

## LEXICAL LOANS IN EARLY SYRIAC: A COMPARISON WITH NABATAEAN ARAMAIC

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Of all the Semitic languages Aramaic has the longest history and this fact alone makes it particularly interesting and rich from a lexical point of view<sup>1</sup>. Throughout this long history Aramaic has been pre-eminently a language in contact with other languages — Akkadian, Hebrew and Phoenician, Iranian languages, Egyptian, Greek, Arabic, Kurdish and Turkish<sup>2</sup>. The political side of this coin is the fact that the Aramaeans and other speakers of Aramaic never, or hardly ever, constituted a dominating force. The speakers of Aramaic have spent almost all their history under foreign domination of one kind or another, though the impact that Aramaic has itself had on the languages of the rulers is considerable, partly because of the particular roles, administrative and intellectual, that the Aramaeans have tended to have within the dominant culture.

Within the continuum of Aramaic itself, Syriac is worthy of special attention. As a dialect, it is a direct heir of the Achaemenid Aramaic tradition<sup>3</sup>, but its formation as a distinctive branch of Aramaic and its linguistic and literary development took place under Greek, Iranian and Arab influences<sup>4</sup>. Its lexica reflect this, just as its later history down to the present century in the Tur 'Abdin reflects later influences, especially Kurdish and Turkish<sup>5</sup>.

Within the 2,000-year history of Syriac itself, the earliest inscriptions are particularly interesting for the following reasons:

- (i) They contain very clear evidence of the formation of classical Syriac<sup>6</sup>;
- (ii) The corpus is small and therefore easy to survey exhaustively<sup>7</sup>;

1 Beyer, *Aramaic*, gives a bibliographical survey.

2 See E.Y. Kutscher, *Aramaic*, in T.A. Sebeok (ed.), *Current Trends in Linguistics 6*, The Hague/Paris 1970, 347-412, especially sections 3.4 and 4.4.

3 K. Beyer, *Der reichsaramäische Einschlag in der ältesten syrischen Literatur*, ZDMG 116, 1966, 242-54.

4 See in general Beyer, *Aramaic*, 43-46.

5 These influences are evident from O. Jastrow, *Der neuaramäische Dialekt von Hertein (Provinz Siirt)*, Wiesbaden 1988 (e.g., p. 77) and his work on the Turōyō of Mīdin: *Laut- und Formenlehre des neuaramäischen Dialekts von Mīdin im Tür 'Abdīn*, Wiesbaden 1983<sup>3</sup>.

6 Within the series of inscriptions can be seen the emergence of «classical» orthography superseding Achaemenid forms to reflect changed pronunciation (e.g. the graph š is still at first in use for etymological š, though it is eventually replaced by the graph s) and «classical» morphology (e.g. imperfect verb prefix *y-* giving way to *n-*). See brief discussion of Drijvers, xii-xiii, and Beyer, ZDMG 116, 1966, 242-54.

7 Cf. Drijvers, from which the present author has for convenience produced a concordance.

(iii) There are four other, more or less contemporary Aramaic dialects, Palmyrene, Hatran, Nabataean and Jewish Aramaic, which can be compared with Syriac. Of these only material in the Jewish dialect of Aramaic is really extensive<sup>8</sup>. The Palmyrene and Nabataean corpora<sup>9</sup> are large so far as the number of inscriptions is concerned, though the inscriptions are mostly brief. The Hatran inscriptions<sup>10</sup> are relatively few in number and, like the Syriac, easy enough to survey.

It is impossible within the scope of this article to give exhaustive treatment of any of the five dialects. Of broader studies dealing with loans, special mention must be made of that of E.Y. Kutscher<sup>11</sup>. The Palestinian Jewish Aramaic which is contemporary with the earliest Syriac (and the other epigraphic Aramaic dialects) has been well covered in broader treatments by scholars such as Kaufman (for Akkadian influence)<sup>12</sup> and Krauss (for Greek and Latin)<sup>13</sup>.

Loans in this period of Aramaic range from the Sumerian (via Akkadian and Achaemenid Aramaic) to Greek and Parthian. Examples of words of Akkadian (or ultimately Sumerian) origin<sup>14</sup> include: *kwkh'* /*gwḥ'* / *gwmh'*, which appears in its different forms in Jewish Aramaic, Nabataean and Palmyrene and which derives from Akkadian *kimāhu*<sup>15</sup>, and means «burial-niche», *'rdkl'* in Hatran which derives from Akkadian *arad ekalli* and means «architect»<sup>16</sup>, and *'bwł'*, in Palmyrene and Hatran, from Akkadian *abullu*, «gateway»<sup>17</sup>. It is noteworthy that these examples and others are in the semantic field of architectural terms (principally religious architecture). Frequently bundles of lexical loans are specific to particular spheres of life.

