



DEPARTMENT OF MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES PUBLIC TALKS

Arabic and Romance influences on late Judaeo-Arabic orthography

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Written Judaeo-Arabic is generally divided into three chronological categories (Khan 2007, 2011, 2018; cf. Blau 1992, 2009): early (ninth - tenth centuries); classical (tenth - fifteenth centuries); and late (fifteenth - nineteenth centuries). These periods have been defined predominantly by their orthographic attributes as 'phonetic', 'Arabicized' and 'Hebraized', respectively. Late written Judaeo-Arabic orthography is often described as reflecting the increased social and cultural seclusion of Arabic-speaking (and writing) Jewish communities during the Ottoman era, with evidence of classical Arabic writing practices' influence on late written Judaeo-Arabic being attributed to the continued influence of classical Judaeo-Arabic orthography, rather than active engagement with their Muslim Arabic-speaking (and writing) contemporaries (see Khan 2018: 151). However, recent research into the development of two key late Judaeo-Arabic orthographic developments - (i) the transformation of the definite article into an independent entity, and (ii) changes in the use of diacritical dots to distinguish graphemes with dual functions - indicates the influence of both Romance languages and Arabic on post-fifteenth-century Judaeo-Arabic writing practices.

Thursday 16 January
5.15 - 6.45pm (tea and biscuits from 5.00pm)
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Free and open to all

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