

Arabic Language as the Foundation of Semitic Languages

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Abstract

There is a view that there was a hidden Greek transmission into Arabic linguistics and terminology which was subsequently borrowed by traditional Arab scholars who started to describe their own language scientifically. This has been rejected by some Muslim scholars who believe that the purity of Arabic linguistics, such as the theory of Arabic syntax, is totally free from any foreign influence. Thus, the purpose of the research is to discover the origin of the Arabic language before the dawn of Islam. The research focuses on the linguistic corpus development in order to give a balanced judgment.

Keywords: Arabic linguistics, Arabic Language, Origin of Arabic and Semitic Languages

The word `Semitic` was introduced by Schlozerⁱ in 1781 to denote a group of languages that evolved from Aramaic, Phoenician, Hebrew, Arabic, Yemen, Babylonian and Assyrian (al-Wāfī, 1988, p. 6). He understood them to be languages of the descendants of Prophet Noah (Roux, 1965, p. 124). If we look at the Upper Paleolithic,ⁱⁱ Mesolithic,ⁱⁱⁱ Neolithic,^{iv} and Chalcolithic^v times, the descendants of Adam were the founders of human civilization; their success was dependent on the stability of their political, cultural and geographical structures. We find that linguistic study is a vital aid in analysing their development. The major documented cultures of the ancient Near East have produced the largest body of material, providing a sound basis for subsequent reflections on their linguistic diversity and attempts at contrastive linguistics with Mesopotamia (Reiner, 1990, p. 61). Reiner (1990) asserted that there were two major languages at the beginning of recorded human history, namely, Acadian^{vi} and Sumerian^{vii} (p. 61). He assumed that the Acadian of the Semitic people spread to Mesopotamia by way of migration around 4000 B.C.E. (Ṭaha Bakir, Wādi an-Nail, 1956, pp. 210-320).

The medieval Muslim historian Ibn Kathīr believed that when Adam and Eve were expelled from paradise, Adam found himself in India on a mountain called Wasim in the valley of Bahil between ad-Dahnaj and al-Mandal and Eve in the land of Mecca (al-Bidayah wan Nihayah 1:13, Dār Ibn Kathir).^{viii} However, Ibn Abī Hatīm narrated from Ibn ‘Abbas that Adam descended in Dihna situated between Mecca and Ṭa’if. Another anecdote mentioned by Ibn Kathīr in his book `The Stories of the Prophet` is that according to Al-Hassan Al-Baṣrī, Adam descended in India, Eve in Arabia, Iblis in Bodistiman, Iraq, and the serpent in Isfahan, Iran. According to Abu Musa al-Ash’arī, before Allah ordered Adam to descend from Paradise to Earth, he taught him the names of all things and provisioned him with crops (Stories of the Prophets 1:1, Umm al-Qura). According to some narrations, Adam and Eve met in ‘Arafah.^{ix}

The question is, what language did Adam speak? Loewe (1994), a historian of ancient Babylon, purported from the Scripture that Aramaic was the language spoken by Adam (vol. 1, p. 103). Yet, if Adam spoke Aramaic, how could he receive a direct command from God in Arabic? As mentioned in Quran verse 2:35 is a command pattern or command mode, the word أسكن is a command pattern and لا تقربا and فتكونا both of them were commands pattern but for inhibition, what does it mean if the sentence in a command mode or pattern? It was revealed in direct conversation between the both parties, the letter أ in أسكن and التاء in لا تقربا and فتكونا linguistically had indicated the direct conversation was occurred. The Qur’ān states (Translated by A. Y. Ali):

"وقلنا يا آدم اسكن أنت وزوجك الجنة وكلاً منها رغدا حيث شئتما ولا تقربا هذه الشجرة فتكونا من الظالمين"

(Qur’ān, 2:35)

We said, ‘O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the garden and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression.’

"وعلم آدم الأسماء كلها ثم عرضهم على الملائكة فقال أنبؤني بأسماء هؤلاء إن كنتم صادقين"

(Qur’ān, 2:31)

And he taught Adam the nature of all things; then he placed them before the angels and said: ‘Tell me the nature of these if ye are right.’

