not have,³⁴ not whether the vast bulk of the conquerors could have understood it — they were Berbers, and it seems fairly clear that they could not have; but rather whether the tiny number of Arabs themselves among the conquerors could have read it — it seems somehow less than likely that they could have. They might well have had a very few people on their staffs capable of writing, but surely not very many. The number of people there literate in Arabic must have been very tiny, including just the small handful needed for internal administrative purposes, communications with Damascus, and the like, in the invading armies. And what does this mean for what knowledge of Arabic, and ignorance, or the ignoring, of other languages, meant in such situations, and for how knowledge of the Arabic language spread downwards, there and elsewhere, apparently at a fairly rapid

³² I do not know how late the Romance of al-Andalus, one of the daughters of Latin, survived. It was eventually, and probably quite rapidly, swamped by other new Iberian daughters of Latin, like Castilian, in the course of the Reconquista. It would be interesting to know more in detail of its later history and fate. For the more general linguistic situation there see my 'Language situation' (n. 23).

³³ See *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, II, 323-37, art. 'Diwan', esp. 324 (by A.A. Duri); and, for the coinage, Philip Grierson, 'The monetary reforms of 'Abd al-Malik: their metrological basis and their financial repercussions', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 3, 1960, 241-64.

³⁴ For the text see the late medieval geographical dictionary of Ibn 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Himyari, *al-Rawd al-Mi'tar fi Khabar al-Aqtar*, ed. Ihsan 'Abbas, Beirut 1975, 131-32; see also E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne Musulmane*, Paris-Leiden 1950, 32-3.

pace? How did the new subjects of the Arabs, not just peasants but remnants of old élites too, apprehend the technicalities and the practicalities of their new situation?

But being a, or the, language of rule was not the only thing: that had been true of Latin and Greek in the eastern Roman empire before Arabic, and it did not make of them local spoken languages or exclusive written ones either. Several other things helped the process along. The first is the very size of the empire. It seems like a truism to say that Ibn Battuta, in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, could travel from Cordoba to the Maldives, off the western coast of India, and have no trouble at all linguistically because he knew Arabic — and it is also probably neither so true, nor so simple, as this sounds. But there is something in it nonetheless, as anyone who travelled in the Jewish world before the Second World War could confirm. The empire of early classical Islam, and the world of medieval Islam, was in a very real sense a unity, culturally and to some degree also linguistically. It did not become so automatically, or accidentally, neither rapidly nor all at once.

The new world had a variety of sources. The existence until roughly 900 CE (and thereafter the continuing aspiration to the existence) of what was essentially a single united Islamic world-state provided one of the essential foundation stones for this new world: Muslims learned early to travel all over this world, first with the armies of conquest, then in trade, and on the pilgrimage and *fi talab al-'ilm*, in search of (religious) learning. Like ancient Romans, who saw their empire as coterminous with the known world, or what was worth knowing of that world, as Claude Nicolet has pointed out, so too the Muslims of the middle ages and after saw the known world as the Muslim world, and the vastness of the Muslim world made it virtually all known.³⁵ If China is not mentioned in sources from Christian Europe between the fall of the Roman empire and a Jewish traveller from Christian Spain in the late twelfth century, there would have been nothing odd for a traveller from Muslim Spain in reading about, meeting people from and even travelling to that country.³⁶

In part, this would be helped by the presence of Arabs everywhere: long before Islam, Arabs had been leaving the peninsula and settling outside, from the Sinai round to Iraq, creating a dense fringe of Arabic-speaking populations within and on the borders of the empires. We see here tribal migration and state formation and can trace it in part through the evidence of language use among the populations of these regions. We still do not know enough about the movement of Arabs outwards from the peninsula around the birth of Islam, but what we do know about the period of the early conquests permits us at least to consider the use of the term *Völkerwanderung* to describe it. Large numbers of Arabs left the peninsula, and never returned to it. They settled all over the new world that they had conquered, bringing with them customs and patterns of life, food, kinship patterns, law and religion, and language. They settled both in cities (new and old) and in the countryside, and they mingled with the local population, so much so

³⁵ Claude Nicolet, *L'inventaire du monde: géographie et politique aux origines de l'Empire romain*, Paris 1988; André Miquel, *La Géographie humaine du monde musulman: jusqu'au milieu du 11e siècle*, Paris and New York (Civilisations et sociétés, 68, 78) 1980, 1988.