The main purpose of this article is to illustrate the importance of loanword studies in the Aramaic of the first centuries A.D. by reference to Nabataean and early Syriac.

### (i) Nabataean

The Nabataean corpus consists of a number of formal inscriptions from the Nabataean kingdom (mostly of 1st century A.D. date), a few Nabataean papyri of the late

8 For the Jewish Aramaic material see Beyer, ATTM; M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, Bar Ilan 1990.

9 For Palmyrene see J. Cantineau, *Grammaire du palmyréen épigraphique*, Cairo 1935 (reprint Osnabrück 1987). For Nabataean see J. Cantineau, *Le Nabatéen*, Paris 1930-32 (reprint Osnabrück 1978); Healey, TIMS.

10 See Vattioni; A. Caquot, *L'araméen de Hatra*, GLECS 9, 1960-63, 87-88.

11 Aramaic, in T.A. Sebeok (ed.), *Current Trends in Linguistics 6* cit., 347-412.

12 S.A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic*, Chicago/London 1974; see especially his Introduction for general discussion of loans.

13 S. Krauss, *Griechische und Lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum*, Berlin 1898-99.

14 Akkadian influence on all phases of Aramaic is surveyed thoroughly by Kaufman.

15 See discussion in Healey, TIMS, 82.

16 Vattioni, Index and p. 23.

17 Vattioni, 88.

first/early second century A.D. (only one fully published)<sup>18</sup> and a vast number of graffiti.

From the linguistic point of view «Nabataean stands nearer to Achaemenid Imperial Aramaic than does Hasmonaeian»<sup>19</sup>. However, several of the conservative features of Nabataean<sup>20</sup> support the view of Nabataean which would see it principally as a *Schriftsprache*<sup>21</sup>, an earlier form of Aramaic preserved in a scribal environment from the ongoing development of the language reflected more fully in the other dialects. The Nabataeans are believed to have used a form of Arabic in everyday life.

Vocabulary is in general clearly Aramaic, with some inner Aramaic developments of meaning<sup>22</sup>, but loanwords of several types can be noted.

Greek loans<sup>23</sup> include military/administrative titles like:

’*srtg*’ (στρατηγός), «governor»<sup>24</sup>

*klyrk*’ (χιλίαρχος), «commandant»

*qntryn*’ (κεντυρίων), «centurion»,

legal/administrative terms like *qns*’ (κῆνος), «fine», and architectural terms like *bss*’ (βάσις), «platform».

Iranian loans are much rarer and may go back to the Achaemenid Persian period from which the Nabataean dialect comes. Later Iranian influence is less because of the remoteness of the Nabataean realm from the main spheres of Parthian influence. We may note a rather unusual term for a tomb which comes from an Iranian source, ’*wn*’: «lodging, dwelling»<sup>25</sup>.

18 The fully published papyrus is to be found in J. Starcky, *Un contrat nabateen sur papyrus*, RB 61, 1954, 161-81. Others are to be published by J. C. Greenfield: see his article on Arabic loanwords in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 15, 1992, 10-21. On these, and especially on legal aspects, see Healey, in *New Arabian Studies* 1, 1993, 203-14.

19 Beyer, *Aramaic*, 27. Hasmonaeian is the more or less contemporary Judaean dialect (Beyer, 20-21). Beyer's assessment of the situation follows, for example, T. Nöldeke, F. Rosenthal and J. Starcky.

20 Thus on the suffix *-hm* see E.Y. Kutscher, in *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 4, 1958, 16, n. 72. According to Kutscher, «Nabataean, being on the periphery of 'Reichsaramäisch' territory, was more inclined to cling to archaic forms».

21 See F. Rosenthal, *Die aramaistische Forschung seit Theodor Nöldeke's Veröffentlichungen*, Leiden 1939, 92; C. Brockelmann, in HdO III, 1954, 147-49.

22 H.-P. Roschinski, *Sprachen, Schriften und Inschriften in Nordwestarabien*, in *Die Nabatäer. Erträge einer Ausstellung im Rheinischen Landesmuseum Bonn* (ed. G. Hellenkemper Salies), Bonn 1981, 27-60 (= Bonner Jahrbücher 180, 1980).