It seems that Adam was taught not only the names of all things, but also the art of writing (on clay)^x which he passed on to his descendants, for the just governance of the world and writing (Zawq, 2006, p. 11 & al-Numānī, 1985, p. 77). Is it possible — as some historians assert — that mankind’s first language was Arabic, which developed the Aramaic dialect? (Zawq, 2006, p. 2). If so, then Aramaic did not prelude Arabic, but has to be considered as its offshoot, as argued by Zawq (2006) who stipulates that Arabic formed the root of Qahton, Adnan, Hebrew and Aramaic (p. 2). Yaseen (n.d) whose research into Mesopotamian civilization led him to establish the theory that the Sumerians received Acadian immigrants from Arabia (pp. 36-40) supports his theory. While Sumerian culture was more advanced (Kramer, 1963, pp. 73-269), their languages integrated and formed the ancient Semitic language.^{xi} Around 2400 B.C.E Semitic people migrated to eastern Mesopotamia, settled in the vicinity of the Dajlah river and erected the city of Assur. A group of migrants moved further south and mixed with the original populace. The language that developed through this migratory process was called Acadian or Babylon-Assyrian (al-Wāfī, 1988, p. 27). The two major cities entertained ties with other cities like Tel al-Emrnah as indicated by the evidence of scriptures^{xii} written in Acadian circa 1411-1358 B.C.E. It is assumed that Acadian represents an eastern branch of the Semitic family of languages. According to Reiner (2013), a group of bilingual texts composed around 1000 B.C.E. contain numerous syntactic faults in the Sumerian version -- a calque on the Acadian (p. 88). This suggests that the Sumerian version was subsequently added, either because of the need for a Sumerian version for cultic recitation or simply to lend more authenticity to the text (Reiner, 2013, p. 90). Conclusive evidence that Acadian was the formal language was uncovered when two Acadian tablets were unearthed in Gaza, written in cuneiform script that contained contracts relating to the sale of land and dated according to the Assyrian calendar by the eponym of the year. Based on these findings, it was inferred that cuneiform script had survived in Canaan from the Amarna period onwards serving as the official script for legal documents when the Assyrians were the undisputed masters of Palestine. A small limestone fragment bearing Assyrian characters was found in Samaria issued during the reign of Sargon (Lods, 1996, p. 3).

The Arabic writing development process was similar to the Greek writing development process as mentioned by Powell (1991):

“...In the eighth and seventh and sixth century B.C. appear in the Levant clear local varieties of this script. West Semitic writing came to include two branches: Northwest Semitic (Phoenician, Canaanite, Hebrew, Aramaic, Samaritan) and Southwest Semitic (North Arabic, South Arabic, Ethiopic). Derivatives of the script are still today preferred by Semitic speakers, while Phoenician writing is a sub-group of `West Semitic` writing, it is also the form of West Semitic writing which is earliest attested by complete inscriptions” (p. 9)

In addition to that evidence we find that ancient Greek writing was written from right to left (Powell, 1991, p. 9)—similar to the case of Arabic writing which originated from ancient written languages that interacted in Mesopotamian area. Perhaps, the interrelationship was an indicator that they originated from the same root at the genealogical level.

Ancient near East Writing Activities

According to Kramer (1959), the Sumerians are one of the best known people of the ancient Near East. They became excellent workers in building temples, palaces and making tools such as

weapons, pots, vases, jewels and ornaments. Moreover, Sumerian clay tablets have been found by the tens of thousands inscribed with their business, legal and administrative documents. A large number of Sumerian clay documents on which their literary creations revealing Sumerian religion, ethics and philosophy were inscribed because the Sumerians were one of the very few people who not only, probably, invented a system of writing but also developed it into a vital and effective medium of communication (Kramer, 1959, p. xviii & xix). Kramer believed these people had existed 5000 years ago (1959, p. xix). Their early attempts were crude and pictographic characters; after the development of thinking, they became a highly conventionalized and pure phonetic system of writing. The great majority of these were excavated between 1889 and 1900 at Nippur, an ancient Sumerian site not much more than a hundred miles from modern Baghdad (1959, p. xx). A millennium before the Hebrews wrote their Bible and the Greeks their Iliad and Odyssey, the epic Gilgamesh which was the most excellent literary work of Babylonian was found in 1862 (1959, p. 183). The epic Gilgamesh consisted of twelve songs or cantos of about three hundred lines each; each canto was inscribed on a separate tablet now located in the Ashurbanipal library (1959, p. 183). The poet who held the centre stage was Gilgamesh, whose love and hatred, tears and rejoice, strives and wearies, hopes and despair meant he dominated the action of the poems (1959, p. 104). The discussion above indicates that the concept of writing had already come to existence since the existence of Noah and his descendants; Shem, Ham and Japheth (Genesis 10:7).