³⁶ Benjamin of Tudela (in the 1170s) seems to be the first writer from Christian Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire to mention China; in Islamic Europe, Islamic Spain, China was perfectly well known to writers on geography and others.

and so rapidly that by the tenth Christian century, only three or four hundred years later, the realities of tribal structures of the Arabs, and the authenticity of claims to belong to them, were pretty well everywhere completely lost. Rule by Arabs, miscegenation with Arabs, the benefits and advantages of life as part of an Arab world-empire, all conspired to increase the attractiveness of the Arabs' language too.

The Arabs also brought with them their faith. If we cannot say which came first, or whether indeed one must have preceded the other, islamization and arabicization seem to be very closely related in this phase of the history of both. The spread of Arabic goes hand in hand with the spread of Islam. The spread of the new state religion of Islam meant the decline of other religions (Judaism is a special case here³⁷); and the tremendous success of the new *Reichssprache* of Arabic meant that other languages were eliminated along the way. Gradually but definitively, they died out. The fragments of Aramaic that survive to this day are isolated and dying; Persian revived, but in heavily arabicized form. All this happened along with, and in relation to, the islamization of the populations in question. Christianity survives, if under increasing threat, in the Islamic world today, but as early as the thirteenth century, possibly even earlier still, it was already at a low ebb in most areas — in some, like north Africa, it was already gone by then. The few Christian tombstones that we have from Islamic North Africa and Spain point in that direction. The process of islamization made Arabs of the new converts or of their descendants. If conversion to Islam wiped out the sin of past lack of faith, it also tended to wipe out past identities, and to confer a new identity, as an Arab, at least on the descendants of the convert. If an Arab used Arabic, it was even more true that an Arabic user was an Arab. In none of this could Greek or Aramaic compare with Arabic. The granting of Roman citizenship to all the inhabitants of the empire had recognised a pre-existing situation, and, by formalizing it, deprived it of any real meaning; in the Arab case things went much farther, and were much more fluid, and the results were more far-reaching.

A further element in this great change was the building of Baghdad as the new capital of the Islamic world empire, in the middle of the eighth century. Here was a new centre. It was built by Arabs. It was dominated by Arabs. Arabic was the dominant language there. It grew very rapidly, attracting huge numbers of people, Arabs and others.³⁸ And it acted as a magnet for vastly varied types of people, Arabs and others, Muslims and non-Muslims, subjects of the empire and foreigners, free and slave, creating a linguistic and cultural mosaic comparable to that in any great empire of the past. Baghdad was not, however, just another administrative and political centre for a new

³⁷ For my reservations about the application of large-scale general models of conversion to Islam, such as that of Bulliet, to the Jews, see my 'Islamisation and the conversion of the Jews', in Mercedes García-Arenal (ed.), *Conversions islamiques. Identités religieuses en Islam méditerranéen. Islamic Conversions. Religious identities in Mediterranean Islam*, Paris 2001, 49-60.

³⁸ Jacob Lassner, *The topography of Baghdad in the early Middle Ages; texts and studies*, Detroit 1970. My formulation here should not be taken to imply that I think that the majority of the population of Baghdad was Arab. Estimates of the size of the city at its height, popular and scholarly, medieval and modern, all make it compare favourably with Constantinople.

empire. Like Alexandria, and like some other cities, it came to serve higher aims. Christianity as the religion of an empire started in Constantinople, and so too Baghdad was founded as the capital of an empire which identified itself in religious terms.

