

Such are the principal original sources from which the Arabic lexicons and lexicological works have been derived. Another source consisted of phrases and single words transmitted from the Arabs of classical times, or from those later Arabs of the desert who were believed (though they were not regarded as unquestionable authorities) to have retained the pure language of their ancestors. The earlier of these are often called, by the lexicologists, *العرب العاربة*; as in the 1st Section of the Muzhir, where it is said that the transmission (*التَّغْلُ*) should be “from such as *العرب العاربة*, like [the descendants of] *Kaḥṭān* and *Ma'add* and *'Adnān*; not from those after them; after the corruption of their language, and the varying of the *Muwalleds*.” *El-Jowharee*, as will presently be seen, applies the appellation *العرب العاربة* even to desert-Arabs of his own time; but in doing so, he deviates from the general usage of the lexicologists. As is said in the 6th Section of the Muzhir, the transmitter must be a trustworthy person; but may be a woman, and may be a slave, as we have before stated. The degrees of credit to which the phrases and words thus transmitted are entitled are distinguished by ranging them in the following classes: 1st, (as is stated in the 3rd Section of the Muzhir,) the term *مُتَوَاتِرٌ* is applied to that which has been transmitted by such a number of persons as cannot be supposed to have agreed to a falsehood: 2ndly, *أَحَادٌ* (plural of *أَحَدٌ*), to what have been transmitted by some of the lexicologists, but are wanting in that which is required to justify the application, thereto, of the former term; and what is thus transmitted is also termed *مَظْنُونٌ*: 3rdly, (as is said in the 5th Section,) *أَفْرَادٌ* (plural of *فَرْدٌ*), to what have been transmitted by only one of the lexicologists; and what is thus transmitted, if the transmitter is a person of exactness, as *Aboo-Zeyd* and *El-Khaleel* and others, is admitted: 4thly, (as is said in the 15th Section,) *مَغَارِبِدٌ* (plural of *مَغْرُوبٌ*), to words known to be spoken only by one Arab. It was only when all other sources failed to supply what was wanted, that recourse was had, by the writers of lexicons and lexicological works, to contemporary Arabs of the desert; and I do not find that much reliance was often placed upon these after the end of the third century of the Flight. *El-Jowharee*, who died near the close of the next century, states, in the short preface to his “*Ṣiḥāḥ*,” that what he had collected in *El-'Irāk* for his lexicon he “rehearsed by lip to [those whom he terms] *العرب العاربة* in their abodes in the desert (*الْبَادِيَةِ*):” but this he seems to have done rather to satisfy any doubts that he may have had, and to obtain illustrations, than with the view of taking such persons as authorities for words or phrases or significations. It is related of *Aboo-Zeyd*, in the 7th Section of the Muzhir, that he said, “I do not say ‘the Arabs say’ unless I have heard it from these: *Bekr Ibn-Hawāzin* and *Benoo-Kilāb* and *Benoo-Hilāl*; or from [the people of] the higher portion of the lower region, or [of] the lower of the higher:”* and that *Yoonus* used the expression “the Trustworthy (*الْبَيِّنَةُ*) told me from the Arabs;” that being asked, “Who is the Trustworthy?” he answered, “*Aboo-Zeyd*;” and being asked, “And wherefore dost thou not name him?” he answered, “He is a tribe, so I do not name him.”†

Most of the contents of the best Arabic lexicons was committed to writing, or to the memories of students, in the latter half of the second century of the Flight, or in the former half of the next century. Among the most celebrated lexicological

first of these from the *Mo'allakah* of *Imra-el-Keys*. It would have been strange, indeed, if this had not been the case: for, except the *Ḳur-ān*, nothing was so highly prized by the lexicologists as the pagan poetry: every fragment of it was most valuable in their estimation, and most carefully sought after and preserved; and the intentional corruption of it they regarded as almost a crime.

* “*Aboo-'Amr* said, ‘The most chaste in speech, of men, are the higher [in respect of territory] of [the tribe of] *Temeem*, and the lower of [the tribe of] *Keys*:’ and *Aboo-Zeyd* said, ‘The most chaste in speech, of men, are [the people of] the lower portion of the higher region, and the higher of the lower,’ meaning the rear of [the tribe of] *Hawāzin*; the people of the higher region being the people of *El-Medeeneh*, and those around it, and those next it, and those near it, whose dialect he held to be not the same as that [of *Hawāzin*].” (*Muzhir*, 49th Section.) According to the *Ḳámoos*, the higher region (*العالية*) is “what is above *Nejd*, to the

land of *Tihámeh*, to the part behind *Mekkeh*; and certain towns, or villages, outside *El-Medeeneh*.”

† The exclusion of post-classical words and significations in the best Arabic lexicons, or their specification as such when they occur therein, is of very great importance to us in the use that we are often obliged to make of those lexicons in interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus the triumph of *El-Islám*, by occasioning the corruption of the Arabic language and the composition of such lexicons, has rendered us a most signal service. I have seldom noticed correspondences between the Arabic on the one side and the Hebrew and other Semitic languages on the other, because, though these are often illustrated by means of the incomparable copiousness of the Arabic, the Arabic is rarely illustrated by them, and because we have no such authorities for the interpretation of those languages as we have for the interpretation of the Arabic.