H. G. Wells (Wells, 1956, Vol 1, p. 159) had divided the types of human writing into three categories; picture writing, syllable writing and alphabet writing. Picture writing is the pictograph that could be found today in places like railway stations such as the arrow pointing uptown or downtown; in restaurants a little sign of steamboat or a sign of a cup of coffee or even in Chinese writing where there are still traceable numbers of pictographs (1956, p. 160). The syllable writing could be visualized in Sumerian picture-writing which was done upon clay and in styles made of complex and inaccurate curved marks which today is rapidly degenerating; it was however, a well-adapted language. Then, another system of writing, developed in Egypt and the Mediterranean coast, had been found in priestly picture-writing called hieroglyphics of the Egyptians which also partly became a sound-sign system based on the sign the alphabets were created.

The above mentions how the system of writing was developed during the different periods in time. We now return to our discussion on how the ten systems of five languages (Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, Ancient Phoenician and Babylonian Assyrian became almost matching in corresponding aspects. The vowel and consonant systems indicate that those languages perhaps originate from the same source. The question is, from the five languages above (some of historians considered six languages because the Babylonian and Assyrian came from the same area but in different period of dynasty), which one had become the source for the rest? Or are they languages or dialects? If we refer to historical documents, it was mentioned in the Qur'an, the Genesis or other ancient documents that the sons of Shem named Amur, Asshur (Kysun), Elam, Arpakhshad and Aram travelled to the East and West to find different places to live in. H. G. Wells believed they were looking for new places to relocate, leaving their current home which had been struck by natural disaster (Wells, 1956, p. 117-122). According to Zaydān (1911), the first son of Shem, Amur, moved to the East or present-day Iraq (*Urk*) and the West in Palestine. In the East, he became the ruler of *Urk* starting the Hamurrabi Dynasty. Likewise, in the West

his people became the first group who populated the coast of Palestine, eventually known as the Canaanite people who spoke the Phoenician language (Margoliouth, 1924, p. 9). The second son of Noah was Ham who spoke the Hamitic languages such as the language of ancient Egyptians and Coptics, the Berber languages of the mountain people of North Africa, the Masked Tuaregs, the Ethiopic group of African languages in eastern Africa including the speech of the Gallas and the Somalis (Wells, 1956, p. 120). The third son was Japhet, the languages which originated from his descendants called the Aryan languages or the Indo-European in Aryan family were popular among philologists. Currently, these great languages cover nearly all of Europe such as English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Russian, Armenian, Persian and various Indian tongues. We realize the same fundamental roots and the same grammatical ideas are traceable throughout this family of languages; for instance, the English words for *father* and *mother* are similar to the German *vater* and *mutter*, Latin *pater* and *mater*, Greek *pater* and *meter*, French *père* and *mere*, Armenian *hair* and *mair*, Sanscrit *pitar* and *matar*, etc. (p. 118). Similarly, the manner in Aryan languages only changes in a great number of fundamental words, for example, the *f* in the Germanic languages becomes *p* in Latin and so on. Actually those languages are not different; they are variations of one thing since the people who speak those languages think in the same way (p. 118). We can conclude that Semitic, Hamitic and Japhetic or Aryan people express their ideas of relationship in different ways; the fundamental ideas of their grammars are thus different. The above mentioned indicates that the three sons of Noah (Shem, Ham and Japhet) developed the first languages in the different regions; however, each had different fundamental approaches due to the different territories, provinces and cantos.

The above mentioned shows the strong connections between them; when we look at the ancient historical aspect we can see that they came from the same root whereby their father called Shem bin Noah had five sons; Amur (Elam)^{xiii}, Asshur (Khyusun), Arpachshad, Lud and Aram (Genesis 10:22) and their land of origin was Damascus previously called the city of Aram, which means that Syria was their original home (H. G. Wells, The Outline of History, Volume 1, 1956, pp. 127-134). The first was Amur who travelled to the East (Iraq) and West (Palestine) looking for new places and habitat; most historians believed his descendants were rulers of Sargon, Hammurabi (called Babylonian), Assyrian and Chaldean empires. Meanwhile, Hebrew came from Shem's sons, Lud and Aram; it is no wonder that their dialects are very similar to each other (Genesis 15: 10).

