The Foundations of Arabic Linguistics
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The papers in this volume are a selection of the papers presented at the first Foundations of Arabic Linguistics Conference (FAL1), which was held in the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Cambridge between 3rd and 4th September 2010. It had as its main focus Sibawayhi and early Arabic linguistic theory. I am extremely grateful to each of the authors for their contribution to this volume and for their hard work and dedication. I am privileged to be able to count them not only as colleagues but as friends.

As Chair of Faculty and a colleague, Professor Geoffrey Khan never failed to show his encouragement and support and I am deeply grateful to him.

I am greatly indebted to Professor M.G. Carter for his unfailing encouragement and his willingness to write the foreword for this volume. In fact he was the one who suggested the title of the conference.

Very warm thanks are due to Professor Harry Norris whose fatherly care and scholarship were of the greatest value. I am also indebted to Marie-Claire Daaboul for her generous financial support in organising the FAL1 Conference, and to Gerard Hill for making this manuscript a much better text. Special thanks are due to my students Charles Walker-Arnott and Thomas Crooke for their editorial suggestions and to Jasmin Lange, who oversaw the production of this book. I should like to end these acknowledgements by expressing my deepest gratitude to my family and especially to Jan, Elise and Joseph.

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All the papers in these Proceedings are concerned with Sibawayhi to a greater or lesser extent, and it is appropriate to arrange them here not in the order of presentation but according to the degree of their focus on the Kitāb. We shall therefore divide them into groups, using the familiar binary scheme of qisma ‘aqliyya or taqsīm, the exhaustive dichotomy borrowed from the Greeks and enthusiastically applied in all the Islamic sciences, though conspicuously absent from the Kitāb. By the first taqsīm the papers are divided into those devoted exclusively to Sibawayhi and the Kitāb and those which are not, the former group comprising (in order of publication) the papers of Kasher, Noy, Hnid and Dayyeh. The residue is subdivided into those which deal with Sibawayhi in the wider context of the development of grammar within the Arab-Islamic tradition, and those which do not, the former group containing the papers of Carter, Marogy, Giolfo, Sakaedani, and Sadan, leaving two papers in which Sibawayhi is only marginal, those of King and Khan.

There is little to be gained from summarising the contents of individual papers, but some general qualitative remarks may help to put this conference into perspective. Group One examines Sibawayhi alone, sometimes in very great detail, exploring hitherto unremarked aspects of his theory, his terminology, categories and linguistic evidence. It is always risky to make claims of completeness, but it can be safely asserted that some of the papers in this group are so data-rich that they may well have captured every item of relevant information in the corpus.

The humanities do not deal in certainties, and it will be apparent from some contributions that the lifetime of a scholarly opinion on Sibawayhi is not much more than a generation. Indeed perfect unanimity is either an impossible dream or a sign of intellectual stagnation. The mediaeval grammarians knew this well, and spent much of their energies in disagreeing with their rivals, often by relabelling or reanalysing the same old facts.

In Group Two the horizons are broader, placing Sibawayhi in the context of his grammatical legacy and reviewing his system in the light of modern theories (the boundary is too vague to support another taqsīm). It will become obvious how much the later grammarians owed to Sibawayhi, who remains to this day the acknowledged fountainhead of authentic data and methodological adequacy. When his ideas are measured against those
of modern Western linguistics the profundity and coherence of his analysis become clear, and his observations and conclusions compare well with our own most recent perceptions, a scientific convergence which proves no historical link, merely the truth of the old saying that great minds think alike. Another way of putting it is that the study of the Kitāb in the West over the last one hundred and eighty years or so (from de Sacy’s Anthologie grammaticale arabe of 1829) has been a continuous application of the prevailing Western linguistic theories as they successively emerge, with no end in sight.

In this regard the pedagogical by-products of the Kitāb have their own special importance, as they illustrate the gradual simplification of theory and reduction of the range of possible patterns symptomatic of a situation where the language had not only ceased to be a mother tongue and could only be acquired artificially, but which also for religious reasons could not be allowed to evolve like a natural language.

Group Three takes us out of the Kitāb and into the intellectual environment in which Sibawayhi’s ideas were formed. The two papers give a vivid impression of the immense vitality of the period, the watershed of the transition from informal oral contact to documented literary dependence on Greek sources.

The result is, however, three different grammars within three different cultural frameworks: in contrast to the Arabic, both the Syriac and Karaite Hebrew grammars were self-consciously non-universal, reflecting the position of those communities inside an Islamic political structure which did explicitly claim to be universal. Sibawayhi takes all this for granted: simply by describing Arabic in all its domains, religious, poetic, commercial, legal, administrative, proverbial, conversational, his grammar acquires a universality unattainable by the grammars of Hebrew and Syriac, languages which (to over-simplify) functioned largely as the religious and liturgical vehicles of a minority.

It is astonishing how sophisticated the speculations were in each of the three cultures, and there is no doubt of their common methodological ground, but their individuality and autonomy are even more striking. If the three systems were expressed as Venn diagrams, the overlap would be exceedingly small by comparison with the large areas in which they go their separate ways.

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PART I

SĪBAWAYHI IN THE KITĀB
THE TERM MAFʿŪL IN SĪBAWAYHI’S KITĀB

Almog Kasher

INTRODUCTION

Modern studies of medieval Arabic grammatical tradition are always at risk of reading Western linguistic theories into the writings in question. This problem is most acute when translating grammatical terms, since there is hardly an exact one-to-one correspondence between the meanings of indigenous terms and those of Western linguistics. Modern scholars are therefore at odds over the extent to which it is desirable to translate indigenous terms to the closest equivalent Western term.2

In this article I will discuss the term mafʿūl as it appears in the earliest extant grammatical treatise in Arabic, Sībawayhī’s Kitāb.3 Sībawayhī’s use of this ostensibly simple term is actually rather intricate, raising the question as to the level of linguistic analysis, syntax or semantics, to which this term pertains.

Two translations for this term have been suggested in modern scholarship, ‘object’ and ‘patient’. According to the former, mafʿūl pertains to the syntactic, and according to the latter to the semantic level of linguistic analysis. What I would like to show in the following pages is that the term embraces both syntactic and semantic aspects, but that its syntactic component does not correspond to ‘object’, nor does its semantic component correspond to ‘patient’. The interpretation proposed here may also throw some light on this term’s origin.4

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1 I would like to thank Avigail Noy for her helpful suggestions.
3 The morphological sense of the term mafʿūl, viz. passive participle, will not be examined here, and will be taken into account only insofar as it sheds light on its non-morphological sense.
4 I will not discuss the possible foreign origin of the term mafʿūl; see C.H.M. Versteegh, Greek Elements in Arabic Linguistic Thinking (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 59–61.
1. **The Syntactic Component of the Term Mafʿūl**

The rendition of the term *mafʿūl* in Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* as ‘object’ appears already in Jahn’s German translation,⁵ but was refuted later by Mosel.⁶ In her dissertation, Mosel shows that the term *mafʿūl* in Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb* is not applied to just one syntactic function, the direct object, but also to the subject of verbs in the passive voice and to the objective genitive:⁷

(1) *Mafʿūl* as direct object: The sentence “ʿAbdullāhi hit Zayd” is used by Sībawayhi to illustrate Chapter 10—amidst a series of chapters dealing with the categorization of verbs—entitled “this is the chapter about the *fāʿil*⁸ whose verb passes over beyond it to [one] *mafʿūl*”.⁹ The constituent ʿAbdullāhi, here a direct object, is labeled *mafʿūl*.

The key-term *taʿaddin* “transitivity” (lit.: “passing over”), featuring in this title, has been extensively discussed by modern scholars.¹⁰ Suffice it to say, with regard to the sentence in question, that it basically denotes the relationships obtaining between verbs and dependent nominals labeled *mafʿūl*. In the sentence in question, the verb ʿAbdullāhi engages in a *taʿaddin*.

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⁸ Similarly to *mafʿūl*, the term *fāʿil* (lit. “doer”) does not denote just one syntactic function; see Mosel, “Terminologie,” 248. Here it refers to the subject of verbs in the active voice. Several suggestions regarding this term will be made in what follows.

⁹ Sībawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 10, Derenbourg 1, 10/Hārūn 1, 34. The expression ‘the verb of the *fāʿ il*’ refers to the verb in the active voice; as we shall see, the expression ‘the verb of the *mafʿūl*’ refers to the verb in the passive voice. What is at stake in such expressions is the identity of the constituent which functions as the subject of the verb in question.

relationship with زید. This, needless to say, has to do with the ‘amal (grammatical operation) which the verb exerts here: the verb, according to this chapter, assigns the fa’il the independent, and the maf’ūl, here زید, the dependent case.11

(2) Maf’ūl as subject: The title of Chapter 9—also in the same series of chapters about the ‘transitivity’ (ta’addin) of verbs—reads: هذا باب الفاعل الذي لم يتعده فعله إلى مفعول والمفعول الذي لم يتعد إليه فعل فأعلى ولا تعلى مفعول آخر “this is the chapter about the fa’il whose verb does not pass over beyond it to a maf’ūl, and about the maf’ūl which a fa’il’s verb does not pass over to it, nor does its [own] verb pass beyond it to another maf’ūl”.13 The first part of this title refers to sentences such as زَدَهَ زُید “Zayd went away”,14 whereas the second refers to e.g., ضُرِبَ زُید “Zayd was hit”, in which the constituent زید—the subject—is labeled maf`ūl.15 In this chapter, Sibawayhi puts this maf’ūl on a par with the fa’il, in that both take the independent case due to the grammatical operation (‘amal) of the verb. This applies also to Chapter 14, which deals with constructions such as كَبْيَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ وَهْيَا “Abdullāhi was hit”17 after comparing these constructions with ضُرِبَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ “Abdullāhi was hit” with respect to the grammatical operation (‘amal) exerted on the subject, Sibawayhi labels the verbs in question فَعِل مَفْعُول هَوِيَ بَنْزَة الْفَعَّال “a verb of a

11 As we shall see below, for Sibawayhi, verbs do not engage in ‘transitivity’ (ta’addin) relationships with the space/time qualifier (ṣarf), its dependent case being accounted for by means of the so-called ‘tanwīn-nasb principle’. As we shall also see, constituents conveying the meaning of a ṣarf may behave syntactically as mafʿūls (i.e. they may be ‘objectivized’, as a case of saʿat al-kalām “latitude of speech”), and it is only then that a ta’addin relationship obtains between them and their verbs. Hence, the category of mafʿūlat/mafʿūl of later grammarians (a general category embracing not only the direct object but also other functions such as the ṣarf; see Z.A. Taha, “Maf’ūl,” in Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics, ed. K. Versteegh et al. [Leiden: Brill, 2008], 3, esp. 100–101, 104–5, and the references therein) does not exist in the Kitāb.

12 Hārūn’s edition reads: وَلِيْتْ يَتَعَدَّه. Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 9, Derenbourg 1, 10/Hārūn 1, 33.

13 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 9, Derenbourg 1, 10/Hārūn 1, 33.

14 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 10/Hārūn 1, 33.

15 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 10/Hārūn 1, 34.

16 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 14, Derenbourg 1, 14–15/Hārūn 1, 41–43.

17 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 14, Derenbourg 1, 14/Hārūn 1, 41. In a similar vein, chapter 15, dealing with constructions such as زَيْدًا إِبِلَ فَلَان “I was informed that Zayd is the father of so-and-so”, bears a title commencing with the words: هذا باب المفعول الذي يتعداه فَعِل إِلَى مَفْعُول “this is the chapter about the mafʿūl whose verb passes over beyond it to two mafʿūls…” Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 15, Derenbourg 1, 15/Hārūn 1, 43.
mafʿūl which has the same status as the fāʿil, i.e. by virtue of its functioning as the subject, thereby taking the independent case. He also remarks in this chapter that the form (lafẓ) of the mafʿūl functioning as a subject is the form of the fāʿil. These statements emphasize, on the one hand, the parity between these two types of subject, yet, on the other hand, they reflect the markedness of the mafʿūl functioning as a subject.

(3) Mafʿūl as objective genitive: Sibawayhi asserts that the oblique nominal, referring in the case in question to an objective genitive, behaves just like the dependent nominal, viz. as a direct object. First, he discusses two possible parsings of the objective genitive when the annexed noun is a verbal noun (maṣdar): in the sentence “I was astonished at causing the people to repel each other”, the objective genitive is a mafʿūl, this sentence corresponding to the sentence “I caused the people to repel each other”, in a similar vein, in the sentence “I was astonished at the people’s repelling each other”, the mafʿūl is a fāʿil, this sentence corresponding to “the people repelled each other”. The oblique constituent, Sibawayhi says, behaves analogously to the corresponding dependent constituent in the first case, and to the corresponding independent constituent in the second. A general statement follows: "and such is the case with all we have mentioned, when you cause the verbal noun to operate on them [viz. annex a verbal noun to them], their behavior corresponds to their behavior following the [corresponding finite] verb."
The term mafʿūl thus refers to the direct object of verbs in the active voice, the subject of passive verbs and the objective genitive, hence the inadequacy of its rendition as ‘object’. What can be inferred from this discussion is that Sībawayhi regards these three syntactic functions as a ‘correspondence set’ constituting the syntactic aspect of the term mafʿūl. That is, the three constructions, “Abdūllāhi hit Zayd”, “Zayd was hit” and “the hitting of Zayd” are regarded by Sībawayhi as syntactically analogous. Generally speaking, any of the three constructions implies the other two. Moreover, as we shall see presently, the meaning conveyed by the mafʿūl in all three constructions is the same. This syntactic, as well as semantic, correspondence is the reason, so it seems, for labeling the three functions by the same term.

As we shall see in the next section, there is semantic justification for such a set; however, Sībawayhi’s conception of the term mafʿūl is not restricted to the semantic level and is not applied accidentally to constituents following a certain semantic condition. In other words, the set of syntactic functions discussed above is part and parcel of Sībawayhi’s conception of mafʿūl. The evidence supporting this interpretation will be discussed presently. But first, two remarks are in order:

First, it is rather tempting to interpret the term mafʿūl in terms of a unidirectional ‘derivation’, i.e. as applying to all direct objects, either in the surface structure or underlyingly (or ‘originally’). Yet, although such a concept is coextensive with the syntactic aspect of Sībawayhi’s concept of mafʿūl, it is nevertheless inadequate as its interpretation, simply because Sībawayhi does not couch this relationship in such terms. As we have seen, Sībawayhi juxtaposes, in one chapter, “[he] sat” and “[he] was hit”, even before he discusses “[he] hit”, never stating that
“Zayd was hit” is derived from, for example, “Abdullāhi hit Zayd”. The following excerpt is of interest with this regard:

I was informed that Zayd is the father of so-and-so—as the [verb of the] fāʿil passes over to three [mafʿūls], the [verb of the] mafʿūl passes over to two, and you say: “I am made to think/know that ‘Abdallāhi is the father of so-and-so”, since if you had added to this verb the fāʿil and formed it [viz. the verb] for it [the fāʿil; viz. used the active voice], its [the fāʿil’s] verb would have passed over beyond it to three mafʿūls.

Note that whereas in the first statement the direction is from the active to the passive (...(أَرَى → يُنَبَّئُزَ...) → أَرَى), in the second it is from the passive to the active (...(يُنَبَّئُزَ → ثُقُلَهُ)... → أَرَى). This passage demonstrates the correspondence obtaining between mafʿūl as an object and as a subject in syntactical terms, even if we take into consideration the fact that mafʿūl as a subject is regarded as marked vis-à-vis fāʿil as a subject.

Second, it is interesting to compare the syntactic aspect of the term mafʿūl to Sibawayhi’s use of the term habar. In addition to the predicate of the subject of nominal sentence (muqtada’), this term applied also to the predicate in sentences introduced by ٌإِنُّ الذَّنَبَ لَعَلَّهُ يُؤْثِرَ (indis) or one of its ‘sisters’,

---

32 This is a rather peculiar wording, since it implies that it is the fāʿil and the mafʿūl which are ‘passing over’, whereas it is always the verb elsewhere in the Kitāb. One might suggest a different vocalization from the one presented here (taken from the printed editions of the Kitāb), namely: لما كان الفاعل يتعدي إلى ثلاثة تعلل المفعول إلى اثنين “as the fāʿil is passed over by the verb to three [mafʿūls], the mafʿūl is passed over by the verb to two”, which solves this problem, although the text remains peculiar. On the other hand, a version presented in al-Sirāfi’s commentary suggests that the text is slightly corrupted: لما كان الفاعل يتعدي إلى ثلاثة تعلل فعل المفعول إلى اثنين “as the [verb of the] fāʿil passes over to three [mafʿūls], the verb of the mafʿūl passes over to two”. Abū saʿīd al-Sīrāfī, Šarḥ Kitāb Sibawayhi, ed. A.H. Mahdali and ‘A.S. ‘Alī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2008), 1, 291. I would like, on this occasion, to thank A. Sadan for bringing the Beirut edition of al-Sirāfi’s commentary to my attention during the conference.
33 See also Carter, Arab Linguistics, 170ff.; Owens, Foundations of Grammar, 180ff.
the mafʿūl of كُن “[he] was” (i.e. the predicate in sentences introduced by كُن) and its ‘sisters’,35 the second mafʿūl of ditransitive cognitive verbs such as حَبِب “[he] thought” and the circumstantial qualifier (ḥāl).36 It thus applies to constituents whose relation with some other constituent corresponds to that obtaining between ‘regular’ predicates and subjects. This also seems like a set of functions engaging in a certain correspondence relations.37

Strong evidence for the centrality of the syntactic aspect in Sībawayhi’s conception of mafʿūl stems from his theory that constituents conveying the meaning of a space/time qualifier (ẓarf) occasionally behave syntactically as mafʿūls. These, consequently, may function as subjects of verbs in the passive voice and as objective genitives. Nevertheless, their meaning remains intact. Sībawayhi discusses this theory in scattered places in the Kitāb, including several instances in his series of ‘transitivity’ (taʿaddin) chapters, mentioned above; the following discussion will be based mainly on one chapter in which it is explicated in the most perspicuous and condensed manner, Chapter 38.38 The title of this chapter reads: هذه إبناً جري مجيري الفاعل الذي يتعدى فعله إلى مفعول له في الفعل لا في المعنى39 behaves analogously to the active participle whose verb passes

35 For Sībawayhi’s application of the term mafʿūl to these constituents, see the discussion in the next section.
37 I will not discuss here the question of whether or not Sībawayhi regards this case of correspondence as a ‘derivation’, in light of his use of the verb ُلَضَلُلَلَلَل (see above); cf. Owens, Foundations of Grammar, 223–26, 242. Note that we have seen above that Sībawayhi uses the verb لَضَلُلُلَلَل with regard to the inference from the passive to the active construction!
39 Hārūn’s edition reads: يُعدُدُهُ .
40 The notion of ‘category’ is conspicuous here in Sībawayhi’s use of the word بِاب. On the other hand, in al-Sīrāfī’s version, the word مً does follow the word بِاب: al-Sīrāfī, Šarḥ Kitāb Sībawayhi, 2, 31.
over to two mafʿūls, in form, not in meaning. The three relevant constructions are:

\[\text{يا سارق الليلة أهل الدار} (1) \]

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{“Oh you who steals from the people of the abode in the night!” (lit.: “Oh you who steals the night from the people of the abode!”—see below)}, \\
&\text{“I stole from the people of the abode in the night” (lit.: “I stole the night from the people of the abode”—see below)}, \\
&\text{“hunting took place on it for two days” (lit: “two days were hunted on it”).}
\end{align*}
\]

According to Sibawayhi, (1) is equivalent, with respect to its form (lafẓ), to (i.e. it displays the same syntactic behavior as):

\[\text{هذا معتلي زيده درهمًا} (1) \]

whereas the meaning (maʿnā) of (1) is: “in the night”. Similarly, the meaning of (3) is “hunting took place on it for two days”.

That is to say, Sibawayhi distinguishes two states, the ḥadd al-kalām “the ordinary way of speech” and saʿat al-kalām “latitude of speech”. In the former state, the normal relationship is kept between the form (lafẓ) and the meaning (maʿnā) of configurations. The space/time qualifier (ẓarf) thus has a certain unmarked syntactic behavior, wherein it may function neither as the subject (taking the independent case) nor as a nomen rectum (taking the oblique case), and even when it takes the dependent case in a verbal sentence its case is not assigned to it by the verb by means of

\[\text{41 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 38, Derenbourg 1, 75/Hārūn 1, 175.} \]
\[\text{42 Or: will steal, or: the one who stole.} \]
\[\text{43 Or: will steal, or: the one who stole.} \]
\[\text{44 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 38, Derenbourg 1, 75/Hārūn 1, 175.} \]
\[\text{45 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 75/Hārūn 1, 176. As we shall see, another parsing is eligible here, to which the literal translation does not apply.} \]
\[\text{46 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 38, Derenbourg 1, 75/Hārūn 1, 176.} \]
\[\text{47 Or: will give, or: is the one who gave.} \]
\[\text{48 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 38, Derenbourg 1, 75/Hārūn 1, 176.} \]
‘transitivity’ (taʿaddin). On the other hand, in the latter state, the space/time qualifier behaves syntactically as a mafʿūl, while keeping its locative/temporal meaning intact. This accounts for examples (1) and (3): since a mafʿūl, but not a space/time qualifier, can implement the function of nomen rectum of an active participle, and since هي لليلة does not qualify as a ‘regular’ mafʿūl of the verb سُرِقِ الليلة, only behaves formally as a mafʿūl, yet it keeps its temporal meaning, which is illustrated with the paraphrase في الليلة. A similar explanation holds for (3). The analysis of the dependent nominal in (2) as behaving syntactically as a mafʿūl can be accounted for if one considers the following schema:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(mine:)</th>
<th>(mine:)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>هذا معنِي زٌيٌدٌ درهمًا</td>
<td>يا سارق الليلة أهل الدار</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ضَرِّب بِرَبِّهِ (٨)</td>
<td>صَيدٌ عليه يومان</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أَعْطِيَتُ زٌيٌدٌ درهمًا (٩)</td>
<td>سَرَقَت الليلة أهل الدار</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the left column there are three configurations displaying mafʿūls implementing three syntactic functions: objective genitive, subject of a verb in the passive voice and dependent object, respectively. These constituents are mafʿūls with regard to both form and meaning. In the right column are presented, in the first two rows, the two problematic constructions, in which a constituent carrying a meaning of a space/time qualifier behaves syntactically as a mafʿūl. From these it is inferred that a constituent conveying the meaning of a space/time qualifier may behave syntactically as a mafʿūl, and therefore nothing prevents it from this behavior also in the sentence appearing in the third row, although its unmarked parsing therein, needless to say, is as a regular space/time qualifier. Put differently, the third construction is sanctioned by the first two. The correspondence principle is manifest here: a construction in which هي لليلة functions as


51 Although this verb may take two direct objects (see E.W. Lane, An Arabic-English Lexicon [London: Williams and Norgate, 1863–93], 4, 1352), هي الليلة qualifies as neither of them: those from which something is stolen are referred to by أهل الدار, and the night cannot be regarded as the thing stolen.
an objective genitive, one of the mafʿūl-functions, entails a construction in which it functions as a direct object.

The two-faceted character of mafʿūl is manifest in the pair of terms lafẓ “form” and maʿnā “meaning”, used in the above discussion to designate syntactic behavior and meaning, respectively.

Furthermore, Sībawayhi’s theory with regard to the space/time qualifier, as depicted here, applies mutatis mutandis also to the ‘absolute object’ (what came to be labeled by later grammarians al-mafʿūl al-muṭlaq).52 I will not go here into Sībawayhi’s conception of the ‘absolute object’;53 suffice it to say that this time Sībawayhi labels these constituents explicitly as mafʿūls (see also the next section).54 The classification, on sheer syntactic grounds, as mafʿūl, of constituents which do not convey the semantic meaning of mafʿūl, is strong evidence against the interpretation of mafʿūl as merely a semantic term.

Corroboration for the centrality of the syntactic component of the concept of mafʿūl is provided by Sībawayhi’s treatment of prepositional phrases. Chapter 26 of the Kitāb deals with constructions of the type: يُرَأَيْتُ زَيْدًا وَعُمْرَاءَ كَمَرٌّ وَعُرَا كُنْتُ “I saw Zayd, and ‘Amr [dependent]—I spoke to him”.55 The second clause is an ištiġāl (lit. “being occupied”) construction, the dependent case of عرَا كُنْتُ being explained by positing an underlying verb، كُنْتُ preceding it.56 This holds also if the verb takes a prepositional phrase instead.

53 See Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 10, Derenbourg 1, 11/Hārūn 1, 34–35; chapter 13, Derenbourg 1, 14/Hārūn 1, 41; chapter 14, Derenbourg 1, 14–15/Hārūn 1, 42; chapter 15, Derenbourg 1, 15/Hārūn 1, 43; chapter 42, Derenbourg 1, 88/Hārūn 1, 212; chapter 45, Derenbourg 1, 96–99/Hārūn 1, 228–34; chapter 75, Derenbourg 1, 149–51/Hārūn 1, 355–61; chapter 90, Derenbourg 1, 162/Hārūn 1, 385. See Versteegh, “ittisāʿ,” 28ff.
54 See, e.g., Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 45, Derenbourg 1, 96/Hārūn 1, 228. It is thus plausible that Sībawayhi also regards as mafʿūl those constituents conveying the meaning of space/time qualifier, yet syntactically behaving as mafʿūl, dealt with above.
55 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 26, Derenbourg 1, 35/Hārūn 1, 88.
56 The term ištiġāl is not used by Sībawayhi, who discusses such constructions in a series of chapters (Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 24ff., Derenbourg 1, 31ff./Hārūn 1, 80ff.). See R. Baalbaki, “Some Aspects of Harmony and Hierarchy in Sībawayhi’s Grammatical Analysis,” Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik 2 (1979): 7ff.; Owens, Foundations of Grammar, 188; Levin, “Theory of al-taqdír,” 144–45. The preference of this construction here stems from the tendency to maintain equilibrium between the two clauses: due to the ištiģāl construction, in both clauses the nouns are said to be ‘built on’ their verbs (here referring to their functioning as direct objects); on the other hand, عرَا كُنْتُ “ʿAmr [independent]—I spoke to him”, as the second clause, displays a construction in which the verb is ‘built on’ the noun (which is a subject of a nominal sentence [muḥtaṭa], the verbal clause being its predicate), thereby breaching the equilibrium, although the construction is permissible.
of a dependent noun: "I passed by Zayd, and 'Amr [dependent]—I passed by him".\(^{57}\) Sibawayhi explains this by stating that زيد is a mafʿūl,\(^{58}\) as if it were said: مُرَّبَت زيدا. This assertion is illustrated by adducing the sentence "I exasperated him", where صدره is in a 'place' (mawḍiʿ)\(^{59}\) of the dependent and the meaning conveyed is that of the dependent.\(^{60}\) A further analogy, both semantic and syntactic, is drawn between مَرَّبَت بعمر وزيدا and "I met him".\(^{61}\) Another construction, dealt with in the same chapter, which displays the parity between oblique and dependent nominals, is is in a 'place' (mawḍiʿ) of a dependent mafʿūl, and the meaning conveyed here is the same as that of "I came to".\(^{62}\) Sibawayhi thus couples his assertion that such oblique nominals convey the meaning of mafʿūl with the analogy he draws between them and dependent nominals functioning as mafʿūl, to wit, with a certain syntactic behavior.

2. The Semantic Component of the Term Mafʿūl

The point of departure of this section will be Mosel’s rendition of the term mafʿūl. In light of the inadequacy of the rendition ‘object’ for the term mafʿūl, the term mafʿūl has often been used as the term for a dependent noun.\(^{57}\) Elsewhere, however, Sibawayhi puts prepositional phrases in contradistinction to dependent nominals, so that only the latter are to be regarded as mafʿūl; after mentioning the usage of the verb دَا عَلَا as taking two mafʿūls (in the sense of ‘[he] named’), he says: َُّ مَرَّبَت بعمر وزيدا "but if you mean [by the verb دَا عَلَا] calling [someone] to something, [this verb] does not exceed one mafʿūl" (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 11, Derenbourg 1, 12/Hārūn 1, 37), that is, in the sentence (mine:) دَا عَلَا مَرْبَت زيدا إلى أمير بيجاو مفعولا واحدا. See also, in the next section, an instance where the difference between direct objects and prepositional phrases is regarded by Sibawayhi as semantically crucial.\(^{59}\) According to Versteegh, this term often means ‘syntactic function’; C.H.M. Versteegh, “The Arabic Terminology of Syntactic Position,” Arabica 25 (1978): 271ff. However, as he also shows, phrases such as ‘in the place of the genitive’ (ibid., 273).

\(^{57}\) Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 27, Derenbourg 1, 37/Hārūn 1, 92.

\(^{58}\) Elsewhere, however, Sibawayhi puts prepositional phrases in contradistinction to dependent nominals, so that only the latter are to be regarded as mafʿūl; after mentioning the usage of the verb دَا عَلَا as taking two mafʿūls (in the sense of ‘[he] named’), he says: مُرَّبَت زيدا. See also, in the next section, an instance where the difference between direct objects and prepositional phrases is regarded by Sibawayhi as semantically crucial.

\(^{59}\) According to Versteegh, this term often means ‘syntactic function’; C.H.M. Versteegh, “The Arabic Terminology of Syntactic Position,” Arabica 25 (1978): 271ff. However, as he also shows, phrases such as ‘in the place of the genitive’ also occur, which he explains as ‘[it] occupies the

\(^{60}\) Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 27, Derenbourg 1, 37/Hārūn 1, 92.

\(^{61}\) Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 37/Hārūn 1, 93.

\(^{62}\) Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 38/Hārūn 1, 94. This theory will be dealt with in a forthcoming article. Elsewhere, however, Sibawayhi refers to the entire prepositional phrases as in the ‘place’ (mawḍiʿ) of a dependent mafʿūl; Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 35, Derenbourg 1, 65/Hārūn 1, 153.
mafʿūl, Mosel suggests ‘patient’ instead,63 quoting Vermeer’s definition of the latter as the constituent whose “Inhalt als durch den Verbalinhalt betroffen oder bewirkt dargestellt wird”,64 although, she states, Sībawayhi uses mafʿūl as a grammatical term, as if there were a grammatical category of ‘patient’ in Arabic. Similarly, fāʿil is interpreted as ‘agent’.

In the previous section we already pointed to the inadequacy of a purely semantic definition of the term mafʿūl, since the syntactic component is inherent in Sībawayhi’s conception of this term.

An immediate difficulty in the equation mafʿūl-patient arises when transitive verbs such as رضي “[he] was pleased with” or خشى “[he] feared” are considered. Such verbs, which take non-patient mafʿūls, show that direct objects of many verbs cannot be considered as conveying the meaning of patienthood as this notion is normally understood by linguists.65 Consider, however, Chapter 432 of the Kitāb, entitled: هذا باب بناء الأفعال التي هي “this is the chapter about the patterns of the verbs which [denote] actions passing over beyond you [viz. the perpetrator] to someone/something else and you make [the action] befall him/it, and about their verbal nouns”.66 It is inferred from this chapter that action verbs can be either transitive (hence befalling someone/something) or intransitive. It is also inferred (see in what follows) that such actions are characterized as ‘visible and audible’. Note that intransitive verbs need not necessarily denote action, but there is no reference in this chapter to non-action transitive verbs (but see below). This semantic trait of ‘ʿamal “action” constitutes, for Sībawayhi, grounds on which he draws morphological analogies between the two groups (i.e. transitive and intransitive action verbs).

63 Mosel, “Terminologie,” 246ff. The correspondence between mafʿūl and ‘patient’ is, according to her, “ohne Einschränkung” (ibid., 246). See also Saad, “Sībawayhi’s Treatment of Transitivity,” 83–88; Taha, “mafʿūl,” esp. 100.

64 H.J. Vermeer, Einführung in die linguistische Terminologie (Munich: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1971), 78. Whether or not this definition fits Vermeer’s own ends has no bearing on the present discussion.

65 The Western term ‘patient’ has been used in a large variety of senses by different linguists. We are nevertheless exempt from surveying all the meanings, since Mosel explicates what she means by ‘patient’. Note that the translation of fāʿil as ‘agent’ faces a similar difficulty; see H. Hamzé, “La position du sujet du verbe dans la pensée des grammairiens arabes,” in Langage et linéarité, ed. P. Cotte (Villeneuve d’Ascq: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1999), 127–28; Y. Peled, “ḍamūr,” in Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics, ed. K. Versteegh et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 1, 556.

Although this category of verbs is characterized as denoting actions befalling the referents of their direct objects, verbs such as رضي are also subsumed under this category. Two explanations for this apparent discrepancy can be suggested, which are by no means mutually incompatible:

First, Sībawayhi’s conception of the notion of ‘being affected’ with regard to the semantics of verbs (i.e. the notion of patienthood) may differ from the one generally used in modern linguistics, by being more relaxed. Interesting in this respect is the following quotation from Lyons, regarding the relationship between the ‘formal’ and the ‘traditional-notional’ aspects of transitivity; after pointing to the ‘inappropriateness’ of what he labels “the traditional ‘notional’ definition of transitivity”, according to which “the effects of the action expressed by the verb ‘pass over’ from the ‘agent’ (or ‘actor’) to the ‘patient’ (or ‘goal’)”, he says:

Furthermore, it might be maintained that the grammatical form of an English sentence like *I hear you* or *I see you* (its parallelism with *I hit you*, etc.) influences speakers of English to think of hearing and seeing as activities initiated by the person ‘doing’ the hearing and seeing. Whether this is a correct account of perception, from a psychological or physiological point of view, is irrelevant. If the native speaker of English…tends to interpret perception as an activity which ‘proceeds’ from an ‘actor’ to a ‘goal’, this fact of itself would suggest that there is some semantic basis for the traditional notion of transitivity. 67

That is, the verb رضي, for instance, due to its formal characteristics, might have been construed by Sībawayhi as denoting a رضوان (its verbal noun) befalling the referent of the direct object.

Second, Sībawayhi seems to regard the notion of transference of an action as basic, or prototypical,68 to the formal feature of transitivity, so that verbs which, at least prima facie, do not conform to this notion yet display the formal characteristics of transitive verbs, are said to be ‘inserted’ (i.e. ‘incorporated’ or ‘drawn’) into this category. Taylor lists

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68 The phenomenon of prototypicality is ubiquitous in grammatical terminology. For this phenomenon (labeled ‘hard core’) with regard to the parts of speech, see G. Bohas, J.-P. Guillaume, and D.E. Kouloughli, *The Arabic Linguistic Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1990), 51–53.
several semantic properties characterizing prototypical transitivity, of which those relevant to the present discussion are:

... The event is initiated by the referent of the subject NP, i.e. by the agent. As a consequence of the agent’s action, something happens to the patient, i.e. the referent of the object nominal. After the occurrence of the event, the patient is in a different state from before the event. Usually, the difference is one which would be highly perceptible to an onlooking observer; The agent’s action on the patient usually involves direct physical contact. The event has a causative component, i.e. the agent’s action causes the patient to undergo a change;...

Taylor then discusses deviations from this paradigm case, including verbs denoting perception (e.g. ‘watch’ and ‘see’), mental states (e.g. ‘like’), relations between entities (e.g. ‘resemble’), as well as verbs stating a property of the subject’s referent (e.g. ‘cost’).

Interesting in this regard is Sībawayhi’s treatment of the verb حَضَبّ “[he] was angry”. He explains the pattern of the verbal noun (masdar) of this verb, viz. faʿal, which is characteristic of intransitive verbs, by analogy to the (near-)synonym غَضَبَ, on the ground of their identical verbal pattern (faʿila) and their semantic similarity. The following statement ensues: حدّكِجِ سِخَّات وَحَضَبَهُ أَنَّهُ مَدْخِلٌ فِي بَابِ الأُمَالِ الَّذِي تَرْى وَتَسْمَعُ وَهُوَ مَوْضُوعٌ بِغَيْرِهِ “angry” and غَضَبَ “I was angry with him” show you that [this verb] is ‘inserted’ into the category of [verbs denoting] actions which are visible and audible, and that [possibly: while] he [viz. the perpetrator] causes it to befall someone/something else.” What is asserted here is that contrary to its (near-)synonym غَضَبَ, the verb حَضَبَ takes a direct object and its verbal adjective takes the pattern faʿil, both regarded as formal characteristics of transitive action verbs, which raises the abovementioned problem with regard to the pattern the verbal noun this verb takes. This verb is

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69 Taylor’s use of the term ‘patient’ here is rather relaxed, yet still semantically restricted: whereas he comments on “John obeyed Mary” that “it is doubtful whether it is still legitimate to speak of the subject [in this sentence] as the agent and of the direct object as the patient”, he does not prompt this doubt with regard to the sentences “We approached the city” and “I read the book”. See J.R. Taylor, Linguistic Categorization, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 233–34.
70 Ibid., 232–33.
71 Ibid., 233–34.
73 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 432, Derenbourg 2, 225/Hârûn 4, 6.
74 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 432, Derenbourg 2, 225/Hârûn 4, 6.
75 Note that the verbal adjective of غَضَبَ does not take the form faʿil. See al-Sīrāfī, Šarḥ Kitāb Sībawayhi, 4, 400, also quoted in Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 432, Hârûn 4, 6n3.
thus ‘inserted’ into a category characterized notionally.\textsuperscript{76} It is not clear, though, whether projection of the notional property of this category on to this verb ensues, that is, whether Sībawayhi holds that speakers conceive of this verb as denoting an action befalling someone/something, by virtue of its formal behavior, or that to the contrary, this verb is only said to behave formally as if it had these notional traits. A somewhat clearer statement appears in the next chapter; there Sībawayhi discusses \textit{inter alia} intransitive verbs denoting fear, whose verbal adjectives take the pattern \textit{faʿil} and whose verbal nouns take the pattern \textit{faʿal} (see above), e.g. \textit{يَرَز} and \textit{َعِرَاز}. Their transitive use, i.e. \textit{فوَقَتْهُ} and \textit{فوَقَتْهُ} “I feared him”, is then explained; the problem this usage raises seems to be both semantic and formal: the sense of fear is apparently semantically construed as fitting intransitive non-action verbs, which is consonant with the fact that other verbs of fear are intransitive, e.g. \textit{وَجَلَّ}, and with the fact that the verbal adjective of these verbs take the pattern \textit{faʿil}, rather than \textit{fāʿil}, and their verbal nouns take the pattern \textit{faʿal}. These ostensibly transitive verbs are explained as being in the sense of \textit{مَنَىَ} wherefrom the preposition is elided; these verbs are thus not considered as basically transitive.\textsuperscript{77} Then the verb \textit{كَحْشِبُهُ} “I feared him” is considered, which is transitive and whose verbal adjective takes the pattern \textit{fāʿil}—two formal features which, as we have seen, designates that the verb in question belongs to the category of transitive action verbs. Moreover, its verbal noun takes the form \textit{faʿla} rather than \textit{faʿal}. This is accounted for by analogy to the verb \textit{رَجَمَ} “[he] had mercy on”, which belongs to the category of transitive action verbs;\textsuperscript{78} here Sībawayhi states that the formal behavior of this verb differs from that of other verbs conveying the same meaning, i.e. verbs denoting fear, and that the patterns of its verbal adjective and of its verbal noun are accorded to a verb which has the same verbal pattern, viz. \textit{faʿila}.\textsuperscript{79} Thus, although the verb \textit{khashbi} behaves just like other verbs considered as denoting an action befalling someone/something, its meaning is still regarded as identical to intransitive verbs denoting fear. Hence, its direct object is not a patient.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{76} See also Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 432, Derenbourg 2, 226/Hārūn 4, 9.
\textsuperscript{77} Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 433, Derenbourg 2, 230/Hārūn 4, 18–19.
\textsuperscript{78} On this verb, see Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 432, Derenbourg 2, 226/Hārūn 4, 9.
\textsuperscript{79} Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 433, Derenbourg 2, 230/Hārūn 4, 19.
\textsuperscript{80} There is no indication in the text of the \textit{Kitāb} bearing out al-Ṣirāfī’s interpretation, to the effect that \textit{khashib} also originates in \textit{مَنَىَ}, as well as that \textit{khashib} originates in \textit{مَنَىَ}, as well as that \textit{khashib} originates in \textit{مَنَىَ}; al-Ṣirāfī, \textit{Šarḥ Kitāb Sībawayhi}, 4, 408–9. See also Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 442, Derenbourg 2, 245/Hārūn 4, 49, where \textit{khashbi}, as well as that \textit{مَنَىَ} and \textit{مَنَىَ} are regarded as transitive, without
The corollary from this discussion is that there exists a group of transitive verbs which are semantically construed as denoting actions befalling someone/something; there are also verbs which are said to behave formally as transitive action verbs, although they are probably not semantically construed as such. It is not clear, with regard to a host of transitive verbs, to which of the two categories they belong.81

More conclusive counterevidence against the equation mafʿūl—patient can be extracted from Sībawayhi’s treatment of َكَانَ “[he] was” and its ‘sisters’.82 According to Chapter 17, also in the abovementioned series of ‘transitivity’ (taʿaddin) chapters, the independent nominal in sentences introduced by َكَانَ and its ‘sisters’ is labeled fāʿil (also: ism al-fāʿil), and the dependent nominal—mafʿūl (also: ism al-mafʿūl). َكَانَ and its ‘sisters’ are subsumed along with َسُكَرَ “[he] hit” under the same general category, with regard to their taʿaddin to one mafʿūl, and the basic reason for Sībawayhi to present them in separate chapters is, as he says, the fact that the two constituents in sentences introduced by َكَانَ are refer to the same thing, a semantic fact which entails the impermissibility of the omission of the mafʿūl. Sībawayhi introduces in this chapter several syntactic similarities between َكَانَ and its ‘sisters’.83 What is striking with regard to َكَانَ and its ‘sisters’ is that Sībawayhi himself states that these verbs—as well as ditransitive cognitive verbs such as َسُكَرَ “[he] thought”—do not indicate an action affecting the referent(s) of the mafʿūl(s). He says, regarding these two categories: وَلَيْسَ 482... and they are not [verbs denoting] actions which you perpetrate from you to someone/something else, such as َسُكَرَ “I hit” and َأَعْطَيْتُ “I gave”.85 The mafʿūls in these cases are therefore regarded by

any qualification. If al-Sīrāfī’s interpretation were correct, this would mean that the verb خَلَّي is basically intransitive, hence irrelevant to our discussion, just like َفَعَّلَ فِرَقَ and َرَضَى. Interestingly enough, the verb رَضَى is deemed in medieval Arabic lexicons an antonym of the verb حَسْبَ; see Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, 3, 1099–1100. Needless to say, the discussion above does not aim at being a comprehensive account of the issue of semantics of verbs in the Kitāb, which merits a separate study.

81 For an extensive study of the issues discussed here, see Levin, “kāna wa’āxawātuḥā,” 185–213.

82 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 17, Derenbourg 1, 16/Hārūn 1, 45–46. See also Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 26, Derenbourg 1, 35/Hārūn 1, 89; chapter 29, Derenbourg 1, 42/Hārūn 1, 102.

83 al-Sīrāfī’s version reads: َلَيْسَا which seems more plausible; al-Sīrāfī, ʿarḥ Kitāb Sībawayhi, 3, 126.

84 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 211, Derenbourg 1, 337/Hārūn 2, 366. Sībawayhi’s application of the term taʿaddin “transitivity” to َكَانَ and its ‘sisters’ and to cognitive verbs such as حَسْبَ is regarded by Levin as strong evidence against the interpretation of the term taʿaddin as denoting the ‘passing’ of an action; Levin, “taʿaddā al-fiʿl ilā,” 198–99.
Sibawayhi himself as not affected, and consequently the term ‘patient’, as defined above, does not apply to them.\textsuperscript{86}

What I would like to suggest, with regard to the semantic component of the term mafʿūl, is: (a) that the meaning of a certain mafʿūl is the same, regardless of which of the three abovementioned syntactic functions it assumes; (b) that the meaning of mafʿūl is relative to each verb; (c) that it is relative to each ‘slot’;\textsuperscript{87} (d) that it basically corresponds to the meaning conveyed by the passive participle of the verb at stake: Zayd being struck by which they are afflicted, into which they are brought against their will and by which they were smitten. As the meaning is the meaning of the passive participle, they used for it the ‘broken’ plural according to this meaning.” Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 431, Derenbourg 2, 222/Hārūn 3, 648.

The term mafʿūl is referred to.

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\textsuperscript{86} Note also that \textit{kān} does not appear in the chapters regarding the patterns of transitive and intransitive verbs (see above), possibly due to the prominence of the semantic characteristic of transitivity therein. This notwithstanding the fact that with regard to its formal behavior, \textit{kān} fits perfectly in the category of transitive action verbs, since its verbal adjective takes the form faʿīl and its verbal noun takes the form faʿl.

\textsuperscript{87} By ‘slot’ I refer here to the distinction customarily drawn between ‘first’, ‘second’ and ‘third’ mafʿūl (mafʿūl awwal, ṭānin and ṭaliṭ, respectively).

\textsuperscript{88} The argument put forward here does not rule out the possibility that patienthood may be regarded as the prototypical meaning of the direct object. In fact, this would be in line with our argument, since the prototypical meaning of the passive participle seems to be also of patienthood: after Sibawayhi states that faʿīl in the sense of mafʿūl (مفعول مرفوع) has the ‘broken’ plural pattern faʿlā (e.g. Qarib “killed person” and its plural form قربي; it is inferred that Qarib is regarded as semantically identical to the passive participle Qariblī (سبيح), he explains, on the authority of his master, al-Ḥalil, the ‘broken’ plural pattern faʿlā of forms such as مريض “sick person”; it is inferred that مريض is not identical, for him, to the passive participle مريضlī (مفعول مرفوع), as follows: لأن ذلك أمر يتفنون به وادخروا فيه ولهم كارهون وأصبحوا به فابكان المعنى معنى المفعول كره وعلي هذا المعنى due to the fact that it is something by which they are afflicted, into which they are brought against their will and by which they were smitten. As the meaning is the meaning of the passive participle, they used for it the ‘broken’ plural according to this meaning.” Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 431, Derenbourg 2, 223/Hārūn 3, 648. The term mafʿūl, needless to say, pertains in this excerpt to the morphological level. See also Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 431, Derenbourg 2, 223–24/Hārūn 3, 649–50.
The correspondence, discussed in Section 1, between maf’ūl as a direct object and maf’ūl as a subject, is justified by Sibawayhi on semantic grounds as well:

واعلم أن المنقول الذي لم يتد إلى فعل فاعل في التعدي والإقصار ينزلته إذا تعدد إليه فعل الفاعل لأن منعنا متعايدا إليه فعل الفاعل وغير متعد إليه فعله سواء.

know that the maf’ūl to which a verb of a fā’īl does not pass over [i.e. which functions as a subject], has—with regard to passing over and failing to pass over—the same status as the [corresponding maf’ūl] when the fā’īl’s verb does pass over to it [i.e. when it functions as a direct object], since its meaning is the same whether or not the verb of the fā’īl passes over to it.89

This is illustrated by the fact that it is impermissible to add another maf’ūl to “I hit Zayd” or ضربَ زيد “Zayd was hit”, in both of which is a maf’ūl.90 The same is asserted with regard to Zayd in a garment” vs. Zayd was clothed in a garment”: زيدَ كُتِبَ تويَبًا “I clothed Zayd” or كيميَ زيدَ تويَبًا “Zayd was clothed in a garment”: in the latter is said to have the same status as زيدَ in the former.91 In both cases the explanation is that the same meaning (ma’nā) is conveyed. This chapter demonstrates thus that the meaning of a certain maf’ūl as an object and as a subject is the same; it is also inferred that this meaning is sensitive to the ‘slot’ the maf’ūl occupies: with regard to a ditransitive verb such as كُا, Sibawayhi states that its first maf’ūl keeps its meaning regardless of whether it is a subject or an object; it is thus inferred that this meaning differs from the meaning of the second object of this verb.