Among these were cultural aims. One of the great legacies of Abbasid Baghdad to mankind is the huge number of translations, largely from Greek, that were made there or under Baghdadi influence. These translations offer, in fact, part of both a problem and an answer in this area: Islam, Arab Islam, is really, in large part, the cultural heir of Byzantium, of Hellenism in a broad sense. Islam did not take much by way of texts from pre-Islamic Iran — there is controversy about why;³⁹ it did so, in great numbers, from the Greeks;⁴⁰ and it did so with, so we are told, support from government.⁴¹ Support from government in such areas has a point, going beyond the casual interest of a ruler in one particular topic or in some special text. The cultural policies of the Abbasids aimed at, among other things, the creation of a successor, a replacement culture to those of the Byzantines and the Persians. And they did so, at first at least, by means of transformations, translations, of texts from Greek and other languages into Arabic.

In doing this, the world of classical Islam differed greatly from that earlier major centre of international culture, Alexandria: translation was known and practised in the ancient world, of course, but it was not a great feature of Greek culture in Alexandria, either in general or at the courts of the Ptolemies. It was only later, following the rise of Christianity, that translation from Greek into what some may have regarded as more local languages, like Syriac, became a significant feature of cultural activity in the region.

³⁹ This is not to suggest that there were not translations from Persian: see Martin Sprengling, 'From Persian to Arabic', *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 56, 1939, 175-224, 325-36; 57, 1940, 302-05; see also C.E. Bosworth, 'The Persian Impact on Arabic Literature', in *The Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, I, *Arabic Literature to the end of the Umayyad Period*, eds. A.F.L. Beeston, T.M. Johnstone, R.B. Serjeant and G.R. Smith, Cambridge 1983, 483-96. For similar activity in the time of the Sasanians (and later translation into Arabic from Persian versions of Sanscrit texts), e.g., David Pingree, 'Astronomy and Astrology in India and Iran', *Isis* 54, 1963, 229-46. Robert Hoyland reminds me that, while Greek historical and other narrative texts proved of no interest to Arabic Islam, texts on similar subjects from pre-Islamic Iran did: see, e.g., A. Shahpur Shahbazi, 'On the Xwaday-Namag', *Acta Iranica* 30 (Textes et Mémoires XVI: *Iranica Varia, Papers in Honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater*), 1990, 208-29. In the end the question is not one of numbers of translations; it boils down rather to what cannot be anything but a subjective appraisal of how significant the Persian and the Greek influences on Islamic civilization were.

⁴⁰ See, e.g., M. Steinschneider, *Die arabischen Übersetzungen aus dem Griechischen*, Graz 1960; Felix Klein-Franke, *Die klassische Antike in der Tradition des Islam*, Darmstadt (Erträge der Forschung, 136) 1980; L.E. Goodman, 'The Greek impact on Arabic literature', in Beeston et al. (n. 39), 460-82; Richard Walzer, *Greek into Arabic. Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, Oxford 1962.

⁴¹ Cf. Marie-Geneviève Balty-Guesdon, 'Le Bayt al-Hikma de Bagdad', *Arabica* 39, 1992, 131-50; P.S. van Koningsveld, 'Greek manuscripts in the early Abbasid empire: fiction and facts about their origin, translation and destruction', *Bibliotheca Orientalis* LV, 1998, cols. 345-72; A.R. Badawi, *La transmission de la philosophie grecque au monde arabe*, Paris 1968; F. Rosenthal, *Das Fortleben der Antike im Islam*, Zurich and Stuttgart 1965 (Eng. trans. *The Classical Heritage in Islam*, London 1975).

We hear excellent stories about how the Ptolemies got hold of rare books for their libraries, but we do not know of a single translation of a non-Greek text that was certainly in the great Library of Alexandria.⁴² Baghdad, and other great classical Islamic centres, possessed libraries, some of them huge, and these contained great numbers of foreign texts, all of them in Arabic translation.⁴³ For a couple of centuries and more, Arab Islam made itself wide open to foreign influences, and welcomed the fruits of foreign learning in the form of translations. The result was the great civilisation of classical Arab Islam.