Arabic Language as the Root of Semitic Languages

As we have discussed earlier, the Semitic languages which – as postulated by Schlozar – consisted of Acadian, Aramaic, Syriac, Phoenician, Babylonian-Assyrian, Arabic and Hebrew. However, a group of linguists argue that Arabic had assumed its classical form not shortly before the seventh century C.E. but actually already during ancient times and as such has to be considered the main stem from which all other Semitic languages evolved later on.^{xiv} There is linguistic evidence which would indicate that Arabic was the mother of all ancient Semitic languages (Kamaludin, 2007a, pp. 41-44 & 2007b, pp. 27-36).

Table 1. Similarities between Arabic and other Semitic languages

	Arabic	Hebrew	Syriac	Ancient Phoenician	Babylonian Assyrian
Istifham	Mā	Mā	Mā	Mī	Mī

Nafi	Lā	Lā	Lā	Lā	Lā
Domir naşob	Nī	Nī	Nī	Nī	Nī
Nouns	Tanawwūr	Tannūr	-	-	Tinnūru
	Lisān	Lāšōn	Leššānā	Lesān	Lišānu
	Şayţān	Şaţān	Sāţānā	Sayţān	-
	Ful	Pūl	-	Fūl	-
	Ḳassīs	-	Ḳaşšīšā	Ḳasīs	-
	Atān	Āţōn	Attānā	-	-
Al-Muta'addi ajwaf	Şāma	Şām	Sām	-	-
	Şāba	Şāb	-	-	-
	Dāna	-	Dān	-	-
	Baḳā	Bāḳā	Bkā	-	-
	Banā	Bānā	Bnā	-	-
	Balā	Bālā	Blā	-	-
Al-Muta'addi Al-Akhir	Ġalā	-	Ġālā	Ġlā	-
	Talā	-	-	Tlā	-
	Ḥaliya	Ḥālā	Ḥlī	-	-
	Hayiya	Ḥāyā	Ḥyā	-	-
	Raḍiya	Rāşā	R<Ā	-	-
	Abā	ābā	-	Abaya	-
	Bakā	Bāḳā	Bkā	-	-
Al-Harakāt At-	Kibārunā	Wālaylā	Nāşā	Samāwāt	-

Ūawīlah Fi Al-Kalimah	كبارنا Hārātunā حاراتنا	وليلنا Ālay علي	قوم Abdāyā إفساد	سماوات -	-
Al-Ḍomah	Yaḡūlūna يقولون	Mō`ābiyyōt مؤايبات	Šūbḡūh اتركوها	Zaye>ehzōmū الذي يأخذهم	-
	Mansūrūna منصورون	-	Abūkūn أبوكم	Yenaḡhōmū يحطمهم	-
	Maḡhūrūna مقهورون	-	-	Fenōtōmu طريقهم	-
Al-Kasrah	Tabi<ina تبيعين	Šadiḡim أبرار	Šbikin مغفورة	Yebēlanī يقول لي	-
	Ġari>ina جربئين	Yēmīnī يميني	Smīkīn متكى	-	-
Associate in meaning	Uht أخت	Āhōt	Hāḡā	Eht	Ahatu
	Bala<a بلغ	Bāla<	Bla<	Bala<a	Belu
	Ba<ir بعير	Bē<ir	B<irā	Ba<rāwī	-

The languages which can be found in nearly all of the Mesopotamian area including North African are Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, Ancient Phoenician and Babylonian Assyrian. They are called Semitic languages or the language of *al-Jazariyyah*. The same fundamental roots and the same grammatical ideas are traceable throughout this family. When comparing the ten examples which have been highlighted from the ten topics that focus on grammatical issues; *istifham* (question) in Arabic language is *Mā*, for Hebrew it is *Mā*, Syriac is *Mā*, Ancient Phoenician is *Mī* and for Babylonian Assyrian it is *Mī*. The difference can be found in the last vowel; either in accusative form by using *ā* (*al-Alīf*) or genitive form by using *ī* (*al-Yā`*) when there is a declensional change in the noun ending represented by vowel *i*. In Semitic linguistic rules, it does not change the meaning or in other words, `a word` could be in similar connotation and denotation based on sense signification. The *Nāfi* (deny) in all languages in the table is