23 See discussion of Greek loans in Cantineau, 172-73.

24 Discussions of this and the following terms, with references, may be found in Healey, TIMS: see index. A most useful source on administrative and related terminology is H.J. Mason, *Greek Terms for Roman Institutions: A Lexicon and Analysis*, Toronto 1974. For Semitic transformations see M.G. Bertinelli Angeli, *Nomenclatura pubblica e sacra di Roma nelle epigrafi semitiche*, Genova 1970. Individual items in both these works can be looked up *sub voce*, though some prominent terms have special studies devoted to them.

25 See Healey, TIMS, 186. Cantineau's identification of *ptwr*’ as a possible Iranian borrowing is dubious: TIMS, 197-98.

Akkadian influence is hardly to be expected in Nabataean for reasons both of date and geography, but there are words of Akkadian origin. Such borrowings as exist will have come to Nabataean indirectly via other forms of Aramaic or via another language. Such indirect borrowings include *gwh*<sup>2</sup> (already alluded to above) and *'pkI'*, perhaps «exorcist-priest,» a most interesting Mesopotamian loan, originally from Sumerian *ab.gal*, which entered various Aramaic dialects and also Epigraphic South Arabian and Early North Arabic<sup>26</sup>.

The most distinctive feature of Nabataean by comparison with all other Aramaic dialects of the period is its Arabic colouring or, to be more precise, colouring from an Arabian language allied in some way to what became Classical Arabic. This was already noted in the earliest studies on the Nabataean texts and it has tended to dominate discussions of the Nabataean dialect. This Arabian «influence» of a kind not found, for example, in Jewish Aramaic and Syriac is seen in the appearance of grammatical forms, syntax and lexica which are known otherwise in Semitic mainly or exclusively in Arabic<sup>27</sup>.

In passing it may be noted that the Namāra inscription dated A.D. 328 is written in the Nabataean Aramaic script but in the Arabic language, while in another inscription, dated A.D. 267/8, there is room for debate on whether the language is Arabic or Aramaic or a mixture<sup>28</sup>. We should also note that some other early though undated «Nabataean» inscriptions may in fact be in Arabic and that some of the thousands of Nabataean graffiti are arguably in Arabic<sup>29</sup>. It would, of course, be inappropriate to cite words from these texts as examples of Arabisms in Nabataean<sup>30</sup>!

Among the contributions to the study of Arabic lexica in the Nabataean texts in general, note may be made especially of the studies of J. Cantineau and M. O'Connor<sup>31</sup>. We may note the following examples of «Arabian» lexical intrusions<sup>32</sup>:

- 'nh*, «dispose of»(?)
- 'sdq*, «legitimate heir»
- gt*, «corpse»
- wgr*, «rock-tomb»
- wld*<sup>33</sup>, «offspring»
- hlt*, «maternal aunt»(?)

26 See Healey, TIMS, 160-62.

27 For discussions of this matter see Cantineau, 171-72, 177-80, and his article in AIEO 1, 1934-45, 77-97; M. O'Connor, JNES 45, 1986, 213-29, and Healey, TIMS, 59-63. For discussion of this in the context of the ethnic background of the Nabataeans see Healey, *Aram* 1, 1989, 38-44.

28 J.F. Healey and G.R. Smith, *Atlat* 12, 1989, 77-84.

29 See A. Negev, IEJ 36, 1986, 56-60.

30 See M. O'Connor, JNES 45, 1986, 213-29.

31 Cantineau, 171-80 (also his AIEO 1, 1934-45, 77-97); M. O'Connor, JNES 45, 1986, 213-29. Other works are cited in Healey, TIMS, 59-63.

32 Discussions can be located through the index of Healey, TIMS. In some cases, e.g. *wgr/wld*, the consonantism (retention of initial *w*) suggests the word is a loan from Arabic. In others the structure of the word suggests an Arabic loan (so *'sdq*).

33 Pace O'Connor, *op. cit.*, 219, *wld* is not restricted to one late text.

*ḥlyqt*, «nature, character»  
*kpr*, «tomb»  
*l̄n*, «curse»  
*nšyb*, «father-in-law»  
*‘yr*, «other than, change»  
*p-*, «and, then (consequently)»  
*sryḥ*, «burial-chamber»  
*rhn*<sup>34</sup>, «give in pledge»  
*rtb*, «draw up»  
*ślw*, «limb, remains»<sup>35</sup>.