The effect of the translation movement was two-fold. On the one hand it hellenized the culture of the Arabs, continuing thus the hellenization of the near east as a whole that had been going on for centuries.⁴⁴ On the other, it made Greek itself quite unnecessary: everything that was necessary in Greek was arabicized, through translation — and that did not include tragedy or epic, or historiography or comedy or lyric poetry; it was mainly philosophy and the sciences — medicine, astronomy, astrology, mathematics, botany, hippiatry and so on. On the one hand, Greek culture was made Arabic, and on the other the Arabic language was changed and developed in order to make room, linguistically as much as in other ways, for the new material. After about the year 950 CE the stream of translations became weaker, and eventually dried up more or less completely. Islam now had access to all the texts that it needed, or that it could find; now it was able to produce important independent work in the fields in which it had borrowed from abroad. But the cultural openness that had characterized Arab Islam from the start went along with the other features that I have mentioned here to make of literary Arabic a partner with the dialects of spoken Arabic in the broad linguistic change in the Near East in this period. The later linguistic situation of the Arab world — characterized by diglossia, in which people use one register of a language for speech and another for writing — is not so very dissimilar from those of many other societies of the past (or, for that matter, the present). But the fact that the language, or the register, of literary expression in Arab Islam, in homegrown areas like poetry and religion and in the foreign sciences like mathematics and medicine, philosophy and botany, astronomy and oneirocritics — the interpretation of dreams — and the rest, was a form of Arabic, will have added to the prestige of the language of rule, of religion, of travel and trade and study, to make the acquisition of the language as a vehicle of speech that much the more attractive.

⁴² The Septuagint might appear to be the obvious exception to this statement; in my view it is not. I am preparing a separate study on this question.

⁴³ For the libraries see Y. Eché, *Les bibliothèques arabes publiques et sémi-publiques en Mésopotamie, en Syrie et en Egypte au Moyen-Age*, Damas 1967; D.J. Wasserstein, 'The library of al-Hakam II al-Mustansir of Cordoba and the Culture of Islamic Spain', *Manuscripts of the Middle East* 5, 1990-91, 99-105 (a pirated translation of this appeared in Arabic in *Majallat Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Wataniyya* [Saudi Arabia] vol. I, no.1, Muharram-Jumada II, 1416/June-December 1995, 7-38).

⁴⁴ See for example J.L. Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam, The cultural revival during the Buyid age*, Leiden 1986; id., *Philosophy in the Renaissance of Islam. Abu Sulayman al-Sijistani and his Circle*, Leiden 1986; Richard Walzer, 'Early Islamic Philosophy', in A.H. Armstrong (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, Cambridge 1967, 643-69.

Greek did not linger on too long, outside very specialized circles: Hunayn b. Ishaq, because of the range, extent and quality of his translation activity perhaps the most important inhabitant of the Islamic world after Muhammad, tells us of the difficulties that he encountered in trying to locate a copy of one of the works that he wanted to translate from Greek into Arabic, this in what had been the heartlands of late antique Hellenism.⁴⁵ Naturally there is a *topos* here — what scholar does not complain of the inadequacy of his facilities, especially his library facilities? — but his plaint seems to reflect some truth as well. On one hand we may suppose that in the time of Hunayn himself, and in general during the first two or three centuries after the rise of Islam, there must have been a good many Greek manuscripts in circulation and available. Nonetheless, on the other, with a few well-publicized exceptions, which are all really special cases — the Codex Sinaiticus is one such; the patriarchal and similar libraries of Istanbul and elsewhere another — Greek manuscripts have basically not survived in Islamic lands. Why not? Because they were not needed; and they were not needed because they could by and large no longer be read, by people who had long gone over to Arabic, in writing as in speech. If we wish to explain these changes, and to understand why the case of Arabic is so different from those of Aramaic and Greek, then it seems to me that this mixture, of geographical extent, of empire, of cultural self-sufficiency (at least after the tenth century), and the unique combination offered by the linkage of religion and ethnicity, is where we must look for the key.