represented by the same word which is `Lā which means the concept of denying something with the same sense of significance. The word *Domir naṣob* (accusative case) is also in the same form and feature. In order to have concrete evidence, the researcher highlights some used nouns in these languages such as in Arabic it is called *Tanawwūr*, in Hebrew it is *Tannūr* and *Tinnūru* in the Babylonian Assyrian language; meanwhile, the words for the remaining two languages Syriac and Ancient Phoenician are still being researched in the manuscripts. The words `Lisān, Lāsōn, Leššānā, Lesān and Lišānu are in the same roots but with different features; however, they still originate from the primary source which is considered the oldest language among the five mentioned above. The word *Šayṭān* in Arabic, *Šaṭān* in Hebrew, *Sāṭānā* in Syriac and *Sayṭān* in Ancient Phoenician indicate that most of these languages use the same forms and features basically, in the same manner for the words *Ful*, *Pūl* and *Fūl* except for the long vowel in the middle, for sure it does not make any sense as a result of different dialects spoken among the ancient population indicating that the languages did evolve. Looking at the accusative case (*Al-Muta`addiajwāf* and *Al-Muta`addi Al-Akhir*), the examples may include the word *Šāma* in Arabic, *Šām* in Hebrew and *Sām* in Syriac, or other words `Šāba, Šāb, Dāna, Dān, Baḳā, Bāḳā, Bkā, Banā, Bānā, Bnā, Balā, Bālā, Blā, Ğalā, Ğālā, Ğlā, Talā, Tlā, Ḥaliya, Ḥālā, Ḥlī, Hayiya, Ḥāyā, Hyā, Raḍiya, Rāšā, Rā, Abā, Abā, Abaya; simple analysis could help us in proving that all of them actually come from the same source by examining the basic root of the words provided such as the word *Baḳā* which is an Arabic root word that Arab people still use till today. The Jewish people pronounce it in a long vowel style in the middle and ending of a word, the Syrians pronounce *Bkā* with a long vowel in the ending as well as *Banā*, *Bānā*, *Bnā* and *Balā* in Arabic and Hebrew. Another angle that the researcher believes proves a stronger connection between them is the system of long vowel either at the beginning of the word or middle or end of it such as in the case of *Al-Harakāt At-Ṭawīlah Fī Al-Kalimah* in Arabic *Kibārunā* and *Hārātunā*, Hebrew *Wālaylā* and *Ālay*, Syriac *Nāšā* and *Abdāyā* and Ancient Phoenician *Samāwāt*; the letter *ā* in each word has the same manner in pronunciation. Further discussion on the topic focuses on the nominative and u-vowel such as Arabic *Yaḳūlūna*, *Manṣūrūna* and *Maḳhūrūna*, Hebrew *Mō`ābiyyōt*, Syriac *Šūbḳūh* and *Abūkūn*, Ancient Phoenician *Zaye`ehzōmū*, *Yenāḍhōmū* and *Fenōtōmu*; the letter *ū* plays an important role for these languages in practising the nominative and u-vowel. The *Al-Kasrah* among these languages is practised when they are collectively and cooperatively used together to identify and diagnose the classification of words such as Arabic *Tabīcina* and *Ġari`īna*, Hebrew *Šadiḳim* and *Yēmīnī*, Syriac *Šbikin* and *Smīkīn*, and Ancient Phoenician *Yebēlanī*, the focus is on the letter *ī* which undoubtedly conveys the same manner in fundamental basic word approaches. The associate meaning is the last analysis on the function of samples carried out by the researcher. It obviously shows the same root or source of the languages in Arabic which calls *Uht*, *Bala`a* and *Ba`ir*, Hebrew *Āhōt*, *Bāla`* and *Bē`ir*, Syriac *Ḥāṭā*, *Bla`* and *B`irā*, Ancient Phoenician *Eht*, *Bala`a* and *Ba`rāwī*, Babylonian & Assyrian *Ahatu* and *Belu*. The words *Uht*, *Āhōt*, *Ḥāṭā*, *Eht* and *Ahatu* basically use the same fundamental morphology in giving the impression of meaning; this technique is also implemented in the second and third words.