The identity of maf’ūl as an object and as a subject, with respect to meaning, is manifest also in Chapter 16 dealing with the circumstantial qualifier (ḥāl): while characterizing the distinction between the circumstantial qualifier and the maf’ūl on semantic grounds,92 Sibawayhi puts, with respect to meaning (ma’nā), the maf’ūl functioning as the second object of the verb كا (regardless of whether or not the first object is mentioned) on a par with the maf’ūl functioning as the subject of a passive verb. That is, the meaning (ma’nā) of الثوب, which is maf’ūl, is the same

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89 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 14, Derenbourg 1, 15/Hārūn 1, 42.
90 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 14, Derenbourg 1, 15/Hārūn 1, 42.
91 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 15/Hārūn 1, 43.
92 The circumstantial qualifier (ḥāl) is characterized as حالت وقع فيه الفعل “[denoting] a circumstance under which [the content of] the verb occurred”, which is not the case with maf’ūl; Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 16, Derenbourg 1, 15/Hārūn 1, 44. On this usage of ḥāl and fīl as metagrammatical intuitive terms, whose semantic scopes cover both their meaning as technical terms, and the everyday concepts underlying them, see Peled, “Grammatical Terminology,” 50–85.
in “I clothed Zayd in the garment”, “I clothed [someone] in the garment” and “the garment was clothed [on someone].” Again, from Sibawayhi’s assertion that the meaning of the second maf’ûl of a ditransitive verb is the same regardless of whether it functions as an object or as a subject, a distinction is inferred between the meaning of the first and the second maf’ûls of such verbs. Both maf’ûls (i.e. زيد and اثوب) are nevertheless coupled together semantically, in this chapter, in contradistinction to the circumstantial qualifier.

After dealing, in Chapter 12, with ditransitive cognitive verbs such as حسب "Abdullâhi thought that Zayd is Bakr”, Sibawayhi discusses in Chapter 13 the corresponding tritransitive verbs, such as أرى الله زيدا بشرًا بركا. "God caused Zayd to think/know that Bišr is your father”. The first maf’ûl in these constructions (here: زيدا) is said to be semantically identical to the fā’il in the constructions of the previous chapter (here: ارٰى الله زيدا بشرًا بركا ... لان المفعول هاهما في الفعل في الباب الأول: عبد الله الذي قبه في المعنى “... since the maf’ûl here is like the fā’il in the preceding chapter, with respect to meaning”. In a similar vein, Sibawayhi points to the parity between حواف الناس ضعيفهم قريتهم “I caused the weak people to fear the strong” and خائف الناس ضعيفهم قريتهم “The weak people feared the strong”, although maf’ûl is in the former, but fā’il in the latter. These passages demonstrate again the sensitivity of the meaning of maf’ûl to its ‘slot’. They also demonstrate its relativity to each verb: although the meaning of the fā’il خائف is the same as the meaning of the first maf’ûl خواف، the first is a fā’il and the second is a maf’ûl since these labels are relative to each verb. The subject of the verb خائف is its fā’il, and its referent is the خائف (its active participle), whereas the first direct object of خواف is its maf’ûl, and its referent is the خواف (its passive participle).

We have already seen, in Section 1, that Sibawayhi, in his discussion of constituents conveying the meaning of space/time qualifier

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93 Sibawayhi, Kitâb chapter 16, Derenbourg 1, 15/Hârūn 1, 44.
94 Sibawayhi, Kitâb chapter 12, Derenbourg 1, 13–14/Hârūn 1, 39–41.
95 Sibawayhi, Kitâb chapter 13, Derenbourg 1, 14/Hârūn 1, 41.
96 Ibid.
97 Sibawayhi, Kitâb chapter 35, Derenbourg 1, 65/Hârūn 1, 153.
98 For more such cases (including a pair of sentences whose verbs do not share the same root), see Sibawayhi, Kitâb chapter 35, Derenbourg 1, 65/Hârūn 1, 153–54; chapter 35, Derenbourg 1, 67/Hârūn 1, 156–58. These cases raise the question of the extent to which the meanings of maf’ûls of ditransitive and tritransitive verbs are conveyed by the passive participles of these verbs. The text of the Kitâb, however, does not provide an answer to this question.
(zarf) yet behaving as mafʿūl, to the meaning (maʿnā) of mafʿūl. Note, in this respect, Sibawayhi’s statement regarding verbal nouns functioning as subjects of passive verbs, i.e. analyzed as mafʿūls, as a case of saʿat al-kalām “latitude of speech”, e.g., ِضَرَبَ بِه ضَرَبَان “striking took place with it [viz. a whip], of two strokes”, lit.: “two strokes were struck with it”: وَإِنْ كَانَ الْضَرَبَان لاَ تَضَرَبَان “although the two strokes are not [the person/thing which is actually] being struck”.99 What is asserted here is that when a certain constituent is a mafʿūl, it is expected to convey the meaning of the subject of the verb in question in the passive voice (that is, the verb in the passive voice can be predicated of it). This condition is not met with the verbal noun analyzed as a mafʿūl, hence the discrepancy between syntax and semantics, designated by the term saʿat al-kalām here. Put differently, the constituent in question does not refer to what is actually مضروب.

Although Sibawayhi does not correlate his parsing of the predicate in sentences introduced by كَان as a mafʿūl directly with its meaning, there is an indication in the text of the Kitāb that point (d) applies to كَان. Sibawayhi says in the chapter about كَان and its ‘sisters’: فِهْوَ كَان وَمَكُون كَان كَان ضَارِبٌ وَمَضْرُوبٌ, that is, كَان ضَارِبٌ وَمَضْرُوبٌ, as active and passive participles, respectively, belong to the verb كَان just as the forms ضَارِب and ضَرَب belong to the verb كُان.102 That is, كُن عبد الله أُحَلَّك “‘Abdullāḥ was your brother”, كَان عبد الله أُحَلَّك, whereas كَان أُحَلَّك is the مَكُون كَان أُحَلَّك. This might explain the labels fāʿil and mafʿūl, respectively.103

3. A Possible Provenance of the Term Mafʿūl

It has been suggested in modern scholarship that the term mafʿūl originated in the term mafʿūl bihi (lit. “that to which [the content of the verb] is done”),104 an impersonal passive participle, by the omission of the prep-

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99 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 45, Derenbourg 1, 97/Hārūn 1, 229–30.
100 Hārūn’s edition reads: تقول.
101 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 17, Derenbourg 1, 16/Hārūn 1, 46.
102 See Carter, Arab Linguistics, 221.
103 As noted above, the direct linkage between the meaning conveyed by a mafʿūl and the passive participle of its verb does not apply to all verbs. An obvious counterexample is لَيْس مَزْرَةٌ بَيْدٌ مَزْرَةٌ لَا تَمْلَأ, which has no passive participle. Another case is prepositional phrases such as see Section 1). See also the remark in fn. 98 regarding ditransitive and tritransitive verbs. It is still the case that in all these categories the meaning conveyed by mafʿūl is relative to each verb (rather than a general meaning of patient).
104 This literal sense may be linked to the ‘patient’ interpretation of this term.
ositional phrase.\textsuperscript{105} Even if such a process is plausible,\textsuperscript{106} the assumption that the introduction of the term \textit{mafʿūl} followed, chronologically, the use of the term \textit{mafʿūl bihi}, is not substantiated by the \textit{Kitāb}: whereas the term \textit{mafʿūl} occurs in Derenbourg’s edition of the \textit{Kitāb}, according to Troupeau, 174 times, both as a semantico-syntactic and a morphological term, the term \textit{mafʿūl bihi} occurs only six times.\textsuperscript{107} Out of these, two are totally irrelevant, since \textit{mafʿūl bihi} conveys therein a meaning akin to the term \textit{mafʿūl maʿahu “accompanying object”, lit. “that with which [the content of the verb] is done”}.\textsuperscript{108} As for the remaining four, none of them appears as such, if at all, in all the versions of the \textit{Kitāb} at hand in the printed editions.\textsuperscript{109} Thus, the extent to which Sibawayhi in fact uses the

\textsuperscript{105} See R. Köbert, “Zum Verständnis des arabischen Grammatikerterminus \textit{mafʿūl} und seiner Verbindungen,” Orientalia 29 (1960): 330; Levin, "al-\textit{mafʿūl al-muṭlaq},“ 924. al-Sīrāfī, on the other hand, suggests a different explanation: given that the ‘real’ \textit{mafʿūl} is what is originated by the \textit{fāʿil}, e.g. created things by God, actions by human beings, the application of the term \textit{mafʿūl} by the grammarians to the direct object is merely figurative (\textit{majāz}; see Versteegh, “ittisāʿ,” 285–86); al-Sīrāfī, \textit{Šarḥ Kitāb Sībawayhi}, 3, 129.

\textsuperscript{106} Köbert draws a parallel between the pair \textit{mafʿūl bihi} and \textit{mafʿūl}, on the one hand, and the pair \textit{al-mubtadaʾ bihi} and \textit{al-mubtadaʾ} (the subject of a nominal sentence), on the other; for him, \textit{al-mubtadaʾ} is the shortened form of \textit{al-mubtadaʾ bihi}. See Köbert, “\textit{mafʿūl},” 330. However, since Sibawayhi uses the verb \textit{yabd} as a directly transitive verb far more frequently than with the preposition \textit{zā}, Köbert’s view is unfounded. I have also not found any occurrence of \textit{al-mubtadaʾ bihi} in the \textit{Kitāb}; see also G. Troupeau, \textit{Lexique-Index du Kitāb de Sībawayhi} (Paris: Klincksieck, 1976), 36–37. A similar case is that of the term \textit{maʿmūl fīhi} (the constituent affected by the grammatical operation): whereas it appears three times, in Derenbourg’s and Hārūn’s editions, as \textit{maʿmūl fīhi} (Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 41, Derenbourg 1, 84, line 13/Hārūn 1, 202; chapter 41, Derenbourg 1, 84, line 17/Hārūn 1, 202–3; chapter 176, Derenbourg 1, 303/Hārūn 2, 281), it appears in these editions twice as \textit{maʿmūl} alone (Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 32, Derenbourg 1, 53/Hārūn 1, 128; chapter 41, Derenbourg 1, 84, line 16/Hārūn 1, 202); however, these two occurrences also appear as \textit{maʿmūl fīhi} in some of the manuscripts consulted in Derenbourg’s edition. A more convincing case is the expression \textit{“that to which [the content of the verb] is done”} in Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 187, Derenbourg 1, 316/Hārūn 2, 313; the same notion, however, is conveyed later by the word \textit{“place”} (Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 187, Derenbourg 1, 316/Hārūn 2, 314), raising the possibility of corruption in the text. Another such case is the passive participle referring to direct objects (Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 13, Derenbourg 1, 14/Hārūn 1, 41), since the direct object of the verb \textit{“place”} (see above) is the subject, not the direct object.

\textsuperscript{107} Troupeau, \textit{Lexique-Index}, 164.

\textsuperscript{108} Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 58, Derenbourg 1, 125, line 11/Hārūn 1, 297; chapter 58, Derenbourg 1, 125, line 15/Hārūn 1, 298. See Mosel, “Terminologie,” 256.

\textsuperscript{109} The one in Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 10, Derenbourg 1, 11 appears as \textit{mafʿūl} in Hārūn 1, 34; the one in Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 19, Derenbourg 1, 22/Hārūn 1, 57 is a part of a sentence which does not appear at all in one of Derenbourg’s manuscripts; the one in Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 66, Derenbourg 1, 136 does not appear in one of Derenbourg’s manuscripts as well as in Hārūn 1, 325 and seems to be a late interpolation (see Jahn, \textit{Sībawayhi’s Buch} 1.2, 204); and the one in Sībawayhi, \textit{Kitāb} chapter 89, Derenbourg 1, 161/Hārūn 1, 383 appears as \textit{mafʿūl} in several of Derenbourg’s manuscripts.
term *mafʿūl bihi* is unclear; at best, it is extremely marginal vis-à-vis the term *mafʿūl*. We should therefore at least not rule out the possibility that the term *mafʿūl*, in the semantico-syntactic sense, is an original term, and try to account for it. This can be explained by the linkage pointed to above between the semantic component of *mafʿūl* and the passive participle. It might be the case that “ʿabdullāhi hit Zayd” was termed *mafʿūl* since it conveys the meaning of مضروب, which is the morphological *mafʿūl*, the passive participle.¹¹⁰ Studies have shown that one of the facets of Sibawayhi’s terminology is that terms are often applied to more than one level of linguistic analysis.¹¹¹ In the case of *mafʿūl*, the direction of the semantic extension might be discerned, i.e. from the morphological level to syntax. Further study should decide whether or not this is the general direction with regard to early Arabic grammatical terminology.

**Conclusion**

The term *mafʿūl* in Sibawayhi’s *Kitāb* pertains exclusively neither to the syntactic nor to the semantic level of linguistic analysis. It carries both syntactic and semantic aspects. At the syntactic level it is not restricted to one syntactic function, but rather consists of a ‘correspondence set’ of syntactic functions. At the semantic level it does not correspond to the term ‘patient’, but conveys a meaning relative to each verb, basically corresponding to the meaning of the passive participle. This raises the possibility that the origin of this term is to be found in its morphological meaning.

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¹¹⁰ The direction of our argumentation here can, of course, be inverted: if it is the case that the semantico-syntactic term *mafʿūl* in fact originated in the morphological meaning of this term, this substantially corroborates our argument for the link between the semantic component of *mafʿūl* and the passive participle.

One might venture to raise the possibility that it was the semantico-syntactic use of the term *fāʿil* which prompted the semantico-syntactic use of *mafʿūl*, its already established counterpart at the morphological level.

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Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


DON’T BE ABSURD: THE TERM MUḤĀL IN SĪBAWAYHI’S KITĀB

Avigail S. Noy

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I offer a thorough investigation into the notion of muḥāl ‘crooked; absurd’ in Sībawayhi’s (d. ca. 180/796) monumental Kitāb, in the hopes of shedding new light on the understanding of the term by the early and influential grammarian. The analysis of the term is undertaken by examining all of its occurrences in the Kitāb and by a conducting a close reading of the context in which the term muḥāl appears.¹

We first come across the notion of iḥāla ‘crookedness’ in a very brief chapter in the preliminary sections of the Kitāb (the so-called Risāla) titled باب الاستقامة من الكلام والإحالة ‘On the Straightness and Crookedness of Utterances’.² The chapter, which has received much interest in modern scholarly literature,³ presents the reader with five ‘correctness’ or ‘soundness’ criteria that presumably encompass all utterance types. One of these

¹ I wish to thank Professor Wolfhart Heinrichs for reading an earlier version of this paper and for providing me with helpful comments and suggestions. Needless to say, any remaining shortcomings are solely mine.
criteria is *muḥāl*. The others are a combination of two of the following terms: *mustaqīm* lit. ‘straight’ i.e. ‘sound, correct’, *muḥāl* lit. ‘crooked’ i.e. ‘incorrect’, *ḥasan* ‘beautiful’, *qabīḥ* ‘ugly’ or *kaḏib* ‘false’; besides *muḥāl* these will mostly not concern us here.

I begin with an introductory section that presents medieval technical and lexical definitions of the term, as well as modern scholarly understandings thereof in Sibawayhi’s work. I touch on the Greek and Legal Hypotheses regarding the origin of the term in grammatical thinking only to show that lexically, *muḥāl* inherently implies ‘speech’. In the second section I lay out the two basic functions played by the term *muḥāl* in Sibawayhi’s *Kitāb*, functions that operate on the assumption that sentences marked ‘*muḥāl*’ do not occur in natural Bedouin speech. Sections three and four delve into each of the two functions of *muḥāl* by discussing instances of its usage. The last section offers concluding remarks by way of comparing the notion of *ihāla* to the adjacent notion of *naqḍ* ‘contradiction’.

The title of this paper is in fact misleading for Sibawayhi does not use *ihāla* to refer to plain ‘absurdity’. Rather, he employs ungrammatical, *muḥāl*-marked sentences as a tool for either teaching the reader a grammatical phenomenon or proving the validity of a pre-defined grammatical rule.4

1. Technical and Lexical Definitions of *Muḥāl*

One of the many merits of Sibawayhi’s *Kitāb* lies in its systematic employment of Arabic terminology at a time when Arabic as a scientific language was at its infancy. In this respect, my investigation into the term *muḥāl* should be seen as a small chapter in the history of the development of medieval Arabic technical terms. In order to frame our discussion in the larger context of medieval Arabic thought, we should keep in mind that *muḥāl* does not develop into a full-fledged technical term in later grammar, but does appear in the later adjacent sciences of philosophy and

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4 I use the expression “*muḥāl*-marked sentences” to refer to stretches of speech that Sibawayhi says are *muḥāl*; there is no real ‘marker’. Also, I have chosen the word “sentences” to refer to these stretches of speech, rather than “utterances”, because they are not attested in native speech and are thus not “uttered” (see §2). I have placed an asterisk before these stretches of speech, which are ungrammatical.
literary theory (*naqd*). One prevailing definition of the term *muḥāl* found both in philosophy and in some of the works on literary theory talks about “a co-occurrence of two contradictory [things] within the same object at the same time, in the same element [or] the same relative state” (جمع المتنافين في شيء واحد في زمان واحد في جزء واحد وإضافة واحدة), such as describing an object as being both black and white at the same time. As such, *muḥāl* is not only non-existent but also inconceivable (and the philosophers make the distinction between that which does not exist but is imaginable and that which does not exist and is unimaginable).

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5 The term occurs in another early work of grammatical import, namely *Muʿānī al-Qurʾān* of al-Farrāʾ (d. 207/822); since it is limited to only two passages (4 occurrences in all cited by Kinberg), we would hesitate to refer to it as a technical term. Kinberg translates *muḥāl* as "solecistic, impossible, construction, combination, etc."; see N. Kinberg, *A Lexicon of al-Farrāʾ’s Terminology in his Qurʾān Commentary: With Full Definitions, English Summaries and Extensive Citations* (Leiden, New York: E.J. Brill, 1996), 196. Al-Farrāʾ’s usage of *muḥāl* might be comparable to that of Sibawayhi, but one would need additional textual evidence to be sure.

6 This definition is taken from the technical dictionary of al-Huwārizmī (d. 387/997–8), *Kitāb maḏāfiḥ al-ʿulām*, ed. G. van Vloten (Lugduni-Batavorum: Brill, 1895), 140, under the chapter of philosophy (the text reads *wa-ulāma* instead of *wa-ḥadā*). Definitions to this effect are stated by the early philosopher al-Kindī (d. ca. 256/873) and the literary critic Qudāma b. Jaʿfar (d. between 320/932 and 337/948) and can be found in later technical dictionaries and books of definitions. For al-Kindī’s definition in his *Risāla fi ḥudūd al-aṣyāʿ* wa-ruṣūmihā see J. Jihāmī, *al-ašyāʾ wa-rusūmihā* (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān, 1998), 34–5. For Qudāma’s definition see his *Kitāb naqd al-šiʿr*, ed. S.A. Bonebakker (Leiden: Brill, 1956), 124 (under the sub-heading “absurdity and self-contradiction”, 124–33); for a later typical philosophical definition see al-Šarīf al-Jurjānī (d. 816/1413), *Kitāb al-taʿrīfāt* (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān, 1969), 217. The example الجسم أسود أبيض في حال واحدة is given by the literary critic Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskārī (d. 395/1005) in his *al-Furūq fi al-ḫuwa*, ed. Lajnat Iḥyāʾ al-turāṣ al-ʿArabī (Beirut: Dar al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, 1983), 34–5. The term *idāfa* in its philosophical sense refers to a state that is by nature continuously relative or analogous to something else (*Taʿrīfāt*, 28–9), such as ‘fatherhood’ (inherently suggests ‘son’) or ‘slavehood’ (inherently suggests ‘owner’).

7 For the ‘non-existent’ aspect of *muḥāl* see Jihāmī, *Mawsūʿa*, 774. Qudāma distinguishes between *muntanā* ‘impossible’ and *mutanāqiḍ* ‘self-contradictory’ (or *mustābīl* [used by Qudāma interchangeably with *muḥāl*], so we infer from his sub-heading the استحالة والتنافس) stating that the former cannot come into existence (لا يكون) but may be conceived in the imagination (يمكن تصوره في الوعي), while the latter is non-existent but also inconceivable (Qudāma, *Naqd*, 133; also Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskārī, *Furūq*, 35). Interestingly, Qudāma contrasts *muḥāl/mustābīl* (or *mutanāqiḍ*) with *mustaqīm* (e.g. *Naqd*, 125). For a subdivision of poetic hyperbole based on the distinction *munkin-muntani-mustābīl* (the latter translated as ‘unthinkable’) see W. Heinrichs, “Mubālagha,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs (Brill; 2011. Brill Online, Harvard University), accessed September 19, 2011, http://www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-1438 (henceforth: EI²). Utterances are sometimes later classified according to the philosophically-inspired modal distinction
It would seem at first from Sībawayhi's quasi-definition of muḥāl given in his bāb al-istiqāma that it is the same self-contradictory sense that stands at the basis of the term in its grammatical application: “muhāl is contradicting the beginning of your utterance with its end”. The archetypal examples allegedly corroborate this: “I came to you tomorrow” and “I will come to you yesterday”. Indeed, modern Western scholars have understood Sibawayhi’s muḥāl in a logical or semantic sense: Carter makes the distinction between ‘semantic’ and ‘structural’ correctness, as he understands the istiqāma-iḥāla pairing to reside in the former; according to Versteegh, “the category of ‘correctness’ (mustaqīm) [is used] in a logical sense”; according to Mosel, similar to Carter, mustaqīm does not mean “grammatisch richtig”, but rather “ein sinnvoller verständlicher Satz” (= semantic/logical sense); and going further back to Jahn, it is not clear whether he sees mustaqīm as “grammatisch richtig” (= structural/formal correctness) or as “dem Sinne nach angemessen” (= semantic/logical correctness) because on one hand he contrasts muḥāl with “dem Sinne nach angemessen” and renders it “dem Sinne nach verkehrt” (= logical) but on the other hand mustaqīm is translated throughout as “grammatisch richtig” (= structural/formal). Interestingly, Owens identifies the archetypal muḥāl-sentences as “grammatically acceptable” in that they exhibit structural correctness: verb + agent + object + circumstantial complement.

wājib-jāʾiz-mumtaniʿ ‘necessary-possible-impossible’; e.g. Ibn Fāris (d.395/1004), al-Sāhibī fi fiqh al-luğa wa-sunan al-arab fi kalāmiha, ed. M. al-Chouémi (Beirut: Mu’assasat Badrān li-l-Tibāʿa wa-l-Našr, 1963), 179, al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), Kitāb al-iqtirāḥ fī ‘ilm usūl al-naḥw (Hyderabad: Jamʿiyat Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-Ūtmaniyya, 1940), 14 (quoting Ibn al-Ṭarāwa, d. 528/1134). I thank Professor Michael Carter for these references and hope to elaborate on these and other classifications, found in naqd works, elsewhere.

8 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 6, Derenbourg 1, 7/Hārūn 1, 25.
9 Carter, Sībawayhi, 61; idem, “An Arab Grammarians,” 148; Marogy (Kitāb Sībawayhi, 74–9) accentuates the pragmatic role played by the istiqāma-iḥāla pairing.
12 G. Jahn, Sībawayhi’s Buch über die Grammatik: Übersetzt und Erklärt (Berlin: Reuther and Reichard, 1895) 1, 10–11. Instances of this inconsistency (parentheses are Jahn’s): category (i) of Sibawayhi’s soundness hierarchy is rendered “was (grammatisch) richtig und (dem Sinne nach) angemessen ist” (mustaqīm ḥasan); category (iv): “was (grammatisch) richtig, aber (der Wortstellung nach) incorrect ist” (mustaqīm qabīḥ); category (v): “was (dem Sinne nach) verkehrt und (dem Inhalt nach) eine Lüge ist” (muḥāl kaḏib).
That Sībawayhi's sense of *muḥāl* was not obvious even to his successors is evident from the account given by his commentator Abū Sa‘īd al-Sīrāfī (d. ca. 368/979). In expounding on *muḥāl* al-Sīrāfī stays true to the 'philosophical' understanding of the term, while its antipode *mustaqīm* takes on a more 'formal' sense (cf. Jahn) as it is glossed “having sound form and sound declension/verbal-mood”, i.e. “permissible in the Bedouins' speech, without [necessarily] being preferable” (नاَّم اََي حنَّكوُة). In fact what I hope this paper will show is that in Sībawayhi's application of the term, *muḥāl* simply means 'ungrammatical' and should be taken as the opposite of al-Sīrāfī's understanding of *mustaqīm*: i.e. غير حائز “impermissible”. Moreover, this impermissibility or ungrammaticality is best described, in the Sibawayian context, as a syntactic one.

By following Sibawayhi's actual usage of the term *muḥāl* we are initially finding out whether its application “conforms to the definition” but are consequently unravelling additional aspects of the analytical-theoretical, as well as pedagogical mechanisms that are employed by Sibawayhi. Such an approach, applied to the other correctness-categories, could potentially yield a better understanding of Sibawayhi's views on grammaticality and value judgements of utterances.

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15 al-Sīrāfī, Šarḥ 2, 89–90. The term *jāʾiz* here should be taken in its most basic lexical sense and should not be confused with any philosophical sense thereof (viz. *mumkin*, cf. n. 7). Carter (“Les Origines,” 84) suggests that the term *jāʾiz* was taken up from law; he understands a *jāʾiz*-utterance to be both *ḥasan* and *mustaqīm*.
16 It would perhaps be inaccurate to assign the incorrectness of an utterance to one linguistic level (e.g. semantic, pragmatic) as all linguistic levels are one and the same for Sibawayhi (on the “inseparability of form and meaning” in the Kitāb see Baalbaki, Legacy, 170–91, esp. 173 [wherefrom I quote], 181, 187. To ‘form’ and ‘meaning’ we should add ‘context’ to account for the pragmatic dimension of many of Sibawayhi's analyses; see e.g. Bohas et al., Arabic Linguistic Tradition, 42–3). In the case of *muḥāl*-marked sentences, we will see that Sibawayhi explains their ungrammaticality primarily in structural or syntactic terms.
17 Carter, “An Arab Grammarians,” 148. He states: “As used in the Book these criteria [the 'behavioural criteria', p. 147; i.e. categories of speech-correctness] entirely conform to the definitions given to them”. As will be shown in what follows, this is not the case with regards to *muḥāl*.
18 Thus, I would not be quick to rely on Sibawayhi's archetypal qabīḥ-example, say, given in his bāb al-istiqāma in order to evaluate the term. A scrutiny of the terms *ḥasan* and *qabīḥ* throughout the Kitāb would be a much more extended undertaking, as their
Since one cannot attend to the istiqāma-iḥāla discourse without invoking the Greek Hypothesis or Legal Hypothesis regarding the origin of these terms, I should say that I subscribe to neither, at least in the case of muḥāl. A brief lexical survey of the word suffices to show that we need not view muḥāl as the opposite of an ethically-charged mustaqīm nor as the Arabic counterpart to the Greek adúnatos, as muḥāl seems to have originally applied to speech, rather than things or ideas. According to Ibn Manẓūr (d. 630/1311–2), it is said that the verbs حَال (form I) and استحالة (form II) and manẓūr (d. 630/1311–2), it is said that the verbs حَال (form I) and استحالة (form II) and manẓūr (d. 630/1311–2), it is said that the verbs حَال (form I) and استحالة (form II) may refer to “anything that is altered from straightforwardness” to crookedness (حوَل), wherefrom the adjectives مستحيل and مستحال “crooked, uneven, distorted, twisted” are derived. The word muḥāl, however, signifies a ‘crookedness’ that solely applies to speech, such that the verbs حَال (form IV) and (form IV) derive from it: the Arabic counterpart to the Greek adúnatos,21 as adúnatos is seemingly both the active and the passive participles are synonymous: this may explained by the fact that many form X verbs are “at least originally, mustaqīm, besides its occurrences in the introductory chapter, the notion is absent from the Kitāb. The term mustaqīm will be scrutinized in this paper only inasmuch as it corroborates our conclusions regarding muḥāl. For a neat presentation of these hypotheses, as well as the Syriac connection regarding the origins of the Arabic grammatical tradition, see Versteegh, Grammar and Exegesis, xx–xxvii. With regards to the speech soundness criteria, Versteegh seems to support the Greek hypothesis (Grammar and Exegesis, 35) while Baalbaki seems to support the legal one (Early Islamic Grammatical Tradition, xxv).

19 For a neat presentation of these hypotheses, as well as the Syriac connection regarding the origins of the Arabic grammatical tradition, see Versteegh, Grammar and Exegesis, xx–xxvii. With regards to the speech soundness criteria, Versteegh seems to support the Greek hypothesis (Grammar and Exegesis, 35) while Baalbaki seems to support the legal one (Early Islamic Grammatical Tradition, xxv).


21 Versteegh, Grammar and Exegesis, 24 (following Rundgren).

22 Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān al-ʿarab (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.) 2, 1054. and are commonly said of a bow (قوس) and of the edges of a thigh/leg (or a person who has a ‘twisted’ thigh/leg; ibid.). Seemingly, both the active and the passive participles are synonymous: this may explained by the fact that many form X verbs are “at least originally, reflexive” (thus the agent, that is the “active”, and the patient, that is the “passive”, are the same); see W. Wright, A Grammar of the Arabic Language, revised by W.R. Smith and M.J. de Goeje (3rd edition reprint; n.p.: Simon WallenbergPress, 2007) 1, 45 (one example Wright adds is “to stand upright lit. to hold oneself upright” [ibid.; italics his]). We also find ‘straightness’ and ‘crookedness’ in the most profane of contexts (viz. far from having moral/ethical import), as the following proverb and explanation thereof suggests (Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān 2, 1054):

وَفِي الْمِثْلِ ذَاكْ أُحْوَّلُ مِنْ بُوْلِ الْجُلْدِ وَذَلِكَ أَنْ الْبُوْلَ لَا يّخْرِجُ مَسْتَقِيماً

"Proverbially [it is said:] That is more crooked/twisted than a camel’s urination, and this is [said] because its urine does not come out straight going in one of the two directions [right and left]"]. This proverb should not be confused with the other: "He is more cunning than a wolf" (stated several entries later; Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān 2, 1055).

23 al-Šarīf al-Jurjānī mentions a lexical definition to this effect (Taʿrīfāt, 217) but does not limit it to ‘speech’. Cf. some of the definitions of the verbs مُنْحَرٍ and اَنْغَيْفٍ as “deviating
muhāl; ahāla [intransitive]: to utter muhāl”.24 Linguistically, it should be said, form IV verbs in Arabic (here أَحَال) comprise many denominatives, such that they “combine with the idea of the noun, from which they are derived, that of a transitive verb, of which it is the direct object”.25 Similarly, form II verbs (here حوَلَه) are frequently denominative and “express [...] the making or doing of [...] the thing expressed by the noun from which it is derived”.26 In other words, the grammar of the language (in terms of the semantics of verb-forms) supports Ibn Manẓūr’s synopsis. Notice that whereas would be used adjectivally to modify the word “speech”, the word مُعْلَام “The meaning of] mustahil speech [is] muhāl”.27 In what way is speech “crooked/twisted”? This question remains unexplained in the Lisān.28

It is here that we find the speech-classification attributed to Sibawayhi’s most prominent teacher, al-Ḫalīl b. Aḥmad (d. between 159/776 and 215/791), opening thus (on the authority of Ibn Shumayl [d. 203/818?]): “The verb الكلام لغير شيء والمستقيم كلام شيء” “muhāl is the saying/speech for a non-thing and mustaqīm is the saying/speech for a thing”.29 It is not clear

24 Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān 2, 1055.
25 Wright, Grammar 1, 34–5. Wright adds that in these cases the verb would often be intransitive (as is أَحَال). Of the many examples provided by Wright are أَنْفَقَ “to produce herbage” [of the saying] إِبِلَةٌ or أَلْبَغَ “to speak eloquently” [with the saying]. What is a bit strange in our case of أَحَال is that the noun itself is a derivative of form IV (passive participle). The only comparable example I found in Wright was أَمَكَّنَ “to become possible”, the noun from which it is derived being مَسْكِن, the active participle of form IV. Regarding the intransitivity of أَحَال it should be noted that Ibn Manẓūr does record a possible usage of the verb as a transitive one; i.e. it could be used with the complement ‘speech’; أَحَلال to utter muhāl [...] and it is said aḥaltu ʿl-kalāma ‘I make speech muhāl’ (+conjugations): when you corrupt it [speech]” (Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān 2, 1055).
26 Wright, Grammar 1, 32; italics his (cf. Ibn Manẓūr’s wording, جعله معلام).
27 Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān 2, 1055.
28 According to one definition it exhibits “corruption” (see n. 25), but what exactly is corrupt in the speech is still unclear to me.
29 Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān 2, 1055. This classification is not found in al-Ḫalīl’s extant work, Kitāb al-ʿAyn, and is more in line with the criteria stated by al-Aḥfaṣ (al-Awsat’, d. ca. 215/830, credited with making the Kitāb widely known) and by Abū ‘Ali al-Fārisī (d. 377/987), in that all three are additionally concerned with subjective lies and inadvertent errors. The views of al-Aḥfaṣ are recorded by al-Sirāfī, Ṣarḥ 2, 94 and by al-Santamārī (d. 476/1083), al-Nukat fi ṭafṣīr Kitāb Sibawayhi, ed. Z.A.M. Sulṭān (Kuwait: Ma’had al-Maḥtūṭāt al-ʿArabiyya, al-Munazẓamah al-ʿArabiyya li-l-Tarbiya wa-l-Taqāfa wa-l-Ulūm, 1987), 1, 134; and see Abū ‘Ali al-Fārisī, Aqsām al-akhbār, ed. A.J. al-Manẓūr, al-Mawrid 7,3 (1978): 202–4. The entry muhāl in Kitāb al-ʿAyn, eds. M. al-Maḥzūmī and I. al-Samārāʾī
whether this ‘definition’ should be taken in the philosophical-logical sense (as in Versteegh: “Impossible is speech about something that does not exist”)\(^{30}\) or whether it should be seen as a more basic lexical explanation, in which case the English “nonsense” could be an appropriate literal rendering of \(\textit{muḥāl}\)’s “speech for a non-thing”. It is nevertheless apparent from Ibn Manẓūr’s account that he preserves an earlier, speech-bound sense of \(\textit{muḥāl}\); this is while the semantically-extended sense of the word seems to have become standard among many of the lexicographers preceding him (Ibn Manẓūr does not mention the ‘logical’ definition).\(^{31}\) An explicit statement concerning this issue is made by Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī (d. ca. 395/1005) in his semantically-organized dictionary \(\textit{al-Furūq fī al-luḡā}\), according to whom “our saying \(\textit{muḥāl}\) pertains only to speech/utterances ( وإنّا ﺑِدْخَﻻ ﻃَارِقًا ﻓِي ﺍﻟْﻠُغَآ)”. As his explanation goes, the theologians (مَنْكَوْنُ) use the term to refer to a nonexistent attribute (صَنْعًا)، although lexically (في اللغة) it refers to the “utterance” of the one making the attribute (قولاً الواصف).\(^{32}\)

Also noteworthy is the fact that the notions of ‘straightness’ and ‘bentness/crookedness’—though not in terms of \(\textit{iḥāla}\)—are used long before Sibawayhi to critically apply to speech (poetic speech, to be exact). This can be attested by the following poetry line by the umayyad ʿAdiyy b. al-ʾRiqā‘ (d. ca. 95/714) (in the \(\textit{kāmil}\) meter): وقصيدة قد بينها حتي أقوم ميليها وستادها many a qaṣīda I would spend all night revising (lit. assembling its [scattered parts]) until I straightened out what was bent/crooked (كلاً م. تول). In al-Zamaḫšarī’s (d. 538/1144) ‘thesaurus’ (مَا مِرَّ مِنْ جَاءَتْ ﺔٌ وَأَنَا ﺔٌ ﺔٌ ﻹَأَنَا ﺔٌ حَلَوْتُ), although (no further definition); \(\textit{Asās al-balāgha}\) we find \(\textit{muḥāl}\) and \(\textit{muḥāl}\) being said of things: (withstanding its [scattered parts]) until I straightened out what was bent/crooked.

\(^{30}\) Versteegh, Grammar and Exegesis, 34.

\(^{31}\) Lane preserves the speech-bound sense only with regards to اسْتَحْلاَت: “it (speech, language or thing) became \(\textit{muḥāl}\)” (E.W. Lane, \(\textit{An Arabic-English Lexicon}\) [New-Delhi: Asian Educational Studies, 1985], 675); أحاد in his entry of the word reads: “Absurd (speech); Crooked; Impossible” (J.G. Hava, \(\textit{al-Furāʾid: Arabic-English Dictionary}\), 5th ed. [Beirut: Dār al-Mašriq, 1982], 151). Kitāb al-ʾayn (3, 298) does preserve the speech-bound sense of \(\textit{muḥāl}\) (but here it is derived from the verb حَوْل), rather than the other way around). In al-Zamaḫšarī’s (d. 538/1144) ‘thesaurus’ and figurative dictionary \(\textit{Asās al-balāgha}\) we find mustaʿqim and \(\textit{muḥāl}\) being said of things: (withstanding its [scattered parts]) until I straightened out what was bent/crooked.

\(^{32}\) \(\textit{Furūq},\) 35. Notice that al-ʿAskarī is attending to the speech-bound sense of \(\textit{muḥāl}\) parenthetically; his point of departure is the ‘philosophical’ sense of \(\textit{muḥāl}\) and it is the latter aspect that receives most of his attention.
and corrupt". Statements like these, and the fact that muḥāl intrinsically refers to speech, would seem to render the ‘legal’ understanding of the term irrelevant.

To conclude this section, it is important that we identify the distinction between the philosophical-logical and what was to become standard sense of muḥāl, namely ‘absurd, impossible’, and the lexical speech-bound sense thereof, namely ‘nonsense’ (or ‘crooked’, inherently implying speech). Even though Sibawayhi’s quasi-definition of muḥāl seems to reflect the former, it is indeed the latter from which the term in its technical grammatical sense develops. If at all ‘foreign’ influences are to be found, they may lie in the quasi-definition itself. In what follows we shall see that throughout the Kitāb, the term is used in a systematic, grammatical and indeed technical way. In the context of the Kitāb the term muḥāl is best rendered ‘ungrammatical’.

2. **Muḥāl-Marked Sentences in the Kitāb as Hypothetical Speech**

As recorded by Troupeau, the term muḥāl appears 45 times in the Kitāb, with an additional 10 occurrences of the variants aḥāla ‘to utter muḥāl’, istahāla ‘to be muḥāl’, muḥīl ‘uttering muḥāl’ and iḥāla ‘the state of being muḥāl’. In most of these occurrences muḥāl is used by Sibawayhi as a ‘tag’ referring to sentences. In a minority of occurrences, however, muḥāl is used in the sense that befits the later standard sense of the word, viz.

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34 Or: ‘ungrammatical sentence’, see below. It should be noted that muḥāl (or mustaḥīl) does not appear in the Qurʾān nor does it show up in the poetry of six prominent pre-Islamic poets; see A. Arazi and S. Masalha, *al-ʿiqd al-ṯamīn fī dawāwīn al-šuʿārāʾ al-jāhilīn* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Institute of Asian and African Studies, 1999).

35 G. Troupeau, *Lexique-Index du Kitāb de Sībawayhi* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1976), 75–6, who translates muḥāl as “absurde, impossible”. I exclude istahāla in the sense of “trouver absurde, impossible” (2 occurrences) as they do not refer directly to sentences. Note: in the following references to Derenbourg’s edition of Sibawayhi’s Kitāb I specify the line number only if the term muḥāl appears more than once on the same page.
impossible. Thus we find comments like “it is impossible for you to assign the raf’ ‘independent case marker’ to [a word in a sentence] on account of [another word in that sentence]”. I call this the ‘non-technical’ use of the term. My investigation is limited to the ‘technical’ use of the term, and my conclusions are a result of a close examination, not only of all of the sentences marked as muḥāl, but also (and especially) of the context in which Sibawayhi adduces them. We should keep in mind that iḥāla occurs on the level of the sentence (or stretch of speech, kalām), not the single word; meaning, ungrammaticality on the morphological or phonological level would not be deemed muḥāl. So much so that muḥāl is contrasted at one point with kalām (cf. al-Ḫalīl’s utterance-classification): "it [a certain construction] is a [valid] utterance as an interrogative but ungrammatical as a declarative sentence" (emphasis mine). More important is the fact that muḥāl may be contrasted with ḥasan (what is commonly rendered ‘well-formed’, i.e. structurally sound), what Sibawayhi probably means here is ḥasan in the (non-technical?) sense of ‘fine, permissible’. This may explain why we further find the contrast of muḥāl with yajūzu ‘is permissible’ (and cf. al-Sīrāfī’s understanding of mustaṣqīm as ʿan yākūn gārātī in Kalam ‘al-Um). Examples of the muḥāl-ḥasan juxtaposition (all emphases are mine): “it is ungrammatical in one sense/aspect but ‘fine’ [i.e. grammatical] in another”; and as al-Ḫalīl mentioned this only in order for you to know/distinguish what is ungrammatical of [a certain construction] from what is grammatical”.

I understand to mean that the pronunciation of the word ʿṣibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 110, Derenbourg 1, 200/Hārūn 2, 35 (but cf. the alternative reading in Hārūn). This case should not be confused with a certain construction that he is none other than himself “(ṣibawayhi, chapter 240, Derenbourg 1, 372/Hārūn 3, 26).

Another example could be a certain construction with regards to the idea of “notifying him [the listener] that he is none other than himself” (ṣibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 205, Derenbourg 1, 332/Hārūn 2, 355). A gray area consists of statements like “it is muḥāl for you to say […]”, where the sense could be either non-technical “it is impossible to say […]” or technical “it is ungrammatical to say […]” (ṣibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 145, Derenbourg 1, 259/Hārūn 2, 177; chapter 146, Derenbourg 1, 263/ Hārūn 2, 184; chapter 146, Derenbourg 1, 264/Hārūn 2, 187 [two instances of muḥāl]). I count these as technical instances of the term.

Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 224, Derenbourg 1, 353/Hārūn 2, 406; cf. Talmon, “Kalām,” 84. Talmon analyzes the term kalām in the Kitāb (p. 82 ff.), seeing it essentially as a non-syntactic term; on its basic tenet as “acceptable speech” see Iványi, “Poetic Licenses,” 211.

“All the structural features of Arabic, from the level of the phoneme to the sentence, are evaluated as either ḥasan or qabīḥ [and the like]” (Carter, “An Arab Grammarian,” 148).

Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 103, Derenbourg 1, 186/Hārūn 1, 439.

Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 117, Derenbourg 1, 219/Hārūn 2, 80. For discussion see §3.
“had you not suppressed it [the particle ‘an], the utterance would have been ungrammatical [...] and if you suppress ‘an, the utterance is fine”.

Examples of the muḥāl-yajāzu juxtaposition: 

 ولو قلت… كان حالًا... فلَيْبِذ داوجاز على الإتباع 

“had you said [sentence] it would have been ungrammatical [...] and this is not permissible but it is permissible as a [constituent] opening [the sentence]”;43

“it is ungrammatical in one sense but permissible in another”.

Probably the most important aspect of muḥāl-marked sentences is that the vast majority of them do not reflect actual Bedouin speech but are rather the result of the grammarian’s forged speech. In fact, we only find one clear-cut instance of a natural sentence being tagged as muḥāl, but this is put in the mouth of al-Ḫalīl, not Sībawayhi (see below).45 Most of the occurrences follow a formulaic 


two separate instances). Not all occurrences follow the formula literally but they essentially express the same idea. The interlocutors in al-Ṯāfī’s discussion of bāb al-istiqāma (Šarḥ 2, 90), who object to Sībawayhi’s use of the word muḥāl, miss in fact this exact point by interpreting the sentences as utterances that exist. Indeed, they may exist as poetic utterances, but this is not reflected in the Kitāb. Already Abboud (“Grammaticality,” 61) alerts to the fact that muḥāl sentences do not occur in actual speech
you said X while intending Y, then it [X] would have been ungrammatical (X could represent a grammatical sentence here).47

The cause for adding a nonfactual, non-grammatical sentence seems to fall within one of the following two reasons: either (a) to explain or describe a grammatical rule/behaviour or (b) to justify the rule and to provide proof (dalīl) to its validity.48 Cases that fall under the second reason tend to follow a formulaic (sometimes opening with “(don’t you see) the indication/that which indicates to you that P is that had you said X, it would have been ungrammatical” (alternatively: simply “P because X is ungrammatical”).49

That muḥāl-marked sentences are unattested in the speech of the Bedouins is somewhat reminiscent of the tamṯīl-type sequences which are explicitly glossed by Sībawayhi as "لا يَكُنْ لَكَ كَلَامًا “not spoken".50 However, the

(Talmon similarly does so with sequences of speech tagged "لا يَكُنْ لَكَ كَلَامًا “is not a [valid] utterance”; Talmon, "Kalām," 83). Cf. Ivānıyı’s take on law qulta-utterances (utterances preceded by the words “had you said”, Ivānıyı, "Poetic Licenses," 201–4): if they are tagged “bad or ugly”, they “are (sometimes) used in speech” (p. 202; Ivānıyı’s parentheses). That in his view, all “actual” utterances adduced by Sībawayhi do not reflect everyday Bedouin speech but rather everyday ruwāt or “so-called Bedouin” speech (Ivānıyı, “Poetic Licenses,” 204).

47 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 112, Derenbourg 1, 209/Hārūn 2, 55; chapter 177, Derenbourg 1, 219 (ll. 17–18)/Hārūn 2, 81; chapter 145, Derenbourg 1, 259/Hārūn 2, 177 (two instances); chapter 194, Derenbourg 1, 322–3/Hārūn 2, 331; chapter 205, Derenbourg 1, 331–2/Hārūn 2, 355 (if we interpret muḥāl as a technical term); chapter 241, Derenbourg 1, 372 (l. 20)/Hārūn 3, 28 (though istabāla could be interpreted here in its non-technical sense. Note that istabāla in the following line is a clear case of non-technical usage); chapter 244, Derenbourg 1, 383/Hārūn 3, 55 (two instances); chapter 247, Derenbourg 1, 390/Hārūn 3, 72–3 (two separate instances). Not all occurrences follow the formula literally.