It is difficult to obtain a clear view of «Arabic» lexica and even grammatical and syntactic features in a period before the existence of Arabic texts. Many of the lexica which look Arabic prove to be only vaguely related to meanings found in the Classical Arabic dictionaries. The «Arabic» lexical intrusions are not homogeneous<sup>36</sup>. A number of the lexica, such as *kpr* and *’ṣdq*<sup>37</sup>, which are often cited in this connection, have their closest parallel in Lihyanite, the local *Frühnordarabisch*, not in Classical Arabic. In the case of *kpr* there may be a distinct regionalism at work — it is only found in the south of the Nabataean realm.

This is not the place for details, but there is evidence of a difference between the «Arabic» in the background of the Nabataean texts and Classical Arabic, both in vocalism and in morphology — the Arabic behind Nabataean had already lost case endings<sup>38</sup>. This seems to imply that the dialect behind the Nabataean inscriptions is a «more developed» form of Arabic than Classical Arabic.

The writers of the inscriptions were fairly competent in chancellery Aramaic, though they used many pieces of vocabulary which are peculiar from an Aramaic point of view and must be taken from the everyday language of the scribes. Some of the intrusive lexica are related to special spheres of life, such as kinship relations, property law and burial customs<sup>39</sup>. This may be simply a reflection of the nature of the texts, especially the Madā'in Śalih tomb texts, which provide the largest group of examples, and it may have been inevitable that local non-Aramaic terms were used, since such appropriate Aramaic equivalents as exist would not carry the same technical nuance. It is noteworthy that there appears to be a weighting of these Arabic lexical items in the south of the Nabataean realm, specifically in the Madā'in Śalih inscriptions.

## (ii) Syriac

Early Syriac is our second example.

34 Doubtful Arabism — see Healey, TIMS, 121.

35 A marginal case is the use of *bnt* for *brt*.

36 J. Starcky, in DBS, VII, Paris 1966, col. 924.

37 See discussions in Healey, TIMS, 69, 91-92.

38 W. Diem, ZDMG 123, 1973, 227-37; Or 50, 1981, §§ 140-42.

39 See comments of O'Connor, JNES 45, 1986, 220.

The material on Greek loans was fairly exhaustively treated by A. Schall<sup>40</sup>. His work brings out quite clearly the difficulty in dealing with the Syriac corpus from this point of view. Unlike the Nabataean it is not compact chronologically and Syriac, unlike Nabataean, became a major literary language which flourished for the best part of a thousand years. It is, as a result, rather difficult to treat of loans throughout this long history: different influences affected Syriac at different times in its history. In addition, for the earliest literature there is a severe difficulty in dating material which has been transmitted over a long period.

For example, the *Doctrina Addai*<sup>41</sup>, a foundation document for the Syriac church and important also for the information it gives on pre-Christian Edessa, is nevertheless a product of the 4th century A.D. rather than the period of which it purports to treat. It is full of authentic-sounding detail which gives it an air of genuineness. For example, early in the text, in the administrative and dating context, there is reference to *qsr* (καῖσαρ), «Caesar», and *'pttp'* (ἐπίτροπος), «procurator,» while the profession of one of King Abgar's officials is defined as *tbwlr'* (ταβουλάριος), «archivist». We also find *'pdn'*, «palace», which is an Iranian loan<sup>42</sup>.

Again in Bardaisan's *Book of the Laws of Countries*<sup>43</sup>, substantially from the early third century A.D., we find such lexica as: *'stwks'* (στοιχεῖον), «elemental guiding sign», *tks'* (τάξις), «order», *nmws'* (νόμος), «law», and *trpzyt'* (τραπεζίτη), «money-changer».

In the *Odes of Solomon*<sup>44</sup>, usually dated to the late 2nd century A.D., are found, for example, the following Greek loans:

- mwkł'* (μόχλος), «bar»
- pnqyt'* (πινακίδιον), «volume»
- prswp'* (πρόσωπον), «face»
- tgm'* (τάγμα), «legion, cohort»
- qyndwnws* (κίνδυνος), «danger»
- lm'n'* (λιμήν), «harbour».

In order to compare like with like in placing Nabataean and Syriac alongside each other, it is best to restrict our consideration of the Syriac to Syriac inscriptions and archival materials. In doing this we have two partially contemporary corpora, on the one hand the Nabataean inscriptions and papyri and on the other c. 70 early, pre-Christian Syriac inscriptions and three legal texts on parchment from the mid-third century

<sup>40</sup> A. Schall, *Studien über griechische Fremdwörter im Syrischen*, Darmstadt 1960.