Obviously, these ten linguistic samples display indisputable similarities. The variant pronunciations indicate the development of different dialects stemming from an identical root. Sulaimān (1992) and Nahār (2002) proposed changing the common term 'Semitic' with 'Jazariyah' as a means to correctly denote the relation of the branches to the Arabic stem or 'Ur' language. Acadian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Caldaean and Aramaic tribes in Mesopotamia can

trace their origins in ancient Arabic civilization (Sakiz, 1989, p. 35). The researcher believes the similarities essentially occur in the ten samples of languages spread and extended in the Mesopotamia area in dialects which came from the same origin which is the Arabic language. In addition, the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad PBUH narrated by at-Tirmīzī *سام أبو العرب، حام أبو العرب، يافت أبو الروم الحيش، (Shem the father of Arab, Ham the father of Habsyī, Japhet the father of Rom)* evidently proves the claim said that the Arabic language is the origin of Semitic languages.

The Term *Jazariyyah* instead of Semitic

Generally, most studies on the evolution of the Arabic language focus on the development of Arabic grammar, the channels through which its system was adopted, and whether or not Arabic was subjected to substantial foreign influences. With respect to the role of Arabic in Islamic civilization, the majority of historians and linguists agreed that formal writings on Arabic grammar started in the time of ‘Ali bin Abi Tālib (Ḍaif, 1995, pp. 366-372). However, the issue regarding the origin of the Arabs and their language has not yet been agreed upon. Many debates focus on numerous assumptions and premature conclusions not thoroughly founded on a solid basis of textual evidence. The earliest extensive body of textual sources in the Arabic language is found in the corpus of pre-Islamic poetry. At the initial stage of investigation, when Jahili literature was created has to be determined. The most famous poet among the Arabs was Amru` al-Qays (died 565 C.E.), the nephew of Muhalhil Ibn Rabi’ah. His phrase "Let us halt and weep" is contained in one of the seven *Mu'allaqāt*, a selection of poems prized as the best examples of pre-Islamic Arabian verses, which - according to the custom of the time - were publicly displayed in Mekkah. Imru' al-Qays remains the most revered of all the pre-Islamic poets and has been a source of literary and national inspiration for Arabic intellectuals up until the 20th C.E. In the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Makkī (2005) believed that Imru al-Qays was of the Kindah tribe and the first major Arabic literary figure by quoting ‘Verses from his *Mu'allaqah* (Seven Suspended Poems), one of seven poems prized above all others by pre-Islamic Arabs, are still the most famous and possibly the most cited verses in all of Arabic literature. The *Mu'allaqah* is also an integral part of the linguistic, poetic and cultural education of all Arabic speakers.’ (p. 311). He also emphasized that Ibn Sallam al-Jumahī (d. 846 C.E.) summarized the poet’s genius in his *Generations of the Stallion Poets* as follows:

Imru' al-Qays was the originator of many great things the Arabs considered beautiful, and which were adopted by other poets. These things include calling up his companions to halt, weeping over the ruins of abandoned campsites, describing his beloved with refinement and delicacy, and using language that was easy to understand. He was the first to compare women to gazelles and eggs, and to liken horses to birds of prey and to staves. He 'hobbled like a fleeing beast' [a reference to his famous description of his horse] and separated the erotic prelude from the body of his poem. In the coining of similitudes, he surpassed everybody in his generation. (Makkī, 2005, p. 222)

To support the above statement, the Iraqi writer al-Samarrā'i (1993) hails Imru' al-Qays as “the freedom poet” (*al-shā'ir al-'ashīq*) and ascribes to him the ideal of an independent spirit:

The poet Imru' al-Qays had a gentle heart and a sensitive soul. He wanted the best not only for himself, but also for all the people of his society. The freedom that he struggled for was not confined to romantic and erotic relations between him and his

beloved Fatimah nor was it limited to his demands to lift the restrictions on sexual relations between men and women, rather it exceeded all this. He was singing for the freedom of humanity and from this point, we are able to name him the Poet of Freedom. (p. 32)