48 Cf. Baalbaki, Legacy, 133: “[... ] Sībawayhi was interested not only in describing linguistic phenomena but also in justifying them”.

49 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 110, Derenbourg 1, 199/Hārūn 2, 32; chapter 118, Derenbourg 1, 220/Hārūn 2, 81 (muḥāl could be interpreted here in its non-technical sense); chapter 141, Derenbourg 1, 255/Hārūn 2, 168; chapter 146, Derenbourg 1, 263/Hārūn 2, 184; chapter 146, Derenbourg 1, 264/Hārūn 2, 187 (put in the mouth of al-Halîl. According to my understanding, it is used as a sarcastic [!] proof to denounce a dialectal variant); chapter 193, Derenbourg 1, 322/Hārūn 2, 331; chapter 194, Derenbourg 322–3/Hārūn 2, 331; chapter 208, Derenbourg 1, 334/Hārūn 2, 361–2; chapter 220, Derenbourg 1, 349/Hārūn 2, 394–5; chapter 224, Derenbourg 1, 353 (ll. 21–22)/Hārūn 2, 406 (here P=“X is muḥāl”); chapter 239, Derenbourg 1, 370/Hārūn 3, 23; chapter 247, Derenbourg 1, 390 (ll. 6–7)/Hārūn 3, 72–3; chapter 251, Derenbourg 1, 395/Hārūn 3, 84 (note that muḥāl is equated with lam yajuz); chapter 252, Derenbourg 1, 397/Hārūn 3, 88; chapter 253, Derenbourg 1, 400/Hārūn 3, 97; chapter 278, Derenbourg 1, 432/Hārūn 3, 169. Once more, these need not follow the formula literally but their function as providing a dalīl still holds.

function played by *muḥāl*-marked sentences is markedly different from that played by *tamṭiḥ* (or *ka-annaka qulta*- ‘as if you said’) sentences in that the purpose of the *muḥāl* sentence is not to explain a case/mood marker whose cause is not manifest in the sentence. Only two of the *muḥāl*-marked sentences do in fact coincide with *tamṭiḥ* and reflect an ‘underlying structure’ intended to ‘manifest’ or ‘bring to the senses’ the cause for the case/mood marker. The first is (explaining the *nasb* ‘dependent case’ after, what later grammarians call *wāw al-maʿiyya*): . . . *As if you had said [with regards to the sentence *What did you do with your brother* (-dependent)]* *What did you do your brother, and this is ungrammatical but I wanted to bring [it] to your senses*. The second case is assuming an implied verb to explain the *nasb* in *haḏr al-ḥajja* “be careful” or *haḏr al-najja* “get away/save yourself*. By contrast, the vast majority of ungrammatical sentences tagged as *muḥāl* are adduced to serve one of the two functions mentioned above. The first function (*viz.* ‘explanation and description’) takes place on the level of ‘acquisition’ of the language: the reader may or may not identify the sentence as ungrammatical, hence its pedagogical import; the second function (*viz.* ‘proof’) takes place on the level of theory: Sibawayhi relies on the fact that the reader will identify the sentence as ungrammatical, otherwise the proof is ineffectual.

Before we delve into the two distinct functions played by *muḥāl*-marked sentences, let us attend to the occurrence of a *muḥāl*-marked sentence that represents a natural utterance. Within the chapter dealing with non-adjective and non-*masdar* adverbial dependents,* Sibawayhi cites al-Ḥalīl’s rejection of *layḥat al-dīrām darḥama* “I got a profit of one dirham on every dirham” and the ensuing debate among Bedouins (العرب):

وَزَمَّنَ الْحَلِيلِ أَنْ قُلُوهُمُ رَيْحُتُ الْدِّرَهْمِ دَرْحَمًا حَلَّّا مَعْلُولًا فِي الْدِّرَهْمِ أَوْ للْدِّرَهْمِ وَكَذَّلَكَ وَجَدَانَ الْعَرَب أَنْ تَقْلُونَ إِنَّ قَالَ قَالُ أَحَذَّرْ فَحْرَ الجُرَّ أَوْ نْوَٰى قِيْلَ لِمَ لَا يَجْوَزُ كَالَّذِٰى يَجْوَزُ مَرْتُ أَحَدُهُ تَأْتُ أَرْيَدُ أَنْ تَرَى أَحْيَكَ فَإِنَّ قَالَ لَا يَجْوَزُ حَذَّرَ الْبَاءِ مِنْ هَذَا أَقِيلُ لَفِهَاذِ الْعِيْقَالُ أَيْضًا

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51 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 59, Derenbourg 1, 126/Hārūn 1, 300.
52 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 54, Derenbourg 1, 117/Hārūn 1, 275–7, and see §4 below. The notion of *tamṭiḥ* is stated explicitly in the beginning of chapter 54 (dealing with warning exclamations in the sense of “beware!”, Derenbourg 1, 116/Hārūn 1, 273): “إِلَّا أَنْ هَذَا لَا يَجْوَزُ فِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَلْقَأُ، لَا يَجْوَزُ لَمْ كَالَّذِٰى يَجْوَزْ” “Except that [in this] construction, making apparent [i.e. uttering] that which you concealed is impermissible but I mention it [to you] to bring to your senses the [component] whose concealment is not apparent [uttered].”
53 Such as as *kāna* فَاَتَأْهَلَ لِيْ فِيُ لَتْلَكَ. lit. “I spoke to him, his mouth[-dependent] to mine” i.e. “I spoke to him face-to-face”; Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 92, Derenbourg 1, 167/Hārūn 1, 391.
al-Ḫalīl claims that their saying “I got a profit of one dirham[-indefinite, dependent] on every dirham[-definite, dependant]” is nonsense, unless you say ḟī l-dirham or li-l-dirham [i.e. utter the prepositions ḟī or li- before the definite dirham]. Likewise we have found the Bedouins say: Were someone to say, Omit the preposition and cast it aside [i.e. say: rabiḥtu l-dirhama dirhaman], he would be replied, It is not permissible to do that [omit the preposition] just as saying “I passed your brother” and meaning “by your brother” is impermissible. If [the first] says [i.e. concedes], Omitting the [preposition] bi- from here [marartu aḫāka] is impermissible, then he is replied, then this [rabiḥtu l-dirhama dirhaman] is not said either.55

The fact that the tag muḥāl is applied to “their speech” (قولهم) may reflect a more prescriptive approach to natural sentences on the part of al-Ḫalīl; similarly, the highly developed debate that Sibawayhi records may reflect an internal dialogue among Bedouin circles regarding the (prescriptive) ‘correctness’ of certain sentences that existed in their language. Sibawayhi’s silence on the issue is suggestive of his differing approach, that is to say, his descriptivism toward attested Bedouin speech.56

3. Muḥāl-Marked Sentences Used as a Pedagogical Tool

The ‘explanatory’ function of muḥāl-marked sentences serves as a pedagogical tool to describe to the learner the rules of the language, or rather, the rules that Sibawayhi and his colleagues have defined. One example can be found within the chapter titled ما ينصب لأنه خير للمروف “That which is assigned the naṣb because it [gives] information on a known [entity]”, as in the archetype هذا عبد الله مقابلة “there is ‘Abdullāhi leaving”.57 Here Sibawayhi sets out to explain why sentences like هو يزيد معروفًا “that is Zayd, no doubt” or هو زيد فارقًا “that is Zayd [in his] boasting[-self]”, opening with the independent pronoun, are grammatical but هو زيد منطقًا is not. Although both هو يزيد معروفًا and هو زيد منطقًا belong to the same syntactic construction, the intention of the former (opening with the demonstrative) is not to identify ‘Abdullāhi but to inform about his departure,

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54 I refrain from translating muḥāl here as ‘ungrammatical’ as this rendering reflects Sibawayhi’s use of the term, not al-Ḫalīl’s.
55 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 92, Derenbourg 1, 167/Hārūn 1, 395 [and see n. 1]. I follow Hārūn’s reading. See also Jahn, Sībawaihi’s Buch 1, 248.
56 The controversy surrounding رَكَتْ الْدِّهْرَمْ درهمًا accentuates once again the propinquity of muḥāl and lā yaḥūzu. For a less clear-cut instance of muḥāl used as a tag on a (perhaps) natural sentence, see n. 45.
57 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 117, Derenbourg 1, 218–9/Hārūn 2, 77–81.
whereas the intention of the latter is to identity of Zayd or an aspect thereof.\footnote{Ibid., Dernbourg 1, 218–9/Hârûn 2, 77–81. For the meaning of مَعْرُوَفٌ “well-known” as “no doubt” (ومعِنِي قوله مَعْرُوَفٌ لا شَكّ) see Dernbourg 1, 219/ Hârûn 2, 79. In the case of فَاخَرًا “boasting”, the idea is to highlight a trait in Zayd that the listener may be unaware of, or it could be a way to belittle Zayd or to praise or threaten him, depending on the adjective uttered (Dernbourg 1, 218–9/Hârûn 2, 78–80; cf. al-Sîrâfî’s explanation stated in Hârûn 2, 79 n.1). In these cases the dependent constituent (seen as a حَال ‘circumstantial qualifier’) is taken as an explanatory component (تَفْسِير).} It is in this context that Sibawayhi says that uttering the sentence أنا ‘Abdullâhi leaving’ or هو زيد منطِلٌ “he is Zayd leaving” (opening with the pronoun) to notify someone who knows you or Zayd well about the departure would be muḥâl, or ungrammatical, because uttering the pronoun (هو) makes uttering the referent’s name redundant.\footnote{Ibid., Dernbourg 1, 219/Hârûn 2, 80–1.} The point at hand, however, is that in the case of هو زيد مَعْرُوَفٌ مَعْرُوَفٌ an aspect of Zayd’s identity is being highlighted or clarified, hence its grammaticality, whereas the fact that one is leaving does not clarify an aspect of one’s identity.\footnote{Ibid., Dernbourg 1, 218/Hârûn 2, 78–80.} It is due to Sibawayhi’s tendency to exhaust all possibilities that he discerns the following ‘inconsistency’:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{admissible} & \iff \text{فَاخَرًا} \\
\text{inadmissible} & \iff \text{هو زيد منطِلٌ}
\end{align*}
\]

The inconsistency lies between the admissibility of one sentence and the inadmissibility of another, which—formally—seems to belong to the same construction. The inadmissible sentences are of interest to Sibawayhi only inasmuch as they clarify the admissibility of sentences in the construction ما ينتصب لأه خير للمعروف opening with a pronoun. We should note that the option of هو زيد منطِلٌ is tagged غَيْر جَازِي ‘impermissible’ a few lines earlier: once again, highlighting the equivalence between the two terms, muḥâl and غَيْر جَازِي.\footnote{Ibid., Dernbourg 1, 219/Hârûn 2, 79. It should be noted that Sibawayhi does provide a context in which هو زيد منطِلٌ is admissible (Dernbourg 1, 219/Hârûn 2, 81), meaning in and of itself, the sentence is not ungrammatical: this is if the listener is located behind a wall or somewhere the speaker is unaware of, in which case uttering a sentence like “It’s me Zayd coming to your aid” (إِنَّا زيد منطِلٌ في حاجتك) would be “fine” (حَاسِن; note the contrast with muḥâl). This example is cited by Baalbaki (Legacy, 202) to illustrate the importance of Context in Sibawayhi’s grammatical analysis. The نَاحِيِّيْيَن seem to have accepted هو زيد منطِلٌ regardless of context (Dernbourg 1, 219/Hârûn 2, 80; compare R. Talmon, “Naḥwīyyūn in Sibawayhi’s Kitāb,” Zeitschrift für}
A statement that could support the view that Sibawayhi’s intent here is pedagogical is the following (quoted above for the *muḥāl*-hasan juxtaposition): “al-Ḥalil mentioned this [the explanation regarding what you must know in order for you to know/distinguish what is ungrammatical of [this construction] from what is grammatical”. In other words, the reader may not “know” the limits and workings of the construction at hand and thus may not recognize the ungrammatical sentence as such. We shall find a similar remark below.

The next example exhibits another so-called inconsistency, this time between the verb’s *form*, or tense, and the intended *time reference*. This example could potentially shed some light on the archetypal *muḥāl* sentence.

The discussion in point concerns the various conjugations of the construction *muḥāl* that stands at the basis of these ungrammatical sentences. Interestingly, this is the only *muḥāl* instance that is comparable to the archetypal *muḥāl* sentences.

The key statement here is *The imperfect after the particle ‘an’ can be placed in the position of the perfect [i.e. still keeping with the past time reference], but the perfect cannot be placed in the position of the imperfect [i.e. still keeping with the future time reference]*. Thus we find another instance of *muḥāl* in this context, but here it is probably in the non-technical sense: “It is impossible/absurd for the noun to appear after it [the pronoun] when you give information about an action-like or a non-action-like attribute [. . .]” (Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 177, Derenbourg 1, 219/Hārūn 2, 80). Alternatively, one could understand it as “Uttering [making apparent] the noun after the pronoun [. . .] is ungrammatical”, in which case the sense of *muḥāl* would be ‘technical’. It is cases like this which I referred to above as ‘a gray area’ (n. 37).

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**arabische Linguistik** 8 (1982): 23). We find another instance of *muḥāl* in this context, but here it is probably in the non-technical sense: “It is impossible/absurd for the noun to appear after it [the pronoun] when you give information about an action-like or a non-action-like attribute [. . .]” (Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 177, Derenbourg 1, 219/Hārūn 2, 80). Alternatively, one could understand it as “Uttering [making apparent] the noun after the pronoun [. . .] is ungrammatical”, in which case the sense of *muḥāl* would be ‘technical’. It is cases like this which I referred to above as ‘a gray area’ (n. 37).

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63 Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 244, Derenbourg 1, 383/Hārūn 3, 55–6 (henceforth: the *mā ‘adawta ‘an fa’alta*-construction). This construction is discussed as a side-note to the chapter dealing with two verbs separated by a conjunction following the particle ‘an; viz. the distinction between *أَرْبَدُ أَنْ تَأْتَىَّيْ مُحَدَّثِيَّيْ* (where the second verb ‘shares’ the mood marker with the first) “I want you to visit[[-dependent] me and then talk[[-dependent] with me” and *أَرْبَدُ أَنْ تَأْتَيْ مُحَدَّثِيَّيْ* “I want you to visit[[-dependent] me, then you will talk[[-independent] with me” (chapter 244, Derenbourg 1, 382/Hārūn 3, 52).

64 *Ibid.*, Derenbourg 1, 383/Hārūn 3, 55 (a similar remark is given in chapter 239, Derenbourg 1, 370/Hārūn 3, 24). Sibawayhi adds that the only exception to this rule is the conditional mood (*muḥāzāt*), as in *إِنْ فَلَعَتْ فِلَعُتْ* “If you do, I will do”, which displays a future time reference despite the perfect form of the verb (chapter 244, Derenbourg 1, 383/Hārūn 3, 55). More on the “lack of correspondence” between tense-forms and time-reference-meanings can be found in Owens, *Foundations*, 234–5 (Sibawayhi is not mentioned). One
can express either a past or a future time reference “I inevitably [-perfect] sat in your company/will sit in your company[-imperfect]”, but it is inferred that ما عدوت أن جالستك can only refer to the past (I keep to the verb جالس “to sit in one’s company” above for the purpose of uniformity; see next excerpt):

وتنقول ما عدوت أن آتيك أي ما عدوت أن يكون هذا من رأي فيما أستقبل [sic.] وبوجود إن يجِّعل أفعَّل في موضع فعلت ولا يجوز فعلت في موضع أفعَّل [sic.]

When you say I am not failing[-perfect] to visit you[-imperfect] you mean inevitably this will happen according to what I expect will occur [i.e. time reference = future], and the imperfect [ātiyaka] can be placed in the position of the perfect [i.e. mā ‘adawtu an ātiyaka = mā ‘adawtu an ataytuka = past time reference] but the perfect [ataytuka] cannot be placed in the position of the imperfect [i.e. mā ‘adawtu an ataytuka in the ‘future’ sense is inadmissible].65

It is because Sibawayhi identifies a double sense in ما عدوت أن آتيك that he moves on to ‘experiment’ with ما عدو أن جالستك (عدها-imperfect). Here, however, the former can only refer to the past and the latter can only refer to the future:

وتنقول والله ما عدوت أن جالستك أي أن كنت فعلت ذلك أي ما أجاز زجالستك فيما مضى ولو أراد ما عدوت أن جالستك غداً كان محالَا ونقضَا كما أنه لو قال ما عدو أن جالستك أسَّم كان محالا

You say: By God I did not fail[-imperfect] to sit in your company[-perfect], meaning I had done that, i.e. I am not overlooking my sitting in your company in the past; and if he means It is inevitable that I sit in your company[-perfect] tomorrow [i.e. in the sense of ‘future’], it is ungrammatical and a contradiction, just as if he were to say It is inevitable that I sit in your company[-imperfect] yesterday [i.e. in the sense of ‘past’], it is ungrammatical.66

The sole purpose of expressing the adverbials أمس “yesterday” and غدا “tomorrow” here (or ما قبل “before/in the past” and فيما أستقبل “that which I anticipate [to come]”) is to signal the time reference; viz. the sense of

65 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 244. Derenbourg 1, 383/Hārūn 3, 55.
66 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 383/Hārūn 3, 55.
past and future, respectively.67 Once again, adducing the ungrammatical sentences has to do with exhausting all possibilities in the construction, especially as one encounters a single time reference being expressed by two different verb forms (past) and conversely, two time references being expressed by one and the same verb form (either past or future).68 We may summarize the conjugations that Sibawayhi exhausts in the following table:69

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(imperfect)</th>
<th>(perfect)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>grammatical</strong> ← (F)</td>
<td><strong>grammatical</strong> ← (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ما أعدوت أن جالستك</td>
<td>تقول: ما أعدوت أن أجالستك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ungrammatical</strong> ← (P)</td>
<td><strong>grammatical</strong> ← (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ما أعدو أن أجالستك</td>
<td>يجوز: ما أعدو أن أجالستك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>grammatical</strong> ← (P)</td>
<td><strong>grammatical</strong> ← (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ما أعدو أن جالستك</td>
<td>تقول: ما أعدو أن جالستك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ungrammatical</strong> ← (F)</td>
<td><strong>ungrammatical</strong> ← (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ما أعدو أن جالستك</td>
<td>لا يجوز: ما أعدو أن جالستك</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That Sibawayhi’s purpose here is pedagogical is evident from his concluding remark: "I am only mentioning this [to you] because of its [the mā ʾadawta ʾan faʿalta—construction] versatile ways and meanings and lest you find some grammatical [form] of it ungrammatical, for it is a con-

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67 For the use of mā ʾadawta as a “non-terminological reference to the future tense” in al-Ḥalil’s Kitāb al-ʿAyn, see R. Talmon, Arabic Grammar in its Formative Age: Kitāb al-ʿAyn and its Attribution to al-Ḥalil b. Ahmad (Leiden, New York: Brill, 1997), 155 (under the sub-heading “Tenses”).

68 Cf. the chapter in the Risāla titled باب اللفظ لمعاني “Wording vis-à-vis meaning” dealing with synonymy and homonymy; Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 4, Derenbourg 1, 6–7/ Hārin 1, 24 (his examples are limited to single words, but by extension synonymy and homonymy can reside on the sentence-level, as in the case above).

69 Key: P=past time reference; F=future time reference. I specify in parentheses the expression used by Sibawayhi to mark the sentence; if Sibawayhi precedes the sentence with ʾadawta “you say”, we take it as a ‘marker’ of grammaticality. I am keeping with the verb جالس for the sake of uniformity. The ‘unmarked’ forms with which Sibawayhi opens the discussion are لما أعدو أن فعلت and لما أعدوت أن فعلت. It is inferred that the former has a past time reference and that the latter has a future time reference.
struction that people use”70 (cf. above, دَكَرُ مَا ذُكِّرَ هَذَا لِتَعْرِفُ مَا يُجَالُ مَنِهِ وَما يُخْصِنُ). In other words, due to the “versatile” behaviour of the construction at hand, the reader may not identify the ungrammatical sentences as such; indeed, he may not at all be aware of the significations of the construction’s various forms.

Another example that we may characterize as pedagogically-oriented has not to do with correct use of tense but with correct use of mood. It is discussed under the chapter dealing with the particle حَتَّى “until; so that; such that; even” involving two agents; i.e. cases in which the agent of the verb preceding حَتَّى differs from the agent of the verb following it.71 After presenting the properties of this construction, Sībawayhi disallows the independent حَتَّى*I travelled such that I entered[-independent] it and that the sun would rise[-independent]* on account of that fact that “your travelling does not cause the sun’s rising”.72 Conversely, the dependent حَتَّى“I travelled such that I entered[-independent] it and the sun rose[-dependent]” is also disallowed (مَال) “unless you assign the dependent mood [nasb] to the verb preceding the conjunction [i.e. أَدْخَلْنَا], for the presence of the conjunction demands that both verbs share the same mood marker.73 The only acceptable (يَجْعَلُ) form would be to utter an additional حَتَّى“I travelled until the sun rose[-dependent] and such that I entered[-independent] it”.74

As in the previous muḥāl examples, here too one might assume that the reader is not necessarily familiar with the workings of the grammatical construction at hand and may not recognize the sentences as ungrammatical. What is more revealing about this case, however, is that the first

70 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 244, Derenbourg 1, 383–4/Hārūn 3, 56.
71 “that in which the action is [carried out] by two [agents];” Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 240, Derenbourg 1, 371/Hārūn 3, 25.
72 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 372/Hārūn 3, 26–7. This complies with the previously defined rule regarding this construction (حَتَّى involving two agents), according to which the independent mood (رَفِ) in the verb following حَتَّى implies that the agent of that verb is the cause (سُبُبُ يُؤْدِيْهِ) for the action expressed in the verb preceding حَتَّى (Derenbourg 1, 371/Hārūn 3, 25). This construction has bearings on the Ḥiǧāzī reading of Q 2:214 يَوْلُوْلَا حَتَّى يَقُولُ اَلْرَسُوْلُ “They were shaken so that the Prophet would say[-independent]” (rather than حَتَّى يَقُولُ “until the Prophet said[-independent]”). Constructions that deal with the verbal mood following حَتَّى—not involving two agents—are treated in this volume by Arik Sadan.
73 Sībawayhi Kitāb chapter 240, Derenbourg 1, 372/Hārūn 3, 26–7.
74 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 372/Hārūn 3, 27.
disallowed sentence, explained in pure semantic (or logical) terms, is
tagged primarily as lā yajūzu (in addition to muḥāl), whereas the second
disallowed sentence, explained in pure ‘formal’ terms (rafʿ-naṣb discrep-
ancy between the two verbs) is tagged solely as muḥāl. This would support
the hypothesis put forth in this paper, according to which Sibawayhi’s
iḥāla refers primarily to syntactic ungrammaticality (however multi-
faceted).

To recapitulate this section: when Sibawayhi adduces a muḥāl-marked
sentence to fulfil an explanatory and descriptive function, i.e. for peda-
gogical purposes, he usually does so out of a highly systematic tendency
to exhaust all linguistic possibilities pertaining to the grammatical con-
struction at hand. The following table may be given as one last example
that neatly reflects this tendency (the sentences are discussed under the
chapter dealing with multiple adjectives, here badal ‘substitution’, sharing
the same case):75

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Structural Properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1  ما مررت برجلي صالح بل أطاج  → grammatical (<em>sentence is negative</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I did not pass by a good person but by a corrupt one”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  مررت برجلي صالح بل أطاج  → grammatical (sentence is affirmative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I passed by a good, rather, a corrupt person”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3  ما مررت برجلي صالح ولكن أطاج  → grammatical (sentence is negative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I did not pass by a good person but by a corrupt one”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4  مررت برجلي صالح ولكن طاج* → ungrammatical (muḥāl) (sentence is affirmative)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(“I passed by a good person but a corrupt one”)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is because both an affirmative and a negative sentence are adduced in
the case of بل “but; rather” that Sibawayhi exhausts the affirmative and

75 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 101, Derenbourg 1, 178/Hārūn 1, 421 ff. The table is
extracted from chapter 101, Derenbourg 1, 184/Hārūn 1, 434–5; emphases are mine. In all
four sentences the second adjective is the badal sharing its case with the first adjective.
The ungrammatical sentence (#4) is discussed in more detail—albeit in isolation from
the context in which it is adduced—in Carter, “An Arab Grammarian,” 149. In sentence
#2 the speaker retracts his words out of forgetfulness (على الغفل) or error (على النسيان); the
second adjective is nevertheless a badal.
the negative options with regards to و لكن “but”. The tendency to present ‘linguistic behaviours’ in patterns is strongly associated, to my mind, with pedagogical methodology.76

4. **MUHĀL-MARKED SENTENCES USED AS A THEORETICAL TOOL (DALĪL)**

A separate function that a *muḥāl*-marked sentence may fulfil is to provide evidence or proof (دَلِيل) for a grammatical rule that is defined by the grammarian (in the ‘classic’ cases we will find the stem ل.د. “to indicate, to prove” in Sibawayhi’s discussion, but it need not appear explicitly). This type of proof forms part of the *theoretical*, or *scientific* apparatus of the *Kitāb* albeit its pedagogical import should not be ignored. When adducing a *muḥāl*-marked sentence as proof, the reader must recognize it as inadmissible; indeed, Sibawayhi counts on this recognition, or judgment, in order for the proof to be effective. For the purpose of our discussion, we may refer to this identification on the part of the reader as a type of ‘grammaticality judgment’.77

Our first example concerns the understanding of the particle لْ “for; to; so that” in the archetypal جَتَّاكَ لَتُفَعَّلَ “I came to you so that you would do [*-dependent*] [such and such]” *not* as the cause of the dependent mood in the imperfect verb. According to Sibawayhi, the mood marker is the result of an implied أنَّ، and had we not understood جَتَّاكَ لَتُفَعَّلَ with an implied أنَّ, the sentence would be ungrammatical (muḥāl) as it would amount to uttering a verb after a preposition, the latter being the basic function of لْ. The reason for this stems from the previously defined rule according to which particles like لْ and حَتَّى can only exert effect on nouns, not

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76 Other cases which I would classify as fulfilling the pedagogical function are Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 103, Derenbourg 1, 186/Hārun 1, 439; chapter 141, Derenbourg 1, 255 (ll. 15–21)/Hārun 2, 169; chapter 145, Derenbourg 1, 259/Hārun 2, 177; chapter 224, Derenbourg 1, 353 (ll. 12–21)/Hārun 2, 405–6; chapter 241, Derenbourg 1, 372–3/Hārun 3, 28 (if one interprets ِتَشَهَّالا in the technical sense); chapter 254, Derenbourg 1, 403/Hārun 3, 102–3; chapter 270, Derenbourg 1, 420/Hārun 3, 143–4.

77 It should be made clear that as opposed to the modern understanding of ‘grammaticality judgments’, here it is Sibawayhi who is making the judgment and counting on the reader to corroborate it. We find a striking (coincidental) parallelism to Sibawayhi’s method of proof using a *muḥāl*-marked sentence in al- Faction’s (d. 339/950) *al-Alfāẓ al-mustaʿmala fi al-manṭiq*, his introductory work to logic. Termed قَوْلٌ بَاطِلٌ “invalid statement”, al-Farabī’s ungrammatical sentence is adduced in order to prove certain semantic properties of philosophically-loaded particles such as ما “what”; see Abū Naṣr al-Farabī, *al-Alfāẓ al-mustaʿmala fi al-manṭiq*, ed. M. Mahdī (Beirut: Dār al-Mašriq, 1986), 48–53.
verbs: and I have not understood an implicit [‘an] the utterance would have been ungrammatical because li- and hattâ exert [grammatical] effect only on nouns.78 Of course, another approach would simply be to grant ل the power of amal ‘grammatical effect’ when it comes to verbs as well, but that would go against the defined rule.79 In fact, were someone to understand ل as definite 

This method of justification (and for that matter, the previous method of description and explanation) need not be limited to ungrammatical sentences marked as muhāl. The next example exhibits an explicit use of the stem ل. But with respect to an ungrammatical sentence tagged لّ ياجْزُ (and only later as muhāl). The ungrammatical رَبّ رجلٍ وزيدٍ* “many a person and Zayd(-definite)” is adduced as proof to the indefiniteness of وأخيه “and his brother” in رِبّ رجلٍ وأخيه “many a person and his brother”, where أحمد has the definite form of the idāfa ‘annexation’.80 Adducing a clearly definite noun like Zayd annuls the possibility of understanding أحمد as definite: 

ويني لَك على أنَّها نكرة أن لا يجوز لك أن تقول رِبّ رجلٍ وزيدٍ أحمد 

“That which proves to you that it [أحِي] is indefinite [in this construction] is that you cannot say *Many a person and Zayd*.81 It is a few lines later that Sibawayhi states that uttering أحمد the definite form of Zayd(.line 118) would be muhāl, or ungrammatical. But the reiteration of the ungrammatical sense of “many a person and his brother”—this time marked muhāl—only comes as a concluding remark that reaffirms the principle stated earlier regarding the indefinite expression that ‘looks’ definite in the construction at hand.83

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78 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 234, Denerbourg 1, 362/Hârûn 3, 6.
79 For an elaborate discussion on this issue see Baalbaki, Legacy, 76–7, 138–9. Baalbaki too states that “the most obvious alternative of this interpretation would be to ascribe the subjunctive to particles like ل (p. 139).
80 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 112, Denerbourg 1, 209/Hârûn 2, 55.
81 Ibid., Denerbourg 1, 209/Hârûn 2, 55.
82 The term ‘identifiability’ is adopted from Lyons and Lambrecht by Marogy (Kitāb Sibawayhi, 95–123).
83 This principle is restated after adducing the saying of “one of the Bedouins”, كلُ شَأْوَاء وثُنِّيَّـِـهِ “every ewe and its lamb-[idāfa]” (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 112, Denerbourg 1, 209/ Hârûn 2, 55).
One of the more famous examples of a muḥāl occurrence is replying “no” to the disjunctive question “Is Zayd at your place or Bišr?”\textsuperscript{84} Admittedly, Sibawayhi’s point here is not to explain why answering “no” to a disjunctive question yields no communicative meaning (which indeed it does not); his point is to prove that the particle ʿām “or” has the sense of an alternative conjunction and is equivalent to “which one of them/which of the two”. It is in this context that Sibawayhi asserts,

والدليل على أن قولك أزيد عندك أم عمرو بمشزلة أنك لو قلت أزيد عندك أنك لا كان سالباً أبداً فإذا كان أنك لو قلت لا فقد أحل

The proof that your saying Is Zayd at your place or [am] Bišr is equivalent to [lit. has the status of] Which of the two is at your place is that had you said Is Zayd at your place or Bišr and the one being asked had answered No, it would have been ungrammatical just as had he said Which one of the two is at your place and the [one being asked] had said No, he would have uttered an ungrammatical sentence.\textsuperscript{85}

Making the point that ʿām has the sense of an alternative conjunction is important for the following chapter that deals with the ‘non-alternative’ sense of ʿām (termed munqatī’a ‘disconnective’), an issue pertinent to Sibawayhi’s analysis of certain Qur’ānic verses.\textsuperscript{86} Interestingly, here too Sibawayhi sets out to prove status of ʿām, and he does so by adducing both (a) an ungrammatical sentence tagged by the muḥāl-corresponding ʿām ʿālam “unsound, incorrect, ungrammatical” (based on the same ‘grammaticality test’ Sibawayhi preformed on the ‘alternative’ ʿām), and (b) a grammatical sentence that exhibits the disconnective sense of ʿām in an unambiguous manner:

هذا باب ʿām منقطعة وذلك قولك أعمرو عندك أم عندك زيد فهو ليس بمشزلة أنك عندك ألا ترى أنك لو قلت أنك لم يستمر إلا على التكرر والتواذع، وقد أطلق على أن هذا الآخر منقطع من الأول قول الرجل إنها لأبًء أبداً. ʿام شيء ياقوم


\textsuperscript{85} Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 278, Derenbourg 1, 432/Hārūn 3, 169.

\textsuperscript{86} E.g. Q 32.3: “[The sending down of the book wherein no doubt is from the Lord of the worlds] Or/ and yet they say He has invented it”. See Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 279, Derenbourg 1, 433/Hārūn 3, 171 ff.
This is the chapter on *am* [when it is] disconnected [from the preceding words]. That is your saying *Is 'Amr at your place or rather is Zayd at your place* [exhibiting two independent *'indaka*] and it is not equivalent to *Which of the two is at your place*; don't you see that had you said *'ayyuhumā 'indaka 'indaka* [based on the 'grammaticality test' of the preceding chapter] it would not have been grammatical unless [it was] by way of repetition and emphasis. That which proves to you that this last [*am*] is disconnected from the beginning is the person's saying *They are camels, rather sheep O my kin.*

One might quibble over the strength of his *lam yastaqīm*–example, but the adducing of a grammatical utterance exhibiting *'am* in a declarative sentence (rather than an interrogative one) indeed strengthens his point regarding its disconnective character. What matters for our purposes is that Sibawayhi (very much like modern linguists) realizes the effectiveness grammaticality judgments have in scientific theory and utilizes them to the full.

Our next example concerns the protasis of a conditional sentence that contains two verbs separated by a conjunction (like *وَمِنْ* “then”, وَ “and”, فَ “and; then”). Sibawayhi discusses this construction vis-à-vis the protasis that contains two verbs *not* separated by a conjunction. The theory Sibawayhi sets out to prove is that when the two verbs are separated by a conjunction, the second verb must ‘share’ its mood with the first and thus be assigned the apocopate (*jazm*) rather than the independent mood. Thus: “If you come to me[-apocopate] and ask me[-apocopate], I will give you [-apocopate],” and not *إنَّكُمَا وَساَلَتُكُمَا أَعَطْنا* “If you come to me and ask me[-independent], I will give you”. Sibawayhi proves his case (even though the stem د.ل.ل is absent) by stating that if one were to say *إِنِّي أَتَأْنِئُ وَتَسَأَلُ أَعَطْنا* "whenever you come to him and coming at dark", the sequence would be *muḥāl*. In order to understand this ‘proof’,

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87 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 433/Hārūn 3, 172 (note the slightly alternative reading in Hārūn).
88 Sibawayhi’s method of adducing grammatical sentences as proof (in addition to ungrammatical ones) could well occupy a separate paper; we shall therefore limit ourselves to the brief remarks above.
90 The chapter is titled ما يَرْفَعْ بَيْنَ الْأَرْمَامِ وَيَبْرِمْ بَيْنَهُمَا "that [verb] which is assigned the independent mood between two apocopate [verbs; i.e. between the verb in the protasis and that in the apodosis] and that which is assigned the apocopate between the two"; Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 253, Derenbourg 1, 395/Hārūn 3, 85.
91 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 396–7/Hārūn 3, 87–8.
92 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 397/Hārūn 3, 88.
we must look at the beginning of the chapter where “if you come to me asking me[-independent verb; no conjunction]” is equated with “if you come to me asking[-active participle]” exhibiting a clear case of ḥāl ‘circumstantial qualifier’. This ‘equation’ is conveyed by the expressions اُرْتُدَ أنْ تَتْقُول “you intended/meant to say”, “the place/function of […]” and “if he said”. The same equation is made in the case of مَيْتِي أَنْ تَتْعَشُ “whenever you come to him at dark [-independent]”, taken from a line by the poet al-Ḥuṭay’a (d. after 41/661). We may demonstrate the ‘process’ of proof in the following stages:

1. Stage #1: equating verb[-independent mood] with participle
   مَيْتِي أَنْ تَتْعَشُ = مَيْتِي أَنْ تَعَاشِي

2. Stage #2: adding conjunction to the new sentence exhibiting participle
   مَيْتِي أَنْ تَتْعَشُ → muḥāl (the reader instinctively identifies it as ungrammatical)

3. Stage #3 (not stated explicitly): going back from participle to independent verb
   مَيْتِي أَنْ تَتْعَشُ → ungrammatical

4. Stage #4 (conclusion; not stated explicitly): the verb must be in the apocopate form
   مَيْتِي أَنْ تَتْعَشُ → grammatical

Since Sibawayhi sees the independent verb as fulfilling the ‘place’, or function of (what we may call) ḥāl, he adduces the ‘unmarked’ ḥāl equivalent in the form of the participle (سَلَاتِلَاءَ عَاشِيَاءِ) in order to make his point, just as he adduced the more ‘pronounced’ definite noun “Zayd”, instead of the seemingly definite “his brother” (see above). Sibawayhi resorts to the most obvious (or least ‘marked’) case in order to be sure that the

93 I am using the term ḥāl here for the sake of simplicity. Sibawayhi does not refer to the dependent active participle here by the term ḥāl; all he does is say that the meaning of the sentence with the independent verb is that of the sentence with the participle, or that they occupy the same place/function. For أُرْتُدَ أنْ تَتْقُول see Derenbourg 1, 396/Hārūn 3, 85; for مَيْتِي أَنْ تَتْعَشُ see Derenbourg 1, 397/Hārūn 3, 88.

94 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 395–6, 397/Hārūn 3, 85–6, 88. The full poetic line is (in the ṭawīl meter): مَيْتِي أَنْ تَتْعَشُ إلى ضوء نَارِ "whenever you [as a nightly guest] come to him at dark seeking light from his fire [because of his generosity], you will find that the best fire in it is the best kindler [of the fire; i.e. the praised one]” (see Hārūn 3, 86, n. 2 and Ibn Manẓūr, Lisān 4, 2960 on the meaning of عَشَا إِلَى آلِ النَّار).

95 Once again, Sibawayhi does not use the term ḥāl in the discussion; see n. 93.
reader identifies his hypothetical sentence as ungrammatical; otherwise, his proof is ineffective.

We shall devote the rest of the section to additional examples of the method of justification and proof through the use of muḥāl-marked sentences. For the sake of brevity, I will summarize the ‘theory’ in question, followed by the ‘proof’. Some of the arguments are circular, others may be less convincing; they are nevertheless based on the assumption that one’s recognition of an ungrammatical sentence can play an important—and intuitive—role in the process of persuasion.96

Theory: The ending لَن (second person suffix) in “slowly, take it easy” can, in certain contexts, be a mark of emphasis and not a personal pronoun. Proof: If it were a personal pronoun (i.e. an ism ‘noun’), the utterance المُنِىَّتَنَّاكَ “make [your] escape” would have been muḥāl, as the first term of the iḍāfa cannot contain the definite article.97

Theory: When the particle إِلَّا “except” follows a word belonging to the category of words that can take a suffixed object pronoun (such as verbs or إنَّ “indeed” and its ‘sisters’), the independent object pronoun must be used and it cannot be suffixed: “I did not see [anyone] but you”. Proof: the exceptive particle إِلَّا does not pass the “postposing test” (تأخير) that applies to constituents like adverbials or the subject of the sentence, i.e. postposing the component that comes between the verb إنَّ and the independent إِلَّا (Sibawayhi seems to be positing it as a ‘historical’ process): إنَّ إِياكَ فيها → إنَّ إِياكَ فيها (after postposing) → ضرب إِياكَ زيد “indeed you are there in it”; ضرب زيد → ضرب إِياكَ زيد (after postposing) → “Zayd hit him”. Conversely, if one were to postpone ما رأيت إِلَّا إِياكَ إِنَّا → ما رأيت إِلَّا إِياكَ إِنَّا, the sequence (kalām) would be muḥāl (i.e. ما رأيت إِلَّا إِياكَ إِنَّا).98

Theory: When relative pronouns like مَنْ “whoever” and ما “whatever” are preceded by إنَّ “indeed” or كان “was”, they lose their conditional character; viz. إنَّ مَنْ يَأْتِي آتِه. “Indeed whoever comes[-independent] to me I will

96 Notice that in several cases the sentence is counterfactually being tagged as muḥāl: “Had not P, then X [a grammatical sentence] would have been muḥāl” (versus the usual “The proof that P is that X [an ungrammatical sentence] is muḥāl”).
97 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 48, Derenbourg 1, 103–4/Hārūn 1, 244–5. Sibawayhi specifies the contexts in which the لَن suffix would have the function of a personal pronoun and the context in which it would not.
98 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 208, Derenbourg 1, 334/Hārūn 2, 361–2. One could take the discussion to mean that the exceptive إِلَّا itself does not belong to the category of words taking a suffixed pronoun, but that would be inconsistent with Sibawayhi’s reasoning of why it does not belong there.
come[-independent] to him" rather than إن من يأتि آنَهِ exhibiting the apocopate verbs. Proof: Uttering الحدِّر الخَدْرَ “indeed if/whenever” would be muhāl (إن “if” and mulheres “whenever” exhibit a more ‘pronounced’ conditional sense than or just as “Zayd” exhibited a more pronounced sense of definiteness than than Zayd had been with us, we would have been defeated”.

Theory: In sentences like لو كان معنا رجلًا إذا زيدْ لُغلِبنا “If any man other than Zayd had been with us, we would have been defeated”, لُكِنِّي acts as an adjective (wasf) equivalent to “as, like” and “other than”. Proof: Had one said (removing the term before لو كان معنا إلا زيدْ لُهِكَ (إلا “if [anyone] other than Zayd had been with us, we would have perished” and intended the ‘exceptive’ sense (istiṯnā`a) of إلا, he would have uttered an ungrammatical sentence (ahalta).

Theory: One cannot utter the implied verb إنْ إلَّا إلَّا لطيف لطيف “take upon yourself” that is understood to be the cause of the dependent mood in warning exclamations like عليكَ الحَدِّر المَحْدِر “be careful” (or to utter “upon yourself” in the case of get away, save yourself”) because these exclamations have the status of the imperative (سَمِّعْلَةً أَفْعَلْ). Proof: Uttering إنْ إلَّا عليكَ أَفْعَلْ or “(take it) upon yourself do!” is muhāl (i.e. just as إنْ إلَّا cannot be uttered before an imperative verb, likewise they cannot be uttered before a warning exclamation).

Conclusion: iḥāla vis-à-vis naqḍ

Looking back at Sibawayhi’s quasi-definition of muhāl, namely أَنْ تَنْقَضُ أُوْلی “contradicting the beginning of your utterance with its end” (see §1), it is perhaps surprising to find that the collocation of and “contradiction” occurs only twice in the Kitāb (excluding bāb al-istiqāma; these are in fact the only instances of the maṣdar ‘verbal noun’ of the

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99 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 247, Derenbourg 1, 390/Hārūn 3, 71–2.
100 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 194, Derenbourg 1, 322–3/Hārūn 2, 331.
101 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 54, Derenbourg 1, 117/Hārūn 1, 275–6. For additional examples of ungrammatical sentences adduced as a dalil ‘proof’ see n. 49. For examples of ungrammatical sentences adduced as a proof but tagged lam yastaqim/la yastaqīm see Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 33, Derenbourg 1, 58/Hārūn 1, 138 (notice the word دِلْيَل); chapter 33, Derenbourg 1, 59/Hārūn 1, 141 (.. لا تَرَى “don’t you see […]”); chapter 219, Derenbourg 1, 346/Hārūn 2, 389 (وَيْلُكَ عَلَى أنْ .. “and woe to you […]”); chapter 221, Derenbourg 1, 349–50/Hārūn 2, 397 (كَيْفَ يَقُوي [that which strengthens […]”); chapter 239, Derenbourg 1, 371/Hārūn 3, 24–5.
One instance involves incorrect use of tense (in the māʿ ‘adawta ‘an faʿalā–construction) similar to the archetypal muḥāl sentences (see relevant quotation and discussion in §3). The second instance involves the noun-like particle كَمْ (နင်သော်) “how many” in the impermissible sequence كَمْ لا رجلًا ولا رجلان (بِغٌرَأْمَة) lit. “how many not one person [-dependent] nor two[-dependent]”, in which uttering the constituent after كَمْ as the “explanation of the number” (تفسير العدد, i.e. the noun being counted) “would be ungrammatical and a contradiction”. The wording in both instances, namely كَمْ لا رجلًا ولا رجلان, suggests a difference between the two terms. Indeed, following the occurrences of the verb نقَضَ in the Kitāb reveals that it is in fact this term that is associated with the logical/semantic dimension of the utterance: the vast majority of occurrences exhibit the term ما نَا ‘meaning, intention’ as the verb’s direct object—bringing us directly to the realm of the speaker’s intention or the purpose of the utterance. The expression usually occurs in the negation, لم ينقض معنى “does not contradict [any] meaning”.

102 Troupeau, Lexique, 205 (I am excluding Derenbourg 1, 9 [l. 12] which has the alternative reading نقَضَ). The verb نقَضَ, on the other hand, appears 27 times besides its occurrence in بَابِ الْإِسْتِقَامَة (Troupeau, Lexique, 205; note that Derenbourg 1, 144 [l. 3] should read 145 [l. 3]).

103 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 244, Derenbourg 1, 383 (l. 21)/Ḥārūn 3, 55.

104 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 141, Derenbourg 1, 255/Ḥārūn 2, 168. More precisely, the impermissible sentence is adduced in order to explain the sentence كَمْ قد أتاني لا رجل ولا رجلان “How many [people] came to me, not one person[-independent] nor two[-independent]”; here, Sībawayhi says, كَمْ (whose predicate is قد أتاني “came to me”) and not of the counted noun—hence its independent mood—otherwise the sentence would be ungrammatical and a contradiction. One could classify this case within the dalāl function of muḥāl-marked sentences.

105 This reflects Carter’s understanding of the term ما نَا in the Kitāb as cited in K. Versteegh, “The Arabic Tradition,” in The Emergence of Semantics in Four Linguistic Traditions, eds. W. van Bekkum, J. Houben, I. Sluiter and K. Versteegh (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1997), 242–3. Versteegh concedes that ما نَا may refer to the “purpose of speech” but states that in most cases, “ما نَا denotes the syntactic function of a word or category” (p. 243). This is not the place to open up the question of ما نَا in the Kitāb, but at least in the case of نقَضَ المعنى “to contradict the [meaning of] negation”, see following note), I think Carter’s understanding is appropriate. I would like to thank Almog Kasher for referring me to Versteegh’s discussion of ما نَا in the Kitāb.

106 Other variants include لم ينقض ما تَرِد “does not contradict what you intend/mean” (Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 196, Derenbourg 1, 325/Ḥārūn 3, 338), لم ينقض الحديث “does not contradict the speech/purpose of speech that you intend” (chapter 37, Derenbourg 1, 74/Ḥārūn 1, 174; chapter 59, Derenbourg 1, 127/Ḥārūn 1, 303), لم ينقض معنى “does not contradict the meaning/purpose that they intended had they uttered…” (chapter 208, Derenbourg 1, 334/Ḥārūn 2, 361), and لم ينقض ما كَتَبَ به “you contradict what you uttered” (chapter 75, Derenbourg 1, 151/Ḥārūn 1, 361). All but three of the
The ‘technical’ expression lam yanquḍ ma’nān (and its like) is typically employed by Sibawayhi in order to justify certain syntactic operations on the grounds that they do not contradict the purpose/intention of the utterance. Conversely, muḥāl-marked sentences typically do not revolve around the intention of the speaker (though this question is always in the background of Sibawayhi’s analyses) but rather around the ‘formal’ correctness of the sentence. Put differently, if at all a contradiction is implied by muḥāl-marked sentences, its basis is formal: adding a preposition to verb, incorrect use of tense (i.e. the form faʿaltu vs. the form afʿalu), inconsistent case/mood markers (i.e. the form -u vs. the form -a or ø), indefinite vs. definite words (vis-à-vis their form), and the like.