<sup>41</sup> See G. Howard (ed., trans.), *The Teaching of Addai*, Chico 1981.

<sup>42</sup> There are, of course, other words which are ultimately of Iranian origin, but which had already been long assimilated.

<sup>43</sup> See H.J.W . Drijvers (ed., trans.), *The Book of the Laws of Countries*, Assen 1965.

<sup>44</sup> J.H. Charlesworth (ed., trans.), *The Odes of Solomon*, Missoula 1977.

A.D.<sup>45</sup>. In the lists which follows words found only in the legal/administrative texts, mostly in a formulaic context, are marked with an asterisk (\*):

### Greek

- 'dryt'* (ἀνδριάς), «statue»
- 'plwtr'* (ἀπέλευθερος), «freedman»
- 'rkwnwt'*\* (ἄρχων), «governor(ship), magistracy»
- 'rkwywn'*\* (ἀρχεῖον), «archive»
- 'strtgwt'*\* *'strtg'*\* (στρατηγός), «governor»
- 'wsbws'*\* (εὐσεβής), «pious»
- 'wtqr̄twr'*\* (αὐτοκράτωρ), «emperor»
- 'w̄twks'*\* (εὐτυχής), «fortunate»
- 'yg(mwn')* (ἡγεμών), «governor»
- b'rs*\* (βᾶρις), «fortified place»
- dynr'*\* (δηνάριον), «denarius»
- glp* (γλύφω)<sup>46</sup>, «carve»
- hpty'*\* (ὑπατεία), «consulate»
- hpws*\* (ἱππεύς), «eques»
- mtrpwls*\* (μητρόπολις), «metropolis»
- nmws*\* (νόμος), «law»
- pylys*\* (φυλῆ), «tribe»
- qlwny*\* (κολωνία) «colonia»
- qsr*\* (καῖσαρ), «Caesar»
- sbs̄tw̄s*\* (σεβαστός), «Augustus»
- tr'*\* (θήρα), «hunt»
- trybwnyws*\* (τριβοῦνος), «tribune»

### Iranian

- 'stwn'*, «column, pillar»
- 'wzn'*, «sarcophagus»
- bwdr*, a type of priest ?
- nwhdr*<sup>47</sup>, «military commander»
- psgryb*', «crown-prince»

<sup>45</sup> For the inscriptions see Drijvers; for the parchments see J.A. Goldstein, JNES 25, 1966, 1-16; J. Teixidor, CRAIBL 1990, 144-66. An unpublished comprehensive work on the Syriac inscriptions is A.H.H. Al-Jadir, *A Comparative Study of the Script, Language and Proper Names of the Old Syriac Inscriptions*, University of Wales Ph.D. thesis, 1983.

<sup>46</sup> The Greek origin of this word is dubious: see Schall, *op. cit.*, 45-48, but it is still maintained by Vattioni, 23.

<sup>47</sup> *nwhdr*', *psgryb*' and other administrative titles in Parthian, several of which were loaned into Aramaic dialects such as Syriac and Hatran, are studied in detail by D. Harnack, *Parthische Titel, vornehmlich in den Inschriften aus Hatra*, in F. Altheim - R. Stiehl, *Geschichte Mittelasiens im Altertum*, Berlin 1970, 492-549. For *naxvadar* see 537-40; for *pašgra/ib* see 516-19.

**Arabian**

*kpr<sup>2</sup>*<sup>48</sup>, «tomb»

**Akkadian**

*blyl\** (*ballu*), «fodder»

*hykl?*\* (*ekallu*), «palace, temple».

The distribution of these loans shows that by far the greater part are found in the legal and administrative context of the parchments. A number are in a sense to be discounted since they appear in the legal and dating formulae which were inevitable in a legal system dominated by Rome. Other loans are found in the architectural sphere. But the number of Greek loans is impressive for this early stage in the history of Syriac.

Of specific note is the fact that a number of the loans have been integrated morphologically and phonetically by having been adapted into a Syriac «shape», with the typical Syriac emphatic -ā ending added, sometimes in place of the original Greek ending. In (')*strtg* an original -os ending has been replaced. Perhaps less remarkable is the easy adaptation of Greek feminines to the Syriac -ā (*qlwny'*). In other cases, here and in later Syriac, a Syriac ending is sometimes *added* to a Greek ending (e.g. *nms'*).

Some words have clearly become so much at home in Syriac that other derivatives can be formed: '*strtgwt*', the abstract noun formed from '*strtg*' < στρατηγός. In some cases this may be because of long or widespread use, even if attestation is not very wide.