Pre-Islamic poetry also contains reference to the ancient Arabic kingdom of Palmyra that was ruled by Queen Zenobia (الزباء) in the third century C.E. when Greater Syria was part of the Roman Empire. Zenobia succeeded in extending her rule to Egypt until 274 C.E. when she was defeated and taken to Rome as a hostage at the orders of Emperor Aurelian (Tārīkh al-Umam wal-Mulūk 1:73, Bayt al-Afkar ad-Dauliyyah). Arabic sources provide indications of her Arab descent, such as al-Ṭabarī who recorded that she belonged to the same tribe as her husband, *al-'Amlaqi*, one of the four original tribes inhabiting the Palmyra region. Zenobia's father, 'Amr ibn al-Zarīb, was the chieftain of the *'Amlaqis* before he was killed by members of the rival *Tanukh* confederation; Zenobia succeeded him as the head of the *'Amlaqis* and originated from the first al-Arab *'Āribah*.^{xv} Latin and Arabic sources describe Zenobia as a beautiful and intelligent woman who carried herself like a man accustomed to riding, hunting and drinking with her officers. Zenobia was renowned to be educated and fluent in Greek, Aramaic and Egyptian. She frequently hosted literary salons and surrounded herself with philosophers and poets (Tārīkh al-Umam wal-Mulūk 1:73). Ibn 'Aqil's *Commentary* (1998) contains a poem allegedly authored by the queen herself (vol. 2, p. 366, & Tārīkh al-Umam wal-Mulūk 1:73):

مَا لِلجَمَالِ مَشِيئُهَا وَوَيْدًا * أَجْنَدَلًا يَحْمِلُنَ أُمَّ حَدِيدًا

*Doesn't the walk of the camel cry out * Be it stoness she carries, or steel*

أُمَّ الرِّجَالِ جُنْمًا قَعُودًا

Or heavy men riding her^{xvi}

Her poem was used by Arabic grammarians to prove specific grammatical rules of the Arabic language. This is of course to be considered another viable piece of literary evidence for the existence of ancient Arabic.

In respect to the origin of the classical Arabic alphabet, scholars such as Suyūṭy have established a linkage with Syriac calligraphy (al-Muḏḥīr 1:4, Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyah), this evidence being supported by Farūqī (1980) who explained the beginning of a more sophisticated Arabic writing style by the introduction of so-called 'Arabeques' in what used to be ancient Mesopotamia and the Arabs called 'what lies between the two rivers (Euphrates and Tigris) (p. 11). When examining the oldest existing manuscript copies of the Qur'anic text originating from the eighth century C.E., their characteristic *naskh* style can be associated with the ancient Nabataean, the difference being that in the latter the letters remained disconnected and scattered while in the former the letters were interconnected (Farūqī, 1980, p. 158). Further studies explained the evolution of specific Arabic letters by the combination of certain Nabataean letters (al-Zayyid, 2011, p. 36). Recent heliographic manuscript studies have also contributed to the discussion (al-Zaybī, 1995, p. 18) by observing noticeable similarities between ancient Egyptian and Arabic syntax. In summary, De Sacy's statement that the Arabs had no writing before Prophet Muhammad's time has long been dispelled and is no longer considered worthy of serious academic consideration (Margoliouth, 2004, p. 7). Even such notoriously biased and ostensibly Biblically inspired orientalists such as Margoliouth (2004) could not help but submit to the sheer overwhelming evidence of ancient Arabic writing which was mostly preserved in the form of stone inscriptions found scattered throughout Arabia:

Inscriptions in truly monumental alphabets accumulated to the number of some thousands, they were found to represent more than one kingdom and more than one dialect the names, records and dates, which they contained, cleared away some of the obscurity which veiled the pre-Islamic history of the peninsula. (p. 7)

Then he added:

... The old Arabian alphabet was constructed is unknown, we have no record... it has however been pointed out that within that alphabet we can see a certain amount of evolution. (p. 11)

From the above it can be safely established that Arabic existed already in its basic form and structure in ancient times. The preservation of classical pre-Islamic Arabic poetry was also not interrupted by the coming of Islam but rather continued in the works of early Muslim grammarians. The evolution of any language does not occur in complete isolation from other languages and cultures, thus, the possible influence of *Nabataean* writing and Egyptian syntax does not stand in contradiction to the independent development of the Arabic language as a unique form of expression of Arabic culture and civilization. Thus the researcher believes the word *Jazariyyah* instead of Semitic is more appropriate due to the origin and development occurred in Mesopotamia area.