In light of the fact that Sibawayhi’s actual employment of muḥāl typically lacks the explicit naqḍ dimension, we are once again confronted with the ‘extraneousness’ of his bāb al-istiqāma (cf. the moot kaḍīb). Carter concedes that many of the notions appearing in the Risāla may have been taken from the teachings of the nahwīyyūn.107 The speech-soundness classification could in fact be one of these notions, especially as we find another predecessor of Sibawayhi treating the issue, namely al-Halil (as recorded by Ibn Manẓūr, see §1). As I hope this study has shown, the main issue concerning muḥāl-marked sentences is not whether their incorrectness lies in a syntactic level or a semantic one, nor whether or not the sentences are nonsensical; in fact, many a time they can quite easily be deciphered by the listener.108 Rather, the picture that emerges from

27 instances of the verb تَقْصِيفَةَ (تَقْصِيفَة) in the Kitāb follow this pattern (again, usually exhibiting simply ma’nā as the direct object). In two instances (both in chapter 241, Derenbourg 1, 377–8/Hārūn 3, 40) it is a ‘type’ of ma’nā that is being contradicted, namely “negation” (تَقْصِيفَةَ التَّفْنِيق), or what Versteegh would call a ‘function of a word or category’ (Versteegh, Semantics, 242–3). One instance (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 119, Derenbourg 1, 220/Hārūn 2, 83) could be read as a ‘non-technical’ instance of the verb in that it does not refer to a specimen of language.

108 Notable examples of muḥāl sentences that could be understood by the listener include: * إنَّ من بِنِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﻓَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّ تأْمُّي وَتَسْأُمْيَ أَعْمَالُكَ (إنَّ تأْمُّي وَتَسْأُمْيَ أَعْمَالُكَ) “indeed whoever comes to me I will come to him” (verbs should be in the independent mood, not the apocopate; see §4); * إنَّ تأْمُّي وَتَسْأُمْيَ أَعْمَالُكَ “if you come to me and ask me I will give you” (second verb should be in the apocopate, not independent; see §4); * "سرت حتي أدخلها وتطلع الشمس" (سرت حتي أدخلها وتطلع الشمس) “I travelled such that I entered it and [until] the sun rose” (the imperfect verb “to rise” cannot be in the dependent mood but must follow an additional conjunction; see §3); * “قد قَالَ الْقَومُ حَتِيَّةَ أَنَّ رَيْدًا يَقْفُوُهُ (كَيْفَ قَالَ الْقَومُ حَتِيَّةَ أَنَّ رَيْدًا يَقْفُوُهُ) "The people have said it [such that] even Zayd is saying it” (wrong conjunction: should be: see Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 270, Derenbourg 1, 420/Hārūn 3, 143–4 and Talmon, "Kalām," 89, n.50); or answering "two slaves" to the question "كم عبداً لك".العديد–
analyzing the *muḥāl* instances shows a deliberate and consistent use of ungrammatical sentences on the part of Sibawayhi for the purposes of pedagogy and/or theory (§3, §4). When pedagogy comes into play, the ungrammatical sentence is adduced as a way of ‘mapping out’ all linguistic possibilities pertaining to a certain construction, thus making clear the ‘limits’ of that construction; the reader would not necessarily identify the sequence as ungrammatical. When theory comes into play, the ungrammatical sentence is used as a scientific tool to prove a previously-defined grammatical rule; in order for the proof to be effective, the reader must identify the sequence as ungrammatical.

The term *muḥāl*, which in its original lexical meaning is language-bound and thus intrinsically implies ‘speech’ (§1), is not the only expression used by Sibawayhi to mark ungrammatical sentences. Other such expressions in the *Kitāb* include ُلم يَسْتَمَ “is not sound/correct”, َلا يَجْوَزَ “is not permissible”, َلا تَتْوَل “you do not say” and َلا كَانَ “is not a [valid] utterance”, some of which we came across in this paper. In fact, and pending on further research, it would seem that the only thing distinguishing these ungrammatical sequences from those tagged *muḥāl*—is rhetorical effect.

References

Primary Sources


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109 For *lā taqūlu*-sentences see e.g. Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 141, Derenbourg 1, 251/Hārūn 2, 169. For *lā yakūnu kalāman*-sentences see e.g. chapter 2, Derenbourg 1, 2/Hārūn 1, 14; chapter 19, Derenbourg 1, 23/Hārūn 1, 16 (notice the clear *dalīl* function in both cases. I thank Mohsen Goudarzi for the latter reference) and also Talmon, “Kalām,” 83. For *lam yastaqīm*-sentences see §4 and n. 101. Instances of *lā yajūzu*-sentences have been discussed throughout the paper; notably, the verb ُجَارِ in its negated form appears 440 times in the *Kitāb* (Troupeau, *Lexique, 63*, though not all instances need be ‘tags’ referring to sentences).


Secondary Sources


The purpose of this article is to explore a semantic field rarely developed in modern Arabic linguistic studies, the relationship between language and space. One finds very early, in the Kitāb and even before, structured analysis of the way linguistic entities express different spatial values in Arabic. These relations are typically locatives as al-iḥtiwāʾ “containment”, which is represented by fī “in”, or al-istiʿlāʾ, “superimposition”, which is expressed by ʿalā, “on”. But they can also be directional—laying stress on a trajectory description—with one of the following two values: al-ibtidāʾ “beginning”, and al-intihāʾ “end”, activated by min “from” and ʾilā “to”.

I will here examine the semantic structure of fī with the aim of describing its spatial configuration as it has been developed in the Kitāb. As regards the specificities of his approach, I will first discuss a very short

1 Among the rare studies on the question of the spatial meaning of the prepositions in Arabic, one can cite the study of K.R. Lentzner, Semantic and Syntactic Aspects of Arabic Prepositions (Michigan: University of Texas, 1980).
3 In a book which is commonly attributed to al-Ḥalīl, one finds a spatial analysis of ḥattā (p. 204–205) dealing with the question of the boundaries of ḥattā, which is a key point in trajectory definition, in the famous example: اَكْتَبَ السُّمَّةُ حَتَّى رَأَسَهَا رأَسِهَا. “I ate the fish up to its head” (al-Ḫalīl, al-Jumal fī al-Naḥw [Beirut: Mu’assasat ar-Risāla], 1995).
text of Sibawayhi without considering any predefined analysis. Then, I will try to infer, from other examples and commentaries which I will comment on, the underlying structure that governs the spatial value of the preposition. Starting from the analysis later grammarians gave of his text, one can confirm that this approach has been universally valued by them. They developed a theory of the spatiality of the preposition by extending the perimeter of contexts in which the preposition could be used and giving a list of the parameters required for the definition of the semantic structure. So what are the distinctive features of Sibawayhi’s approach to the spatiality of fī? What are the main parameters required to realize its semantic structure?

1. Terminology

In a very short passage on fī, Sibawayhi expresses a key notion which governed nearly everything he wrote about the spatial value of this preposition, which is al-wiʿāʾ, “the container”: “Concerning fī, it expresses the meaning of the container, al-wiʿāʾ.” Two observations have to be mentioned here. First, the term wiʿāʾ has been used in texts which are subsequent to al-Kitāb, by Ibn al-Sarrāj: al-Uṣul, by al-Zajjājī, Ḥurūf al-maʿāni, by Māliqī, Rašf al-mabānī and Maʿānī al-ṭurūf by al-Rummānī. However, other grammarians like Ibn Yaʾīš in Šarḥ al-mufaṣṣal, al-Astarābāḏī in Šarḥ al-kāfiya, Ibn Hišām in Muʿānī al-labīb and al-Zamahšārī in al-Mufaṣṣal, prefer another term, al-ẓarfiyya “the circumstance”. The term wiʿāʾ so far has been less common, if not rarely used in most of the recent grammatical literature—particularly in grammar books—where one finds it replaced by another term, which is more general and less precise, i.e., al-ẓarfiyya, and from which two sub-categories derive: al-ẓarfiyya al-makāniyya and al-ẓarfiyya al-zamāniyya.

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5 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 508, Derenbourg 2,335/Hārūn 4, 226.
10 Ibn Yaʾīš, Šarḥ al-mufaṣṣal (Beirut: Dār ṣādir, sd) 8, 20.
(spatial circumstance and temporal circumstance). They both have two kinds of realizations: al-ẓarfiyya al-haqīqīyya and al-ẓarfiyya al-majāzīyya.

2. Approach

Although Sibawayhi did not give any definition of the notion which under examination here or any further detail of its inner characteristics, Sibawayhi provided examples that reveal its distinctive properties. The concise text of the Kitāb explains that the spatial value of wī‘ā’ can be represented under two main ‘forms’ or ‘layers’, the first of which is actual wī‘ā’ or prototypical meaning of fī as in “It is in the jug”,14 هو في الجراب and “He is in his mother’s belly”.16 The other form or layer is analogical wī‘ā’ as in “He is in chains”,17 هو في الصلب and “He is in the mosque”18 and في الجامع “he is in the house”.19 One can assume, on the basis of texts which are subsequent to al-Kitāb, that the approach of Sibawayhi implicates, a third level, i.e., the figurative wī‘ā’, which he derives from the notion of ittisā’.

3. Analysis: Phrasal and Spatial Structure

Sibawayhi’s grammatical representation is first based on a binominal phrasal structure in which only the following three fundamental components of the spatial relation are mentioned: the content, the container and fī. This structure maintains the preposition as a major semantic governor of the sentence. The fact that Sibawayhi chose this structure for all the examples in his text implicitly reveals that his conception of the standard—and prototypical—spatial relation was of structural nature. This relation is dominated by the central position of the fī. ‘Syntactically’ (ʿāmil nawḥī), it is a major governor, and ‘semantically’ (ʿāmil dalālī), it determines the two spatial roles of the two other nouns, namely the container and the content.

The pre-prepositional noun, or the content, is always a personal pronoun, huwa “he, it”, a choice which is not arbitrary. Instead of revealing

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14 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 508, Derenbourg 2, 335/Hārūn 4, 226.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
the lexical identity of whatever content he could mention, Sībawayhi implicitly underlined that this position may be occupied by any lexical reference but must also be validated by the post-prepositional reference. In this second position, and contrary to the first one, the lexical identity of the noun is always realised (a jug, a bag, a belly, etc.). This tells us that, even if the lexical features are not required for giving the content a proper sense, they are mandatory for the sense of the container, which is the real *wiʿāʾ* or in other words the lexical realisation of the prepositional spatial value.

I am here assuming that if the grammatical definition and the lexical definition are both relevant to understanding the approach of Sībawayhi, each of them gives different weights to the targeted noun. What is fundamental for the container is its lexical characteristics, which in turn can define precisely its shape and offer a detailed view of either its geometrical or functional dimensions. As for the content, which is grammatically definite, *huwa*, “he, it”, it does not express any details of its inner characteristics despite having the possibility of being contextually definite. The single condition that has to be met is to match the geometric and functional dimensions of the container.20

Structurally speaking, the preposition maintains its central position between the two nominal blocks, confirming its relational function which is traditionally given to the class of particles in general and prepositions in particular.21 Semantically speaking, *fī* gives a bit of information (order or instruction) which is appropriate for designating the spatial function of the two nouns, namely the content and the container. This crucial information is essentially of prepositional nature, but it further needs some lexical confirmation—special features—from the post-prepositional noun—the container—as already seen above. This means that if the two nouns do not lexically describe the required spatial information, they are nonetheless considered, through the prepositional semantic instruction, as container and content.22

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20 It is possible to imagine, whatever difficult it may be in a standard relation of containment, a content which is bigger than its container. In the sentence “the tree is in the jug”, we can imagine that the biggest part of the content, the tree, is geometrically outside the dimensions of the container, the jug, but still remains functionally speaking in the jug.


22 The semantic roles of container and content are principally attributed by the preposition as a grammatical instruction. This means that, even if this information is confirmed by the lexicon, its role remains limited to the description of the outer characteristics of the content—distinctive features—without any attribution of semantic role. We will show
In what follows, three levels representing the notion of wi‘ā’, i.e., actual, analogical and metaphorical, are distinguished and dealt with in some detail. The point, here, is to expose the fundamental structure of Sibawayhi’s approach of spatial language in Arabic through his description of the semantic functioning of fī. Even if his text did not explicitly mention these levels, we presume that it is based on a structured approach with specific role and properties for each of its components. Moreover, Sibawayhi’s theory of prepositional space—not only with fī- is a key element in nearly all the analyses proposed by later grammarians.

4.1 The Actual wi‘ā’ or the Prototypical Spatial Form

The actual wi‘ā’ is both the prototypical form of the semantic value of the preposition and its most perceptible or realizable figure. By “prototypical form”, I mean a configuration that meets most of the conditions and parameters which are needed to represent a standard spatial relation of ihtīwā’ “containment”. By “most perceptible,” I mean an iconic representation which is illustrated by the nominal block in the first three examples given by Sibawayhi: The jug (al-jirāb), the bag (al-kīs.), the mother’s belly (baṭnu al-ʾummi).

These lexical entities are almost identical in their semantic, lexical and (specifically) geometric properties. Four main conditions are required for meeting an iconic wi‘ā’: a potbellied form, an upper opening, vacuity or three-dimensionality. These properties draw with accuracy the concept of a container in the Kitāb and inform us that, at this stage, the spatial relation is basically geometric as what determines the semantic information is the lexical content of the post-prepositional noun or the landmark. I make here a distinction between the iconic form drawn by the lexicon, where the wi‘ā’ is an independent structure having its own distinctive features, and the wi‘ā’ as a spatial relation between two nouns.

how, with later grammarians, the grammatical status of fī which is so firmly based on its spatial component, allows it to attribute the role of container to nouns that do not lexically have the status of wi‘ā’.

23 We will use in this article two appellations from the field of cognitive semantics (Miller and Johnson-Laird, 386) when dealing with spatial relations; Landmark, for the post-prepositional noun—or the place where the thing is localized—here the container. Target, for the pre-prepositional noun or the thing localized, here the content.
4.2  *The Analogical wiʿāʾ: Resemblance vs. Conformity*

The second level of spatial relation, which is represented in the *Kitāb* by the examples 4, 5 and 6, is also characterized by some new properties. On one hand, Sibawayhi maintains the same grammatical status for the pre-prepositional noun, whatever it may be, target or content. It is grammatically—and even contextually—definite, but lexically indefinite. We assume, on the basis of this choice, that (at this level too) mentioning the lexical identity of the content is not mandatory for it to properly represent the spatial relation. On the other hand, the landmark, or the receptacle, is lexically determined—and grammatically definite—and also put forward one main characteristic: it does not actually fit the content, because it is either smaller—as in example 4—or bigger—examples 5 and 6. In example 4, “the chains” do not actually contain “the prisoner”; they cover a very small part of his body instead. In examples 5 and 6, the target—personal pronoun/he—does not cover more space than a small part of the landmark—location/house or mosque—and does not cover the entire space described by it.

Thus, the second level, the analogical *wiʿāʾ*, is essentially characterized by the geometric differences between the two nominal blocks. Despite this geometric dissimilarity, Sibawayhi considers the spatial relation as valid and admits that the preposition is realizing its semantic value. He comments on this level as follows:

...وكذلك هو في الغل لأنه جعله إذا أدخله فيه كلاماً له وكذلك هو في القبة وهو في الدار...

Even in the sentence: “He is enchained”, *fi* realizes the meaning of *wiʿāʾ* because when "he chained him" [lit. 'enter him in the chain'], he makes it [the chain] as a container and this is the same way we can analyze the sentences: “He is in the mosque”, and: “He is in the house” . . .

The concept "like a container" in the text of Sibawayhi informs us that the prepositional spatial value is realized by ‘resemblance’, *(šabah)*—not by ‘conformity’, *(muṭābaqa)*—to the prototypical form, the actual *wiʿāʾ*.

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24 Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 508, Derenbourg 2, 335/Hārūn 4, 226.

25 In G. Ayoub “De ce qui ‘ne se dit pas’ dans le Livre de Sibawayhi: La Notion de *Tamṭīl*,” in *Studies in the History of Arabic Grammar II*, eds. K. Versteegh and M.G. Carter (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1996), 1–15, one finds an elaborated analysis of the different concepts which are activated by the notion of *šabah* and *tamṭīl* and the multiple connections resulting from their usage in the *Kitāb*. 
4.3 The Metaphoric or Abstract wi‘ā and the Notion of ‘ittisā'

Sībawayhi does not offer any example to illustrate this level; he limits his commentary to the following sentence instead: 

When you widen the discourse, it is [fī or the spatial relation] like this [the second level]. It is like an example which is used to be similar to something [clarify something] but it is not the same example.26

The following two interconnected notions may characterize this representational level of the spatial relation: al-ittisā‘ fi-l-kalām “discourse-widening” and al-mušābaha “resemblance”:

al-ittisā‘ fi-l-kalām “discourse-widening” directly concerns the usage of language and the linguistic behavior of the speaker.27 The widening of the usage of fī is also at the level of space: fī leaves the semantic core of the prepositional value—the tight perimeter of the prototypical level—and moves further, thus implicating new contextual elements. And because of the infinite number of examples and situations in which fī can be used, Sībawayhi did not propose, here, any example to put forward the open character of this category.

The second property of al-mušābaha “resemblance” remains connected to the semantic category as a whole, wi‘ā’, so that the widening of the usage of fī does not have to disconnect it as completely from the standard form. The phrasal illustration of this level is put forward by another grammarian, Ibn al-Sarrāj, who gives two examples: في فلان عيب "Somebody has a flaw"28 هو في عنوان شابه "He is full of youth".29

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26 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 508, Derenbourg 2, 335/Hārūn 4, 226.
27 This notion which is also called “sa’at l-kalām” has multiple meanings that heavily depend on the domain in which it is used. For Versteegh it is closely related to the freedom of the speaker and is found in a special network of concepts like al-haḍf “omission”, al-iḥtisār “brevity”, al-taṣarruf “flexibility”, al-taqdīr “implication” or the couple ḥaqīqī “real” and majāzī “figurative” (K. Versteegh, ‘Freedom of the Speaker: The Term ittisā‘ and Related Notions in Arabic,” in Studies in the History of Arabic Grammar II, eds. K. Versteegh and M.G. Carter [Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1990], 282–5). In this study, what is particularly interesting is the wider meaning of this notion which pertains essentially to the speaker’s transgression of the strict usage of the preposition. This transgression enables fī to leave the “narrow” domain of its canonical usage to the wide (wāsi‘) domain of the unconventional usage of the preposition. See the introductory chapter of this notion in Ibn al-Sarrāj, al-Uṣūl 2, 255.
28 Ibid., 2, 412.
29 Ibid.
Ibn al-Sarrāj comments further on these examples, using the same terms employed by Sibawayhi:

إذا قلت في فلان عيب فجاز وإنسان لأني جعلت الرجل مكانا للعب 我们看看这也符合

When you say: in somebody a flaw, it is a metaphorical usage that widens the discourse because you consider the 'man' as a place containing 'the flaw'...30

وكذلك تقول أنيت فلانا وهو في عنوان شبابه أي وهو في أمره ونحية هذا كشيء وتمثل

You also say: I met somebody and he was full of youth, which means he was powerful. That’ is a resemblance between the two levels and the meaning is: “He was surrounded with these facts”31

Three observations are worth making. First, as far as the third level is concerned, we are far from the previous four conditions advanced by Sibawayhi to illustrate a prototypical realization of wiʿāʾ; the actual wiʿāʾ. However, this transgression moves the new realized spatial form out of the standard semantic categories in such a way that it still belongs to the semantic domain of ʿā.

Second, the text of Ibn al-Sarrāj represents an elaboration of the spatial theory of ʿā. On the one hand he confirms the analysis of Sibawayhi by mentioning the same examples and using the same terms. On the other hand, he puts forward two new notions, al-iḥtiwāʾ “containment”, and al-iḥäṭa “surrounding”, each of them having their own semantic parameters.

Third, Despite the lexical nature of the post-prepositional nouns (somebody/ youth), which makes it difficult to see them as conventional receptacles, ʿā imposes consideration of its complement as wiʿāʾ, whatever its lexical distinctive features may be. This may induce two conclusions:

a) The central role of the preposition: ʿā actually determines the function and nature of the two nominal blocks, which are limited in lexically specifying the inner properties of the noun.

b) Unlike the category of prepositions as a whole, ʿā is heavily based on its grammatical and semantic field.32

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30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 A later grammarian describes the status of ʿā as follows: ...وأما في فلانا فإن حرف ولا تكون إلا خاضعة ولا تكون زائدة ومعناها الوعاء ومنى جاءت فلا يحالو منها الوعاء. As for ʿā, it can only
The two terms the Arabic grammatical literature puts forward to express the semantic value of \( \text{fi} \), “\( \text{al-wi‘ā’} \)” and “\( \text{al-ẓarfīyya} \)” or “\( \text{al-ẓarf} \)”—mean lexically speaking the same thing. The lexical and grammatical texts confirm this terminology by using both of these names. In \( \text{Šarḥ al-Mufaṣṣal} \) and al-Lisān,\(^{33} \) one finds these two definitions:

\[
\text{watf} \quad \text{al-wi‘ā’} \quad \text{al-ẓarfīyya} \quad \text{al-ẓarf}
\]

The \( \text{ẓarf} \) is the container of something. We call receptacles \( \text{ẓurūf} \) because they are containers in which we put things. Space and time are also called \( \text{ẓurūf} \) because verbs take place in them and so they become like their containers.\(^{34} \)

In both of the passages above quoted, the expression \( \text{ẓarf} \) means ‘envelope’ and is closer connected to the semantic field covered by the preposition. However, the \( \text{wi‘ā’} \) becomes a specific concept having its own application codes, which is not the case for the \( \text{ẓarf} \) or \( \text{ẓarfiyya} \) which expresses a general meaning of localization. I assume that this distinction is fundamental in revealing the inner semantic properties of the preposition when analysing some of its occurrences. So the concept of \( \text{wi‘ā’} \) as presented by Sibawayhi enables any attempt to bring out the distinctive features of any spatial use of \( \text{fi} \).

Applying new theories of linguistic analyses—generative semantics, predicate calculus, componential analysis and case grammar—to the study of Arabic prepositions, Ryding\(^{36} \) prefers the term \( \text{ẓarfiyya} \) without mentioning the term \( \text{wi‘ā’} \). In the following examples \( \text{fi} \) expresses the spatial value of \( \text{‘alā}, \text{al-isti‘lā’} \) “superimposition” as in: لさまة تبدو في الجبل “The
peak appears on the horizon” and “Her body had many wounds on it”.

She writes, “Arabic grammars occasionally list al-istiʿlāʾ “superiority” as one of the meanings of fī or else state that fī can be used li-muwāfaqati ʿalā “in accordance with ‘alā.”37 Certainly some grammarians confirm this phenomenon. Ibn al-Sarrāj notices that it is a result of identical semantic contexts:

واعلم أن العرب تسع فيها تقدم بعضها مقام بعض إذا تقاربت المعاني فن ذلك اليم تقول فلان يسكت في مكة وإنما جاز معاً لك إذا قلت فلان يسكت في موضع كذا وكذا فقد خبرت عن اتصاله والتضائه بذلك الموضع وإذا قلت في موضع كذا فقد خبرت بما عن احاطته بإيهإ وإحادته به فإذن تئارب الحرفان فإن هذا التئارب يصح لمعاقبة وإذا تاب معناه لم يجز...

The Arab speakers widen its usage and substitute some of them for others when they have similar meanings like bāʾ. You can say: “Somebody is at Mecca [bi-Makkata]” and “in Mecca [fī Makkata]”. Both of the sentences are correct because when you say: “Somebody is at that or that place”, you inform people about connection and contiguity to this place and when you say: “He is in that place”, you inform us, by using fī, that he is contained and encircled in it. Therefore, when the values of two prepositions are similar, their substitution is permitted, but when their values are different it is not permitted...38

According to Ryding,39 the meaning realized in the two examples (1 and 2, given earlier) is al-istiʿlāʾ—semantic and spatial value of ‘alā—because of the phenomenon of muʿāqaba. We assume, despite the different arguments advanced to defend this hypothesis, that his analysis is not appropriate since it does not make any distinction between what is specific, al-wiʿāʾ, and what is generic, al-zarfīyya.

In the two sentences, fī realizes its spatial value—al-wiʿāʾ and not al-istiʿlāʾ—because of the following main reasons. As already seen above with Ibn Abī al-Rabıʿ, fī is characterized, by being heavily based on its semantic component; it is never used devoid of any semantic dimension, which is not the case in the other remaining prepositions. Furthermore, the condition laid down by Ibn al-Sarrāj—which allows the possibility of muʿāqaba, when there is a semantic resemblance (ʿidā tašābahat l-maʿānī)—is not fulfilled, because the similarity between fī and ‘alā in

37 Ibid., 58.
38 Ibn al-Sarrāj, al-Uṣūl 2, 414.
39 Lentzner, Arabic Prepositions, 32.
the two sentences is irrelevant. Applying the meaning of *al-istiʿlāʾ* instead of the meaning of *wiʿāʾ* considerably affects the semantic structure of the two sentences and neutralizes the core feature of their significance. In sentence 1 “the horizon” is the container of “the peak” because when one visualizes the spatial image of the sentence, one notices that the lower part of the mountain is unseen. It is contained in “the horizon” in such a way that it constitutes a receptacle of “the peak.” In sentence 2, “the body” is a container of “the wounds” to express their depth and to put forward the pain of the subject. “The wounds” are not on her body; they are in her body. Two parameters are here mutually opposed; one is the superficiality conveyed by *ʿalā* and the other is the depth conveyed by *fī*, which is the meaning to which this example leads.

6. Developing the Approach of Sībawayhi

Through his concise text about the spatial value of *fī*, Sibawayhi established a structured representation of its semantic value, especially for its spatial component. This is the framework in which subsequent grammatical contributions about the spatiality of *fī* are elaborated, extending its fundamental meaning and encoding the way it works. This evolution corroborates what Carter called “the universal validity of his concept of language in the *Kitāb*” and illustrates how Sibawayhi’s spatial approach became the starting point from which later grammarians developed their hypotheses. Its validity can be confirmed in several ways.

First, the three representative levels advanced in his text are maintained in all the approaches dealing with the spatial value of *fī* from Ibn al-Sarrāj in *al-Uṣūl*, until Ibn ’Abi al-Rabī’ in *al-basīṭ*. Besides, the examples proposed in the *Kitāb* served as patterns, especially for the first two: actual *wiʿāʾ* and figurative *wiʿāʾ*. The third level, which he did not illustrate by any example because of the infinite possible phrasal combinations, is the point from which begins the widening of Sībawayhi’s approach. So the first two dimensions of *wiʿāʾ* were considered implicitly valid and were not discussed. The general nucleus of interest, in later analyses of the spatial value of *fī*, was mainly various examples which allowed different

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interpretations (*amṭila ḥilāfiyya*) to come from different contextual elements involved in the direct environment of the prepositional structure.

Second, later grammarians, developing Sibawayhi’s spatial approach to *fī*, aimed particularly at harmonizing the open level—the third one—with the remaining two standard levels, as if the fundamental goal had to confirm the semantic component—the *wiʿāʾ*—as heavily based on all of the occurrences of the preposition. This confirmation is realized by proving, whatever the example and the contextual environment of *fī* may be, that the notion *wiʿāʾ* is inseparable from *fī*.

In *Ṣarḥ al-Kāfiya*, for example, al-Astarābāḍī proposed the two following sentences, “I would crucify you, certainly, in [on tree trunks] tree trunks” (Māliqī, 388) and (al-Astarābāḍī 2, 327), يَدْرُكُكُمْ مِن جَذَوَاتِ النَّخْلِ “Pay one hundred camels in the murder of a religious person” (al-Astarābāḍī 2, 327). Then he comments on the two sentences as follows:

[The sentence] ‘Pay one hundred camels in the murder of a religious person’ would mean ‘because of his murder’. The cause, which is ‘the murder’, involves ‘the debt’ as a container containing its content and this usage of *fī* is called causal.

In the two sentences, *fī* realizes its spatial value according to what al-Astarābāḍī states. In this example, *fī* corresponds to the usage proposed by Ryding in example (2). If the container does not correspond in its spatial features to a conventional receptacle, *wiʿāʾ*, like “a trunk” or “a human body” the presence of the preposition necessarily involves the consideration of the notion of *wiʿāʾ*. Astarābāḍī further notes, إنَّها بمعناها تَمْكَن المصلوب في الجذع تَمْكَن المَظْرَف في الظرف... “[fī] maintains its original value [the *wiʿāʾ*] because the ‘crucified’ is really contained [mutamakkinun] in the trunk resembling the relation of a container and its content. Finally, the development of the spatial value of *fī* by later grammarians and the widening of its representative status created an implicit, sophisticated, semantic network. This structured representation, which is

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43 al-Astarābāḍī, *Ṣarḥ* 2, 327.
44 The two lexical units clearly violate the main four conditions advanced by Sibawayhi to illustrate the realization of a prototypical *wiʿāʾ*.
45 al-Astarābāḍī, *Ṣarḥ* 2, 327.
essentially a set of parameters, enabled *fī* to express its spatiality inside a codified structure where the nature of the activated relation particularly depends on the kind and the number of the respected parameters. The spatial ‘theory’ of *wiʿāʾ* advanced by Sibawayhi and developed by later grammarians depends on the realization of two interconnected categories.

On one hand, we have a group of spatial relations resulting from the usage of *fī* and differing from each other regarding the nature of the realized spatial relation. On the other hand, there are a number of parameters or conditions that serve as rules for the activation of the spatial relation. To the first group belongs the *wiʿāʾ* as a prototypical spatial form that respects the four conditions stated by Sibawayhi. In the same group are other relations representing less prototypical configurations of the standard image but still strongly connected to the iconic form, among which *al-ʾiḥāṭa* “surrounding”, *al-ʾiḥtiwāʾ* “containment”, *al-ḥulūl* “localization”, *al-ištimāl* “implication” and *al-taḍammun* “inclusion”.

To the second group belong a number of parameters—or conditions—including *al-manʿ* “control”, *al-tamakkun* “attachment”, *al-šumūl* “cover-ing” and *al-iḫtiṣāṣ* “specificity”. This second group essentially regulates and codifies the functioning of the spatial value.

Thus, for the realization of each spatial relation, several parameters are required. *al-ʾiḥtiwāʾ* “containment”, for example, needs most of the above mentioned parameters because it has a prototypical status. It is very close to the notion of *wiʿāʾ* because of the similarity in the number of parameters they involve. Firstly, a relation of containment requires a container that controls the content, either actually or figuratively. Secondly, from the point of view of the content, it should be firmly attached (*mutamakkin*) to its container. Then, the spatial relation should enable the container to cover (*yašmala*) the content. Finally, each of the two actors in the spatial relation should be exclusively concerned (*muḫtaṣṣ*) with the other. This requires that they should not be semantically connected to, or dependent on, another semantic actor. In contrast, a spatial relation

46 Ibid.
48 al-Astarābāḏī, *Šarḥ* 2, 327.
51 Spatially, *al-iḫtiṣāṣ* does not differ from its grammatical meaning. When one considers, for example, that the prepositions are nominally specified, one means that they exclusively govern the nominal class. Here the parameter of specificity demonstrates the close
like al-ḥulūl “localization or presence” does not require the activation of different parameters because it represents a form of wiʿāʾ which is less prototypical.\footnote{al-Ḥulūl is one of the farthest configurations of wiʿāʾ. It is far from its central semantic value and its prototypical representation, and this is the reason why it expresses a simple meaning of location. Ibn al-Sarrāj, comments on sentence (9) as follows: “fī has not the value of ‘alā [in the sentence], but he [the speaker] compared the crucified to a content as if it were strongly attached to the trunk…” (Ibn al-Sarrāj, al-Uṣūl, 1, 414). Māliqī, notes: السرحة وعَنْ لِثَيْبَ بَيَّانَ النَّجَّسِ بَيْنَ ثَيْبَ وَأَنْ حَلَّتُ عَلَىٰهَا فَلاَ يَزَمُّ أَيْضاً الْتُمَّوْلُ كَالْقَدِيمَ “Sarha “big tree” is a place for the clothes because it is compared to the relation between the body and the clothes. So, when the clothes are on a tree, they should be stable on it. However, total covering is also unnecessary, as we have (said) before (cf. Māliqī, Raṣf al-mabānī, 389).}

This approach can be explained by the analytic schema I have elaborated above, where I considered the wiʿāʾ as the core representation of the spatial value from which derive multiple configurations. On the same basis, the phenomenon of muʿāqaba “semantic interaction between prepositional values” is caused essentially by moving from central—prototypical form and implicated parameters—to new contextual situations. This movement invalidates the fundamental parameters belonging to the iconic form and requires the acquisition of new ones from new contexts. Consequently, any risk of expressing the semantic value of another preposition is a logical outcome whenever it is taken away from the semantic center of a region—or context—occupied conventionally by other linguistic units. We can assume, therefore, that the semantic interaction is a codified grammatical reaction having its own conditions and parameters, not just a contextual arbitrary phenomenon.

Conclusion

Sibawayhi’s approach to the spatial value of fī revealed a sophisticated concept of the way the preposition represents, communicates and articulates information about space. He managed to establish both theoretical and empirical frameworks for the spatiality of fī which have been taken over by subsequent works. His contributions on its geometric elements and functional parameters were also expanded and encoded by subsequent works. Each of them is exclusively concerned with the other.

connection between the container and the content and excludes any additional semantic component from interferring with one of the two spatial actors. Each of them is exclusively concerned with the other.
quent works. It may not be too early to precisely identify the different steps realized in the establishment of the representative structure of \( f \).

It appears that Sībawayhi’s ideas of the spatial structure changed in three main steps. In the first stage, he tried to establish the fundamental elements required by the semantic structure. This explains in part the brevity of his commentaries and the shortness of the illustrations he gave. In the second stage, the aim of Sībawayhi was to consolidate and to develop the structure first realized. This can be seen in the text of Ibn al-Sarrāj, widening the examples advanced by Sībawayhi and illustrating his commentaries whenever he did not propose any example—such as at the third level of \( wiʿāʾ \). In the third stage, he widened exploration of the contextual possibilities in which \( f \) could appear, studying its spatiality at boundaries that link the \( wiʿāʾ \) with other prepositional and spatial values and not in the nucleus of the semantic structure which Sībawayhi achieved. This explains why subsequent approaches were essentially interested in the representation of the spatial value as a problematic one.

Even if this short article did not allow me to comment on the multiple operations and components which are mobilized when activating prepositional significance, I believe that they prove how deep Sībawayhi’s structured analysis may be considered. They also prove, I may add, the originality of his representation found in the fundamental text of the Kitāb and later contributions.

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THE RELATION BETWEEN FREQUENCY OF USAGE
AND DELETION IN SĪBAWAYHI’S KITĀB

Hanadi Dayyeh

INTRODUCTION

The term *kaṭra* “frequent usage” has two meanings in Sibawayhi’s *Kitāb*: The first is associated with single words which the Arabs used frequently; the second is associated with structures which became known to both the speaker and the listener because they were repeatedly used. *Kaṭra* in the first meaning leads either to favouring a certain morphological form or a certain grammatical case which was frequently used, or to changing it to be different from its like. In its second meaning, *kaṭra* leads to *ḥadf* “deletion” of one of the elements of the structure (the verb, the noun, or the particle). The relation between *kaṭra* “frequent usage” and *ḥadf* “deletion”, as presented in various parts of Sibawayhi’s *Kitāb*, is the subject of this study.

As for *ḥadf*, it is in the *Kitāb* different from *ʾiḍmār* “suppression”, *iḥtizāl* “reduction”, or *taqdīr* “suppletive insertion”. It is that kind of *ʾiḍmār* “suppression” in which deletion is necessary. *Iḥtizāl* “reduction”, on the other hand, is a specific kind of deletion where the verbal noun substitutes for the deleted verb. *Taqdīr* “suppletive insertion” is used in the *Kitāb* to express the meaning of “value”, and not the sense of implying a certain elided element.

Sibawayhi is unique in establishing the relation between *kaṭra* and *ḥadf*. None of his contemporaries or successors exploited the far-reaching implications of this relationship. His awareness of this relation and his study of its grammatical implications are attested throughout the *Kitāb*—a fact that highlights the internal unity of the *Kitāb*, in its terminology, šawāhid, and analytical tools.

1. The Term Al-Kaṭra “Frequent Usage” in the *Kitāb*

The term *al-kaṭra* and its variants (*kaṭura, kaṭīr, akṭar*) appear in various parts of the *Kitāb*. Sibawayhi uses *al-kaṭra* to justify syntactical,

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morphological and phonological cases associated with verbs, nouns and particles. A close examination of the occurrences of the term al-katra in 'abwāb al-fīl “chapters on verbs”, 'abwāb al-ism “chapters on nouns”, and 'abwāb al-ḥurūf “chapters on particles/letters” shows that a relation is established between al-katra fi l-isti’māl “frequency of usage” and ḥadhf “deletion” of the verb, noun or particle in certain utterances.

1.1 Al-Katra in Sibawayhi’s Chapters on Verbs

The appearance of the term al-katra in Sibawayhi’s chapters on verbs in the Kitāb is restricted to a chapter where Sibawayhi discusses the dependent forms caused by a suppressed verb that remains covert because the meaning is self evident “باب ما ينصب على إضمار الفعل المتروك كظهار استنفاذ عنه “باب ما ينصب على إضمار الفعل المتروك كظهار استنفاذ عنه.” In this chapter, Sibawayhi presents examples of deletion of the verb in utterances of cautioning and warning “في غير الأمر والتحذير “في غير الأمر والتحذير”, with or without ʾiyyāka, in utterances other than of command and cautioning “في ما صار بمنزلة المثل “في ما صار بمنزلة المثل”, and in utterances that gained the status of a proverb “في ما صار بمنزلة المثل “في ما صار بمنزلة المثل”.2

Citation 1—Utterances of cautioning with ʾiyyāka:

ومن ذلك قولك أيضاً إياك وإيآي والشرّ كأنه قال إياك فائقين والأسدّ وكأنه قال إياي لأنتين والشرّ . وحذروا الفعل من إياك لكره استعمالهم إياه في الكلام فصار بدلاً من الفعل.

And an example of that you saying “beware of the lion” and “beware of evil”, it is like he said “protect yourself from the lion and protect yourself from evil” . . . and they deleted the verb after ʾiyyāka because it is frequently used so it [ʾiyyāka] substituted for the verb.4

ʾiyyāka is frequently used in utterances of cautioning. The frequency of usage makes the verb “protect” known to both the listener and speaker, so it is elided. Frequency of usage in this citation led to deletion of the verb.

study is based on an examination of the occurrences of the root k-t-r throughout the Kitāb. 60 šawāhid, in which al-katra has a syntactical, morphological or phonological function, were extracted and used as the data for this study.

3 For a complete list of the šawāhid taken from this section of the Kitāb, refer to Table 1.
4 Sībawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 54, Derenbourghi, 116/ Būlāq 1, 138.
Citation 2—Utterances other than cautioning or command:

Yā [calling] ʿAbdallāhi

حذيَّوا الفعل لِكُتْرَة استعمالهم هذا في الكلام وصار يأبَدًا من اللُفظ بفَعَّل كَأَنّهْ قال
يا أريد عبد الله حذَّف أريد وصارت يأبَدًا منها لأنك إذا قللت يا فلان علمْ أنك تريدُهٰ

They deleted the verb because this [calling] is frequently used in talking and “yā” substituted for the utterance of the verb, as if he said “yā” I want ʿAbdallāhi so he deleted “I want” and “yā” substituted for it because if you said “yā” someone it is known that you want him.5

In this citation, frequency of usage also led to deletion. Sibawayhi explains that when calling someone it is known that you want this person due to frequent usage of nidā’ “vocative.” The verb consequently is elided and “yā” substituted for it.

Citation 3—Utterances that gained the status of a proverb:

ولا زعمتكم

I am not deluded by your claims

وَلَمْ يَذْكُرُوا وَلا أُنْوِهِم زِعمَتْكُم لِكُتْرَة استعمالهمِ يِاهْ وَلاَسْتَدِلَّهُ بِمَا يُرَى مِن حَالَتِهِ أَنَّهُ

And they did not mention “deluded” because they frequently used it and it is indicated in what is seen in the situation where he is prohibiting him from such claims.6

Frequent usage of the utterance ولا زعمتكم led to the deletion of the verb. The utterance gained the status of a proverb, and proverbs are known to both the speaker and listener. It is worth mentioning here that Sibawayhi highlights another important clue that allows for the deletion of the verb: the fact that the listener is aware of the situation and knows the context of the utterance لاَسْتَدِلَّهُ بِمَا يُرَى حَالَته. The knowledge of the elided element is essential for allowing deletion. The frequent usage of the utterance allows deletion because it makes the elided verb known to both the speaker and the listener.

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5 Sibawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 57, Derenbourgh 1, 123/ Būlāq 1, 147.
6 Sibawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 56, Derenbourgh 1, 119/ Būlāq 1, 141.
1.2 Al-Kaṭra in Sibawayhi’s Chapters on Nouns

The occurrences of the term al-kaṭra in relation to nouns appear in syntactical, morphological and phonological explanations that Sibawayhi gives to certain utterances.\(^7\) In some of these explanations al-kaṭra is used to justify deletion of the noun, in others al-kaṭra justifies favouring a certain syntactical case or morphological form, and in few al-kaṭra leads to changing the noun to be different from its like. The following are three examples that illustrate the uses of al-kaṭra in the three above mentioned situations respectively.

Citation 4:

وَنَظَرُ لَا كَرِيدٍ فِي حَذْفِهِمُ الْإِسْمَ قُولُهُمُ لَا عَلَيْكَ وَإِنَّمَا تَرَيْدَ لَا بَأْسٌ عَلَيْكَ وَلَا شَيءٌ عَلَيْكَ

And similar to “None like Zayd” where the noun is deleted [there is no one like Zayd], saying “La ‘alayka” where you mean “nothing wrong with you” [lā ba’sa ‘alayk] or “nothing against you”[lā šay’a ‘alayk] but it (the noun-dependent) was deleted because they frequently used it.\(^8\)

Citation 5:

وَإِنْ سَمَيْتَ بِفَعْلِهِ صَفْةً مَعَ الْقَبِيحةٍ وَالْتَّوَضَّفِ لمَّا يُبْنِيهِ فَإِلَّا فَعْلَايْلْ لَوْ أَكَرُّ فَعَايْلُ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَعَّلُهُ عَلَى الْأَكْرِ

And if you named him an adjective that follows the pattern fa‘īla like al-qabīḥa (the ugly) and al-zarīfa (the gracious), the plural is fa‘a‘il because it is more frequently used so you follow what is most frequent.\(^9\)

Citation 6:

وَهَذِيْ [الْأَلِفَ وَالْلَّامِ] فِي اللَّهِ بِعَرْضِهِ شَيْءٌ غَيْرٌ مَنْفَصِلٌ فِي الْكُلْمَةِ … وَغَيْرُهَا وَهَذَا الْأَنْ شَيْءٌ إِذَا كَرَّ في كَلاًّ مَهْمُ كَانَ لَهُ فَأْوِهِ لَمَّا هوَ مَثَلٌ

It (the definitive article alif lam) is in ‘Allāh’ inseparable…. and they changed it in this word because if a word is abundant in their utterances, it is treated differently from its like.\(^10\)

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\(^7\) For a complete list of the occurrences of al-kaṭra with nouns, refer to Table 2.

\(^8\) Sibawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 181, Derenbourgh 1, 309/ Būlāq 1, 354.


\(^10\) Sibawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 148, Derenbourgh 1, 268/ Būlāq 1, 310.
1.3 Al-Kaṭra in Sībawayhi’s Chapters on Particles/Letters

Frequency of usage (al-kaṭra fi-l-isti’māl) in Sībawayhi’s chapters on particles appears to justify deletion of the harf “letter/particle” whether it is a particle or a letter.11 In all the examples studied, al-kaṭra fi-l-isti’māl “frequency of usage” led to the deletion of the harf “letter/particle”.

Citation 7:
In discussing suppressed prepositions in sentences like لاقيته أمس that is originally لاقيته بالأمس Sībawayhi says:

وليس كل حاريظر لأن السحر ورداخل في الجار فصار اندوه فسر نح فحرف واحد فهم ثم قبح
ولكنهم قد فضض واحدثون ف iscىكلهم فلاهم إلا نفهم إلى تخفيف مألوف واستعمال أحو.

And not all prepositions are suppressed because the prepositional object is linked to the preposition, so they are both treated as one particle, then this was considered qabīḥ “ill-formed”, but they may suppress and delete it in what is frequently used in their utterances because they need to reduce what is frequently used.12

Citation 8:
When explaining the deletion of the letter nūn from la’ally (لعاليً), Sībawayhi says:13 حذفوا هذه النون كا يذفون ما يكن استعمالهم إياه “So they deleted nūn as they delete what is frequently used”.

1.4 Meanings of al-Kaṭra in the Kitāb

While al-kaṭra led to deletion of the verb, noun or particle in frequently used utterances, al-kaṭra in ’abwāb al-ism “chapers on nouns” led also to favouring a grammatical case ending or a morphological form or to changing the noun to be different from its like.14 This may be explained in

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11 For a complete list of the šawāhid, refer to Table 3.
12 Sībawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 141, Denerbourgh 1, 253/Būlāq 1, 294.
13 Sībawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 213, Denerbourgh 1, 338/Būlāq 1, 386.
14 There is one example in which al-kaṭra leads to tawassuʿ “extension” in the use of adverbial nouns of time. These nouns are allowed to be annexed to verbs like saying هذا اليوم يقوم زيد (Sībawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 260, Denerbourgh 1, 209/Būlāq 1, 460). Adverbial nouns of time are frequently used so they are treated differently from other nouns. These nouns can be annexed to verbs. In this sense, tawassuʿ means “the process by which a word is placed beyond its proper boundaries, as an extension of its normal domain” (K. Versteegh, “Freedom of the Speaker: The Term ittisāʿ and related notions in Arabic Grammar” in Studies in the History of Arabic Grammar II, eds. K. Versteegh and M.G. Carter [Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company], 1990), 283. With this meaning in mind I included this citation in the examples where al-Kaṭra leads to changing the word to be different from its like.
two ways: First, frequency of usage leads to the three different functions (ḥadf “deletion”, tarjih “favouring” or taqyir “changing”). If this explanation is valid then it is worth asking why frequency leads in one situation to deletion, in a second to favouring a syntactical case or morphological form, and in a third to changing the noun. Second, frequency has different meanings each associated with a different function.