**Conclusion**

Our survey has shown that there is a distinction to be made between Edessan Syriac on the one hand and Nabataean on the other. The former shows heavy lexical influence from Greek and some influence from Iranian languages. As might be expected, most of the Iranian loans into Syriac (and Palmyrene and Hatran) are in the sphere of civic administration and military affairs. This reflects the history of the region. Akkadian, as we have noted in passing, has some influence at Hatra, particularly in the sphere of (religious) architecture (and in other religious contexts), but the Akkadian influence in the epigraphic dialects is otherwise less than might have been expected. Words like *hykl?*, «sanctuary, palace» (in early and classical Syriac), though of Sumero-Akkadian origin, had long been integrated into the western Semitic languages. The spheres of life where Akkadian might have made itself felt more strongly had by the first centuries A.D. been heavily Iranised or Graecised.

Some Akkadian influences are also found in Nabataean, and the Akkadian influence may be very old, going back to the period when Aramaic was more unified. When one looks at literary «classical» Syriac (and the same seems to be true of other literary dialects such as Jewish Babylonian and Mandaic), Akkadian cognates can commonly be found. It is difficult to tie these to particular spheres of life, but technical

48 It is the *meaning* which is distinctively Arabian: see Lihyanite and Nabataean (above).

terms, e.g. plant-names, do seem to show continuity with the older Akkadian tradition (as would, of course, be expected). P. Jensen, who contributed the information on cuneiform cognates to C. Brockelmann's *Lexicon Syriacum*<sup>49</sup>, is, however, regarded generally as having somewhat exaggerated the Akkadian influences. Iranian terms also persist into the literary languages long after the demise of the Parthians. It must be remembered that much of pre-Islamic Syriac literature was written within the Sassanian empire.

Perhaps the most substantial outside influence on Syriac was from Greek. Even in early Aramaic (e.g. Biblical Aramaic) there are elements of Greek influence, but from the time of Alexander Greek comes more and more to the fore. Even words which are ultimately of Latin origin tend to enter Syriac via Greek, since Greek was the main language even of the Roman east. A clear case is the word for «tribune»,  $\tauριβοῦνος$ , cited above, which does not appear in standard Greek dictionaries, but is found in Greek administrative texts<sup>50</sup>. The most obvious spheres of this early Greek influence are in administration and law, military affairs and religion (especially architecture). Greek influence also came to be felt through the influence of philosophical writings and especially the Neoplatonic and Christian traditions. This is already reflected to some extent in Bardaisan cited above. Bardaisan's Edessa, the birthplace of classical Syriac, was culturally a Greek city. There was, it appears, at first a Christianity in northern Mesopotamia which showed little Greek influence (cf. Aphrahat, early 4th century A.D.), but Syriac-speaking Christianity came to be dominated intellectually and spiritually by the Greeks and classical Syriac is full of Greek words, especially Greek words connected with philosophy, theology, spirituality and liturgy. Later Syriac also reflects Arabic, Kurdish and Turkish influences.

Syriac had its original home almost in the heartland of the Aramaeans and it was in close contact with the worlds of Iran and Greece. Though further removed from Achaemenid Aramaic linguistically than is Nabataean, it belongs much more within the Achaemenid cultural tradition and also came directly under Parthian influence. The influence of Greek is also prominent, as might have been expected in view of the Seleucid and Roman activity in the area.

Nabataean, though linguistically conservative, is much more of a peripheral dialect of Aramaic and its lexical situation reflects this, especially the Arabian loans (and other Arabian intrusions). It was also effectively a *Schriftsprache* which was not used in common speech in most of the Nabataean region. An Arabian dialect was used in everyday life.

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49 Halle 1928<sup>2</sup>.

50 See H.J. Mason, *op. cit.* (see n. 24), 94.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- Beyer, *Aramaic*  
K. Beyer, *The Aramaic Language: its Distribution and Subdivisions* (trans. J. F. Healey), Göttingen 1986.
- Beyer, ATTM  
K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer*, Göttingen 1984.
- Cantineau  
J. Cantineau, *Le nabatéen*, II, Paris 1932.
- Drijvers  
H. J. W. Drijvers, *Old-Syriac (Edessean) Inscriptions*, Leiden 1972.
- TIMS  
J. F. Healey, *The Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions of Mada'in Salih*, Oxford 1994.
- Vattioni  
F. Vattioni, *Le iscrizioni di Hatra*, Naples 1981.