Conclusion

The Arabic language originated from ancient civilization not long after the dawn of Islam where the Qur'an became the major source for Muslims. From the abovementioned, it is clear that the Arabic language had been used during historic times but in different forms. What does this mean? Several evidence indicate the existence of the Arabic language during ancient times based on the early manuscripts written by the primitive people, the main one among them the manuscript of Epic Gilgamesh which dated 4000 B.C, written in Sumerian writing where some orientalist claim it came from the Sumerian civilization. Unfortunately, the researcher believes it did not originate from this group but from the Semitic groups who were descendants of Shem either through Amur or Kyushun or Elam or Arpakhshad or Lud or Aram but not from Sumerian people who were known as non-semitic so they could not claim the manuscript of Epic Gilgamesh as originating from the Sumerians. The Sumerian people came to the Mesopotamia area after the period of Sargon and Hammurabi Dynasties, not before. In addition to that, the writer who translated the first world document of 'The Epic of Gilgamesh' into Arabic in 1957 asserted that the fundamental grammar such as the different types of rules had been practised by different genders^{xvii}. Thus, the civilization in ancient Iraq (Urk) did not belong to them but to the descendants of Dynasty King Hammurabi, then the Dynasty of Assyrian ruled the region, not the Sumerians. This means the Sumerians who came from the regions of Europe were absolutely not the people whose started the civilization of the Mesopotamia area but the region was developed by the Semitic people. The ancient inscriptions were the evidence indicating that the established system in linguistics had occurred. According to the findings, the Arabic writing was considered a new character form called *Arabesque* which is an ornamental design consisting of intertwined flowing lines, originally found in ancient inscriptions; a strong evidence that the Arabic language originated from the evolution of the ancient writing character of Nabatean, Syriac, Assyur, Madaen, etc.

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ⁱ German Orientalist whose theory is not supported by Arab scholars who coined the rival term ‘*Jazariah*’ or ‘*Urubah*’; (see Kamaludin, 2007a, p. 15).

ⁱⁱ Relating to the time when humans first started to make tools out of stone.

ⁱⁱⁱ Denoting the middle period of the Stone Age between the Paleolithic and Neolithic period also called Middle Stone Age. (The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1999, p. 1161).

^{iv} Period of history began around 8000 B.C.E. when humans began to make stone tools, grow their food and live in permanent communities, when ground or polished stone weapons and implements prevailed. (see The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1999, p.1242)

^v Relating to the period in 4000 to 3000 B.C.E. in the Near East and South Eastern Europe when weapons and tools were made of copper, period still largely Neolithic in character, also called Eneolithic (see The New Oxford Dictionary of English, 1999, p. 301)

^{vi} Also called Assyro-Babylonian.

^{vii} Was supported by HijÉzi (1980, p. 151).

^{viii} (See *Qism al-AbhÉth wa al-dirÉsÉt al-IslÉmiyyah*, n.d., p.30); (Stories of the Prophets 1:1); and (Newby, 1989, p. 38).

^{ix} Originally means “place to know each other”; (see Stories of the Prophets 1:1)

^x (See Domrah, 1987, p.11), He was the first man in the earth spoke Arabic, (see Zawq, 2006, p.2).

^{xi} According to Schlozer, all people of language were descendants of Sam, the son of Noah.

^{xii} Contains narratives of Egyptian kings such as Akhenaton and Amhotep 1 & 11, (see al-WÉfÉ, 1988, p. 27).

^{xiii} The Bible only mentions the name of Elam, but the researcher found in traditional Arabic books supported by some views from Jewish writers who stated `Amur` as the other name.

^{xiv} The spoken and written Arabic before the revelation of the Qur’an in the seventh century was different, the Arabic spoken by prophet Ismail was the dialect of the Quraysh. (see Zawq, 2006, p. 7).

^{xv} Al-Arab ‘*Āribah* they were ten, ‘*Āad, Thamud, ‘Amlaqi, Taas̄m, Jadis, Ummim, al-Mauḍu’, Jurhum, Yaḳṱān and Salāf*. (Tārīkh al-Umam wal-Mulūk 1:28).

^{xvi} Mentioned by Tārīkh al-Umam wal-Mulūk 1:73

^{xvii} *Milhamah al-Gilgamish*, p. 31.