Citations 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 8 serve as examples to three patterns of deletion due to frequency of usage. Citations 1 and 2 are examples of the first pattern. In these citations, frequency of usage led to deletion of the verb in utterances that are known to both the speaker and listener. There are enough clues for the listener to figure out the elided element. In this pattern, frequency of usage rendered the utterance known, so when the verb is deleted the meaning of the utterance remained clear.

Citation 3 is an example of the second pattern, where the utterance due to frequent usage is considered a proverb. Proverbial expressions are known to the speaker and listener as well, so the elided element is retrievable by the listener.

Citations 4, 7 and 8 serve as examples of the third pattern. In these citations Sibawayhi justifies deletion of an element of a structure simply because of frequency of usage. It is clear that in presenting the cause of deletion, Sibawayhi depends mainly on frequency of usage that makes the elided element known to the listener. It is worth noting here that he states that Arabs tend to reduce what they frequently use and they do so because both speaker and listener know the utterance and the deleted element can be retrieved.

In citation 5, Sibawayhi favors a morphological form faʿāʾil as plural to faʿila because it is more frequent. In this example frequency is associated with a single word that Arabs used in a certain morphological form more frequently. Sibawayhi states “so you follow what

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15 For complete list of the šawāhid that follow this pattern, refer to Table 4.
16 For complete list of the šawāhid that follow this pattern, refer to Table 5.
17 For complete list of the šawāhid that follow this pattern, refer to Table 6.
18 Sibawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 141, Denerbourne 1, 253/Būlāq 1, 294.
20 Among the 60 citations used in this study, there are 16 cases where frequency of usage led to favoring of a certain grammatical case or morphological form (refer to Table 2). In all these citations frequency is used to describe single words that are used more in a certain syntactical or morphological form.
is most frequent”. Here frequency is descriptive and associated with number of times a single word is used.

Citation 6 represents one of three instances where frequency led to changing the noun to be different from its like.\(^{21}\) In the three examples frequency is associated with single words. It is descriptive. The noun ‘Allāh’ is used abundantly and that is why it is treated differently from other nouns. Sibawayhi says: “they [Arabs] change the most frequently used to be different from its like”.\(^{22}\)

Kattra “frequent usage”, then, appears in the Kitāb to convey two meanings: The first is associated with utterances that are frequently used, and consequently have become known to the speaker and listener. Frequency in this context leads to deletion of the verb, noun or particle in the utterance. The second meaning is descriptive and associated with single words. al-kattra “frequent usage” in this context leads to favouring a syntactical or morphological case or changing the noun to be different from its likes.

2. Ḥadf “Deletion” in the Kitāb

In an attempt to study deletion throughout the Kitāb, the following terms and their variants were examined: ḥadf “deletion”, ʾiḍmār “suppression”, ihtizāl “reduction”, and taqdīr “suppletive insertion”. These terms may be confused to be synonyms. A fact that is observed in some Arabic Grammar books, where grammarians may use ʾaḍmara “to suppress” to mean ḥadafa “to delete”, or iḥtazala “to reduce” to mean ʾaḍmara “to suppress”, or taqdīr “suppletive insertion” to mean ʾiḍmār “suppression” or ḥadf “deletion”.

This study will show that these terms are not synonyms in the Kitāb.\(^{24}\) Sibawayhi uses each term in a specific related context consistently wherever it appears in the Kitāb.

\(^{21}\) Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 148, Derenbourg 1, 268; 357/Bülāq 1, 310; 404 and chapter 310, Derenbourg 2, 39/ Bülāq 2, 42.

\(^{22}\) Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 227, Derenbourg 1, 357/Bülāq 1, 404.

\(^{23}\) I shall discuss the use of these terms in 2nd, 3rd and 4th century sources in section 4. As to recent books, refer to M. Maḥzūmī, Fī al-naḥw al-ʿarabī (Beirut:al Maktaba al ‘Arabiya, 1946) and M. Yāqūt, Qudāyā al-taqdīr al-naḥwī bayn al-qudamāʾ wa al-muhdaṭṭin (Cairo: Dar al-Maʿārif, 1985) for samples of grammar books that uses the terms as synonyms.

2.1 Between Ḥadīf “Deletion” and ʾIḍmār “Suppression”

The difference between ḥadīf “deletion” and ʾiḍmār “suppression” appears in parts of the Kitāb where Sībawayhi explains the ‘suppressed verb’ (al-ʾfiʿl al-muḍmar). He distinguishes between two kinds of suppressed verbs: فَعْل مَضْرَر مُسْتَعْمَلُ إِظَاهَرُه “A suppressed verb that may be overt” and “A suppressed verb that remains covert”.25 Examples of the latter were discussed in section 1.1 of this study. The suppressed verb that remains covert is a deleted verb due to frequency of usage.

As to the suppressed verb that may be overt, its šawāhid show that the verb is muḍmar “suppressed” and not muḥḍūf “deleted”. Neither the word ḥaḍafa “to delete” nor its variants is used with the suppressed verb that maybe overt:

وَأَمَّا النَّهَى فَإِنَّهُ التَّحْذِيرُ كُلُّ الْأَسْدَ الْجَدارِ وَالْحَائِطِ الصَّبِّيِّ إِنَّهُمَا نَهِيهَا أَنْ يَقْرَبُ الْجَدارِ أَوْ يَقْرَبُ الْأَسْدَ أَوْ بُوْطِيُّ الصَّبِّيِّ وَإِنْ شَاء أَٰظُهَرُ مَعِ هَذَهُ الْأَشْيَاء مَا أَضْمَرَ مِنَ الْفَعْل.

As to prohibiting, it is cautioning like saying “the lion the lion”, “the wall the wall”, “the boy the boy”, you prohibited him from getting closer to an inclined wall or a lion, or stepping on the boy, and if he wants he may mention the suppressed verb.26

The verb in this citation is referred to as muḍmar “suppressed” and not muḥḍūf “deleted”. Sībawayhi states clearly that it is up to the speaker to mention the verb or not.27 This option is not given to the speaker in the case of a suppressed verb that remains covert. There is a clear distinction in the use of the terms ʾiḍmār “suppression” and ḥadīf “deletion”. Sībawayhi uses the first when the suppressed verb may or may not be overt, and the second only when the verb has to remain covert.28

In discussing the suppressed verb that remains covert in utterances of cautioning, Sībawayhi says:

كَمَا تَتُوْلِ رَأَسُكَ وَالْحَائِطُ وَهُوَ يَحْذِيرُ كَأَنَّهُ قَالَ أَتَقَرَّ رَأَسُكَ وَالْحَائِطُ وَإِنَّهَا حَذَفْنَا الْفَعْلُ فِي هَذِهِ الْأَشْيَاء حِينَ تُنْثِرُ نَكْرَتَهَا فِي كَلَّامِهِمْ وَأَسْتَغْنَاء بِسَبَىٰرُ وَاٰثَرُهُ وَمَا جَرِي مِن

25 Sībawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 140, Derenbourgh 1, 247/Būlāq 1, 149.
26 Sībawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 50, Derenbourgh 1, 107/Būlāq 1, 128.
27 Ibid.
28 Sībawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 50–54, Derenbourgh 1, 107–117/Būlāq 1, 128–139.
Like saying “Your head and/with the wall”, cautioning him as if saying protect your head, the verb is deleted in these utterances when the structure conveys duality due to frequency of usage and sufficiency with what is seen and said, the first dependent substitutes for the verb because it resembles 'iyyāka, and it would not have been like 'iyyāka if the structure is not dual because it is not frequent in their talk the way 'iyyāka is.

The frequency of using the structure رأسك والجدار which is frequently used by Arabs allowing the deletion of the verb in structures like إياك والجدار. 

Deletion of the verb in this example occurred when a condition of duality is fulfilled. This duality creates a structure that resembles the frequently used structure of 'iyyāka. The verb in this case is referred to as mahḍūf “deleted”. If the utterance is made up of one noun (dependent) like "رأسك "أو الجدار "، then the verb may or may not appear. In this case the verb is referred to as muḍmar “suppressed”.

The distinction in the uses of the terms hadf “deletion” and 'idmār “suppression” may be tracked throughout the book, and not only when discussing eliding a verb, but also a noun or a particle. The term hadf

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29 Sibawayhi explains that wāw in this example can be wāw 'atf “conjunction” or wāw ma’īyah (Sibawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 54, Derenbourg 1, 117/Būlāq 1, 138).
30 Sibawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 54, Derenbourg 1, 117/Būlāq 1, 138–139.
31 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 117/Būlāq 1, 138.
32 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 117/Būlāq 1, 139.
33 For examples of suppressed nouns refer to Sibawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 140, Derenbourg 1, 220; 241; 245/Būlāq 1, 258, 279; 284.
34 For examples of suppressed nouns refer to Sibawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 140, Derenbourg 1/Būlāq 1, 407–408.
“deletion” appears with the frequently used structures where the elided element is covert, whereas ‘iḍmār “suppression” is associated with structures were the elided element may or may not appear.

With this conclusion in mind, a question may be raised regarding the relation between ‘iḍmār “suppression” and ḥaḏf “deletion”. The terms are not used as synonyms in the Kitāb, however, they are related. Sibawayhi refers to the deleted verb as فعل ماضع متورك إظهاره. A deleted verb is a suppressed verb; however, it is a specific kind of fi’l muḍmar “suppressed verb” that has to remain covert. The same can be said about deleted nouns and particles. Then, ḥaḏf “deletion” is a specific kind of ‘iḍmār “suppression” where the elided element remains covert. Throughout the Kitāb, Sībawayhi consistently uses ḥaḏf to refer to elided elements that remain covert in utterances that are frequently used.

2.2 Between Ḥaḏf “Deletion” and Ḥiṯtāzāl “Reduction”

The root ḥzl and its derivations appear 10 times in the Kitāb.35 It is mainly used in discussing verbal nouns that are dependent due to a فعل متورك إظهاره “a covert verb”. These verbal nouns appear in utterances where the speaker invokes God for or against, and in utterances other than invoking God.36 In these utterances the verbal noun substitutes for the verb, so the verb is elided. Example of these verbal nouns: كأنك قلت سفاك الله سقيا... وإنما احتزل الفعل venue (the verb was reduced here because it [the verbal noun] substituted for the verb”. 37

Studying the situations where ihtāzala “to reduce” is used, it is observed that ihtizāl is associated with elided verbs in utterances where the verbal noun substitutes for the verb. In these specific situations the verb is said to be ihtizāl “reduced” and not ḥuḏifa “deleted”. Sibawayhi consistently uses the term ihtāzala “to reduce” in these situations, which means that he distinguishes between the two terms and does not use them as synonyms.

Although not a synonym to ḥaḏf “deletion”, the term ihtizāl “reduction”, is related to it. It is associated with verbs that remains covert (fi’l matrukun ʿizhāruhu), however, in specific utterances where verbal nouns substitute for the elided verb. This may lead to a conclusion that ihtizāl “reduction” is a specific kind of ḥaḏf “deletion” associated with certain

35 Troupeau, Lexique Index, 8.
37 Sībawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 61, Degenbourgh 1, 131/Būlāq 1, 157.
utterances. Sibawayhi consistently distinguishes between the uses of both terms throughout the Kitāb.

3. The Concept of Taqdir in the Kitāb

The term taqdir is commonly used to mean the supposition of an elided element that affected other elements in a structure. In this sense, the concept of taqdir is related to ‗idmār and ḥadīf “deletion”. Consequently, a study of taqdir as presented in the Kitāb is necessary when ḥadīf “deletion” is a main subject of a study.

The word taqdir in relation to syntactical explanations appears three times in the Kitāb:

First

Then you said Is not that Zaydan munṭaliqan (Zayd leaving) where munṭaliqan is dependent because it is circumstantial and similar to the noun after ‗inna, it [the circumstantial dependent] gained the status of a second object of a transitive verb like saying ‗Abdullāhī ḥit Zaydan qa‘īman (while standing), it is similar to it in syntactical value but not in meaning.38

Sibawayhi in this citation is building an analogy between two words in two different structures to explain the syntactical case of one of them. The word munṭaliqan is dependent in the first structure in the same way the word qa‘īman is dependent in the second although both structures do not convey same meaning.

Second

‘Verily are your people honorable‘ and ‘Verily is your maid leaving‘ so the ha‘ in ‘inna-hu refers to the suppressed speech that you mentioned after ha‘ as if supposing, although not stated, he said that verily the issue is that your maid is leaving.39

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38 Sibawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 140, Derenbourgh 1, 247/Būlāq 1, 287.
39 Sibawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 145, Derenbourgh 1, 259/Būlāq 1, 300.
The word *taqdir* appears in this citation to mean the supposition of an elided word.\(^{40}\) In the example given the word أَمْتَكَ ذَاهِبَةٌ is elided and is independent as it is *habar* (comment).

Third

فَأَنَتْ قَدْ تَقُولُ عَبْدَاللهَ نَعَمْ رَجْلًا مِنْهَا بِهِ وَلَوْ كَانَ نَعَمْ يُصِيرُ لَعَنَّاهُ إِلَّا نَعَمْ رَجْلُ قَتَرْعَهُ فَعَبْدَاللهِ لِيَشْهَدُ فِي شَيْءٍ وَالرَّجُلُ هُوَ عَبْدَاللهِ لَوْ كَانَ مَنْ تَصَلُّفُ مِنْهُ كَانَ نَفْصَالَ الْأَخِ مِنْهُ إِذَا قَلَتَ عَبْدَاللهِ ذَهَبَ أَخوَهُ فَهَذَا تَقْدِيرٌ وَلَيْسَ مَعْنَاهُ كَعَمْنَاهُ.

You may say “Abdullāhī what a man (dependent)’ starting with ‘Abdullāhī, if *ni‘ma* is related to ‘Abdullāhī you would not have said “Abdullāhī what a man (independent),’ ‘Abdullāhī has nothing to do with *ni‘ma*, the man is ‘Abdullāhī but separated from it the way the brother is separated when saying “Abdullāhī, his brother left’ (‘Abdullāhī’s brother has left), it has the same value (i.e. equivalence) but not the same meaning.\(^{41}\)

Again, *taqdir* is used here to mean the value of two elements in two parallel structures in an analogy. ‘Abdullāhī is separated from “the man” in the sentence عبد الله نعَمَ الرجل the way it is separated from” the brother “in عبد الله ذَهَبَ أَخوَهُ. ‘Abdullāhī in the first and second structures is in similar situation.

It may be noticed that *taqdir* is used only once in *AL Kitāb* to mean supposition of an elided element. This conclusion may even be supported by studying the occurrences of the word *taqdir* in explaining certain morphological and phonological phenomena. In morphology, it is mainly used in the sense of forming a word according to a certain pattern.\(^{42}\) In phonology, its use is restricted to words where ‘*ayn* substitutes for the glottal stop (*hamza*).\(^{43}\) In both areas, *taqdir* is not used in the sense of supposing an elided element.

Based on the above, it may be concluded that the concept of *taqdir* in *al-Kitāb* is not associated with *ḥadro“deletion” or *i‘dmar“suppression*. It is used to mean similar value in *qiya‘* “analogy” or similar pattern.

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\(^{40}\) The translation of *taqdir* as suppletive insertion has first been suggested by Baalbaki, cf. Ramzi Baalbaki, *The Legacy of the Kitāb* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2008), 69, fn. 151.

\(^{41}\) Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, chapter 145, Derenbourg 1, 260/Būlāq 1, 301.

\(^{42}\) Sibawayhi, *Kitāb*, chapter 141, Derenbourg 2, 2; 59/Būlāq 2, 3; 63.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., Derenbourg 2, 1; 21; 39; 8; 83; 104; 128; 175; 254; 256; 262; 311; 313; 330; 410; 429/Būlāq 2, 21; 42; 84; 86; 105; 126; 169; 239; 240; 245; 285; 286; 303; 370; 386 (note that the chapter numbers are not given here).
4. The Relation between Frequency of Usage and Deletion in Sources Other than the Kitāb

In the previous sections of this study, it is proposed that a relation between frequency of usage and deletion is established in the Kitāb. In this section, the present study will trace this relation in other language sources from the 2nd, 3rd and 4th century in an attempt to find out if any of Sibawayhi’s contemporaries or successors noticed the relation between frequency of usage and deletion. From the 2nd century, the study will look into al Ḫalīl’s (d. 175/791) Kitāb al-ʿayn and al-Farrāʾs (d. 207/822) Maʿānī al-Qurān. From the 3rd century, al-Mubarrad’s (d. 285/898) al-Muqtaḍab and Ibn al-Sarrāj’s (d. 316/929) al-ʿUsūl fī al-naḥw, and from the 4th century, Ibn Jinnī’s (d. 392/1002) al-Ḥaṣāʾiṣ will be examined.

4.1 In Kitāb al-ʿAyn

Frequency of usage in Kitāb al-ʿayn leads to:

1. Merging two words to become one, example: munḏu (originally min iḏā)\textsuperscript{44}
2. Deleting letters or short vowels from certain frequently used words, example: ḏat (originally ḏawāt—wāw is deleted)\textsuperscript{45}
3. Tawassuʿ “extension” in the use of words\textsuperscript{46}

Although al-kaṭra “frequent usage” has in Kitāb al-ʿayn similar functions to those presented in the Kitāb,\textsuperscript{47} it is noticed that the relation between frequency of usage and deletion is not established the way it is in the Kitāb. Two observations are worth mentioning regarding the use of the term al-kaṭra “frequent usage” in Kitāb al-ʿayn. First, there is confusion in presenting the functions of al-kaṭra “frequent usage” for it may lead to two contradictory functions in the same example: wāw ḏawāt is deleted due to frequency, however, its tāʾ is pronounced due to frequency.\textsuperscript{48} Second,

\textsuperscript{44} al-Ḫalīl, Kitāb al-ʿayn, edited by M. al-Maḥzūmī and I. al-Sāmarraʾī (Baghdād: Dār al-Rašīd 1980–85) 8, 192. See also for more examples: 4, 116 and 8, 350.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 8, 207–208. See also for more examples, 4, 320 and 5, 301.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 5, 301.
\textsuperscript{47} Refer to citation 25 in Table 2 for an example of merging two words to become one due to frequency of usage. The merging happens as a result of deleting letters, so basically it is another example of deletion due to frequency of usage. For tawassuʿ “extension” see footnote 5.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 8, 207–208.
al-kaṭra “frequent usage” leads to deletion of particles or vowels only. It is not associated with deletion of the noun or verb. Nouns and verbs in Kitāb al-ʿayn are suppressed and not deleted.49 al-kaṭra appears to justify the suppression and not deletion of the verb or noun,50 and the deletion of the particle.

It is observed that the relation between frequency and deletion is not established in al-ʿAyn. However, it may be argued that its basis can be traced there. After all, al-ʿayn is a lexicon and not a grammar book like the Kitāb.

4.2 In Maʿānī al-Qurān

al-kaṭra in al-Farrāʾs Maʿānī al-Qurān leads to:

1. Merging two words to become one either by treating them as one51 or by deleting a letter.52
2. Taḥfif “lightness” by treating diptotes as triptotes,53 or by deleting a particle.54

In both cases the relation between al-kaṭra and deletion is not established, although a beginning of such a relation may be observed. al-Farrāʾ refers to deleting particles due to frequency. Also the concept of ḥiṣfa is related to deletion. 55 Sībawayhi establishes this relation in the Kitāb clearly, he states:وَكُلَّهُمُ يَضْرِبُ وَهُوَ وَجْدُوْنَهُ فِي سَأْكُرُ فِي كَلَا مَهُمْ لَأَنْهُمْ لَأَنْهُمْ إِلَى تَخْفِيفِ مَا أَكْثَرُ وَأَسْتَعْمَالُهُ إِلَّا حَرْجٌ.56

As to deleting the verb or noun, al-Farrāʾ, like al-Ḥalīl, speaks about ʾiḍmār “suppression” of the verb or noun and not ḥaḍf “deletion”.57

Among his contemporaries it appears that Sībawayhi is unique in establishing a relation between frequency of usage and deletion. He is

49 About the difference between suppression and deletion in al-ʿAyn, refer to Maḥzūmi, Fī al-Nahw al-ʿArabī 207–224.
50 al-Ḥalīl, al-ʿAyn, 1, 330; 3, 121; 215.
52 Ibid., 2, 144.
53 Ibid., 1, 321.
54 Ibid., 2, 314.
56 Sībawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 141, Derenbourg 1, 253/ Būlāq 1, 294.
consistent in linking between frequency and deletion and using the exact terminology any where the relation appears in the Kitāb.

4.3 In al-Muqtadab

Influenced by Sībawayhi, al Mubarrad uses the citations that Sibawayhi uses in discussing eliding a verb, noun or particle and gives similar explanations. A comparative study between the two explanations shows that:

First, the use of al-kaṯra in al-Muqtaḏab is almost nonexistent and when mentioned it is not related to deletion.

Second, the term ḥaḏf “deletion” is not consistently used in al-Muqtaḏab. Instead Mubarrad uses terms like التقدير كذا والتأويل و استغنيت عن ذكر الفعل in explaining some citations. Also, he might use ḥaḏf “deletion” and ʾiḍmār “suppression” exchangeably.

It is noticed that frequency of usage is neglected as a cause for deletion in al-Muqtaḏab, instead the presence of a clue that refers to the elided verb becomes the condition for deletion. The clue may be the situation itself that is sufficient to know the elided element or the knowledge of the listener. al-Mubarrad does not recognize the role of frequency of usage in building the listener’s knowledge.

4.4 In al-ʿUṣūl fī al-Naḥw

Like Sībawayhi, Ibn al Sarrāj differentiates between three types of verbs: An overt verb that cannot be covert, a suppressed verb that may be overt and a suppressed verb that remains covert. In discussing the last two types of the suppressed verb, he uses Sibawayhi’s šawāhid and explains the deletion of the verb neglecting frequency of usage. He focuses though on the presence of a Dalīl (an indicator of what is elided) as a condition to deletion. Ibn al Sarrāj’s al-ʿUṣūl fī al-naḥw shows that grammarians after

\[\text{References:} \]

58 Ten common citations were compared (al-Kitāb–al-Muqtaḏab): 1, 147–4, 202; 1, 147–3, 252; 1, 160–3, 226; 1, 138–3, 212; 1, 139–3, 215; 1, 171–3, 264; 1, 353–2, 151; 1, 279–3, 76; 1, 353–4, 429; 2, 247–2, 302.


60 Ibid., 3, 252; 3, 212; 264.

61 Ibid., 2, 308.

62 Ibid., 3, 215; 3, 264; 2,151.

63 Ibid., 4,429.


65 Ibid., 2, 254.
Sibawayhi, although influenced by him in discussing deletion, neglected the concept of frequency of usage, and focused on the situation of the utterance or knowledge of the speaker as a condition for deletion.

4.5  *In al-Ḥaṣāʾīṣ*

Ibn Jinni devotes a chapter in *al-Ḥaṣāʾīṣ* to *ḥadf*. He discusses deletion of a sentence, a word, a particle and a short vowel: 

وقد حذفت العرب الجملة والمفرد والحرف والحركة وليس شيء من ذلك إلا عن دليل عليه وإلا كان فيه تكليف علم الغيب

Arabs deleted sentences, words, particles and vowels and they did so only while there is an indicator of it otherwise it would be entrusting knowledge of the unknown.66 In the deletion chapter, frequency is neglected. Ibn Jinni is more interested in the context of the utterance as it is a powerful clue to the elided verb:

ومن ذلك أن ترى رجلا قد سدد سهام نحو القدر ثم أرسله فتسمع صوتا يقول البرقاس والله أي أصاب البرقاس فأصاب الآن في حكم الملفوظة البينة. وإذ لم يوجد في الفظ غير أن دلالة الحال نبات مناب الفظ.

And among that when you see a man aiming an arrow towards the target and then shooting and then you hear a sound so you say “the target” meaning “he hit the target”, hit, although not pronounced, it has the status of a pronounced verb, however, the situation itself substituted for the pronunciation of the verb hit.67

This citation is presented as an illustration of the deleted verb that is considered pronounced because of a clue that refers to it: 

باب في أن المحدود إذا دللت الدلالة عليه كان في حكم الملفوظ به إلا أن يعترض هناك من صناعة الفظ ما يمنع منه 68

The focus in this citation is the context of the situation that substituted for the pronunciation of the verb. In this example, the verb may be overt, nevertheless it is referred to as *Māḥḏūf* “deleted”. The distinction between *ʾidmār* “suppression” and *ḥadf* “deletion” seem to be insignificant.

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67 Ibid., 1, 286.
68 Ibid., 1, 285.
Conclusion

This paper has shown that the relation between frequency of usage and deletion as established in the Kitāb was neglected after Sibawayhi. Deletion was developed as a concept but not in relation to al-kaṭra “frequent usage” and post-Kitāb sources limit themselves to setting rules and conditions for ḥaḍf “deletion”. Although influenced by Sibawayhi, these sources did not pay attention to frequency of usage and its role in making the utterance known to the listener.

The relation between frequency of usage and deletion as established in the Kitāb highlights the internal unity of Sibawayhi’s work. Sibawayhi establishes a link between the two notions wherever they appear in the Kitāb. What is more, he is consistent in using the right term of ḥaḍf “deletion”, ʾiḍmār “suppression” or ihtizāl “reduction” when describing the linguistic phenomena he is dealing with, as this study shows. Sibawayhi’s unique achievement in establishing the relation between kaṯra “frequent usage” and ḥaḍf “deletion” among all his contemporaries and successors proves that the Kitāb still holds much linguistic treasure to be unearthed and studied.

References

Primary Sources

Secondary Sources


### Tables

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page no. (Būlaq)</th>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Frequency of usage led to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/138</td>
<td>إياك والأسد Beware of the Lion</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb after ’iyyāka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/138</td>
<td>رأسه والحائط Your head and the wall</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb دع رأسه والحائط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/147</td>
<td>أخذته بدرهم فصاعدا I took it for one Dirham and more</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb فذهبن الثمن صاعدا</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/147</td>
<td>يا عبد الله O [calling] ‘Abdallāhi</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb يا أريد عبد الله</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/147</td>
<td>من أنت زيدا Who are you to mention Zayd</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb من أنت تذكر زيدا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/148</td>
<td>أما أنت منطقتا انطلقت معاك You are departing then I depart with you</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb أما أنت منطقتا انطلقت معاك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/149</td>
<td>مرحبا وأهلا Thou hast come to amleness, spaciousness, and kinsfolk</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb رحبت بلادك وأهلا</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/353</td>
<td>رأيت رجلا By God, what a man he is</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb نأي ما رأيت رجلا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/141</td>
<td>ولا زعماتك I am not deluded by your claims</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb ولا أنوهم زعماتك</td>
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Table 1 (cont.)

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<tr>
<td>1/142</td>
<td>دیار میا The dwellings of Mayya</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/142</td>
<td>کلیهما وتمرا Both of them and dates</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/142</td>
<td>کل شيء ولا شتیمدة حر Anything but cursing a free man</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/143</td>
<td>اتهمها خيرا لكم Stop what you are doing and go for what is good</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/114</td>
<td>إذا كان عند فاطمی Come to me tomorrow</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/114</td>
<td>حينئذ الآن At the time now</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/279</td>
<td>ما أعفه عنك شيئا He did not hide anything from you</td>
<td>Deletion of the verb</td>
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Table 2

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/179</td>
<td>لولا عبد الله لكان كذا وكدذا If it were not for ‘Abdallāhi</td>
<td>Deletion of noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/353</td>
<td>لازکورد رجل اک No man like Zayd</td>
<td>Deletion of the noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/145</td>
<td>أي والله Yes by God</td>
<td>Deletion of the noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/146</td>
<td>لعمر الله لأفعان By God, I will do . . .</td>
<td>Deletion of the noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/42</td>
<td>إذا ابن أبي موسى بلغته If you reach Ibn Abi Moussa</td>
<td>Favoring of independent <em>ibn</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/44</td>
<td>وثلاث كلهن قتلت I killed all three</td>
<td>Favoring of dependent <em>kullahuna</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/137</td>
<td>راشدا مهیدا May God make thee to be a follower of a right way</td>
<td>Favoring of dependent <em>rašidan mahdiyyan</em></td>
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Table 2 (cont.)

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<td>صبر جميل فكلنا مبتلى فلن ننسى</td>
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<td>1/110</td>
<td>سير عليه اليوم</td>
<td>Favoring of al yawm</td>
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<td>1/130</td>
<td>إن خير أمير بقدر أن يكون زيد</td>
<td>Favoring of independent hayr</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/377</td>
<td>أنتو في إلا أن يكون زيد</td>
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<td>فداء لله</td>
<td>Favoring of oblique fidā</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/401–402</td>
<td>أي</td>
<td>Favoring the use of the plural form in interrogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/460</td>
<td>هذا يوم يقوم زيد</td>
<td>Expanding the use of Yawm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/318</td>
<td>يا ابن أم وأبن عم O son of the matriarchs and patriarchs</td>
<td>Favoring of dependent um and ‘am</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/403</td>
<td>من زيدا Who is Zayd</td>
<td>Favoring of dependent noun that follows man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/42</td>
<td>ذا وذي ولأ وآلا</td>
<td>Treating these nouns as particles (changing them to be different from its likes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/69</td>
<td>بعير حامض A sour camel</td>
<td>Favoring of the pattern حمضية</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/101</td>
<td>فعيلة</td>
<td>Favoring of the pattern فعل as plural</td>
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<td>1/351</td>
<td>لا غلام ظريف لك You do not have a gracious slave</td>
<td>Deletion of nunation</td>
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<td>1/314</td>
<td>هذا زيد بن عمر</td>
<td>Deletion of nunation</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/316</td>
<td>يا تيم بم عدي</td>
<td>Deletion of nunation</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/301</td>
<td>نعم و بس</td>
<td>Deletion of the short vowel fatḥa</td>
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Table 2 (cont.)

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<td>Deletion of letters from النبر</td>
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<td>2/264</td>
<td>الخجاج</td>
<td>Favoring of imala of the sound of ʾalif</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/310</td>
<td>الله</td>
<td>Changing the word to be different from its likes (the definite article is inseparable from the noun)</td>
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Table 3

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<td>لاَهُ أَبُوك/ لَقِيْتِهُ أَمِّي</td>
<td>Deletion of the prepositions</td>
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<td>By God, your father, I met him yesterday</td>
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<td>اللّٰهُ لَقِيْتَن</td>
<td>Deletion of the particle و</td>
</tr>
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<td>By God, I will do . . .</td>
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<td>2/144</td>
<td>وَجَدْتُ مَا يُمِّرِيجُ بِهَا</td>
<td>Deletion of the particle رب</td>
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<td>2/46</td>
<td>أَنْتُ أَفْضَلُ</td>
<td>Deletion of the preposition من</td>
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<td>You are better</td>
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<tr>
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<td>أَمَّا أَنْ يُغْفِرَ اللّٰهُ لَكَ</td>
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<td>May God forgive you</td>
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<td>1/330</td>
<td>ُيا قُومِ</td>
<td>Deletion of the letter ُيا قومي</td>
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<td></td>
<td>O my kin</td>
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<td>ُيا صاحِب</td>
<td>Deletion of the letter ُيا صاحب</td>
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<td></td>
<td>O companion</td>
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<td>2/222</td>
<td>اِيِضَنَّ</td>
<td>Deletion of the letter اِيضاً</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Become white</td>
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<td>الَذِي وَلَتِي/ الْذِّبْحَ وَاللَّتِي</td>
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<td>الذي وليتی/ القذیة واللیتي</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/165</td>
<td>أَرَى وَتِرِثَ</td>
<td>Deletion of hamza</td>
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<td>أرى وتيرث</td>
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<td>2/343</td>
<td>أَفْعَلَ</td>
<td>Deletion of ʾalif in the present tense</td>
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<td>أفعل</td>
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<tr>
<td>2/345, 347, 349</td>
<td>استحِيا/ بعث/ طاه/ تاء/ نم/ نم المُرَأَة</td>
<td>Deletion of the letters wāw and yā</td>
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<td>1/301</td>
<td>لعَلِيَّة</td>
<td>Deletion of ta from لعَلِيَّة</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/386</td>
<td>نِعَمُ العَرَأَة</td>
<td>Deletion of the letter نِعَمُ العَرَأَة</td>
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<td>for لم العراة</td>
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Table 2 (cont.)

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<td>أَرَى وَتِرِثَ</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>أرى وتيرث</td>
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<td>أَفْعَلَ</td>
<td>Deletion of ʾalif in the present tense</td>
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<td>أفعل</td>
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<td>استحِيا/ بعث/ طاه/ تاء/ نم/ نم المُرَأَة</td>
<td>Deletion of the letters wāw and yā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>استحيت/ بخ/ طاه/ تاء/ نم/ نم الممرأة</td>
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<td>نِعَمُ العَرَأَة</td>
<td>Deletion of the letter نِعَمُ العَرَأَة</td>
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Table 4

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<tr>
<td>1/138</td>
<td>إياك والأسد&lt;br&gt;Beware of the Lion</td>
<td>The verb is deleted because the utterance is frequently used and ʾiyyāka substituted for the verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/147</td>
<td>يأ عبد الله&lt;br&gt;Yā [calling] Abdallāhī</td>
<td>The verb is deleted because the utterance is frequently used and yā substituted for the verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/147</td>
<td>من أنت زيدا&lt;br&gt;Who are you to mention Zayd</td>
<td>The verb is deleted because of frequency of usage and knowledge of the listener</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/149</td>
<td>مرحبا وأهلا&lt;br&gt;Thou hast come to amleness, spaciousness, and kinsfolk</td>
<td>The verb is deleted because of frequency of usage and the verbal noun substituted for the verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/353</td>
<td>تأله رجلا&lt;br&gt;By God, what a man he is</td>
<td>The verb is deleted because it is known to the listener that the verb is not mentioned in this utterance due to frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/143</td>
<td>اتهوا خير الكب&lt;br&gt;Stop what you’re doing and go for what’s good</td>
<td>The verb is deleted due to frequency of usage and knowledge of the listener</td>
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Table 5

<table>
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<td>ولا زعماك&lt;br&gt;I am not deluded by your claims</td>
<td>Utterance gained the status of a proverb due to frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/142</td>
<td>ديار مية&lt;br&gt;The dwellings of Mayya</td>
<td>Utterance gained the status of a proverb due to frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/142</td>
<td>كليمها وتما&lt;br&gt;Both of them and dates</td>
<td>Utterance gained the status of a proverb due to frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/142</td>
<td>كل شيء ولا شئية حر&lt;br&gt;Anything but cursing a free man</td>
<td>Utterance gained the status of a proverb due to frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/114</td>
<td>إذ آكان غد فائتي&lt;br&gt;Come to me tomorrow</td>
<td>Utterance gained the status of a proverb due to frequency of usage</td>
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### Table 5 (cont.)

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<td>1/114</td>
<td>حينّنذ الآن At the time now</td>
<td>Utterance gained the status of a proverb due to frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/279</td>
<td>ما غفّله عنك شيئا He didn't hide anything from you</td>
<td>Utterance gained the status of a proverb due to frequency of usage</td>
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### Table 6

<table>
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<td>1/353</td>
<td>لا كرير رجلا No man like Zayd</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/145</td>
<td>أي والله Yes by God</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/146</td>
<td>لعمر الله لأفعان By God, I will do...</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/351</td>
<td>لا غلام ظريف لك You do not have a gracious slave</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/314</td>
<td>هذا زيد بن عمر</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/316</td>
<td>يا أبا يمّ عمّ عدي</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/301</td>
<td>نعم وبنس</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>ست</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
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<td>2/430</td>
<td>بلعنبر</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/294</td>
<td>لاه أبوك لاقفيه أمس By God, your father, I met him yesterday</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/144</td>
<td>الله لأفعان By God, I will do.</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/144</td>
<td>وجداء ما يرجي بها</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/46</td>
<td>أنت أفضل You are better</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/482</td>
<td>أما آن يغفر الله لك May God forgive you</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
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<td>Page no.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/330</td>
<td>يا قوم</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>O my kin</td>
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<td>1/337</td>
<td>يا صاح</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
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<td>O companion</td>
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<td>2/222</td>
<td>ابيض</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Become white</td>
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<td>2/140</td>
<td>الذئب واللذي واللذة واللتين</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
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<td>2/165</td>
<td>أرى وترى</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
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<td>2/343</td>
<td>أفعل</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
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<td>2/345, 347, 349</td>
<td>استحيت/عت/طاح/تاه</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/301</td>
<td>نعم المرأة</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
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<td>1/386</td>
<td>لعلي</td>
<td>Frequency of usage</td>
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PART II

SĪBAWAYHI IN HIS HISTORICAL AND LINGUISTIC CONTEXT
THE PARsING OF SĪBAWAYHī’S KITĀB, TITLE OF CHAPTER 1,
OR FIFTY WAYS TO LOSE YOUR READER

M.G. Carter

The work which forms the basis of this paper appears as the 14th mas’ala in a compilation of short essays on miscellaneous linguistic topics attributed to Abū ‘Alī al-Fārisī (d. 377/987). It deals with the parsing of the title of Sībawayhi’s Kitāb, Chapter 1, hāḏā bāb ‘ilm mā al-kalim min al-ʿarabiyya, and presents fifty grammatical interpretations of the seven words which launched the science of Arabic grammar.

The authorship is questionable for various reasons. Biographical sources do not mention it among Abū ‘Alī’s works, nor does he refer to it in other writings consulted, where, moreover, he uses jarr for the oblique case and not ḥafḍ as here. Šalabī argues that all the masā’il in the set are probably by Abū ‘Alī, and is followed in this by Sezgin and the editor of the Bağdādiyyāt, while the editor of the Ta’liqa is sceptical. A serious objection is that the very first mas’ala in the collection contains a brief excursus on lying which is quoted in full by al-Bağdādi (d. 1093/1682), but there ascribed to Abū Bakr Ibn al-Anbārī (d. 328/940). For convenience we will have to give Abū ‘Alī the benefit of the doubt.

The theme may be quite ancient: Abū ‘Alī himself states elsewhere that “Abū l-ʿAbbās [al-Mubarrad (d. 285–6/898–9)] and earlier grammarians” used this chapter title as parsing practice for students, though it does not appear where it might be expected in al-Mubarrad’s main work, the Muqtaṣab.

Predating Abū ‘Alī by a good generation is al-Kalām fī taḥṣil ʿiʿrāb qawl Sībawayhi hāḏā bāb ‘ilm mā l-kalim min al-ʿarabiyya, by al-Nahḥās

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1 Šalabī, Min ʿaʾyān al-Shīʿa. Abū ʿAlī al-Fārisī, ḥayātuh wa-makānuh bayn ʿāmmat al-ʿarabiyya wa-ʾtārūf ʿīl-ʿiʿrāb wa-l-nahw bi-munāsabat murūr ʿālī qām ʿalā wafātih. (Cairo, 1958), 568f.
6 al-Fārisī, Bağdādiyyāt 365.
The manuscript could not be examined for this paper, but a secondary source reports that it contains "some 40–odd" parsings, which confirms its similarity to Abū ‘Ali’s *mas’ala* 14.

The only other monograph on this topic is credited to Ibn al-Munāṣif al-Nahwī (Andalusian, d. ca 630/1233), by al-Maqqarī in *Naḥḥ al-Ṭib*, who tells us that it contained the unbelievable number of 130 parsings, but there is no evidence that the work survives.

Not surprisingly the *Kitāb* commentaries all have something to say about the title. al-Sīrāfī (d. 368/979), who probably knew Abū ‘Ali, as they had masters and pupils in common, offers fifteen parsings, and al-Rummānī (d. 384/994), achieves twelve (they do not completely overlap with al-Sīrāfī). In two of Abū ‘Ali’s other works the parsings do not reach double figures, but he devotes a number of pages to the syntax of the title, as do the Andalusians Abū Naṣr Hārūn b. Mūsā (d. 401/1010) and al-A’lam al-Šantamarī (d. 476/1083), the latter relying heavily on al-Sīrāfī.

The text given here (at the end of the article) is the version published by ‘Alī Jābir al-Manṣūrī; the editor’s punctuation and his interventions in round brackets are retained as printed, the present writer's are in square brackets. The serial numbers have been converted for clarity from words to digits, in italics are those which have been moved from the end of the line to the beginning; at no. [12] two parsings were combined as one, confusing both the scribe and the editor, and the correct numbering has been restored. Textual emendations are conjectural in the absence of a sight of the original manuscript. They include replacing ḥayyiz by ḥabar in [36]/[37]; the last phrase of [34] has been moved from the end of [33], where it is clearly misplaced; in [46] the printed text makes no sense, raf’ al-bāb mudāfān ‘ila l-ʿilm wa-l-ʿilm munawwan bi-l-ḥaḍīd ‘alā anna l-ʿilm wa-mā kilahum ḥabar hāḍā “bābu in indep. form annexed to obl. ‘ilmīn with tanwīn on the basis that ʿilm and mā are both predicates of hāḍā” and has been replaced by al-Sīrāfī’s parsing; the last phrase of [46] has been left as ‘iḏā jamaʿa l-ṭaʿmaynī but with misgivings. The count of “sixty” parsings at the end of the text means only that this number could easily have
been reached (\textit{qad tabluğ}), and even more than seventy if the ramifications were followed up more thoroughly.

The Table is an attempt to assign a place to every parsing, with some additional parsings from the \textit{Kitāb} commentaries in square brackets.

The technical vocabulary on the whole reflects the typical discourse of the 4th/10th century grammarians, as indeed it should, if genuine. Unusually, along with the familiar term \textit{taqdīr}, e.g. in [3] (only one token parsing will be cited in the examples), \textit{talḫīš} occurs five times in the same sense, e.g. in [2] and \textit{yatalaḫhaṣ} in [6]. Whether this is a true technical term or a private usage cannot be ascertained: \textit{talḫīš} normally means “abridging, summarising”, but in \textit{Dozy} \textsuperscript{13} it is recorded with the meaning of “calculating” (\textit{scil.} the number of folios per day al-Ṭabarī would have written over his lifetime), and is thus a perfect synonym of \textit{taqdīr} “assigning a numerical or grammatical value”.

In its brevity the work takes a number of methodological principles for granted. Thus the distinction between overt and implicit inflection is observed, e.g. in [8] \textit{al-kalimi} is formally in obl. case by annexation but implicitly in indep. case as the agent of the passive verb implied in ‘ilm, as shown in the paraphrase \textit{(talḫīš)}, ‘\textit{an yu’lama l-kalimu}.

Agreement is accounted for in several ways, by adjectival concord (\textit{naʿt}) [49], apposition (\textit{badal}) [47], repetition (\textit{takrīr}) [38], correlation (\textit{ḥaml}) [18], attraction or a kind of assonance (\textit{ʾitbāʿ}) [12] and equivalence to a compound word \textit{ḥilwun-ḥāmiḍun} “sweet-sour” [46].

\textit{Madḥ} “praise” is used with striking frequency to account for the case in seventeen of the fifty parsings, both dep. [14] and indep. case [15]; in seven pairs of parsings either case is permitted [19/20] etc. \textit{Madḥ} “praise” therefore appears in the Table with all the nouns and pronouns except those in obl. case.

For this paper three topics have been selected for more detailed comment.

(1) Deixis problems with \textit{ḥāḍā}. As a demonstrative pronoun, \textit{ḥāḍā} must refer to something, an issue left entirely untouched in our fifty parsings. However the commentators were not at ease with it. Their three explanations in the first row of the Table are incompatible, and reflect three different scenarios for the public presentation of the \textit{Kitāb} pragmatically as an acoustic, not a literary event, hinging on whether the reference of \textit{ḥāḍā}

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Supplément aux dictionnaires arabe}. 
is anaphoric, cataphoric or purely rhetorical. Rather than review these explanations here it will suffice to link the problem with one which every reader would have called to mind, namely the prefatory demonstratives in the Qurʾān, interpreted in a “presentative” sense (taqrīb, see below), as in Sūra 55:43, ḥāḍīhi jahannamu llatī yukaḏḏibu bihā l-mujrimūn “this is the Hell which the wrong-doers deny”, quoted by al-Sīrāfī.14 In some Kitāb commentaries, notably Abū ʿAlī15 and Hārūn ibn Mūsā16 an elaborate real-life situation is reconstructed in which the chapter title is the answer to a supposed question about what words are, with Hārūn stressing the vocative (tanbīh) force of the initial element of hāḍā.

It should be remembered that the Kitāb is one of the earliest books in Arabic, and appeared well before there were any conventions of composition and arrangement, so it has no formal start. If we are to believe that it was dictated to al-Aḥfash (d. 215/830) then this abrupt and enigmatic hāḍā is the first thing he would have heard as Sībawayhi personally addressed him. Curiously in one MS of the Kitāb the title of Chapter 1 precedes the basmala, suggesting that the custom of beginning every work with the basmala was not always observed.

The deixis in hāḍā at least gives our author the opportunity to account for dep. elements as “presentative predicates” ḥabar al-taqrīb in a number of parsings, e.g. [27], and cf. Sūra 11:72 wa-hāḍā baʿlī šayḥan “And this is my husband, an old man”. Note that the indep. case can also occur with presentative hāḍā, as in hāḍā l-shitāʾu muqbilun “this is the winter approaching”,17 though this possibility is not entertained among our fifty parsings, where presentatives are confined to dep. nouns.

(2) Tanwīn issues. There may or may not be tanwīn on both bāb and ʿilm, and the structural implications would not have gone unnoticed. Two features invite comment:

(a) perhaps because it marks the end of a constituent, tanwīn is associated with potential repetition, e.g. [4] hāḍā bābu ʿilmī mā l-kalimu, [34] hāḍā bābun [bābu] ʿilmī. The plausibility of the analysis is not our concern, and we must assume that these constructions do occur in natural speech or poetry, as is certainly the case with [46] in the kind

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14 Šarḥ fol. 1b, Ḥadiṭī, Kitāb 183, followed by al-Šantamārī in al-Nukat fī taqsīr Kitāb Sībawayhi, ed. Yāḥyā Murād. (Beirut, 2005), 13f.
15 Taʿlīqa, 1, 6.
17 al-Sīrāfī, Šarḥ fol. 1b, Ḥadiṭī, Kitāb 183.
of inflectional repetition seen in the virtual compound ُحِبْوَٰنَ ُحَمِيْدُن “sweet-sour”.

(b) There is a correlation between ِتَنْوِين and the status of the verbal noun ِإِلْم. The impression is that when the ُمَسْدَار is felt to be more nominal than verbal it is annexed, as in [5], ِإِلْمِي ُمَا ُلْ-كَالِمُ “the knowledge of what words are”, and when it is more verbal than nominal it has ِتَنْوِين, [2] ِيَلْمِيْنَ مَا ُلْ-كَالِمُ “knowing what words are”. This reflects the same distinction in the active participle, e.g. nominal ِقَتِلُو ُجُلَامِيْكَا “the killer of your slave”, against verbal ِقَتِلين ُجُلَامِيْكَا “one going to kill your slave”. Objective and subjective annexation are of course taken for granted, as made explicit in the verbal paraphrases of ِإِلْم in [2] ُتَلَامُع (active, objective) and [3] ُأَن يُعَلَّمَا (passive, subjective).

