

It goes without saying that not all the words which as-Suyūṭī's authorities class under the term **السريانية** are of Syriac origin. Gold-

ziher has pointed out ¹ that **سرياني** was frequently used by Muslim writers for anything ancient, time honoured, and consequently little understood, and he quotes a line from Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, who in his *'Iqd al-Farīd*, speaking of a notoriously bad copyist, says: **كان اذا نسخ الكتاب مرتين عاد سريانيا** "if he copied a book twice 'twould be Syriac". Dvořák ² also refers to a common Turkish phrase quoted by Vambéry: **بو سريانيميدر بو بز اكليمه دق** "Is it perhaps Syriac? We could not understand it," somewhat as we say, "It was all Greek to me." It is thus clear that **سرياني** in the writings of the Muslim exegetes may frequently have meant nothing more than that a word was of the old learned tongues and so more or less unintelligible to the ordinary person.

(vi) *Hebrew*.—We learn from the Muslim historians that Jews were prominent in the pre-Islamic community at Madīna,³ and that there were in fact three considerable tribes of Jews in that area, the Banū Qainuqā', Banū Quraiza, and Banū Naḍir,⁴ who were proprietors of lands and plantations of palm trees, and who exercised no little influence on the Arabs around them.⁵ There were also many Jewish tradesmen in the city who are said to have been particularly skilled as jewellers and armourers.⁶ We learn also of communities at al-'Alā ⁷ (the ancient Dedan), Taima,⁸ Khaibar,⁹ and Fadak,¹⁰ in North Arabia,

¹ *ZDMG*, xxvi, 774.

² *Fremdwörter*, 22 n.

³ Ibn Hishām, 351; at-Tabarī, *Annales*, i, 1359 ff. For a discussion of their position and influence there, see Hirschfeld, *REJ*, vii, 167 ff.; Leszynsky, *Die Juden in Arabien*, 1910; and Wensinck, *De Joden te Medina*, Leiden, 1908.

⁴ We learn also of a tribe Banū Hadal (or Handal or Bahdal), cf. Yāqūt *Mu'jam*, iv, 462, and see Hirschfeld, *REJ*, vii, 169 ff. The *Aghānī* also mentions other smaller tribes or families.

⁵ *Aghānī*, xix, 94.

⁶ Cf. Hirschfeld, *op. cit.*; Wellhausen, *Reste*, 230; Caetani, *Annali*, i, 386.

⁷ Rudolph, *Abhängigkeit*, p. 1.

⁸ Shammākh, *Divan*, ed. Shanqīṭi, p. 26; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, i, 907.

⁹ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, ii, 504 ff.

¹⁰ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, iii, 856, 857; Abū Dā'ūd, *Sunan*, xix, 26.