Let me conclude with a word or two on the Jews. I think that they offer a sort of *cas témoin* here. I said earlier that the Jews were a special case, in this as in other fields. For other non-Muslim non-Arabs, as I have indicated, subjection to Arab Islam meant, in the end, and sometimes more slowly than at others, adaptation to the religion of the Arabs (Islam), to the language of the Arabs (Arabic) and, by a natural extension of these two processes allied to others, to the ethnic identity of the Arabs (arabization). These changes, though not in any particular order, have been the fate of pretty well everyone in what became the Arab world of today, from the Atlantic to the border of Iran. It is this, not genetics, that has made the Arab peoples of today. But although it is more inclusive than merely of Muslims — we (though not everyone would necessarily agree with us) speak of Christian Arabs today — the term Arab does not seem ever to include the Jews of Arab lands. The reasons are complex and have little or nothing to do with the rise of Zionism. The Jews are also an exception to the general rule that I outlined earlier: then I said that Arabic replaced all the other languages that were in use in the newly conquered territories, Greek and Latin and Berber and Persian (for a time) and Aramaic and Coptic. In the case of the Jews, however, things were uniquely different: here we see not only not the decline to disappearance of one language but the revival

⁴⁵ For Hunayn see especially G. Bergstraesser, *Hunain ibn Ishak und seine Schule*, Leiden 1913; id., *Hunayn ibn Ishak, Ueber die syrischen und arabischen Galenuebersetzungen*, Leipzig 1925; id. *Neue Materialien zu Hunain b. Ishaq's Galen-Bibliographie*, Leipzig 1932; the art. 'Hunayn b. Ishak al-'Ibadi', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, III, 578-81 (by G. Strohmaier), with detailed bibliography; see also more broadly Juan Vernet, *La cultura hispanoarabe en Oriente y Occidente*, Barcelona 1978, and Dimitri Gutas, *Greek thought, Arabic culture. The Graeco-Arabic translation movement in Baghdad and early Abbasid society (2nd-4th/8th-10th centuries)*, London 1998.

and the reinvigoration of one, but in this case not, or not only, Arabic. Hebrew enjoys a veritable renaissance under the impetus derived from Islam. This is a reflex of the beneficial effects of Islamic rule on the Jews in the early Islamic centuries.

The Jews of the Arab world went over to Arabic, but in a special way. Unlike the Christians, and the new Muslims, who also did so, the Jews did so in ways which helped them to retain their social and their cultural specificity: they used Judaeo-Arabic, which constituted a different dialect, or set of dialects, from those of their neighbours.⁴⁶ For writing, like their neighbours of different faiths who used different languages, they used a different script, one which was also specifically Jewish;⁴⁷ the range of registers that they developed was parallel, rather than identical, to those of the Arabs.⁴⁸ It included Hebrew, where the Arabs used the highest forms of Arabic; and in that language it used the Bible, a work which served the Jews both as a literary and linguistic exemplar above all others, and as a reference point and foundation for their religious and ethnic identity and uniqueness over against that of Islam. Thus the Jews, unlike the Christians and the new Muslims, were able, were in fact enabled, to retain a high degree of specificity within Islam by exploiting the very features, language and language use, which for Christians and new Muslims meant the end of specificity and assimilation into the greater mass offered by Islam. As so often, the Jewish case serves to illuminate and to draw into focus the case of the broader society, by confirming the universality, or the near-universality, of what happens there, and illustrating its possible variety, and its limits.

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⁴⁶ I ignore here the essentially sterile debate over whether Judaeo-Arabic should be seen as a language or a set of dialects, and over how distinctive it is linguistically from other forms of Arabic.

⁴⁷ The Karaites, among whom we also find Hebrew written in Arabic characters, constitute in this a special category within a special case.

⁴⁸ See especially C. Rabin, 'Hebrew and Arabic in medieval Jewish philosophy', in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History Presented to Alexander Altmann on the occasion of his seventieth birthday*, eds. S. Stein and R. Loewe, Alabama 1979, 235-45; A.S. Halkin, 'The medieval Jewish attitude towards Hebrew', *Biblical and Other Studies*, ed. A. Altmann, Cambridge, Mass. 1963, 233-48; R. Drory, *Models and Contacts. Arabic literature and its impact on medieval Jewish culture*, Leiden 2000; D.J. Wasserstein, 'Jews, Christians and Muslims in Medieval Spain', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 43, 1992, 175-86; id., 'Langues et frontières entre juifs et musulmans en al-Andalus', in *Judios et musulmanes en al-Andalus y el Magreb, Contactos intelectuales*, ed. Maribel Fierro, Madrid 2002, 1-11; and id., 'Language situation' (n. 23).