(3) Interrogative and relative ُمَا and problems of subordination. Redundant ُمَا has no function, but when the referential pronoun ُ(‘َأَيِّدا) is omitted, relative ُمَا is indistinguishable from interrogative ُمَا, and ُمَا ُلْ-كَالِمُ can mean either “what are words?” [1] as a question (direct or indirect!), or “what words are” [2] as a relative clause. For pedagogical and expository purposes the ambiguity can be removed by substituting ُعَلَا، e.g. [6] ُعَلْئِسُ ِلَلَاوُقُ ُهُوَ ُلْ-كَالِمُ (also restoring the missing referential pronoun), or by replacing uninflected ُمَا with inflected ُأَيَّ "which[ever]". The ُلُوكَس ُكَلاسِيِسُ is ُيَرِبُ ُأَيْوْهُم ُعَفَّدَلُ “hit whichever of them is best”, with indep. case of ُأَيْوَ as the subject of an interrogative clause (cf. ُسُرَا ُسِرَارَة، ُعَلْئِسُ ِلْ-ِهِزِبَاِي in [1]), versus ُيَرِبُ ُأَيْوْهُم ُعَفَّدَلُ, with dep. ُأَيْوَا as the object of ُيَرِبُ in a relative clause, “hit the one of them who is best”. So far so good: we must pass over the fact that there was just as much dispute about the inflection of ُأَيَّ as there was about the status of ُمَا, and proceed to the main difficulty for the grammarians, how to accommodate interrogative clauses syntactically into compound sentences when there was no standardised structure for indirect questions or even indirect speech.

Since the fifty parsings are only jumping-off points for the author to develop the material in the classroom or ُماجِلِس, we can best start by listing here a series of interdependent assumptions which would have been elaborated during discussion. They are drawn largely from Abū ُعَلِي’s explicit treatment of the topic in his ُتَلِيْقا and ُبَاجِدَادِيِيْيِي.”

(a) Relative clauses are pronominalised sentences, that is, they can function in any position where a pronoun can occur. “Pronominalised” is preferrable to the usual term “nominalised” here because so-called “nominalised” sentences cannot occur as the first term of annexation, a
characteristic they share with pronouns (including demonstratives). Thus in Arabic, as in English, we may say “the name of the book” and “the name of it” but not *“the it of the book”, likewise the clause in “the name of the book which he wrote” can be pronominalised as “the name of it”, but there is no *“the which he wrote of it”. Interrogative sentences, on the other hand, cannot by definition function as single nouns or be pronominalised at all (see *jumla* below): they remain autonomous sentences, and when they occur in the position of subordinate clauses, they are either direct objects of the verb in the special case of *qāla* “say”, or pseudo-objects of verbs of asking, knowing etc.

(b) The function of a clause being determined by its head, it is conventional to state only the inflection of the head, with the remainder of the clause being considered a mere adjunct (*ṣila*) in the Arab theory. Thus in [2] relative *mā* is said to have dep. case as the object of the verb, whereas we might see the whole clause as the object. The same procedure is followed with interrogative clauses, which by default have to appear in some function or other (*mawḍī*, syntactical position), as in [5], where *mā* is said to have obl. status by the annexation of *ʿilm*, even though, as the subject in an interrogative *jumla*, *mā* cannot be directly operated on by an outside element (hence marked with * in the Table, row 4).

(c) When questions do seem to be objects of verbs of knowing, asking etc. (apart from *qāla*), the Arab theory is that these verbs are “suspended” (*muʿallaq*) or “neutralised” (*mulğa*), and do not operate grammatically on the interrogative sentences, which remain quotations of direct speech and not subordinate clauses. Note that both these concepts of neutralisation (*ʿilɡā*) and suspension (*taʿlīq*) arise in conversations between Sibawayhi, al-Ḫalīl and Yūnūs, and most of the issues of neutralised verbs are covered in the *Kitāb*.

(d) The unit of discourse labelled *jumla* is important. In later grammar *jumla* was subcategorised into various types of sentences and subordinate or coordinate clauses, but in the 10th century it is less specific, denoting a group of words with an internal syntactic structure which cannot be over-ridden by external operators. It is strongly linked to direct speech, and the terms *ḥikāya* and *ḥadīṯ* often occur alongside it.

The structural property of the interrogative *jumla*, that it cannot be pronominalised, is matched by a semantic property which it has in common with conditionals, imperatives, prohibitions, optatives, performatives and

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exclamatory sentences. All these are termed ḡayr wājib by Sībawayhi, lit. "non-binding", i.e. not placing the speaker under the obligation of the speech contract to make a verifiable statement. We would call them "non-assertive" (and not "negative" as in some of the secondary literature, since non-assertive sentences can be positive or negative), and in later grammar most of these utterances were classified as ‘īnšā’, lit. "creating", denoting speech acts intended to elicit a physical or linguistic reaction, in contrast to ‘īḥbār, the conveying of information in the form of declarative sentences.

As mentioned above, the peculiar status of indirect questions had already attracted the attention of Sībawayhi and his teachers, who could only account for it by appealing to the somewhat ad hoc notions of "neutralisation" (‘īlgā’) and "suspension" (taʿliq) to explain how the main verb does not operate grammatically on the following clauses. Abū ‘Alī holds to this principle, but he stands out among the commentators for the thoroughness with which he applies it to the title of Chapter 1 of the Kitāb, and particularly for extending it to the problem of whether questions can be agents of passive verbs.

Following Sībawayhi, Abū ‘Alī shows that the verbs which take interrogative clauses as apparent objects all belong to a category whose operation can be neutralised or suspended under certain conditions. Thus in ‘alimtu Zaydan munṭaliqan “I knew Zayd [was] gone” the verb has two genuine direct objects, while in ‘alimtu ‘anna Zaydan munṭaliqun “I knew that Zayd [was] gone” its operation has been cancelled by ‘anna, and the (pronominalised) ‘anna clause occupies only the position of the first direct object. Applying the same analysis to ‘alimtu mā l-kalimu “I knew what words are”, the interrogative clause, being a jumla, can likewise fill only one slot, yet al-kalimu can substitute for a second direct object in the same way as munṭaliqun in ‘alimtu ‘anna Zaydan munṭaliqun. In both cases the clause is in the position (mawḍi’) of a direct object without actually being one.

Abū ‘Alī also offers a second, pragmatic explanation. He supposes that the question has been put, “what are words?”, and the chapter heading answers it by repeating the question, which he paraphrases as hādā bābu ‘an ta’lama mā l-kalimu “this is a chapter of [the fact] that you will know ‘what are words?’", effectively retaining direct speech.
Abū ‘Alī goes a step further, and asks why questions cannot be the agents of passive verbs. His hypothetical examples are ‘ulima ḍaraba Zaydun “Zayd struck was known”, ẓunna kayfa Zaydun “how is Zayd was thought”, and ‘ulima ’ayna Zaydun “where is Zayd was known”. There is little difficulty in accepting that the first is impossible, but the second appears merely unlikely, while the third, especially if rendered in more natural English as “it was known where Zayd was”, seems unobjectionable to Indo-European linguistic intuitions, yet all three are classified as lā yajūz “not permitted”, and by the same token ‘ulima mā l-kalimu “what are words was known” is also disallowed.

The formal argument for rejecting these sentences as passive agents is irrefutable: each item is a jumla, a syntactic complex which cannot be replaced by a single term, i.e. [pro]nominalised, therefore it cannot be a topic of predication, and a fortiori cannot be the agent of a verb either. There are supporting semantic arguments having to do with the special nature of the verb ‘ulima “know”, but they will not be explored here.

In practice constructions of the type ‘ulima ’ayna Zaydun are rather rare, and the phenomenon still needs to be investigated. It is a grey area of Arabic syntax, which has no fully developed structure for reported speech and indirect questions.

The situation is still unresolved in modern Arabic: Cantarino paints a picture of complete chaos, with relative structures in indirect questions and interrogative forms in relative clauses.

An obvious exception is qīla “was said” and its partner ʾujība “was answered” from dialectic, but these are a special case (see Guillaume). With suʾila “was asked” we seem to have an intermediate type somewhere between qīla and ‘ulima: a sentence such as suʾila ’ayna Zaydun (the example is made up) does not mean “[the question] ‘where is Zayd?’ was asked”, but “he was asked, ‘where is Zayd?’” (in more natural English

20 Abū ‘Ali may be among the first to take this topic so seriously; it was obviously going round in his time, as it was raised earlier by Ibn al-Wallād (d. 332/943, see M. Bernards, Changing Traditions. al-Mubarrad’s Refutation of Sībawayh and the Subsequent Reception of the Kitāb. Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997: 123), and it was discussed by al-Fāriqi (d. 391/1001, see the extracts in the footnotes to al-Mubarrad, Kitāb al-Muqtaḍab, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Ḥāliq ʿUdayma. (Cairo, 1965–8), 4: 62ff and the editor’s remarks id. 1: 85f), Sībawayhi does not mention it, and the rôle of al-Mubarrad remains to be ascertained.


“he was asked where Zayd was”, that is, it is the passive equivalent of saʾaltuhu ʾayna Zaydun “I asked him where Zayd was” and the like. In suʿila suʿālun “a question was asked” (more accurately “some questioning was done” we have a mafʿūl mutlaq, not a direct object, and it does not tell us the content of the question any more than qīla qawlun “a saying was said” tells us the contents of the statement, so these are not within the scope of Abū ʿAlī’s analysis.

The fifty parsings are enumerated without any stated preference, but in the commentaries the vocalisation hādā bābu ʿilm mā l-kalimu min al-ʿarabiyya is clearly preferred by all scholars for the title in the Kitāb itself, with the tanwín of ʿilm often spelt out and mā l-kalimu specified as an interrogative clause. It is difficult to be sure which of our fifty, if any, corresponds to this in every part. In [1] the mā clause is interrogative but ʿilmun is indep. (because it is treated as a quotation, like Sūra titles, Sūrat al-Munāfiqūn etc.), [2], [3] and [6] are explicitly relative clauses, while in [4] the nature of the mā clause is not stated, and in [5] the clause is interrogative, to be sure, but ʿilm is without tanwín. The remaining parsings add nothing, and this uncertainty is itself another argument against the authorship of Abū ʿAlī, who elsewhere leaves no doubt that ʿilmīn and interrogative mā are the only authentic readings for the Kitāb.

In four printed versions of the Kitāb, Hārūn’s edition leaves the title unwovelled, while Derenbourg, Būlāq and a Lebanese pirate edition are all vocalised with ʿilmī, which is only the third preference in al-Sīrāfī, not proposed at all by al-Rummānī, and appears in nos. [5] (interrogative) and [6] (relative) and elsewhere in our fifty. The Būlāq, Hārūn and Lebanese editions are all based on Derenbourg (Humbert), so we are looking at the reading of one Frenchman against the prevailing Muslim tradition. To be fair Derenbourg was only following the Paris copy (his MS A), which appears to have ʿilmī: in three other manuscripts consulted two were not vowelled anyway, but the third has a clear tanwín (Humbert, Voies Pl. IX), and is thus consistent with the majority preference.

Inexplicably de Sacy in the first printed edition of this chapter reproduces the short version of the title from Derenbourg’s MS A (i.e. lacking min al-ʿarabiyya), as hādā bāb ʿilm mā l-kalima (no inflections are

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23 Taʿlīqa 1,3, Bağdādiyyāt 365, al-tanwín fī ʿilm wa-ʾanna mā istifhāmiyya, and cf. the facsimile of the manuscript in Taʿlīqa 1, intro. 62.


marked), replacing the original plur. *al-kalim* with with generic fem. sing. *al-kalima*; he offers no justification for this choice (cf. his n. 2, p. 384), nor does Denenbourg remark on it. Certainly the plur. *al-kalim* is the original, and most commentators (al-Sīrāfī fol. 2a, al-Rummānī 113, al-Šantamārī 14, Hārūn 5) felt obliged to account for its distributive sense, as if they would have preferred the general term *al-kalām* “speech”, reflecting the scholastic distinction between dividing the whole (*kalām*) into its parts and the generic (*kalima*) into the particular.

As for the motives for constructing the fifty parsings, there are three possibilities, pedagogical, systematic and professional. A pedagogical intention cannot be ruled out, though the technicalities of the parsings would have gone over the heads of all but the most advanced students, and it is hard to see what they would have learned from them.

In their range and complexity the parsings are proof of the highly developed state of grammar achieved within a century and a half of Sibawayhi’s death, and it is very likely that they have a systematic purpose. By the 4th/10th century all the sciences were in a ferment of elaboration and demarcation within the emergent Islamic *Organon*: it is the era of the classification of the sciences, such as the *Mafātīḥ al-ʿulūm* of al-Ḫwarazmī (d. 387/997), and of the appearance of works with the title *ʿUṣūl al-naḥw* and *ʿUṣūl al-fiqh*, two closely related sciences which evolved in tandem.

Both Islamic law and Arabic grammar necessarily claimed to be exhaustive, that is, they operated on the principle that there was no problem which they could not solve, and here the parsings, like the hypothetical cases in law (*šuwar*), go far beyond pedagogy. They serve to test the system, often to limits which might seem absurd, but which can never stray into irrationality, for then they would simply be rejected. Common sense plays no part in this, only systematic coherence: as we have seen, the thirteenth century Andalusian Ibn al-Munāṣif is said to have devised 130 parsings of the *Kitāb* chapter title, in his case probably an attempt to outshine his rival grammarians in the East, while an anonymous sixteenth century scholar rose to the occasion with 1,800,000 ways to parse a certain verse of al-Mutanabbi.26 A mediaeval European analogue is the debate (possibly spurious) about the number of angels who could dance upon a pinhead, where the aim was not to come to a numerically precise conclusion but to

show that within the limits of the human mind there are no topics which cannot be tackled.

These are typical activities of a civilisation in a state of intellectual homeostasis, to use a term which avoids the negative connotations of calling it a closed or stagnant world: it is the consequence of “closing the gate of *ijtihād*”, which took place in the 4th/10th century, when the Muslim community decided to limit the linguistic and legal data to a finite body of text in order to provide a valid basis for deductive reasoning in the application of grammar and law, but which also led, inevitably, to counting up the number of verses, words and even letters in the Qurʾān.

In a more subtle way the proliferation of parsings, as with legal speculations, demonstrates another axiom of Islamic reasoning, to wit that the exercise of unaided human intelligence does not lead to unique and universally accepted conclusions but only, as the lawyers put it, to *‘akbar al-ẓann* “the most likely supposition”, with absolute certainly being confined to revealed truths.

Such exercises are more than simply displays of pedagogical virtuosity or academic ingenuity, however, and have good professional motives as well. Abū ‘Alī’s fifty parsings are an assertion of his competence and a challenge to fellow grammarians to do better (perhaps even with the earlier forty parsings of al-Naḥḥās in mind). Islamic scholarship was an extremely disputatious arena in which a scholar’s prestige depended on his ability to defeat opponents in public debate, and hundreds of controversies both oral and written are recorded, notably in the *majālis* literature. In the spirit of the Ḥadīth *iḫtilāf ʾummatī raḥma* “disagreement in my community is a mercy”, scholars competing in *ṭalab al-riʾāsa* “the quest for leadership” strove to assert their superiority by having the last word, and many such encounters are collected under the title *al-ʾajwiba l-muskita* “answers which reduce the opponent to silence”. There is no more famous (or infamous) incident in our field than the *Masʾala l-zunbūriyya*, in which Sibawayhi was humiliated by counter-evidence from Bedouin informants who, some say, had been bribed by al-Kīsāʾī to provide false data.

What is truly remarkable is that every notion deployed in our fifty parsings is already explicitly stated or clearly foreshadowed in the *Kitāb*. There is a pleasing circularity in the fact that Sibawayhi’s first words are analysed in terms of his own grammatical theory, and it is historically significant that, in order to demonstrate control of this theory and earn the scholarly authority it confers, Abū ‘Alī should remain entirely within the Sibawayhian system, even when making his private excursion into the
topic of questions as agents of passive verbs. This is one reason why the
parsings were chosen for this paper, to confirm the rôle of the Kitāb as
the “Foundation of Arab Linguistics”, which has been the theme of this
conference.

We are still talking about the parsings a thousand years later, so Abū ‘Ali has achieved more than he expected, as it is unlikely that he envis-
aged such a chronologically and geographically distant audience as this majlis of ours.

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### Parsings and Functions of \( \text{hāḍā bāb 'ilm mā l-kalim min al-‘arabīyya} \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. ( \text{ذا} )</th>
<th>[anaphoric to something present]</th>
<th>[cataphoric to sth. coming]</th>
<th>[rhetorical or mental deixis]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. ( \text{بَاب} )</td>
<td>annexed to ( '\text{ilm} )</td>
<td>not annexed to ( '\text{ilm} )</td>
<td>annexed to ( '\text{ilm} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. predicate of ( \text{hāḍā} )</td>
<td>2. pairs with ( '\text{ilm} ) like ( ḥɪल\text{wun} ) ( ḥ\text{āmīdun} )</td>
<td>1. ( '\text{ilm} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. ( \text{madḥ} )</td>
<td>2. ( '\text{ilm} )</td>
<td>2. ( '\text{ilm} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ( \text{علم} )</td>
<td>annexed to ( \text{mā} ) or ( \text{al-kalimi} ) if ( \text{mā} ) redundant</td>
<td>not annexed to next word, made obl. by ( \text{bāb} ), or by:</td>
<td>not annexed to next word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. intention to repeat ( '\text{ilm} )</td>
<td>1. pred. of ( \text{hāḍā} )</td>
<td>1. pred. of ( \text{hāḍā} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. intended repetition of ( \text{bāb} )</td>
<td>2. predicate of elided ( \text{huwa} )</td>
<td>2. predicate of elided ( \text{huwa} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. ( \text{madḥ} )</td>
<td>3. apposition or ( \text{na‘t to bābun} )</td>
<td>3. apposition or ( \text{na‘t to bābun} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. ( \text{badal of hāḍā} )</td>
<td>4. pairs with ( \text{bābun} ) like ( \text{ḥ\text{īl\text{wun}} h\text{āmīdun} \text{madḥ} )</td>
<td>4. pairs with ( \text{bābun} ) like ( \text{ḥ\text{īl\text{wun}} h\text{āmīdun} \text{madḥ} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. ( \text{madḥ} )</td>
<td>5. ( \text{madḥ} )</td>
<td>5. ( \text{madḥ} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. م</td>
<td>interrogative م</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. indep., subject of al-kalimu</td>
<td>relative م with elided هو</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. indep., predicate of al-kalimu</td>
<td>redundant, emphatic, indef. م</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. * obl. by annexation of ؤlm</td>
<td>1. redundant م, no function at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. emphatic م, no grammatical effect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. indefinite م, no grammatical effect</td>
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<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. الكلم</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. predicate of م</td>
<td>A. independent functions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. subject of م</td>
<td>1. agent of passive verb in ؤlm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. predicate of elided huwa</td>
<td>2. apposition to باب(n), like a na’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. agent of passive sense of ؤlm</td>
<td>3. repeating contents of, or agreeing with بده باب(n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. agent of passive يللم</td>
<td>4. after elided huwa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. predicate of بده</td>
<td>5. predicate of بده after qat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. predicate of بده</td>
<td>6. madḥ of باب or ؤlm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. madḥ of بده or ؤlm</td>
<td>B. dependent functions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. oblique functions:</td>
<td>1. object of active verb in ؤlm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. annexation of ؤlm</td>
<td>2. after elided udkur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. agreeing with ؤلمن</td>
<td>3. taqrīb with بده</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. madḥ of باب or ؤلم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>only with redundant, emphatic or indefinite م</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. object of verb implied in ؤلم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. taqrīb with بده</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. madḥ of بده with indefinite م</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| the parsing of sībawayhi’s kitāb | only with redundant, emphatic or indefinite م |
|---------------------------------| 1. annexed by active ؤلم |
|                                 | 2. annexed by passive ؤلم |
|                                 | 3. apposition to ؤلم, ؤلمن |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>مكّم</td>
<td>if علم paraphrased as اعلم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>لا يعلم</td>
<td>not applicable if ما redundant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. interrogative ما:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. *dep. function as obj. of اعلم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. relative ما</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. object of active sense of اعلم with suppressed حوا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. annexed by اعلم in active sense</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B. relative ما</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. agent of passive sense of اعلم with suppressed حوا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. annexed by اعلم, passive sense</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory</th>
<th>Partitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. predicate of هدأ</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. predicate of ما</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table (cont.)**

قوله هذا باب علم ما الكَمِم (من العربية) في خمسة جواباً

1. هذا باب علم باسمضمة الباب إلى العلم، وثنوين العلم، ورفع العلم، والباب خبر هذا، وهو خاضع للكلمة والكلمة خبر ما، وموضع ما رفع بالكلمة، والكلمة خبر لها، كما لم ينصب العلم إلا في قوله تعالى "العلم أي الخزائن [أحسن]" (الكهف 18/12).

2. أن يقصر على (ما) بالنص، بفعل مضمر من العلم مسماً فاعلاً تلخيصه علم يعْلَمَهُ الذي هو الكلم، وتأويل ما الذي وصلته هو الكلم، وعائدة (هو) والكلم يرفعها (هو).

3. ارتفاع (ما) ينصب من العلم لم يسم فاعلاً، وتقدير هذا المضمور: هذا باب علم يُعلم (يه) ما الكلم من العربية.

4. خفض (ما) بالمضمور، والتفصيل: هذا باب علم ما الكلم، فكأنه علم من علم.

5. سقوط التثنين من العلم، وإن قال: هذا باب علم ما الكلم (فما) مخوضة بإضافة العلم إليها، ولا تمسك فاعلة العلم ولا مفعوله.

6. أن يقصر على (ما) بالرفع على تأويل فعل ما لم يسم قاعلاً، وإن كان العلم خفضه في الظاهر وتلخيص: العلم هذا باب أن يعلم (يه) الشيء الذي هو الكلم.

7. خفض الكلم بإضافة العلم إليه، وما تؤكد تقريرها: باب علم الكلم.
أن يقضي على الكلم بالرفع وهو مخفوض في المفتاح تلخيص هذا باب أن يعلم الكلم
9 تونى العلم بالخفض، ورفع الكلم بفعل من العلم غير مسنى حاله، وما تؤكد لا [حكم] له بالعراب
8 ينون العلم مخفوض. ونصب الكلم بمشتق من العلم مسنى قاعه وليس لـ (ما) موضع من الأعراب اذكانت لا تفيد إلا التوكيد
7 خفض العلم، والعلم متنوع بقيره، وما تؤكد للكلام
6 ارتفاع (ما) والعلم متنوع مخفوض على الأتباع لباب ومنشها بالنوعت
5 فإن رفعت (ما) على التكرير على ما في الباب من ذكر هذا فهو الوجه
4 فإن نصبت (ما) على المصدح للمضرد الذي في الباب كان ذلك
3 وإن رفع على المصدح أو على التكرير على المضرد فهما 1.5
2 وإن جعلت ما تؤكد الكلم على الأعراب في الباب فهو 17
1 وإن حل على أعراب المضرد فهو 18
20، 19 وإن مدح المضرد بالكلم فنصب الكلم أو رفع [فهما]
18 وإن حملت (ما) على خفض العلم والعلم متنوع فهو
17 وإن صرفت (ما) إلى المصدح لعلم فنصبت أو رفعت بإضمار أذك تقدر هو فهما 2.2
16 وإن كان (ما) تؤكد على العلم من منحى ونحول على خفض العلم فهو
15 وإن نصب العلم أو رفع على المصدح لعلم فهما 26، 25
14 وإن جعلت (ما) منصوبة على حير هذا، وهذا تقرب والعلم متنوع، مخفوض فهو
13 وإن نصبت الكلم على حير الاقرب ولم يحكم على (ما) بوضع فهما
12 وإن نصبت (ما) أو رفع على المصدح فهما 29 و 30
11 وإن نصب الكلم أو رفع على المصدح لهذ (ما) غير معرفة فهما جوابان 31 و 32
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هذا باب علم ما الكلم من العربية يتوافق كل واحد من باب وعلم، على أن باب خبر هذا، وعلم نعت باب وما مقرة على الإجابة التي بينت فيها

هذا باب علم ما الكلم من باب ورفعه. وخفض العلم على باب التكرار بتقدير: هذا باب (باب) علم ما الكلم (والعلم مخفوض منون)

وإن خفض الكلم، وقدرت (ما) بتقدير التوقيد فهو

وإن نون الباب بالرفع ونصب (علم) على (خبر) التكرير أو على معنى الكلام الذي تلخيصه: هذا علم ما الكلم (ولا الكلم فهما) 36 و37 والعلم مضاف فيهما بالنصب

وإن خفض العلم تكرر الباب مع الإضافة فهو الجواب 38

وذلك إن نصب على السمح أو رفع على السمح فهما جوابان 39 و40

وإن قبل هذا باب نصب الباب، وتوتون العلم بالخفض ما الكلم من العربية فهو الجواب 41 ينصب فيه الباب على القطع من هذا، وخبار هذا (ما)، والكلم صلة (ما)

وإن نصب الباب على السمح لهذا، أو رفع ممدوحا فهما جوابان 42 و43

انتصاب الباب على السمح، والعلم مون بالخفض ويعبر (ما) بعلم المذاهب المذكورة، وخيرهما (من العربية) 44

[45] انصتبا الباب على خبر التكرير، والعلم مون مخفوض، وارتفاع الكلم على خبر هذا، وما غير معرفة

رفع الباب (والعلم على أن باب وعلم) كلاهما خبر هذاك خبرت العرب: هذا حلو نامض إذا جمع الطعامين

رفع الباب وهو مضاف إلى العلم، والعلم مون على المبدل من هذا (وها) خبر هذا

هذا الباب علم ما الكلم من العربية ينصب علم على خبر التكرير، والكلم معلقة بالعلم

هذا باب علم ما الكلم من العربية ينصب علم على خبر التكرير، والكلم معلقة بالعلم، وما منصوبان على أن الباب خال من هذا والعلم عطنه (ما) خبر هذا

هذا باب ينصب الباب على العلم، وما منصوبان على أن الباب خال من هذا والعلم عطنه (ما) خبر هذا

وقد تبلغ هذه الوجه ستين وزيد على السبعين إذا استقصي التفرع فيها، والذي يُنَبِّئ من الأصول فيه غني عن ذكر ما أمسك عن أسماعه وإذا اختصار أو لى إذا عرفت

البغية. وحصلت الفائدة. ثم ذلك
ZAYD, ‘AMR AND ‘ABDULLĀHI: THEORY OF PROPER NAMES AND REFERENCE IN EARLY ARABIC GRAMMATICAL TRADITION

Amal E. Marogy

INTRODUCTION

When studying the use of proper names in early Arabic grammatical tradition, and more particularly in Kitāb Sībawayhi, a puzzle immediately arises. Proper names that have acquired the status of prototypical or focal exemplars in traditional Arabic grammar are restricted to Zayd, ‘Amr and ‘Abdullāhi, while certain other names that one would have expected to find are conspicuously absent, e.g., Muḥammad or Aḥmad.

The pioneering contribution of Sibawayhi to the “grammar of names”1 is still terra incognita. This paper seeks to show that Zayd, ‘Amr and ‘Abdullāhi are not random names or gap fillers introduced when illustrating grammatical phenomena, but are referents evoked to make linguistic features of ‘good’ Arabic salient in their extra-linguistic context. There are clear interactions between grammar and the socio-historical context within which names as linguistic entities occur and are organized. An account of proper names is therefore needed and in what follows I explore some of the ways of using prototypical names in the Kitāb. Some linguistic features of proper names are referred to and analysed. Further, three key components of proper names are emphasized. These components are differentiated in the Kitāb and coincide with the three components of grammar, i.e. semantic, pragmatic and syntactic.

1. THE EXTRALINGUISTIC SCENE OF THE KITĀB

There are various modes of describing the world surrounding us and expressing our relationship with it, but the giving of the name to someone or something constitutes the single most effective way of not only identifying but also communicating.

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Against this communicative backdrop of onomastics, I wish to draw attention to the neglected grammar of names in the Kitāb and its relevance to grammatical theory in general. I also set out and clarify the linguistic and extra-linguistic role of proper names in the Kitāb.² What concerns us here is the fact that Sibawayhi dedicated considerable space in his work to assessing how far the morphosyntax of proper names is semantically and pragmatically informed.

Before addressing questions related to proper names, something should first be said about the social and religious milieu in which Sibawayhi lived and worked. It would be unnecessary repetition to cover this historical period at any length.³ However, if we are to deal with a number of issues of particular relevance on a sound linguistic and extralinguistic footing, a few facts should be presented to elucidate the topic under discussion and emphasize the inherent relationship between the choice of particular prototypical names and the prevailing social and cultural order within which these names occur.

The beginning of ʿAbbāsid rule ushered in a period of prosperity and relative peace which was matched by urban development and intellectual achievements. The surge of intellectual activity, pioneered mainly by Christians, Persians and Jews, mirrored the cultural vigour and efflorescence that characterised one of the greatest period in Islamic history and especially that of Caliph Hārūn al-Rašīd’s reign (170–193/789–809). It was during the reign of this caliph that Sibawayhi (d. 180/796) worked and developed further his intellectual activity as a linguist.

The Muslim rulers established in the conquered areas a new religious hegemony which aimed to encourage those embracing the new religion to break with previous ways of life and form a new community based on solidarity and equality. However, Islam’s rejection of traditional tribal society and forced settlement of new converts in Kūfa and Baṣra failed to do away with tribal antagonism. In spite of measures that aimed to bind the tribal converts in ways that cut across tribal lines, old tribal rivalry and affiliation were still very real to Arab society in the eighth century, and Arabs never denounced their attachment to lineage and descent. This is not difficult to prove, for anyone who looks at any linguistic account in the Kitāb will appreciate the weight given to tribal judgment in linguistic

² The discussion will be restricted to anthroponyms or proper nouns with human reference.
matters.\textsuperscript{4} When Sibawayhi is seeking tribal arbitration, he is aware of the importance of quoting his authoritative sources of good Arabic verbatim. His trustworthy informants were most probably men who relied on the reputation of their tribe.

Attachment to tribal affiliation was apparent in the new garrison cities, which were divided along tribal lines into quarters and districts, in most cases with their own tribal mosques. In the chapters dealing with the names of districts,\textsuperscript{5} the boundaries are shown to have been clearly demarcated according to the type of the new settlers. What is more, the geographical distribution of local tribes and groups of early comers is reflected linguistically in the way their names are treated as masculine or feminine, diphtotes or triptotes. We learn from the Kitāb that when the names of Ma‘add, Qurayṣ or Ṭaqīf are mentioned in speech, they usually refer to the groups, not the tribes of Ma‘add, Qurayṣ and Ṭaqīf and hence to the districts named after them, whereas Tamīm usually refers to the dominant tribe in Sibawayhi’s region. Suppressing the recoverable word ‘group’ is made by analogy with suppression of the word ‘tribe’ when talking about Tamīm.\textsuperscript{6}

In spite of some clear signs of erosion in tribal ties—as exemplified in a verse by the poet Nahār b. Tawsi‘a al-Yaṣkurī (d. 85/704),\textsuperscript{7} quoted by Sibawayhi: ‘My father is Islam, I have no other. Let others boast with Qays or Tamīm’—utterances like ‘By us Tamīm, the fog is dispersed’,\textsuperscript{9} ‘O Tamīm, all of you, and O Qays, all of you’ or ‘Are you a Tamīmī on one occasion and a Qaysī on another?’\textsuperscript{11} exemplify a social trend where the long-standing rivalry between two powerful Arab tribes did not diminish in intensity and was still reflected

\textsuperscript{4} For a full list of the tribes mentioned in the Kitāb, see G. Troupeau, Lexique-Index du Kitāb de Sibawayhi (Paris: Klincksieck, 1976), 244–5.
\textsuperscript{6} The aim of ellipsis in language is brevity and economy of speech, but it can only occur when the speaker is certain that the listener is able to recover the full meaning of the utterance and the omitted words.
\textsuperscript{7} Nahār b. Tawsi‘a, a poet of the tribe Taym Allāh (part of the Bakr b. Wā’il) has been called the best poet of the Bakr in Ḫurāsān. See G.L. Della Vida, “Taym Allāh b. Tha’lab,” in EF\textsuperscript{2} online.
\textsuperscript{8} Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 176, Derenbourg 1, 304/Būlāq 1, 348.
\textsuperscript{9} Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 162, Derenbourg, 285/Būlāq 1, 327.
\textsuperscript{10} Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 146, Derenbourg 1, 263/Būlāq 1, 304.
\textsuperscript{11} Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 72, Derenbourg 1, 144/Būlāq 1, 172.
in some people's tendency to change allegiance according to a tribe's position and power within the new political and religious order.

Let us now bring into the discussion the cosmopolitan nature of the ‘Abbasid society, where non-Arab Muslims and non-Muslims dominated cultural activity, which was both rich and varied. Although the ‘Abbasid state was essentially a more pronounced Muslim state, the administrative and intellectual elite and a large proportion of the rank and file were not only non-Arab, but also non-Muslim. Many aspects of these manifold cultural activities and social realities are reflected in the Kitāb, from which some understanding of how Sibawayhi approaches onomastics ought to emerge.\footnote{Cf. the hemistichs referring to the Jews, the ever-burning fire the Magians worshipped, Christians' abstinence from food and drink during their fasting period just before Easter and the way they kneel and pray (Sibawayhi Kitāb chapter 305, Derenbourg 2, 27/ Būlāq 2, 29).}

We may as well say something about the general attitude of the Muslim Arabs at this period of uninterest in various fields of Islamic studies and Arabic language in particular. Part of the reason for this might be the fact that for true Arabs pre-Islamic poetry was the only science that was worth knowing, imitating and transmitting.\footnote{One instance in the Kitāb, where this attitude and the primacy of poetry are reflected, may be Sibawayh's admission at the end of one of his chapters that the linguistic problem he had been discussing hardly arises anywhere in poetry and counts for little in the speech of the Arabs: وذ ذلك ليس في شيء من كلامهم ولا يكاد يكون في شعر (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 21, Derenbourg 1, 28/Būlāq 1, 37).} Goldziher quotes a story about a Qurayšite exclaiming, on noticing an Arab child studying Kitāb Sībawayhi: “Bah! this is the science of school-teachers and the pride of beggars”.\footnote{I. Goldziher, Muslim Studies. (Edited by S.M. Stern; translated by C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern; with a major new introduction by H, Dabashi. London, New Brunswick N.J.: Aldine Transactions, 2006), 105–6.}

2. SĪBAWAYHIAN GRAMMAR OF NAMES: A PRELIMINARY OUTLINE

The uniqueness of proper names resides in their function of denoting individual entities endowed with their own referential character. The proper name, as its name implies, has the function of identifying a person being talked about within a specific spatiotemporal context of a speech act.\footnote{cf. J. Lyons, Semantics. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 637.}

In line with what is universally assumed, Sibawayhi considered proper names as a subcategory of noun. That is why he dedicates lengthy chapters to clarifying, analysing and debating their definiteness and identifi-
ability, the range of their inflection, patterns, shortening and lengthening, their function and number, and of course their particular gender. Here we have another fine example of subtle and serious analysis, which is the hallmark of the Kitāb, but not without its challenges. A comprehensive study of the general principles of the theory of names in the Kitāb goes far beyond the limits of this short paper;16 but, if I highlight some basic assumptions on which this theory is built, that should help us to come closer to Sibawayhi’s purpose. In doing so, I am obliged to gloss over a number of relevant issues, difficulties and complications that a more comprehensive discussion of the topic would require. What is of concern to us here is to focus on the importance of the grammar of names, as a linguistic area to which, in its various aspects with their underlying extra-linguistic context, Sibawayhi considered it worth dedicating hundreds of pages in his work.

In this next short passage, Sibawayhi offers an explicit account of the essence of the grammar of names as he envisaged it. He draws a clear semantic line between common and proper nouns:17

إذا قلت هذا الرجل فقد يكون أن تعني كله وكون أن تقول هذا الرجل وان تريكذ دكر
تكم ومشى على رجلين فهو رجل فإذا أراد أن يخص ذلك المعنى وتختص له يعرف من
تعني بعينه وأمره قال زيد وهفو.

If you say ‘This [is] the man’ you may intend his bodily vigour, and you may also say ‘This [is] the man’ intending that every male who speaks and walks on two legs is a man, but if you want to render the meaning clear and specific so that one may know who you are exactly identifying and referring to, in that case you say Zayd and the like.

The semantic information used to communicate the different meanings intended by the speaker supports the view that, even though most proper names lack lexical meaning,18 they nevertheless are meaningful

16 The amount of syntactical as well as morphological data on onomastics scattered through the two volumes of the Kitāb will prove any such attempt futile; as Carter puts it, “Clearly it was Sibawayhi’s intention to identify and classify every known kind of word in Arabic, and history has confirmed that later scholars were able to add very little to the enormous treasury of word patterns in the Kitāb”. He adds that the 10th-century Arab linguist al-Zubaydī managed to find only some eighty words missing from the Kitāb (M.G. Carter, Sībawayhi. London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 100.
17 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 122, Derenbourg 1, 225/Būlāq 1, 263.
18 Any attempt to summarize or discuss theories of name and reference in general linguistics will lead us too far afield. Without going into detail, it suffices to adopt Katz’s method in grouping these theories into what he calls the classical theory, represented by Frege, Church and Searle, and the casual theory of Kirpke and Donnellan. The classical
and therefore cannot be considered as being completely empty of referential content. It is essential to our understanding of this particular area of grammar in the Kitāb to remind ourselves of one distinctive and indispensable feature of proper nouns, namely the fact that they are definite in themselves and not by virtue of any definiteness marker. In other words, their definiteness cannot be ascribed to the lack or presence of definiteness marker:

فَأَمَّا العلامة اللازمة المختصطة في نحو زيد وعمرو وعبد الله وما أشبه ذلك وإنما صار معرفة لأنه اسم يعرف به بعينه دون سائر أمه.  

As for the specific pertinacious marker [sic. of definiteness], instances are Zayd, ‘Amr, ‘Abdullāhi or the like. They are considered definite because they are names allotted to the person, by which he is known concretely and exclusively to everyone else in his group.

إذا قلت هذا زيد فزيد اسم لمعنى قولك هذا الرجل إذا أردت شيئاً بعينه قد عرفه المخاطب بجملته أو بأمر قد بلغه قد اختص به دون من يعرف . . . وأيضاً مع الأسد وما أشبهه إن يكون له اسم معناه معنى زيد أن الأسد وما أشبهه ليست بأشياء ثابتة مقيمة مع الناس في يحتاجوا إلى أسماء يعرفون بها بعضها من بعض.  

If you say ‘This is Zayd’, Zayd then is a meaningful noun equivalent to ‘This is the man’ whereby the listener knows the individual either in himself or by means of some specific information he has acquired about him and which distinguishes him from any other person the speaker may know…What prevents the ‘lion’ and the like from being a noun with a meaning similar to Zayd’s is that the ‘lion’ and the like are not permanent entities living with people so that they need nouns by which they are distinguished from each other.21

theory is Aristotelian and is based on a mental link between a set of properties and a name, a process that allows us to identify the object as having each of these properties and to name the object as the result of this identification. The central feature of casual theory, however, is that identification is based on historical and casual events, rather than meaning, and that naming an object is dependent on its casual relation to some sort of baptismal ceremony in which the name becomes the name of the referent (J. J. Katz, “A proper theory of names”. Philosophical Studies. An International Journal for Philosophy in Tradition, 311 (1977):1). For a more detailed philosophical survey of names and reference theories, see Katz (ibid.) and Van W. Langendonck, “Remarks on some theories of names in the Handbook for Name Studie. Review article of Name Studies I.” Onoma, 32 (1995) and Theory and Typology of Proper Names (Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs No. 168, The Hague: Mouten de Gruyter. 2007), 20–65.

19 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 104, Derenbourg 1, 187/ Būlaq 1, 219.
20 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 122, Derenbourg 1, 224–5/ Būlaq 1, 263–4.
21 Cf. Van Langendonck, Proper Names, 201, where he refers to the interesting parallelism between naming humans and breed animals. In this respect, he mentions a paper by Dobin-Jülich on breed animals’ names (ibid.).
At this level of generality, it will be evident to anyone who looks at the detailed account of definiteness of proper names in the Kitāb that uniqueness of reference, as an idiosyncratic feature of proper names, is contingent on context. Pragmatically speaking, Sibawayhi points to ‘social deixis’ and the related functions of identification and location as the main reason for people’s giving and using proper nouns. This function of identification and location represents the main aspect of the analytical model of onomastics developed in the Kitāb, for identification requires closeness of entities and appropriated personal features which are assumed to be common ground in the knowledge of both speaker and listener, and exclusive of any other member of the class. The component of location involves spatiotemporal proximity, and thus acquaintance, as an indispensable deictic element. The logical conclusion to be drawn here is that proper nouns are not known by the speaker and listener in an all-or-nothing way, and that the way whereby proper nouns are known is threefold: by acquaintance, by introduction and by description.22

Sibawayhi’s account of proper names can be fruitfully summarised and made more accessible to linguists by means of the three roles of proper names identified by Anderson: the roles of identification, nomination and address/vocative.23 To put it another way, naming a person is a linguistic process whereby someone is either spoken of or spoken to. The role of identification involves both common knowledge of, or acquaintance with the individual named by the speaker and listener, and the deictic element of location which identifies the individual within the immediate non-linguistic context. The role of nomination, on the other hand, helps us grasp Sibawayhi’s observation about the indefiniteness of the dual and plural forms of proper names, for, as Anderson rightly points out, names assigned by nomination do not usually exhibit unique features and they are generally chosen out of a common stock. In spite of them being indefinite, a primary identification in context of the individuals sharing the same name is attained, but it remains an identification independent of its derivative context. Finally, vocative names in the Kitāb24 are another area whose full extent is awaiting further exploration, but it suffices to

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22 Admittedly, Sibawayhi does not use equivalent terminology to qualify the process of knowledge in proper names, but he nevertheless describes these three ways of onomastic knowledge consistently, repeatedly and clearly (see for instance, Sibawayhi Kitāb, chapter 117; 122; 147–8, Derenbourg 1, 218-19/Būläq 1, 257/; Derenbourg 1, 224–5/ Būläq 1, 263; Derenbourg 1, 265ff/ Būläq 1, 306ff respectively).
23 Anderson, Grammar of Names, 215–222.
24 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 103, Derenbourg 1, 262ff/Būläq 1, 303ff.
mention here that vocatives cannot be classified as simple names for “vocatives are not simply nominals of whatever kind; they must be represented as speech acts, and this is part of their lexically derived structure.”

As far as simple utterances—such as ‘This is Zayd’ and ‘This is ‘Abdullāhi’—are concerned, we are told that Zayd and ‘Abdullāhi are meaningful nouns that may refer to a specific individual, known to both the speaker and listener by acquaintance. However, the same utterances may be the result of the speaker’s introducing Zayd to the listener; Zayd would therefore be unknown to the listener prior to the introduction event, in which case the speaker might resort to the common strategy of attributive description, whereby a referential link is established with a personal acquaintance or historical personality. This is exactly what Sibawayhi is referring to when stating that the speaker has the option to qualify ‘Zayd’ in ‘This is Zayd’ either adjectively or not: ولوقت هذا زيد كنت في الصفة بالخير ان شئت صفت وأن شئت لم تصف

Proper nouns may thus be qualified adjectively—as in ‘I passed by the tall Zayd’ or ‘I passed by this Zayd and that ‘Amr’, or ‘I passed by Zayd, your brother’. In ‘I passed by the tall Zayd’, the adjective ‘tall’ is required to make Zayd better known and focus the listener’s attention on him. However, the proper noun ‘Zayd’ in ‘I passed by your brother, Zayd’ does not fulfill the role of an adjectival qualifier because it lacks a lexical meaning, but instead its specific content and referential character (i.e. its meaningfulness) reveal further the identity of ‘your brother’ within an apposition structure. This is the reason why an instance like

25 Anderson, Grammar of Names, 222.
26 See the general discussion in Van Langendonck, Proper Names, 91, where he refers to a similar phenomenon that occurs in the European languages he is discussing. See also Sirafi’s (p. 146b) comment on chapter 88 (Sibawayhi, Kitāb, Deroebourg 1, 159/ Būlāq 1, 189) where he mentions that the equational sentence ‘This is ‘Abdullāhi’ may be fully self-sufficient as an utterance or may need further qualification to remove any doubt regarding ‘Abdullāhi’s identity—افازت هذا عبد الله جاز أن يكون كلام ما قد جرى على يمين منك وتحقيق—This is ‘Abdullāhi departing’ where ‘departing’ is intended to draw the listener’s attention to ‘Abdullāhi’s state of departing and certainly not to identifying him further (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 177, Deroebourg 1, 218/ Būlāq 1, 256).
27 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 157, Deroebourg 1, 281/ Būlāq 1, 323.
28 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 104, Deroebourg 1, 188/ Būlāq 1, 220.
29 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 148, Deroebourg 1, 267–8/ Būlāq 1, 309). Cf. also Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 115, Deroebourg 1, 215/ Būlāq 1, 252 where Sibawayhi points out that Zayd in مرت برجل زيد ‘I passed by a man, Zayd’ is possible, because the speaker evaluates the
This is ‘Abdullāhi who excels in perfection’ is not considered an example of good Arabic because ‘Abdullāhi is already identifiable by the listener beyond any doubt.30

What Sibawayhi intends when qualifying a proper name as describable is that it no longer falls within the remit of identification and recognition by acquaintance. The deictic element of identification and location is lacking and its role of performative nomination and recognition by description is fully assumed. In other words, the entity cannot be identified by reference to the immediate context of speech but only by means of ‘reference-fixing description’ where the expression of the name’s definiteness is not assumed.31

An important formal reflection of the pragmatic-semantic characterization of proper names is thus their ability to display grammatical features exhibited by other nouns, such as definiteness, case assignment, gender and number. The correlation between number and definiteness in proper nouns is complex but it will prove highly beneficial for tracing some of the patterns that run through the grammar of names as a whole, and reflect the way proper names fulfill their roles and convey the meaning related to each role. The features we are going to consider in what follows are features that should help us to identify where definiteness and number of proper nouns interact with one another.

On the basis of the distinction Sibawahyi draws between the definite interpretation of singular proper names and the indefinite interpretation of their dual/plural form in utterances, there is one point that can be usefully made before we proceed. In ‘These are two departing Zayds and these are two departing ‘Amrs’, the dual forms of Zayd and ‘Amr are qualified as ‘unknown or indefinite’ لم يكن هذا الكلام إلا مرة and this relates to one of the different roles that may be assumed by proper names in various speech contexts, raised by Sibawahyi in the chapters dealing with definiteness and proper nouns in general and those dealing with the dual and plural forms of proper nouns in particular.32 The fact that more than one Zayd or ‘Amr is referred to in the utterance above is enough to deprive these proper nouns of their unique appropriated qualities, which makes it possible for the listener to

mental state of the listener and puts him in the status of someone who asks ‘Who is he?’ even if he does not actually say so.

30 Sibawayhi Kitāb chapter 104, Derenbourg 1, 190–1/ Būlāq 1, 223.
32 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 123, Derenbourg 1, 228–9/ Būlāq 1, 268.
identify the two Zayds or the two ‘Amrs. The dual (and indeed plural) forms of proper names in Arabic cease to be a means of identification and assume the function of performative nomination. Here, the core component of proper names is lacking, that is “the association of names with fixed referential indices, so that each name-index configuration is unique, enabling identification”.

A final point that deserves comment, one where the Kitāb’s contribution to the grammar of proper names becomes apparent, is Sībawayhi’s remark that toponyms, unlike anthroponyms, retain their identificatory character when they have the dual or plural form. The permanent and immobile character shared by mountain ranges or other geographical features means that they are considered a single entity. ‘The Himalayas’, for instance, does not refer to the sum total of single Himalaya mountains, and nor will anyone say that they passed by a Himalaya mountain, for the name ‘The Himalayas’ is applied to the whole range of mountains covered by that name. This is precisely the argument Sībawayhi applies to the two mountain tops referred to collectively as ʾAbānayn (lit. the two ʾAbāns). The argument is reiterated in the Kitāb when Sībawayhi indicates the impossibility of the name ʾAbānayn referring to one mountain top to the exclusion of the other. Conversely, it is possible to refer to one of two or more mobile humans or beasts of burden in the absence of one or other member(s) of the group sharing the same name.

Sībawayhi’s remarkable achievement in this particular area of grammar manifests itself in his ability to establish a sound approach to onomastics by using a large corpus of naturally occurring data; he manages quite smoothly to show how the formal and functional components of language correlate and integrate.

3. ZAYD, ‘AMR AND ‘ABDULLĀHI IN THE KITĀB

Putting together the various elements discussed so far, we are now ready to formulate a tentative hypothesis as to why names such as Zayd, ‘Amr and ‘Abdullāhi are found on nearly every page of the Kitāb, whereas other names we would expect to see, such as Moḥammad and Aḥmad, are conspicuously absent or recede into the background in the first extant Arabic grammar.

33 Anderson, Grammar of Names, 223.
34 cf. Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 123, Derenbourg 1, 229/ Būlāq 1, 268.
I have deliberately not divided the discussion below into linguistic and extra-linguistic, because this section forms a single argument and both aspects are equally relevant throughout. In the Kitāb, linguistic and extra-linguistic elements are interconnected and shade into one another in such a way that one element does not distract us from the other. On the contrary, the two fuse smoothly and naturally into a cogent argument that combines the two elements to create a holistic view of what language is all about. This is clearly reflected in Sībawayhi’s treatment of proper names that are discussed and richly exemplified, from many points of view, not only in the chapters devoted to Arabic proper names, surnames and nicknames but also in the various chapters dealing with Persian, Jewish, Christian or even pagan Arab and non-Arab names.\(^{35}\)

Sībawayhi states time and again that Zayd, ‘Amr and ‘Abdullāhi are the predominant Arabic names.\(^{36}\) An important reference to the status of Zayd, ‘Amr and ‘Abdullāhi comes in the chapter dealing with al-tarḫīm ‘shortening in vocative’:\(^ {37}\)

واعلم أنه ليس من اسم لا تكون في آخره هاء يُحذَف منه شيء إذا لم يكن اسمًا غالبًا نحو زيد وعمر و من قبل أن المعاف الغالبة أكثر في الكلام وهم لها أكثر استعمالا.\(^ {38}\)

You should know that no noun without a final hāʾ can have parts of it deleted unless it is a predominant name such as Zayd and ‘Amr; this is because popular names occur more often in speech and people use them more widely.

The most important question that must be raised regarding the status of Zayd, ‘Amr and ‘Abdullāhi as prototypical names is Tamīm’s role in the Kitāb. In what follows I present crucial tribal and genealogical factors as the key to understanding this. My historical arguments and quotations

\(^ {35}\) ‘Abd Šams ‘The Sun-worshipper’, for instance, occurs in the chapter discussing annexation of a name to another definite name, but in this case Šams ‘the Sun’ is definite by itself and not by virtue of the definite article ‘al (Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 313, Derenbourg 2, 45–6/Būlāq 2, 49; for further discussion see Marogy, Syntax and Pragmatics, 109–11). The celebrated Šār Sargis (St Sergius), whose cult was widespread among Arab tribes and whose shrine was a great centre of pilgrimage, is also mentioned in the chapter dealing with nicknames (Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 314, Derenbourg 2, 46/Būlāq 2, 49–50).

\(^ {36}\) Cf. for instance Kitāb chapter 148, Derenbourg 268/Būlāq 1, 309, where Sībawayhi repeats twice that these three names are the most common Arabic names.

\(^ {37}\) al-tarḫīm is a linguistic phenomenon where a common anthroponym is abbreviated by eliding its final letters to facilitate its pronunciation, as in Ḥār for Ḥārith and ṣāḥ in the vocative expression yā ṣāḥ for yā ṣāḥib ‘O companion’. The frequent occurrence of these words in speech is the condition sine qua non for their eligibility to undergo al-tarḫīm (Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 103, Derenbourg 1, 293/Būlāq 1, 290).

\(^ {38}\) Ibid.
below, unless otherwise indicated, are based on Lecker’s article on the tribe of Tamīm b. Murr because it succinctly contains all the basic socio-historical data needed to support the hypothesis advanced in this paper.

Tamīm’s weight in the tribal population of Iraq is concomitant with the weight given to their authoritative eastern variant of Arabic, which formed the core of the classical language and a great deal of the Kitāb’s linguistic data. In spite of Sībawayhi’s reference to the Hijazi variant as ‘good old Arabic’, the Tamīmī dialect was “the actual model for the practical form of the language Sībawayhi sought to define”.

The tribe of Tamīm was divided into three main subgroups whose eponymous ancestors were the three sons of Tamīm, namely Zayd Manāt, ‘Amr and Ḥāriṭ. Their descendants in their turn became the eponymous ancestors of many other Arabic tribes. The children of Sa’d b. Zayd Manāt, except Ka’b and ‘Amr, formed a group called al-ʾabnā’. Except for two of Ka’b’s sons, ‘Amr and ‘Awf, the rest of his sons were called al-ʾajārib ‘the scabby ones’. The main group in the Mālik b. Zayd Manāt subdivision was the Ḥanẓala b. Mālik, among whom the Dārim b. Mālik, or rather the ‘Abdullāhi b. Dārim was the dominant group, if not the most important in the whole tribe of Tamīm. The dominant line among the ‘Abdullāhi b. Dārim was Zayd b. ‘Abdullāhi. As for the ‘Amr b. Tamīm branch, the area of ‘Abbādān near Baṣra was called after one of his descendants. The least important branch of Tamīm was Ḥāriṭ b. Tamīm.

Even a cursory examination of the onomasticon of the tribe and its branches suggests that a case can be made for a clear and predominant influence of the Tamīm in the area of morphology in the Kitāb. Zayd, ‘Amr and ‘Abdullāhi are not common in the broad sense of the word; their pre-dominance reflects their correlation with ancestral eponyms of the most powerful branches of Tamīm. When dealing with shortening in the voca-
tive and the necessary condition of frequency in speech, Sibawayhi clearly states that Ḥāriṭ, Mālik and ‘Āmir are names frequently used in poetry and given to men—وليس الحذف لشيء من هذه الأسماء أزوم منه لحارث ومالك—but the low profile of Ḥāriṭ b. Tamīm within the tribe may explain why it is not as frequently used by Sibawayhi even though he affirms that Ḥāriṭ is as common as Zayd.46 What is crucial about these names is that they throw much light on Sibawayhi’s circle of informants and the milieu in which he worked and moved.47

Further support is gained from the fact that there is a certain amount of empirical evidence to suggest that names like Muḥammad and Aḥmad were not very popular in the pre-Islamic or early Islamic period. There is perhaps stronger empirical evidence to support the view that there was hardly any Muslim child called Aḥmad after the founder of Islam before the year 125/742, while there is evidence that children received the name of Muḥammad.48 It is not as if any religious reference to Muḥammad as the founder of Islam is completely absent from the Kitāb, for I am aware of two verses quoted in the Kitāb where the name of the founder of Islam occurs.49

The solid spot in this argument is not only the obvious predominance of the eponyms Zayd, ‘Amr and ‘Abdullāhi, but also the geographical distribution of large Tamīmī groups in both garrison cities of Başra and Kūfa that are described as the “extensions of Tamīm’s Arabian territories. The Tamīmīs in Başra belonged to the Sa’d, the Ḥanẓala and the ‘Amr; members of the same groups were among the early settlers in Kūfa as well.”50 However, the most tantalising and possibly the most significant argument here is the fact that “[m]any Tamīmīs settled in the regions of Persia conquered by Başran and Kūfan troops”.51

The discussion so far nicely dovetails with Tamīm’s pre-Islamic relationship with the Sāsānids, al-Ḥīra and with Mecca. The Tamīm and other

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45 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 166, Derenbourg 1, 291/ Būlāq 1, 335.
47 One of the instances that show Sibawayhi’s direct interaction with the Tamīmīs is when he explicitly mentions that he asked the Tamīmīs about the definiteness of some spatial qualifiers (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 311, Derenbourg 2, 43/ Būlāq 2, 47).
49 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 103, Derenbourg 1, 230/Būlāq 1, 269 and Derenbourg 1, 363/Būlāq 1, 408.
51 Ibid.
Arab tribes were part of the king of al-Ḥīra’s network of allies in the institution of ridāfa or viceroyship, a measure to keep troublesome tribesmen and Bedouins under control and secure the safety of the Sāsānid

52 and Ḥīran trade caravans. The Tamīmī clan of the Banū Ayyüb, whose most prominent member was the poet ‘Adī b. Zayd,

53 was quite influential in al-Ḥīra and had very close ties with the Sāsānid court. References made to the Abnāʾ Fārs, the ‘Abādīd, the Anbāṭ

54 and the Manāḏira

55 may be considered significant pointers to Tamīm’s socio-political and religious world.

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Conclusion

My main purpose in this brief account has been to emphasise the theoretical importance of the grammar of names in the Kitāb and the importance of the linguistic and extra-linguistic elements and their interconnectedness and mutual interdependence. Complementarity of approach has been reaffirmed yet again as the hallmark of the Kitāb.

Although this discussion has been of a preliminary character, it has nevertheless drawn attention to a neglected area in the Kitāb and most probably in Arab linguistics. Sibawayhi’s approach stands out again not only for the quality of his arguments, which remain consistently solid, but also for the numerous contemporaneous examples that sufficiently supplement and illustrate his views and add a unique socio-historical value to them. Zayd, ‘Amr and ‘Abdullāḥi have been the window through which we have managed to take a unique glimpse into the grammar of names and the influence of the well-known Arab tribal group Tamīm, both socio-politically and linguistically. In addition to the valuable data associated with Zayd, ‘Amr and ‘Abdullāḥ, the Kitāb can be claimed to have immortalised the Tamīmī’s eponyms.

52 According to Lecker, Hajar was an important venue of Tamīmī-Persian co-operation (ibid.).

53 Note that the poet’s son was named ‘Amr. Zayd and ‘Amr were also the names of ‘Adī b. Zayd’s brothers who were claimed to be among the notable Ḥīrīs who went to meet the leader of the Muslim army that besieged al-Ḥīra (F.M. Donner, The Early Islamic Conquests. ACLS Humanities E-Book. Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1981: 183; 331 n. 85).

54 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 339, Derenbourg 2, 86/Būlāq 2, 88–9.

55 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 350, Derenbourg 2, 97/Būlāq 2, 98.

The dialogue between the Kitāb and general linguistics has proved fruitful, but this dialogue is meant to be a real encounter so as to prevent the dialogue from degenerating into a monologue. In other words, the Kitāb is not meant to be constantly on the receiving end. Sibawayhi’s comprehensive and detailed study of proper names, probably more than any other area of grammar and linguistics covered by the Kitāb, will bring considerable benefits and invaluable insights to this area of linguistic research. We have seen that there is a distinguishable and highly developed grammar of names in the Kitāb, which can offer general linguistics some basic but indispensable tools and analytical strategies.

The following words express the spirit that guided the writing of this paper and they can fittingly bring it to a conclusion:

Names are obviously not sufficient to make a linguistic system, but they are necessary: name-free full linguistic communication is not an option. And, as the range of concerns we have surveyed testifies to, having a name remains perhaps the most mysteriously and fascinatingly human manifestation of language.57

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YAQUM VS QÂMA IN THE CONDITIONAL CONTEXT:
A RELATIVISTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE FRONTIER BETWEEN
THE PREFIXED AND THE SUFFIXED CONJUGATIONS OF THE
ARABIC LANGUAGE

Manuela E.B. Giolfo

INTRODUCTION: FROM SYNTAX TO SEMANTICS

This article is based on an investigation which we have been conducting on the meaning of conditionality in the earliest Arab grammatical theory and on how that meaning is reflected in syntax. Our investigation started by analysing how earliest Arab grammatical theory and European grammars treat conditional systems of the Arabic language.

The analysis was at first led by a syntactic consideration of the conditional sentence, in the attempt to answer the following questions: Which
particles⁴ introduce the conditional sentence? Which verbal forms occur in conditional sentences? Which verbal forms are correlated to a specific conditional particle? These questions necessarily bring to other subsequent interrogatives, which make clear that syntax and semantics are intrinsically tied, and that the first is subordinated to the latter: Which conditional particle is to be used in this or in that case? Which is the typical verbal form associated with a certain conditional particle? Which set is originated by the different verbal forms which are used with the same conditional particle?

The first series of questions, being of empiric-formal nature, corresponds to the grammatical investigation for any specific language. The answers to these questions are provided by linguists, or rather by grammarians of that particular language. Questions of the second group cannot be answered without a prior investigation on meaning, that is to say without taking into account the conceptual values of the conditional structures in general, and after that the value of each conditional structure pertaining to a specific language. The second group of questions belongs to the field of logics and semantics, rather than to that of grammar. Nevertheless the grammatical analysis is never complete until the questions of the second group are answered, being these answers the only ones able to explain the results of the syntactic analysis. As a matter of fact, when analysing the conditional structures of the Arabic language, we are compelled to face problems of semantic nature, which are related to the way in which reality is reflected by each single clause of the conditional sentence, and tied to the type of relationship between the two components of a conditional sentence. The conceptual value of different conditional expressions can only be determined after an investigation on these aspects. We are convinced that it is up to the linguists to provide a linguistic answer on these logic-semantic questions.

⁴ As far as the use of the term ‘particle’ is concerned, it descends from two reasons: on the one hand, the terminological choice of expressly avoiding the use of terms like ‘conjunction’, ‘subordinate conjunction’, ‘subordinate operator’, which could be misleading, as they would reflect the subordinate character of the protasis with respect to the apodosis when referring to the structure in šart jawāb al-šart “conditional particle-condition-answer to the condition”; on the other hand, it also descends from a wish of cautious assent to the neutral terminology of Arab grammarians. Furthermore, the term ‘operator’ should only be used after a clarification about the elements on which the conditional particles operate or, in other terms, whether they operate directly on the šart “condition” and only indirectly on the jawāb “answer”, or directly on both the šart “condition” and the jawāb “answer.”
1. THE ARAB GRAMMATICAL TRADITION AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS

Which kind of process was developed by the Arab grammatical tradition, with respect to the above fields (syntactic and semantic) and to their mutual relationships, in the investigation of the conditional structures? At a first glance, the study of conditionality does not seem to play an important role in the Arab grammatical tradition, as this was primarily concerned with the syntactic-formal aspects. Nevertheless, when getting closer to this problem, we realise that Sibawayhi and early Arab grammarians, though they do not treat the conditional sentence in its pure theoretical sense, refer to an indirect conceptualisation of conditionality, by means of attributing a prototypical character to particular conditional structures. In this respect, a deep difference has to be noticed between the approach of Sibawayhi (d.? 793) and that of any later Arab grammarians. Sibawayhi, in fact, tried to show the semantic-communicative values of formal linguistic structures, and this due to his conviction that any syntactic variation has its semantic counterpart. As Dévényi\(^5\) remarks:

Later grammarians, contrary to Sibawayhi, were not able and, ‘frankly’, did not want, to follow this method which demands great discipline and supposes an overall insight into the basic character of language. They inherited, of course, some general semantic principles (the communicative orientation of Arabic grammar had never ceased to be tangible) from ‘great’ generation of eighth-nine century linguists, but on the whole they were mainly interested in syntactic phenomena from normative and pedagogic points of view.

In our opinion, as far as this matter is concerned, it is in virtue of such a syntactic-semantic analysis, reaching the semantic definition of the concept of conditional sentence, that Sibawayhi’s system of conditional structures—which actually contemplates only the structure of the type ‘in apocopate, apocopate’—is minimally inclusive compared to later Arab grammarians. This appears to be due to his restrictive judgement, deriving from the selective view by which he evaluates different syntactic solutions on the basis of their semantic value. The semantic value of a specific conditional structure would be in this view checked against the semantic definition of the conditional expression. As a consequence, a certain number of particles are excluded from the set of conditional particles (namely the

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particle *idā* and the particle *law*), a certain number of syntactic structures introduced by particles not belonging to the set of conditional particles is excluded from the system of conditional structures, together with verbal forms other than the apocopate.

It has to be outlined that Sibawayhi’s approach is not only due to his conception of language, but also to the subsequent conception of linguistics as a science able to describe the relationships between syntax and semantics. In fact, only such a conception of language and linguistics can justify the exclusion, from his system of conditional structures, of all structures other than ‘in apocopate, apocopate’. Conversely, the higher inclusiveness of the systems of conditional structures as contemplated by later Arab grammarians could be explained by the fact that, as reported by Dévényi,⁶ they limited themselves to a merely formal treatment of the conditional structures, refraining, in their approach, from that deep comprehension which can reach to the essential character of linguistic expression. The higher inclusiveness of the systems of conditional structures by later Arab grammarians actually represents a loss in descriptive effectiveness and in ‘normative’ meaningfulness. Anyhow, despite the fact that Arab grammatical tradition is characterised, from a historical point of view, by a certain variability in the methods used when analysing linguistic data, there is a general agreement on the fact that the essence of the conditional sentences lays in their characteristic of uncertainty: uncertainty about the feasibility of the condition, and, as a consequence, uncertainty about the feasibility of the event subject to that condition.

The different evaluation of conditional sentences with respect to temporal sentences, arises from this very definition of the true conditional expression. As a consequence, an analysis is performed by Arab grammarians on conditions themselves, abstracting from their relation with the conditioned event, with the aim to distinguish conditions which are ‘only possible’ (‘uncertain’) from the ‘certain’ ones (‘possible and necessary’, or ‘impossible’).

2. **Sibawayhi’s Definition of the Conditional Expression**

Sibawayhi clearly limits the field of conditional sentences to the case of ‘only possible’ conditions, that is to say that he limits the domain of conditional sentences to hypothetical sentences alone. He therefore judges that any sentences arising from a condition which is not ‘uncertain’ (‘possible

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⁶ Ibid.
and non-necessary’) should not be considered as a proper conditional sentence, being in fact non-hypothetical. This would be the case for those conditions which are introduced by the particle ʾidāʾ, and by the particle law. Sibawayhi’s definition of the essence of the conditional expression is in fact as follows:

وسأله عن إذا، ومنهم أن يجعلوا بها؟ [. . . ] إذما تجأ، وقعا معلوما: ألا ترى أن كل قلت: ʿاتيك إذا اجتر البار ٨ كان حسنة. ولو قلت: ʿاتيك إن اجتر البار، كان قبيحة. فإن أبدا مهملة: ٩ وكذلك حروف الجزاء. ١٠

Then I asked him [al-Ḥalil] why ʾidāʾ should not be employed as conditional particle. [...] ʾIdāʾ occurs when there is temporal determination; can’t you see that if you said: ‘I’ll come to you ‘when’ (ʾidāʾ) the dates, now unripe, will be mature’ this would be a good expression, whilst in case you said: ‘I’ll come to you ‘if’ (ʾin) the dates, now unripe, will be mature’, this would be a bad expression? ١١ In fact ʾin is always uncertain, like all conditional particles. ١٢

Such a definition—based on non-formal criteria—of ʾin as proper conditional particle inasmuch as it is hypothetical, in opposition to the temporal character of ʾidāʾ, delimits the scope of conditional expression to hypothetical expressions alone. ١٣ This has its syntactic counterpart in the statement that: “Conditional particles operate the apocope of the verbs, being the apodosis apocopated by what precedes [i.e. protasis].” ١٤

If Arab grammarians did not reach a direct description of the cases of the implication, ١٥ this, in our opinion, is not due to their unawareness of implication itself, and of its cases, i.e. the type of relation between the condition and the event subject to that condition. We think in fact

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٧ Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 245, Derenbourg 1, 385/Hārūn 3, 56.
٨ ‘Unripe dates’ (al-busruʾ).
٩ ‘Uncertain’ (mubhama).
١٠ Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 245, Derenbourg 1, 384–9/Hārūn 3, 56–69.
١١ It is important to notice here that “I’ll come to you ‘if’ (ʾin) the dates, now unripe, will be mature” would be a bad expression because of a twofold reason: ʾin is always uncertain whilst ʾidāʾ occurs when there is temporal determination, and the semantic characteristic of uncertainty of the expression introduced by ʾin is represented at the morpho-syntactic level by the fact that حروف الجزاء يَجَزَم الأفعال ويَجْزِم الجواب بما قبله “Conditional particles operate the apocope of the verbs, being the apodosis apocopated by what precedes [i.e. protasis]” (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 245, Derenbourg 1, 386/Hārūn 3, 62).
١٢ Whilst dates sooner or later do necessarily ripen! It’s just a question of time.
١٣ For the particle law, see infra.
١٤ Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 245, Derenbourg 1, 386/Hārūn 3, 62.
that they did not provide such a direct definition only because the logic-semantic analysis is already implicit in Sibawayhi's hierarchy of conditional particles and associated verbal forms. The choice of the particle introducing the protasis, and of the verbal forms in the protasis and the apodosis is in fact based on semantic and non-formal criteria.

A confirmation of the 'possible and non-necessary' i.e. 'hypothetical' character of the condition is to be found in another passage of al-Kitāb, where Sibawayhi draws a parallel between interrogative, imperative, and conditional expressions.

The term which was most commonly used by Arab grammarians referring to the conditional sentence is jazāʾ “remuneration, compensation, reciprocation”, whilst the ‘conditional particles’ (ḥurūf al-jazāʾ) are those which introduce a ‘conditional sentence’ (mā ṣuyūjūṣ bi-hi). In Sibawayhi’s terminology the protasis is called al-kalām al-awwal “the first clause”, while the apodosis is called jawāb al-jazāʾ “answer of the conditional expression” or, more simply, jawāb “answer”.16 The term jazāʾ became, in time, a term indicating the apodosis, sometimes referred to as jawāb and sometimes as jazāʾ (though the two terms maintained, for some grammarians,18 a certain distinctive meaning), while the protasis assumed the denomination of šart “condition”, this latter term maintaining, for some grammarians,19 the original meaning of the term jazāʾ.

The fact that the terminology used by Sibawayhi reflects his conviction that a similarity exists between interrogative and conditional sentences, is described in the following passage of al-Kitāb:20

17 Ibn 'Aqil, Šarḥ ‘alā al-alfīyya, 377; 380.
18 Zamaḥšārī, al-Mufaṣṣal fi al-nahw, 151.
19 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 508, Derenbourg 2, 339/Hārūn 4, 235; Zamaḥšārī, al-Mufaṣṣal fi al-nahw, 151.
20 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 28, Derenbourg 1, 40/Hārūn 1, 99.
21 Ibid., note (1) Hārūn: [يفُعَظِّمُوا*]laughs at it, *it is not possible, it may occur or not*.
22 Ibid., note (2) Hārūn: [*هَذِئَلْنَآ*]laughs at it, *it is not possible, it may occur or not*.
23 Ibid., note (2) al-Sīrāfī (b. 279–289/892–902; d. 2 Rajab 368/2 February 979–984): [كَيْفَْ هَذِئَلْنَآ]laughs at it, *it is not possible, it may occur or not*. The expression is apocopated, as well as the imperative expression can be followed by an apodosis and, when it is followed by an apodosis, the verbal form which appears in such
The interrogative expression is like the imperative expression inasmuch its character is non-necessary. By means of an interrogative expression in fact, the one to whom the question is addressed is asked about what is doubtful for the one who asks. Don’t you see that the interrogative expression can be followed by an apodosis and that, when it is followed by an apodosis, the verbal form which appears in such apodosis is apocopated? In fact, interrogative propositions can carry out the same function as the function of the protasis of a conditional-hypothetical sentence, and the apocopate that follows them is like the apocopate that follows the protasis of the conditional-hypothetical sentence, so that these interrogative expressions apocopated? You say ‘Where is Zayd that I may go and see him?’ as well as you say ‘Come and see me, and I’ll come and see you!’

24 Ibíd., note (3) Hārūn: ‘That is to say the apodosis of the conditional-hypothetical sentence. Originally: ‘like the apocopate that follows the proposition introduced by the conditional particles’ (...).’

25 Ibíd., note (4) Hārūn: ‘If, therefore, Zayd asks you to go and see him, it is followed by an apodosis and that, when it is followed by an apodosis, the verbal form which appears in such apodosis is apocopated. In fact, interrogative propositions can carry out the same function as the function of the protasis of a conditional-hypothetical sentence, in fact it is followed by an apodosis as well as the protasis of a conditional-hypothetical sentence is followed by an apodosis’.

26 That is to say ‘possible and non-necessary’ i.e. ‘contingent’. What leads us to translate ِɡُيْرُ وَاجِبَةُ ِحَزَاءَ [gayr wa’ijiba] by means of ‘non-necessary’ is the fact that Sibawayhi defines in as mubhama ‘uncertain’ and therefore when he speaks of jazā‘ he only refers to conditional-hypothetical expressions, in which the condition is possible and non-necessary. Probably by Sibawayhi, along with the first Aristotle, ‘uncertainty’ was simply a characteristic of ‘possibility’. Initially in fact, Aristotle excluded ‘necessarily true’ propositions from the category of ‘possible’ propositions. He erroneously—see J. Łukasiewicz, Modal Logic (Warzawa: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1970), 26—stated in De Interpretatione that ‘possibility’ implies ‘non-necessity’. Cf. Aristoteles (B.C. 350) Categoriae et Liber de interpretatione, ed. L. Minio-Paluello (London: Oxford University Press, 1949). We think that the term ‘non-necessary’ (in logic ‘contingent’) describes better the modal character of conditional-hypothetical expressions. Infact, regarding the cóñol فِي ِالْعَصُّ الْمَشْرُوفِ ‘The conditional expression is like the interrogative expression’ (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 245, Derenbourg 1, 385/Hārūn 3, 59), Sirāfi comments: ‘The meaning of the interrogative expression is similar to that of the conditional expression as the interrogative expression, belonging to the hypothetical/virtual domain, has a non-assertive/non-factual character’. In fact, Sirāfi’s comment seems to us more generally referred to the fact that both interrogative and conditional expressions would have a non-assertive character, character which is pointed out by Jahn’s explanation of (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 28, Derenbourg 1, 40/Hārūn 1, 99) by “insosfern beide keine wirklich geschehene Thatsache ausdrücken” (Jahn, Sibawaihi’s Buch 1, 63).
can acquire a conditional-hypothetical semantic value. They have in fact the same non-necessary character as the conditional-hypothetical sentence [...].

Don't you see that when you say 'Where is 'Abdullah that I may go and see him?', it is as if you said 'Wherever he were, I would go and see him'.

The whole passage actually consists in the explanation that it is possible that interrogative and imperative utterances carry out the function of protasis of a conditional-hypothetical sentence. What is explained is that the uncertainty of the premise, on which depends the uncertainty of the consequence in a conditional-hypothetical sentence, is either secured by conditional-hypothetical particles (in and similar) which introduce the first utterance, operating at the same time the apocope of the verbal form contained in it, or it is intrinsic to the first utterance being an imperative proposition (gayr wāqi‘a,28 and after all already apocopated) or an interrogative proposition (introduced by particles which render it gayr wājiba).29 This is in our opinion the sense of Sibawayhi’s statement about the fact that Conditional particles operate the apocope of the verbs, being the apodosis apocopated by what precedes [i.e. protasis],31 and this is the sense of the equation mā ba‘da ḥurūfi al-jazā’i32 = al-šarṭu “the condition”33 = protasis of the conditional-hypothetical sentence.

3. From Semantics to Syntax

The meaning of mubhama, gayr wājiba, and gayr wāqi‘a, both in terms of ‘intentions of the speaker’ and in terms of ‘functional meaning of linguistic categories’ is that of ‘non-assertion’, which restricts the expression to the

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27 Once again “The conditional expression is like the interrogative expression” (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 245, Deroenbourg 1, 385/Hārūn 3, 59). It is meaningful to report one more time the clarifying comment of Sirāfī (Jahn, Sībawayhi’s Buch 1.2, 102, note 10) about the fact that both expressions do not carry any truth value (they are neither true, neither false) inasmuch as they are not assertion.

28 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 28, Deroenbourg 1, 40/Hārūn 1, 99, note (1) Hārūn: يعنى غير واقع. يجوز أن يقع ولألا يقع "That is to say it is only possible, it may occur or not".

29 Ibid.

30 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 245, Deroenbourg 1, 385/Hārūn 3, 60.

31 Ibid., Deroenbourg 1, 386/Hārūn 3, 62.

32 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 28, Deroenbourg 1, 40/Hārūn 1, 99.

33 Ibid., note (4): Hārūn.
domain of ‘virtuality’, that is to say to the domain of ‘what exists though not in actual fact’. Such character of the expression is normally rendered by means of the apocopate of the verb, which in the Arabic language is a trait common to conditional-hypothetical sentences and to imperative, jussive, injunctive and prohibitive sentences. The formal mechanism described by Sibawayhi presents the conditional-hypothetical sentence as a structure of two clauses having ‘possible and non-necessary’ (i.e. ‘uncertain’) character, the first of which is either apocopated or imperative or interrogative (protasis) and the second of which (apodosis)—apocopated—is operated by the protasis. The formal mechanism described by Zamaḥšārī presents instead the conditional sentence—hypothetical and non-hypothetical (which differs from the hypothetical inasmuch as it has a ‘certain’ character: i.e. ‘possible and necessary’ or ‘impossible’)—as a structure of two clauses both of which are directly operated by the conditional particle (respectively in or law).

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34 It is worth citing here a passage from the first chapter of al-Kitāb (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 1, Derenbourg 1, 1/Hārūn 1, 12), quoted by Versteegh: "وَأَماَ النَّفِيلِ ـ فَأَمِلَّ أَخْذُتُ ـ مِنَ لَفْظٍ أَحَدَّ اَلْأَسْمَاءِ وَيَنِبِّى لَنَمَا كَانَ وَلَا مَكْرُونُ وَلَا يَقَعُ وَمَا هُوَ كَانَ لَنَفْضُعُ [...]

35 The reason for the higher inclusiveness of in-systems introduced by grammarians posterior to Sibawayhi and Ibn Jinni is in our opinion due to the fact that they recognised that ‘possibility’ is actually included in ‘necessity’. For them, necessary propositions would therefore be ‘possible and necessary’. In the same way, Aristotle initially excluded ‘necessarily true propositions’ from the category of ‘possible propositions’. He later corrected his assumption, first in De Interpretatione and then in Analytica priora, and stated that ‘necessity’ implies ‘possibility’. Cf. Aristoteles, De interpretatione; idem, Prior Analytics, tr. A.J. Jenkinson, Oxford University Press, 1928, and Prior and posterior analytics, ed. W.D. Ross (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1949). On in-systems by Arab grammarians posterior to Sibawayhi and Ibn Jinni, including suffixed verbal forms along with ‘protocolarily’ apocopated verbal forms, see Gioflo, “I sistemi condizionali in in dell’arabo classico” and idem, “In yaqum vs in qama”.

36 Zamaḥšārī (d. 1144) limits the set of conditional particles to only two elements, in and law, being the latter, for the said reasons, not included in Sibawayhi classification: "إنَ وَلَوْ نَدْخُلَانِ عَلَى جَمِيعِ فَجْمَالِنَ الْأَوْلِيْ أَوْلِيْ شَرْطٍ وَالثانيَ جَرَأَةُ. In and law operate on two sentences, rendering the first ‘condition’ and the second ‘consequence’." (Zamaḥšārī, al-Muṣaffāṣ al-nahw, quoted in Dévényi, “The treatment,” 19). Zamaḥšārī's classification was generally accepted at that time and, despite the criticisms of later grammarians for his inclusion of law among conditional particles, is still the classification followed nowadays in contemporary grammar.
Imperative and interrogative expressions can carry out the function of the protasis of a conditional-hypothetical sentence inasmuch as they are provided of the same ‘uncertain’ character of which is provided the protasis of a conditional-hypothetical sentence. They can occupy the place of a šart, they can have the same semantic-syntactic function as a jazm and can thus be followed by a jazm in the same way in which the šart is followed by a jazm. What Sibawayhi states is that the conditional particle (in), operates the apocope of the verb of a proposition transforming it by means of this operation under two respects: the particle transfers to the proposition the same uncertainty of which the particle is provided and at the same time the particle renders the proposition a proposition which cannot stand alone (protasis) but must necessarily be followed by another proposition (apodosis), on which the same twofold transformation (i.e. that the second proposition results uncertain and the fact that it is not independent from the first proposition) is operated by means of the apocope of the verb in the second proposition. This last operation is operated by the protasis. Both clauses result in being ‘uncertain’ and ‘non-independent’.

Zamaḥšarī sheds light on the fact that the function of all conditional particles, and not only of hypothetical ones, is that of rendering two propositions inseparable in a structure which represents the relationship of implication. If the semantic characteristic common to interrogative, imperative and conditional-hypothetical expressions can be summarised by the term ‘uncertainty’, the syntactic characteristic common to interrogative and conditional expressions is represented by the fact that both the conditional particle, introducing the protasis of the conditional sentence, and the interrogative particle, which introduces the interrogative sentence, are not particles of conjunction:

37 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 245, Denerbourg 1, 385/Hārūn 3, 59.
38 The Arabic ṣila designates a sentence after a mawsil either ismī (relative pronouns) or harfī (particles of conjunction). The expression ‘is not ṣila’ could be explained as ‘is not in relation with what precedes’, where the concept of ‘being in relation with what precedes’ is wider than the concept of ‘relative clause’. The expressions ‘is not ṣila of what precedes’ and ‘is not wasl of what precedes’ could be then understood as: ‘is not dependent on what precedes’. What, in our opinion, we should read here is that both in the conditional and in the interrogative expression, the conditional particle introducing the conditional expression and the interrogative particle introducing the interrogative expression are not subordinative conjunctions.
39 This translation finds its justification in Sibawayhi’s statement: إذا قلت ابن تون وَأَنتَ: َّتَسْتَفْهِمُ فِيَنَاءُ الفَلَعُ بِصَلاَتِكُمْ. “When you ask ‘Where are you?’, the verb is not ṣila of what precedes it” (Ibid.).
The best thing you can say is: The verb in the conditional expression is not *ṣila* of what precedes it, as well as with the interrogative particles the verb is not *ṣila* of what precedes it, and when you say ‘Wherever you were, I would be’, it is not *ṣila* of what precedes it, as well as, when you question saying ‘Where are you?’, the verb is not *ṣila* of what precedes it, in the conditional expression it is not *ṣila* of what precedes it, as well as it is not *wasl* of what precedes it in the interrogative expression.

You say: ‘Who beats you?’ when asking, and in the conditional expression: ‘Whoever beat you, I would beat him’, and in both the verb is not *ṣila*.52

40 In the proposition introduced by conditional particles, i.e. in the protasis of the conditional sentence.
41 In the proposition introduced by interrogative particles.
42 *fa-laysa* “is not” is referred to the verb in the protasis of the conditional sentence.
43 *wasta* of what precedes it, in the proposition introduced by interrogative particles.
44 Sībawayhi (Ibid.). “Man sollte sich also korrekt so ausdrücken: Das Verbum ist in Bedingungssätzen ebensowenig *Ṣīla* des Vorhergehenden (d. i. der Konditionalpartikel) wie in Fragessätzen (*Ṣīla* der Fragepartikel),” Jahn, Sībawayhi’s Buch 2.1, 168.
46 The conditional particle.
47 The interrogative particle.
48 The verb ‘to be’ refers here to the verb in the protasis of the conditional sentence.
49 ḥayṯu-mā takun “wherever you were”, being only a part of the conditional sentence.
50 ḥayṯu-mā takun “wherever you were”, being only a part of the conditional sentence.
51 ḥayṯu-mā takun “wherever you were”, being only a part of the conditional sentence.
52 Is not *ṣila* of what precedes. That is: the verb in the protasis of the conditional sentence is not *ṣila* of the conditional particle and the verb in the interrogative sentence is
If what accounted for clarifies in which sense the terminology by which Sibawayhi refers to the apodosis is based on the fact that for Sibawayhi interrogative and conditional-hypothetical expressions have in common a semantic and a syntactic aspect, it also enables to consider that the three sub-domains of linguistic expression—i.e. interrogative, imperative, and conditional-hypothetical—would belong to the common domain of ‘virtuality’ (‘virtual domain’) as opposed to the same time to the domain of facts (‘factual domain) and to the domain of subordination (‘conceptual domain’). For Sibawayhi, *in* is not a conjunction; the apodosis is *ma’mūl* “operated” by the complex *in*+protasis. For Zamaḥšarī, who does not subvert Sibawayhi’s assumptions about the semantic characteristic of conditional-hypothetical sentences, the second *ma’mūl* is *ma’mūl* of the *ma’mūl* of the ‘*ḥāl*’(‘operator’, thus being itself *ma’mūl* of the ‘*ḥāl*. In other terms, defining the ‘*ḥāl* as a binary operator, it is possible to switch to a simpler representation, where both the protasis and the apodosis are *ma’mūl* of *in* and are not *ṣila* of *in*. Zamaḥšarī’s words clearly indicate that both *in* and *law* are not logically translated by ‘if’, but instead by ‘if… then’, which is to say that they are binary operators. This explains why Sibawayhi, focusing on hypothetical sentences, clearly stated that conditional particles operate the apocope of the verbs: such a syntactical description/prescription coincides with his way of representing the implication relatively to conditional-hypothetical sentences. That a verb should be apocopated must actually signify that the proposition which contains it has ‘uncertain’ character (otherwise the verbal form would belong to the suffixed conjugation), that it has not an assertive character (otherwise the verbal form would belong to the prefixed conjugation in its *marfu‘* variant), that it is not dependent (otherwise the verbal form

not *ṣila* of the interrogative particle. Therefore: the conditional particle is not a particle of conjunction and the interrogative particle is not a particle of conjunction.

"The interrogative expression is like the imperative expression inasmuch its character is non-necessary. By means of an interrogative expression in fact, the one to whom the question is addressed is asked about what is doubtful for the one who asks" (Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 28, Derenbourg 1, 40/Hārūn 1, 99).


Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 245, Derenbourg 1, 386/Hārūn 3, 62: "هَُّرْفُ الحَرَّاء جَّرَّمْ الْأَعْفَاء وَجَّرَّمْ الجَوَابَ بِما قَالَهُ Conditional particles operate the apocope of the verbs, being the apodosis apocopated by what precedes [i.e. protasis]."
would belong to the prefixed conjugation in its *manṣūb* variant), that is to say that either it is independent, or it is not independent and at the same time it is not *ṣīla*.

4. **The Prototypical Verbal Form in the Conditional Context**

Arab grammarians refer to the conditional particles through a non-uniform terminology, and the list of conditional particles is not the same for all early grammarians. According to Sibawayhi, the conditional particles are *ayya ḥīnin*, *matā*, *ayna*, *anā*, *haythu-mā*, *in*, *iḍā-mā*, and the conditional nouns *man*, *mā*, *ayyu-hum*. He indicates the particle *in* as the ‘mother’ (*umrn*), that is the ‘root’ (*aṣl*) of all conditional particles, being *in* the one and only particle which does not have any other functions, and therefore possessing a purely conditional meaning. According to Ibn Jinnī (d. 392/1002), the set of the conditional particles and their classification is essentially the same as for Sibawayhi. Both of them use the same classification for the conditional particles, which assumes by Ibn Jinnī the denomination of *aḥawāt in* “sisters of *in*”, due to the outstanding conditional character of the latter, which makes of it an *aṣl* “root”. However, two other authors, Ibn al-Ḥājib (m. 646/1249) and Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274), classify the conditional particles among other particles under the terminology *al-jāzimāt li-al-muḍāriʿ* so that they are no more presented as conditional ‘operators’ (*ʿawāmil*), but they are equalised with any formal operator causing the apocope of the verb as, for example, the particle *lam* for the negative past and the particle *lā* for the negative form of the imperative. In so doing, one could say that they recognised not only ‘one’ syntactic behaviour, but also implicitly defined the apocope of the verb as representing ‘one’ specific pragmatic-semantic function. It is

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56 Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 245, Derenbourg 1, 384/Hārūn 3, 56.
57 Arab grammarians distinguish between ‘conditional particles’ (*ḥurāf*) and ‘conditional nouns’ (*asmāʾ*). *Man*, *mā* and *ayyu-hum* are nouns. It is possible to group conditional particles and nouns as ‘conditional operators’. As Dévényi points out, “originally *ḥarf* did not only mean a part of speech (‘particle’) but a function, too. This means that even an *ism* was allowed to occur in the function of *ḥarf*” (Dévényi, “The treatment”, 39, note 11).
58 Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 245, Derenbourg 1, 386/Hārūn 3, 63; Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 256, Derenbourg 1, 406/Hārūn 3, 112.
interesting to see how Ibn Mālik introduced, within the same set of ‘particles operating the apocope of the verb’ (jawāzīm) a distinction between those operating on a single verb and those operating on two verbal forms, being the latter in fact conditional particles. The particle law appears among the conditional particles in Ibn al-Ḥājib’s classification too, but it is not mentioned in the chapter concerning al-šārt wa-al-jazā’. The apocopated form of the muḍāri’ (al-fi’l al-majzūm) appears thus by early Arab grammarians as a prototypical form in the conditional context, representing the protocollar ‘uncertain’ character of hypothetical expressions. If we look in fact at the conditional systems of the type in šart jawāb al-šārt by early Arab grammarians, namely:

Sibawayhi (d. 793)

in yaqum yaqum
[in qāma yaqum]

63 Ibn Mālik, Alfiyya, in: Ibn ‘Aqīl, Šarḥ ‘alā al-alfiyya (Cairo: 1965), 22. 64 In the following tables, in yaqum/qāma yaqum/qāma expressions are treated as morpho-syntactic structures. 65 Sibawayhi, Kitāb. 66 The brackets mean here that Sibawayhi considers this combination of verbal forms “as secondary compared to the basic jazm + jazm combination” (Dévényi, “The treatment,” 25). Consistently with his cardinal rules “Con-

conditional particles operate the apocope of the verbs, being the apodosis apocopated by what precedes [i.e. protasis]” (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 245, Derenbourg 1, 386/Hārūn 3, 62) and, “The verb is the origin of the conditional sentence” (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 252, Derenbourg 1, 398/Hārūn 3, 91), Sibawayhi explains that the qāma form “in the protosis does not only occupy the place of the original jazm but it takes over its role, too” (Dévényi, “The treatment,” 26) as it governs the verb in jazm in the apodosis. This qāma form is for Sibawayhi “في موضع الفعل السجزوم “occupies the place and takes the role of the original apocopated verb” (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 245, Derenbourg 1, 388/Hārūn 3, 68). In non-formal terms, if the essence of the conditional sentences lays in their characteristic of uncertainty (uncertainty about the feasibility of the condition, and, as a consequence, uncertainty about the feasibility of the event subject to that condition), this combination of verbal forms would represent a particular hypothetical (uncertain) expression in that the uncertainty of the consequence is safe despite the certainty of the condition. As for the combination qāma qāma, Sibawayhi only mentions it as an example of his preference for symmetric construction (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 252, Derenbourg 1, 398/Hārūn 3, 91–92: "And when someone says 'in fa’alta', the best thing to say is: 'fa’alta', as it is like it") but he does not mention it in the chapter on ‘conditional sentences’ (babu al-jazā’i). This combination cannot be included in Sibawayhi’s conditional-hypothetical system as a result of three of his statements: “Conditional particles operate the apocope of the verbs, being the apodosis apocopated by what precedes [i.e. protasis]” (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 245, Derenbourg 1, 386/Hārūn 3, 62).
we notice that the only combination allowed by all these five grammarians is in yaqum yaqum. Moreover, our analysis of all the occurrences of structures of the type in šarṭ jawāb al-šarṭ in the Koran showed that the 87% is of the type in yaqum yaqum, whilst the type in qāma qāma only covers the remaining 13%.72

is the origin of the conditional sentence” (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 252, Derenbourg 1, 398/Hārūn 3, 91) and “in is always uncertain, as conditional particles are” (Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 245, Derenbourg 1, 385/Hārūn 3, 60).


al-Mufāṣṣal fī al-naḥw, 150: “Within a conditional sentence introduced by in, the verbs can only be two prefixed forms or two suffixed forms, or one of the two verbs can be a prefixed form and the other one a suffixed form. When the case is that the verbs are two prefixed forms, then they are both apocopated”.

Mālik’s system, he quotes the hadīṯ of Ibn ‘Aqīl. In order to justify its presence in Ibn Mālik’s system, he quotes the hadīṯ “Those who keep vigil in prayer on the Night of Revelation, their previous sins will be forgiven”, cf. Ibn ‘Aqīl, Ṣarḥ ‘alā al-alfiyya, vol. 1, 22; vol. 2, 372.

For more detailed data, see Giolfo, “I sistemi condizionali in in dell’arabo classico”.

Ibn Jinnī (d. 1002)67
in yaqum yaqum

Zamaḥšarī (d. 1144)68
in yaqum yaqum
in qāma qāma
in qāma yaqum

Ibn al-Hājib (d. 1249)69
in yaqum yaqum
in qāma qāma
in qāma yaqum

Ibn Mālik (d. 1274)70
in yaqum yaqum
[ in yaqum qāma]71
in qāma qāma
in qāma yaqum

we notice that the only combination allowed by all these five grammarians is in yaqum yaqum. Moreover, our analysis of all the occurrences of structures of the type in šarṭ jawāb al-šarṭ in the Koran showed that the
As for European grammarians, the priority order used by them to list the set of verbal forms allowed in conditional sentences is the same for all (with the exception of Fischer): either the perfect, or the apocopate. According to Fischer the order is: apocopate or perfect.

As for the value of the perfect and of the apocopate in conditional sentences, according to Wright the perfect represents an action whose occurrence is so certain that it can be considered as already occurred; according to Vecchia Vaglieri the perfect in the Arabic hypothetical structures fulfils its function by presenting as completed the facts mentioned in the protasis and in the apodosis; according to Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes it indicates that the speaker considers the idea that he formulates as already realised; according to Fischer it represents the perfective aspect, and according to Corriente in the conditional structures the perfect shows its full aspectual value, that is its perfective aspect indicating a process which becomes real as a whole.

For Wright the jussive following in, or other words having the same sense, has always the meaning of a perfect: he explains that the jussive is used in a protasis depending from in or similar particles, because, when something is presumed or assumed, it is as if an order is issued that this event occurs or happens, and again according to Wright this becomes manifest in the fact that the jussive is used in apodosis depending both on imperative protasis and on conditional ones. As far as the value of the apocopate in conditional sentences is concerned, we remark that only one fact exists which leads to the conclusion that Vecchia Vaglieri wished to underline the privileged bond between the apocopate and the conditional structures of the Arabic language: the fact that she inserted the notions on the hypothetical sentence in the chapter concerning the ‘conditional-jussive’ mood. According to Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes the apocopate represents a process whose realisation is uncertain or conditional, and they find in this statement the reason for the use of the apocopate in sentences containing a notion of eventuality or having a hypothetical content, in injunctive or prohibitive sentences, and after lam “not…” and lammā “not yet” with a meaning, in the latter case, of past. If they state

73 The five treatises by leading European grammarians which we have examined are mentioned in note 3. For a more detailed treatment see Giolfo, "Le strutture condizionali dell’arabo classico nella tradizione grammaticale araba e nella tradizione grammaticale europea".
that the perfect represents the fact that the speaker considers the eventuality or the hypothesis that he expresses as already realised, the use of the imperfect would be instead tied to the presence of particles which underline ‘uncertainty’. Fischer states that the apocopate has the function of a perfect, both when it is associated with the particle lam or lammā, and when it appears in conditional sentences. Corriente presents the apocopate as the simplest morphologic form of the imperfect, and points out that its uniformity is poor in terms of its semantic-syntactic content, being the apocopate required by some negative particles which give to it (like lam) the sense of the perfect (which according to Corriente is synchronically unjustified) or by others which give to it (like lā) a prohibitive meaning, or by conjunctions like li- for the jussive or the exhortative, as well as it can be required for conditional structures.

Both Wright and Fischer speak of ‘protasis’ and ‘apodosis’ according to the classical terminology which refers to the apodosis as to the main clause, and to the protasis as to the subordinate clause. Veccia Vagliieri conceives the ‘condition’ as a subordinate sentence, and the ‘answer’ as a main sentence. Only Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes treat the conditional structures in a special chapter, dedicated to the ‘double sentence’, in which the two clauses which form the sentence are not seen in a relationship of subordination, nor in a mere relationship of juxtaposition, as it is their particular relationship which renders the exact scope of the expression. Corriente underlines that the situation is not simply that one clause is subordinate to a main one, but that a clause (condition or protasis), which should be, in principle, the subordinate, can affect the other one (apodosis or conditioned clause), which in turns should be the main clause, though generally following the protasis in this interrelation.

According to Wright in is the conditional particle introducing possible hypothesis, and law the particle introducing impossible hypothesis. According to Veccia Vagliieri, the two main conjunctions translating ‘if’ are in and law. The difference between them is that in is used for a real or possible hypothesis, while law is used for the unreal one, i.e. opposite to reality. Also Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes distinguish between the ‘double sentence’ ‘hypothétique réalisable’, introduced by in, and the ‘double sentence’ ‘hypothétique irréalisable’, introduced by law. Fischer distinguishes between two kinds of conditional sentence: the real conditional sentence and the unreal conditional sentence. In “wenn” introduces the real conditional sentences, law introduces the potential and unreal conditional sentences. Corriente states that the real affirmative
conditional sentence is introduced by *in* “if”, while the unreal conditional sentence is introduced by *law*.

6. *YAQUM VS QĀMA* WITHIN IN *šARṭ JAWĀB AL-ŠARṭ* CONDITIONAL CONTEXT

As far as the structure of the type *in šarṭ jawāb al-šart* is taken into consideration, if *yaqum yaqum* is indeed the only combination shared by early Arab grammarians, nevertheless their systems do also include *qāma* forms. Ibn ‘Aqīl74 (d. 1367) lists all possible combinations of verbal forms, which generate four different structures. The English translation below each different structure is meant to show that it is still problematic to disclose the semantic differences between the different verbal combinations, whose existence seem to be implicit in Sibawayhi’s principle that any syntactic variation has its semantic counterpart.75

*in yaqum* Zaydun yaqum ‘Amrun
if to get up (prefix conjugation variant-Ø 3rd p m s) Zayd (n) to get up (prefix conjugation variant-Ø 3rd p m s) ‘Amr (n)
“If Zayd gets up, ‘Amr will get up”

*in qāma* Zaydun qāma ‘Amrun
if to get up (suffix conjugation 3rd p m s) Zayd (n) to get up (suffix conjugation 3rd p m s) ‘Amr (n)
“If Zayd gets up, ‘Amr will get up”

*in yaqum* Zaydun qāma ‘Amrun
if to get up (prefix conjugation variant-Ø 3rd p m s) Zayd (n) to get up (suffix conjugation 3rd p m s) ‘Amr (n)
“If Zayd gets up, ‘Amr will get up”

*in qāma* Zaydun yaqum ‘Amrun
if to get up (suffix conjugation 3rd p m s) Zayd (n) to get up (prefix conjugation variant-Ø 3rd p m s) ‘Amr (n)
“If Zayd gets up, ‘Amr will get up”

In order to find the key to disclose the different semantic interpretations which must be underlying the different morpho-syntactic structures of the system, we looked at how the early Arab tradition represented the system over the centuries. It is evident that the tables representing the

74 Ibn ‘Aqīl, *Šarḥ al-alfiyya*.
75 In the following list, *in yaqum/qāma* Zaydun yaqum/qāma ‘Amrun expressions are treated as morpho-syntactic structures.
verbal forms combinations considered by Arab grammarians, in virtue of the prototypical position of the structure in yaqum yaqum, appear as variations, in some cases more inclusive—and in some others less inclusive—of the combination(s) allowed by Sibawayhi. One important fact is that the existence of variation in terms of higher/lower inclusiveness of the system actually proves the existence of a semantic differentiation among structures generated by different verbal forms combinations. What is also evident is a sequence from earlier systems to later systems which ranges from lower inclusiveness to higher inclusiveness in terms of admitted verbal form combinations. In our opinion, the answer to the question ‘what are the semantic differences within the four structures listed by Ibn ʿAqīl?’ consists in the answer to the question ‘How is the lower and higher inclusiveness of verbal forms combinations justified within the history of this particular system in early Arab grammatical tradition?’. An answer may be provided by a modal interpretation of the opposition between yaqum and qāma verbal forms within the conditional context.

Our position takes distance from the Semitic paradigm which states that the Arabic jussive is nothing but the old proto-Semitic perfect *yiqṭal*76 which would clearly cancel all possibilities of semantic differentiation among verbal forms combinations within the conditional system introduced by in.77

Our hypothesis is in fact that within the conditional context yaqum forms do not represent either two different tenses or two aspects, but rather two different modal categories, namely the two Aristotelian modal categories of ‘possibility’ (yaqum) and ‘necessity’ (qāma). Modal logic was developed by Aristotle in De Interpretatione and in Analytica Priora.78

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77 “In Arabic, too, when the imperfect is used with the conditional particle in (…), it refers to the past” (Versteegh, The Arabic Language, 17).

78 Cf. Giolfo, “in yaqum vs in qāma: un’ipotesi modale”. The theory of modal propositions, i.e. of propositions which contain the word ‘necessarily’ or the word ‘possibly’ or an equivalent of these words, was developed by Aristotle in De Interpretatione, chapters 12 and 13, and in Analytica priora, I. 3 and 13. The theory of modal syllogisms, i.e. of syllogisms in which at least one of the premises is a modal proposition, was developed by Aristotle in Analytica priora, I. 8–22.
Propositions can be in principle divided into ‘possible’ and ‘impossible’ (necessarily false). Possible propositions are divided into ‘contingent’ (neither necessarily true nor necessarily false) and ‘necessary’ (necessarily true) propositions. At an initial phase, Aristotle excluded necessary propositions from the category of possible propositions. He erroneously affirmed in *De Interpretatione* that ‘possibility’ implies ‘non-necessity’.\(^{79}\) The same position seems to be adopted by Sībawayhi and Ibn Jinnī. In a second phase, Aristotle himself included within the possible propositions the necessarily true propositions. Already in *De Interpretatione* he realised that necessity implies possibility and corrected his assumption in *Analytica Priora*.\(^{80}\) According to our hypothesis, both Sībawayhi and Ibn Jinnī would exclude the *qāma* verbal forms because these would represent necessarily true conditional sentences, whilst propositions represented by *yaqum* forms are possible and non-necessary. Propositions in which appears a *qāma* form would lack the feature of uncertainty and would therefore be non-hypothetical. Zamahšarī, Ibn Ḥājib and Ibn Mālik would include *qāma* forms in the system of conditional structures introduced by *in* because propositions in which appears a *qāma* form would be possible although necessary and, although non-hypothetical, they could be part of a conditional sentence.

The frontier between *yaqum* and *qāma* verbal forms within the system of conditional structures introduced by *in* appears then as a frontier between ‘uncertainty’ (*possible and non-necessary* propositions = ‘contingent’ propositions) and ‘certainty’ (*possible and necessary* propositions = ‘necessary’ propositions). Only ‘contingent’ propositions would contain a *yaqum* form.

As an example of how ‘necessary’ propositions could be part of a conditional sentence introduced by *in*, we would like to quote one conditional sentence taken from that 13% of the occurrences of *in šart jawāb al-šart* structures in the Koran in which the structure is *in qāma qāma*, whilst in the remaining 87% of the occurrences of *in šart jawāb al-šart* structures in the Koran the structure is *in yaqum yaqum*: 3/144

*And Muḥammad is no more than an apostle; the apostles have already passed away before him; if he dies or is killed, will you turn back upon your heels?*\(^{79}\) He erroneously—cf. Łukasiewicz, *Modal Logic*, 26—stated in *De Interpretatione* that ‘possibility’ implies ‘non-necessity’. Cf. Aristoteles, *De interpretatione*.

\(^{80}\) Already in *De Interpretatione* and then in *Analytica priora*, Aristotle corrects his judgment, stating that ‘necessity’ implies ‘possibility’. 
We understand this Koranic verse as follows: If Muḥammad ‘dies’ (māta) or ‘is killed’ (qutila)—and he will necessarily/certainly die or be killed as he is no more than an apostle like those who have already passed away before him—will you necessarily/certainly ‘turn back’ (inqalabtum) upon your heels? (Would this certainty be enough for you to turn back upon your heels?). This reading would explain the presence of qāma form both in the protasis and in the apodosis.

7. yaqum vs qāma within the Wider Conditional Context

If the frontier between yaqum and qāma verbal forms within the system of conditional structures introduced by in is interpreted as the frontier between the ‘uncertainty’ of yaqum forms appearing in contingent propositions as opposed to the certainty of qāma forms appearing in necessary propositions, the frontier between yaqum and qāma verbal forms within the whole conditional context of the Arabic language appears then as a frontier between ‘uncertainty’ and ‘certainty’ which separates contingent propositions at the same time from necessary propositions, and from impossible propositions.

The definition of law by Sibawayhi is: "law is for what could have happened if something else had happened". This definition is not part of the treatment that the Kitāb reserves to the conditional expression, and it was further articulated—by grammarians posterior to Sibawayhi—in terms of ‘impossibility’ (imtināʿ). For some of them law would be a particle introducing an impossible ‘condition’: they do not specify anything about the ‘consequence’. For others law

81 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 508, Derenbourg 2, 334/Hārūn 4, 224.
82 It is worth noting here that at the beginning of his article “Two Conceptions,” 77, Versteegh, states that “The point of departure of this article is a remark in Dévényi’s analysis (1988) of conditionality in the Arabic grammatical tradition. She remarks on the fact that within this tradition the particle law is not regarded as a conditional particle. Now, in traditional Western grammars law is always mentioned on a par with the particle in, both of them having a conditional meaning. Westerns grammarians distinguish between the two particles by stating that in indicates real conditions, whereas law indicates irreal conditions. Both particles are categorized as conjunctions".
84 For example Ibn Hišām (Ibid.); Versteegh (“Two Conceptions," 83) remarks that “He himself, however, does not believe that law indicates the impossibility of both parts of the conditional sentence, and he refutes their theory with an argument derived from logic: if both condition and conclusion are false, the opposite of both must be ‘true’ (ṭābit), and in many instances this is not the case".
would introduce an impossible ‘condition’ and an impossible ‘consequence’, being ḥarfu ʾimtināʾīn li-ʾimtināʾī ʿgayri-hi “a particle indicating the impossibility of something as caused by the impossibility of something else.” Ibn Hišām (m. 1360), however, points out that there are examples of expressions introduced by law in which the condition is impossible, but the consequence is necessary as it exists ‘independently of the existence of the condition’ (wuṣūdā al-ṣarṭu aw fiʿqida). He therefore rejects the definition of law as ḥarfu ʾimtināʾīn li-ʾimtināʾī ʿgayri-hi and sticks to the definition of law given by Sībawayhi, provided that the expression li-wuqūʿ is understood as ‘simultaneity’ (ʾinda ẓubūtī al-awwali) and is not restricted to the cause-effect relation between the condition and the consequence. Sībawayhi’s definition is in fact compatible both with impossible conditions and impossible consequences, and with impossible conditions and necessary consequences.

What is relevant for our hypothesis is that in all cases the condition is ‘certain’ and the consequence is ‘certain’. Law introduces impossible conditions (always false and therefore certain), to which are associated impossible consequences (always false and therefore certain) or necessary consequences (always true and therefore certain). Once accepted that only uncertainty (i.e. the ‘non-necessary’ character of the proposition) is associated with the apocopate, it becomes clear why the apocopate cannot appear neither in the protasis neither in the apodosis of sentences introduced by law. It appears at this point also evident that the apocopated verbal form cannot be associated with idā, being idā not mubhama “uncertain”.

**Conclusion: yaqum vs qāma within the Verbal System of the Arabic Language**

As for the verbal system of the Arabic language, along with Massignon, who affirms that the perfect and imperfect represent, outside our tenses,

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85 Versteegh, “Two Conceptions,” 84.
87 Versteegh (Ibid.).
88 “In fact in is always uncertain, as conditional particles are” (Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 345, Derenbourg 1, 385/Hārūn 3, 60) and ʿ حو ُرف الجزاء Conditional particles operate the apocope of the verbs, being the apodosis apocopated by what precedes i.e. protasis” (ibid., Derenbourg 1, 386/ Hārūn 3, 62).
the degree of realisation of the action, it appears to us that the entire verbal system of the Arabic language, made up of the prefixed conjugation and by the triplet of the prefixed conjugation, can be interpreted—within the different linguistic pragmatic contexts—basing on Sibawayhi’s opposition ‘certainty vs uncertainty’ (in Massignon’s terms ‘reality vs irreality’).

Our hypothesis is that verbal expressions which represent present or future facts as uncompleted actions clearly have an uncertain character, however, we must recognise that their uncertainty is different from the uncertainty of verbal expressions which represent uncompleted actions whose reality is complementary to the reality of other actions on which they depend and to which they are subordinate. These two kinds of uncertainty (‘factual uncertainty’ and ‘conceptual uncertainty’) would be represented respectively by the prefixed conjugation variant- and by the prefixed conjugation variant-.

Verbal expressions representing uncompleted actions belonging to the ‘factual domain’ have an assertive character, are independent and are not introduced by any particle. Verbal expressions representing uncompleted actions belonging to the ‘conceptual domain’ have non-assertive character, are subordinate, and are introduced by a subordinative conjunction. There are then verbal forms—like jussive, prohibitive, negative, and imperative verbal forms—which have a non-assertive character,

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90 In the sense of Blachère and Guadefroy-Demomyynes, who state that in such complex sentences “la subordonnée équivaut à un maṣdar et dépend d’une principale dont elle est complément”: R. Blachère, M. Guadefroy-Demomyynes, Grammaire de l’arabe classique (morphologie et syntaxe), 3e édition revue et remaniée (Paris: G.P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1952), 452.

91 “When the action of the subordinate clause is factual and completed the verb occurs in the perfect after an. This is one of the very limited number of occasions when an may be followed directly by anything other than the dependent imperfect form”. S.M. al-Badawi, M.G. Carter, A. Gully, Modern Written Arabic: A Comprehensive Grammar (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), 603.

92 The subjunctive is used in subordinate clauses after the following common conjunctions: an that, allā (or an lā) that not, li-, kay, li-kay and li-an so that, kaylā, li-kaylā and li-allā so that not, ḥattā until, so that”: D. Cowan, An Introduction to Modern Literary Arabic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 93.
are non-dependent, and can be introduced or not by some particles. The domain to which these latter belong can be defined as ‘virtual’.

The three domains—factual, conceptual, and virtual—contain expressions that range from the lowest degree of uncertainty (‘factual uncertainty’) to the highest degree of uncertainty (‘virtual uncertainty’). Viewed from this angle, the verbal system of the Arabic language would represent ‘certainty’ (suffixed conjugation) as opposed to three different kinds of ‘uncertainty’ (yafʿal-u vs yafʿal-a/-ø). Verbal forms contained in the conditional-hypothetical structure (i.e. in yaqum yaqum), representing ‘contingent’ propositions, would have the maximum degree of uncertainty.

As for the optative expressions (positive or negative), the suffixed verbal form by means of which they are construed would express ‘certainty’. It is in fact the certainty of faith included in such expression as رحمه الله “May God have mercy on him” that psychologically differentiate optative propositions from suppositions and hypotheses; if not in faith, the psychological ‘certainty’ has to be found in one’s expectations.93

Finally, as for the negative context, our opinion is that it should be distinguished in two domains. The domain of the ‘external’ negation being represented by the metanegation mā faʿala of a suffixed form faʿala or by the metanegation mā yafʿalu of a prefixed form yafʿalu, where faʿala and yafʿalu are positive predicates and mā is a modal operator assigning to the proposition a ‘truth value’ indicating the relation of the proposition to truth. When the modal operator mā is applied to propositions of the language, like faʿala and yafʿalu, it generates the propositions of the metalanguage mā faʿala (it is not true that faʿala) and mā yafʿalu (it is not true that yafʿalu).94 If we eliminate the negation, we find the positive predicate of the language to which the metanegation is applied (faʿala or yafʿalu). The other domain is the domain of the internal negation, in which predicates are negative predicates. Being all equally ‘uncertain’ in the sense that they are ‘unrealised’—with the only exception of optative ones which are seen as if they were ‘realised’—all negative predicates are construed with yafʿal- forms: lam yafʿa is the internal negation of faʿala,
lā yafʿalʿu is the internal negation of yafʿalʿu, lan yafʿala is the internal negation of sawf/a/sa-yafʿalʿa, là yafʿala is the internal negation of yafʿalʿa, lā yafʿalʿa/tafʿal is the internal negation of yafʿal95/ifʿal.

References

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


95 In constructions like li-yafʿalʿ, but also in constructions like in yafʿal since, as already mentioned, in Koranic Arabic, with in, lam yafʿal is not the only negation, there is in fact also another negation: lā yafʿal (P. Larcher, “Les systèmes conditionnels en in de l'arabe classique.” Bulletin d'Études Orientales, 58 (2009): 207ff), and with no exceptions lā yafʿal is the negative counterpart of yafʿal whilst lam yafʿal is the negative counterpart of faʿal (Larcher, “Les 'complexes de phrases' de l'arabe classique.” Kervan—International Journal of Afro-Asiatic Studies 6 (2007): 35.)


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A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE USAGE OF LAYSA IN THE QUR’ĀN AND LAYSA IN SĪBAWAYHI’S KITĀB

Haruko Sakaedani

INTRODUCTION

Layṣa in the Qurʾān is used to express ‘do/does not exist’ and ‘am/are/is not.’ Layṣa which means “do/does not exist” commonly appears (41 of the 45 examples) as layṣa “he/it does not exist” a masculine singular form, even if its subject is a feminine noun, especially when it is an indefinite one. As for layṣa which means ‘am/are/is not’, its complement is accompanied by the preposition bi- “by, with” (24 of the 44 examples) much more than it becoming dependent (4 of the 44) in the Qurʾān, which marks different usage from Modern Standard Arabic. In fact, layṣa negates imperfect verbs in Modern Standard Arabic to make an emphasized denial, which is never the case in the Qurʾān.

In this paper,1 I would like to compare what is said about layṣa in Sībawayhi’s Kitāb with how layṣa is used in the Qurʾān. I will investigate the common features and the differences in the way layṣa is used in the Qurʾānic Arabic and in Modern Standard Arabic. I will approach these issues from two different angles. One will be a brief survey of Classical Arabic grammar books that will enable us to trace the changes in the way the Classical grammarians explain the usages of layṣa. The second is a research into layṣa’s diachronic changes from Jāhili verses, which reinforces the hypothesis that changes have occurred in the usage of layṣa. Three questions will form the foci of this paper, namely whether the masculine form of layṣa has been used consistently even when the subject of the verb is feminine. The second point concerns layṣa’s predicate and the dependent case assigned to it and finally the origins of layṣa’s role in negating imperfect verbs.

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1 This study was supported by the Global COE Program “Corpus-based Linguistics and Language Education” (CbLLE) of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.
The verb *laysa*, which means “not to be,” negates predicates in the present tense without exception in spite of its perfect form. Badawi et al.\(^2\) summarize the usage of *laysa* in Modern Standard Arabic as follows:

1. Usage with a dependent predicate:
   
   "But the situation is not serious."
   
2. Usage when the predicate is a prepositional phrase:
   
   “It is not for the general good.”
   
3. Usage when the subject is indefinite:
   
   “He has nothing new to say.”\(^3\)
   
   *(lit. There is not for him anything new to say.)*
   
4. Usage with a predicate comprising *bi-* (predicate may be either indefinite or definite, and either noun or adjective):
   
   “While he is not one who witnessed [it] or read [it].”
   
5. Usage with a predicate comprising a partitive *min*:
   
   “Since there is no revolutionary movement.”
   
6. Usage as a compound negative:
   
   “I do not live in this house.”
   
7. Usage as a negative conjugation:
   
   “It is the people of Egypt, not the government of Egypt.”
   
8. Usage as *laysaʾ illā* “except” or *laysa ġayru* “no others”, either of which when placed at the end of a noun-phrase or sentence means “nothing more” “nothing else” or “nothing but”:

   “a preparatory step, nothing else”
   
   “I want your love, nothing else.”

The above mentioned usage of *laysa* is classified into four large groups.

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\(^3\) Lit. There is not for him anything new to say.
i. the *laysa* that means (Subject) is not (Complement) (this class encompasses categories 1–5 above). The complement in question may be a noun phrase, a prepositional phrase, or an adjective.

ii. the *laysa* that negates imperfect verbs (category 6 above).

iii. the *laysa* that is used as a negative conjugation (category 7 above).

iv. the *laysa ‘illā* and *laysa ġayru* that mean “nothing more,” “nothing else,” or “nothing but” when placed at the end of a noun-phrase or sentence (category 8 above).

2. **LAYSALN THE QUR’AN**

In this section, we shall see how *laysa* is used in the Qurʾān. According to ‘Abdu l-Bāqī⁴ and Ba’labakkī,⁵ *laysa* and its conjugated forms appear in the Qurʾān as follows:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>laysa</em></td>
<td>74 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>laysati</em></td>
<td>3 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>laysū</em></td>
<td>2 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lasta</em></td>
<td>4 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lastu</em></td>
<td>2 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lastum</em></td>
<td>3 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>lastunna</em></td>
<td>1 time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>89 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Badawi and Abdel Haleem⁶ have the following to say about *laysa* in the Qurʾān:

> a word denoting negation, ‘not’, and occurring 89 times in the Qur’an. Grammarians describe it as a conjugable verb, occurring only in the perfect, and classify it amongst the sister of *kāna* (کَانَ...), all of which govern a nominal sentence with the subject in the nominal case and the predicate in the accusative... Preposition ـ is often prefixed to the predicate of *laysa* (ليس) for particular emphasis...

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Namely, they opine that *laysa* neither negates imperfect verbs, nor works as a negative conjugation, nor means “nothing more” in the *Qurʾān*. Actually, Sakaedani⁷ analyzed the text of the *Qurʾān*, and found that other than two, all of the instances of *laysa* usage fall under the first category of *laysa* usage mentioned in the previous section, i.e. “i. the *laysa* that states that (Subject) is not (Complement).” The other two examples include the word ‘*illā*, which means “except,” and no subject appears in them: أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا النَّارَ (Q 11:16) “[S]uch people will have nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire”⁸ and ليس للإنسان إلا ما سمع (Q 53:39) “[M]an will only have what he has worked towards”.⁹

According to Sakaedani,¹⁰ the breakdown of the instances of *laysa* found in the *Qurʾān* is as follows. The numbers of the chapters and verses in which *laysa* appears have been placed within parentheses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicate</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>definite noun phrase</th>
<th>indefinite noun phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>laysa</strong> (4:123), (6:30), (6:53), (29:10), (46:34), (58:10), (95:8) 7 times</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>lastu</strong> (7:172) 1 time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>lastum</strong> (2:267) 1 time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>total 9 times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>laysa</strong> (11:8) 1 time</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>lasta</strong> (4:94), (13:43) 2 times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>laysū</strong> (3:113) 1 time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>total 4 times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>laysa</strong> (3:82), (5:116), (6:122), (8:51), (11:81), (22:10), (36:81), (39:36), (39:37), (46:32 the fast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


⁹ Lit. [thing] is not for man except he has worked toward.

¹⁰ Sakaedani, “*Koran ni okeru hitēdōshi laïsa no yōhō,*” 265 and 273.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 (cont.)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preposition (except bi-) + definite noun phrase</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laysa (6:159) 1 time</td>
<td>total 14 times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| preposition (except bi-) + indefinite noun phrase |  |
| lastum (5:68) 1 time | none |
| laysati (2:113)×2 2 times |  |
| lastunna (33:32) 1 time | total 4 times |

| ‘an clause |  |
| laysa (2:177) 1 time | laysa (2:198), (4:101), (24:29), (24:60), (24:61)×2 6 times |

| bi-‘an clause |  |
| laysa (2:189) 1 time | none |

3. LAYSA IN SĪBAWAYHI’S KITĀB

3.1 Negations in Sibawayhi’s Kitāb

First, as regards the negation of verbs, Sibawayhi has summarized how to negate verbs in لَعَبُ جِنْسِ الفَعْلٍ as shown in the following chart. However,

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he has made no mention here about either laysa + yaf’alu (compound negative) or laysa itself. Nevertheless, he has stated in another section\(^\text{12}\) that laysa indicates negation.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affirmative</strong></td>
<td><strong>Negation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faʿala</td>
<td>lam yafʿal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qad faʿala</td>
<td>lammā yafʿal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laqad faʿala</td>
<td>mā faʿala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yafʿalu</td>
<td>mā yafʿalu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in the actual situation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yafʿalu</td>
<td>lā yafʿalu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(the action was not actual)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>layafʿalanna</td>
<td>lā yafʿalu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sawfa yafʿalu</td>
<td>lan yafʿalu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2 Is laysa a Verb or a Particle?

In order to answer this question, I will present Sībawayhi’s view first, followed by other Arab grammarians’ view as represented by Ibn Ya‘īš.

#### 3.2.1. Sībawayhi’s View

There are two views regarding laysa: “laysa is a verb” and “laysa is a particle.” In traditional grammar, the concept of laysa is explained by comparing it with the particles lā and mā.

Sībawayhi says that laysa is a verb and to illustrate his point, he points out that in the section of وَا جَرِيَتْ قَالَ اللهُ ﺁدَأْرَا كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ حِينَ مُرَادُوا ﻷنْ أَكْرُمْ ﻛَلْٰلَهُ ﻗَدْ أَوْلَمْ ﻛُلُّ ﺗَانِيَةٍ ﺑَنَوْy

12 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 508, Derenbourg 2, 338/Hārūn 4, 233.
13 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 111, Derenbourg 1, 201–206/Hārūn 2, 37–49.
14 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 201/Hārūn 2, 37.
3.2.2. Other Grammarians’ View

As mentioned above, laysa is explained in traditional grammar in comparison with lā and mā. Ibn Ya’īš, for instance, gives examples of the al-Ḥijāz people in whose dialect mā makes its predicate a dependent case, as does laysa in the section of مَا هَذَا بِشََْرٰٓا� (Q 12:31) “He (Yūṣuf) cannot be mortal!” and مَا هُنَا أَمِيَانِهِمْ (Q 58:2) “[T]hey are not their mothers”.

However, the action of mā on a predicate is weaker than the action of laysa on the same, and thus the predicate does not become dependent when the predicate precedes the subject or when an exception particle appears between the subject and the predicate: ولَّا يَأْتِي وَلَّا يَأْتِي (3:144) “Muhammad is only a messenger”.16

Therefore, Ibn Ya’īš opines that laysa is a verb and mā is a particle. Ibn Hišām picks up laysa as one of the examples of a verb as it accepts the inflectional ending –t for the perfect form of the third person feminine singular, like قَامَت “she stood up,” قَدَّمَت “she sat.” He gives some other examples like أَسْعَى نَمَّمَتْ “what an excellent…!,” يَبْسَتْ “what a bad…!” and “it could be that…”17 Ohalla, on the other hand, summarizes his reasons for regarding laysa as a verb as follows:18

1. It triggers dependent case on nominal and adjectival predicates.
2. It inflects for tense-agreement and enters into agreement with the subject.
3. It occupies the initial position immediately before the subject usually reserved for the verb in the canonical order VSO.

3.3 Bi- Attached to laysa’s Predicate

In the context of the usage of laysa in the Qurʾān, Badawi and Abdel Haleem say that preposition bi- is often prefixed to the predicate of laysa for particular emphasis,19 as has been detailed in Section 2.

As for this preposition bi- added to the predicate, Sibawayhi says that there is no difference between the existence of bi- and absence of bi-.20 He

15 Ibn Ya’īš, Šarḥ al-mufaṣṣal (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub) 1, 108.
16 Lit. Muhammad is not [anything] but a messenger.
19 Badawi and Abdel Haleem, Arabic-English Dictionary of Qura’nic Usage, 859.
20 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 20, Derenbourg 1, 25–26/Hārūn 1, 67–68.
supports his claim by quoting an expression found in ‘Uqayba al-‘Asadi’s poem: "And we are neither the mountains nor the iron". He says that adding bi- to the predicate al-jībāl “the mountains” does not cause any change in its meaning as both دخا�هٍ كخَّيََيَّةٍ حِلَالٍ ولا اخخ حخلاخال ولا خخلخحخم� mean “this is enough for you.” Ibn Ya‘īš21 also says that bi- is added to ensure negation, but the addition causes no change in the meaning.

Thus, in their investigative accounts on the topic of whether the preposition bi- is added to predicates “for particular emphasis,” the concerned grammarians have not put forth an affirmative view. Furthermore, as shown in Table 2, when a predicate is a definite noun phrase, the preposition bi- is always added to it. Moreover, the dependent predicates without a preposition total only 4, while the prepositional phrase predicates with the preposition bi- are 23 (4:123 is excluded, as here, bi- means “by” or “according to;” that is, if bi- is removed from this verse, its meaning changes). In other words, predicates comprising the preposition bi- appear much more often in the Qur‘ān than predicates without it. Thus, it cannot be described as “particular.”

However, when the predicate is a 'an clause, it is only once that the 'an clause attached with bi- appears in the Qur‘ān, while seven 'an clauses without bi- appear in the same. This fact turns the table, but even so, as regards the total amount, the predicates with bi- (24 examples) far exceed in number the predicates without bi- (13 examples).

3.4 Ellipsis of ḍamīr al-šaʿn “Pronoun of the Matter"

Sibawayhi talks about the laysa that contains an ellipsis of ḍamīr al-šaʿn “pronoun of the matter.”22 He gives the following examples of ḍamīr al-šaʿn “pronoun of the matter”:23 إنَّهُ من يَأْتِنَا نَأْتُهُ "We come to whoever comes to us"24 and وإِنَّهُ أَمَّةُ اْللّٰهِ ذَاهِبَةٌ "Allāh’s maidservant is going".25

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21 Ibn Ya‘īš, Šarḥ al-mufaṣṣal 2, 114. He cites the following two verses as examples of Qur‘ānic verses:

(39:36) “Is God not enough for His servant?”
(7:172) “Am I not your Lord?”

He explains that the former means ّالسُّ تَ رَيْكَمُ أَلِيسُ الرَّيْكُمُ إِلَّا أَلِيسَ اللَّهُ يَكَافِي عَبْدَهُ and the latter means "Allāh’s maidservant is going.

22 Sibawayhi, Kitāb, chapter 21, Derenbourg 1, 27–28/Hārūn 1, 69–72.
23 Ibīd., Derenbourg 1, 27/Hārūn 1, 69.
24 Lit. It is that whoever comes to us, we come to him.
25 Lit. It is that Allāh’s maidservant is going.
According to Sibawayhi,26 some Arabs say, “Allāh did not create [anyone] like him”.27 He further states that if this laysa had no ellipsis, the verb خلق “(he) created” could not have appeared, and neither could laysa have governed a noun. Sibawayhi also cites a verse of Ḥumaid al-’Araqāṭ as an example:28 فأصبحوا وال butterknife علي معرِّفهم، وليس كلّ النوى تلبّق المساكين “And they [the starving guests] met the morning, the date pits being piled up beside their night’s lodging, but the miserable did not throw away all the date pits [as they were so hungry].”29

If laysa governed kullā it might not take the dependent but the nominal case because laysa might not contain an ellipsis of ḍamīr al-šaʾn “pronoun of the matter.” In point of fact, kullā takes the dependent case because of the verb tulqī, which means “they throw” (lit. she throws). Another example is given.30 Hišām ‘AḫūḎī al-Rumma composed the following: “It might be the cure of my disease if I got the better of it, but no cure of the disease is given by it.”31

Sibawayhi provides an explanation regarding these lines in another section,32 as also about the following expressions including ḍamīr al-šaʾn “pronoun of the matter” that are permitted: “Allāh did not create a more famous poet than he”,33 and “Zayd did not say it”.34 Such laysa that contains an ellipsis of ḍamīr al-šaʾn “pronoun of the matter” is never found in the Qurʾān. Sibawayhi does not give an example of the Qurʾānic verse, either.

### 3.5 Expressing Exceptions

Sibawayhi says that laysa is used to show exceptions in a manner similar to lā yakūnu.35 He gives some examples to illustrate his point as in: ما أتائني واتوتي لا يكون زيداً “The people came to me except Zayd” vs 36

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26 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 21, Derenbourg 1, 27/Hārūn 1, 70.
27 Lit. It is not that Allāh created [someone] like him.
28 Ibid.
29 Lit. And it is not that all the date pits that the miserable throw.
30 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 21, Derenbourg 1, 27/Hārūn 1, 71.
31 Lit. And it is not that cure of the disease is given from it.
32 Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 34, Derenbourg 1, 62/Hārūn 1, 147.
33 Lit. It is not that Allāh created a more famous poet than he.
34 Lit. It is not that Zayd said it.
36 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 328/Hārūn 2, 347.
37 Ibid.
“and they came to me except Zayd” and 38 “and no one came to me except Zayd”, and 39 “No woman came to me except so-and-so” vs 40 “No woman came to me except so-and-so”.

Sibawayhi also says that when the object is a pronoun, it is prefixed by ‘īyā- to become a separate personal pronoun in the dependent, such as the following: 41

“I wish this night were one month, in which we do not see anyone, except me and you, and we do not fear a guardian”. He also mentions hearing the Arabs saying laysa-nī, which means “except me,” too.42 In other words, the object may be a suffixed pronoun in the dependent. Although other grammarians too talk about this type of laysa, however, there is no example of laysa that denotes “exception” in the Qurʾān.

Of course, there are verses that include an expression of exception, but there is no verse in which laysa is used to denote “except.” Some verses that include laysa and ʾillā or min dūni to show the meaning “not…but” can be found, as we saw in Section 2 and as in أُولئك الذين ليس لهم في الآخرة إلا النار (Q.11:16) “Such people will have nothing in the Hereafter but the Fire” and ليس للإنسان إلا ما سعى (Q. 53:39) “[M]an will only have what he has worked towards”. Further, verses (Q. 6:51), (Q. 6:70), (Q. 46:32, the first half) and (Q. 53:58) use min dūni instead of ʾillā. For example: ليس لهم من دونه ولي ولا شفع (6:51) “[T]hey will have no one but Him to protect them and no one to intercede.”

Conclusion

In this study, we investigated the usage of laysa in the Qurʾān and the description of laysa by the traditional grammarians, especially Sibawayhi. Our findings are listed below.

First, compound negative, i.e. the negation of imperfect verbs by laysa that is observed in Modern Standard Arabic, is not mentioned by Sibawayhi and other grammarians. Furthermore, there is no example of compound

38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 Sībawayhi, Kitāb chapter 207, Derenbourg 1, 333/Hārūn 2, 358.
42 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 333/Hārūn 2, 359.
negative in the Qurʾān. The said usage is supposed to be relatively recent, as it not found in the Qurʾānic Arabic. Consequently, a diachronic study is needed to investigate this change.

Secondly, the preposition bi- is often used as laysa's predicate, especially noun phrases rather than ʿan clauses, in the Qurʾān, although Sibawayhi says such usage does not cause any change in meaning. The usage and disuse of the preposition bi- also warrants a diachronic study on the Arabic language.

Third, Sibawayhi points out ḍamīr al-šaʾn “pronoun of the matter” is involved in the verb laysa; however, this kind of laysa cannot be found in the Qurʾān but in Jāhili poetry and other Arab utterances.

Fourth, Sibawayhi and other grammarians show that laysa means “except” in expressions of exception, although such usage of laysa is not found in the Qurʾān.

Although both ḍamīr al-šaʾn of the verb laysa and the laysa of exception are described in Kitāb Sībawayhi, they are not used in the Qurʾān. Even though the purpose of the traditional grammar is to protect the accurate version of the Arabic language to facilitate an exact reading of the Qurʾān, the grammarians have described some grammatical items that are not found the Qurʾān. Such items should be older than the Qurʾānic Arabic. Therefore, other texts—like Jāhili poetry—should be investigated.

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THE MOOD OF THE VERB FOLLOWING ḤATTÄ, ACCORDING TO MEDIEVAL ARAB GRAMMARIANS

Arik Sadan

INTRODUCTION

The mood of the imperfect verb following the particle ḥattā is one of the more complicated subjects in Arabic grammar. This paper focuses on one critical aspect concerning the usage of an imperfect verb after ḥattā: the relationship between the time that such a verb conveys and its mood, 'indicative' (marfūʿ) or 'subjunctive' (mansūb). It consists of three parts:

Part one is a short introduction on the preoccupation of medieval Arab grammarians with the particle ḥattā. Part two examines the main theories of Sibawayhi, on the one hand, and of later grammarians, such as al-Zamaḥšarī, on the other, regarding the time of an imperfect verb following ḥattā. Finally part three is a discussion of al-Astarābāḍī’s proposal, that the mood of the verb following ḥattā is related not only to the time it conveys but also to the speaker’s intention.

1. THE PREOCCUPATION OF MEDIEVAL ARAB GRAMMARIANS WITH THE PARTICLE ḤATTÄ

Medieval Arab grammarians’ preoccupation with ḥattā is due to the many syntactic and semantic contexts in which it can be used: it can be a subordinating particle followed by a verb, a preposition followed by a noun in the oblique case, and a conjunction meaning ‘and even’. The famous grammarian al-Farrā’ expressed his frustration concerning ḥattā and its complexity in the following words: أموت و في نفسي من حقي شيء “I shall die, while in my soul there is something [obscure] regarding ḥattä”.¹

¹ See al-Fīruzābādī, al-Qāmūs al-muḥīṭ (Beirut, 1987) 1, 192a. This sentence is also quoted by al-Kaffawī, al-Kullīyyāt: Mu’jam fi l-muṣṭalahāt wal-furūq al-luġawiyya (Beirut, 1992), 395a; al-Zabīdī, Šarḥ al-qāmūs al-musammā tāj al-ʿarūs min jawāhir al-qāmūs (Beirut, 1994) 3, 36a; B. al-Bustānī, Muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ: Qāmūs mutawwal lil-luğa l-ʿarabiyya (Beirut, 1870) 1, 341b.
Although *ḥattā* has been discussed extensively in the scholarly literature, it is my impression that it is still unclear when the verb following *ḥattā* in Classical Arabic should be *marfūʿ* and when it should be *manṣūb*, according to the views of Sibawayhi and the grammarians who follow him.

2. The Main Theories of Sibawayhi and of Later Grammarians, such as al-Zamaḫšarī

Medieval Arab grammarians’ discussions of *ḥattā* pay considerable attention to the question of the mood of the following imperfect verb. In his famous *al-Kitāb*, Sibawayhi presents a complex theory regarding *ḥattā* and its different meanings when it is followed by a verb in the *naṣb* or in the *rafʿ* mood.² He posits four different sentence types in which an imperfect verb follows *ḥattā*, two in which the verb is *manṣūb*, and two in which it is *marfūʿ*. For only three of these does Sibawayhi explicitly mention the time that the verb following *ḥattā* conveys. The following is a short description of these four types, including the examples that Sibawayhi gives for each.

a. In the first sentence type where the verb after *ḥattā* takes the *naṣb* mood, *ḥattā* has the meaning of ‘until’ (*ʾilā ʾan*) and the following verb signifies the ‘the final point’ (*ġāya*) of the domain of the action of the verb preceding *ḥattā*.³ An example of this pattern is the sentence: “I went until the point of entering⁴ it”, in which the action of entering,

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² Sibawayhi’s theory concerning *ḥattā* is presented in chapters 238–240 of *al-Kitāb* (see Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* (1) ed. H. Derenbourg [Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1881–9] 1, 367–372, (2) ed. ‘A.S.M. Hārūn [Cairo, 1988] 3, 16–27). In chapter 238 Sibawayhi elucidates the different usages of the imperfect verb following *ḥattā* (these will be presented below), in chapter 239 he discusses more complex structures of *ḥattā* and chapter 240 is dedicated to sentences in which the agent of the verb preceding *ḥattā* differs from the agent of the following verb.

³ According to E.W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863–1893), 6, 2312a, the meaning of the term *ġāya* is “the utmost, or extreme, extent, term, limit, point, or reach; or the extremity; of a thing”. Ibn Yaʿīš explains the term *ġāya* in the context of *ḥattā* in the following words: ‘المراد بالغاية أن يكون ما قبلها من الفعل متصلا بها حتى يقع هذا الفعل الذي بعدها في منتهاه’ “the intention in the [term] *ġāya* is that the action of the verb preceding it occurs continuously until the occurrence of the action of the verb following it, in its ending point (i.e. the ending point of the action of the verb preceding it)”. See Ibn Yaʿīš, *Šarḥ Ibn Jaʿīš Commentar zu Zamachšarī’s Mufaṣṣal*, ed. G. Jahn (Leipzig, 1886) 2, 929/Ibn Yaʿīš, *Šarḥ al-mufaṣṣal*, ed. A.S. Ahmad and I.A.J. ‘Abd al-Gani (Cairo, 2001) 3. 248.

⁴ The examples in which the verb following *ḥattā* takes the *naṣb* should be translated using a gerund and not a conjugated verb (in this example: “until the point of entering”
expressed by the verb ʿāmil, is considered the final point of the domain of the action of going, expressed by the verb ḥattā: The sentence ḥattā ʿāmil ʾan ḥattā has the same meaning. Sibawayhi states that there is a similarity between a noun and a verb which follow ḥattā: when they indicate the ʿāmil, the noun takes the oblique case and the verb takes the naṣb. He adds that this observation is due to al-Ḥalīl.

and not “until I have entered”). The reason for this way of translation is the fact that a mansūb verb following ḥattā merely represents the idea that this verb is expected to occur, but its actual occurrence is not certain, that is, it might occur in reality but it might also not occur. Concerning this idea, see §3 below. For other sources that express this view, see H. L. Fleischer, Kleine Schriften (Leipzig, 1885–1888), 2, 84, where he criticizes Trumpp’s translation of the sentence ʿāmil ʾan ḥattā ʾan ʿāmil ʾan has the same meaning. Sibawayhi states that there is a similarity between a noun and a verb which follow ḥattā: when they indicate the ʿāmil, the noun takes the oblique case and the verb takes the naṣb. He adds that this observation is due to al-Ḥalīl.

5 See Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 238, Derenburg 1, 367/Hārūn 3, 17.

6 In both cases ḥattā is considered a preposition (harf jarr), but only when it appears before a noun does it influence it syntactically (causing it to take the oblique case), whereas when it appears before a verb in naṣb, Sibawayhi and most of the grammarians posit ‘an ‘an concealed in the mind of the speaker’ (‘an mudmara) which influences the verb syntactically (causing it to take the naṣb mood). This ‘an is thus considered to be the ʿamil of the mansūb verb after ḥattā and other prepositions, such as li- and wa-. The main reason for this theory lies in the important theoretical principle of the ʿamil has a uniqueness,” i.e. it can either affect the mood of the imperfect verb or the case of a noun, but not both simultaneously. Therefore, a word which is considered to be a preposition, such as ḥattā and li-, can only be an ʿamil of nouns and not of imperfect verbs. For Sibawayhi’s view concerning the case of li- and ḥattā, see Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 234, Derenburg 1, 362/Hārūn 3, 5–6. Cf. al-ANTI’S commentary in al-ANTI’S, al-Nukat fi tafsīr kitāb Sībawayhi, ed. Z.A.M. Sulṭān (Kuwait, 1987) 1, 700.

7 See Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 238, Derenburg 1, 367/Hārūn 3, 17.
b. In the second sentence type where the verb following ḥattā takes the naṣb mood, ḥattā has the meaning of ‘in order to’ (kay) and the action of the verb after ḥattā has not yet occurred. An example of this pattern is the sentence “I spoke to him in order that he would command [to bring] me something”. Sibawayhi adds that the verb يأِمَرَ in this sentence indicates an action which has not yet occurred and that the sentence كَلْمَتِهِ حَتَّى يَأِمَرَ لي نَشَئَie has the same meaning. It is interesting to note that except for this short explanation, Sibawayhi does not elaborate on this sentence type, neither in this chapter (238) nor in the next two chapters devoted to ḥattā. Perhaps this is related to the essential difference between this type and the other three uses of ḥattā followed by an imperfect verb: this is the only case in which the verb following ḥattā necessarily indicates an action which has not yet occurred, i.e. in a future time relevant to the time of speech. In this case, the naṣb mood following ḥattā is perhaps easier to grasp, as it is considered to be caused by ‘an ‘an concealed in the mind of the speaker’ (‘an muḍmara), which is ‘a sign of the future’ (‘alam al-istiqbāl).

c. In the first sentence type where the verb after ḥattā takes the rafʿ mood, the action of the verb following ḥattā takes place immediately after the action of the verb that precedes ḥattā. In addition, both actions must have taken place in the past. An example of this sentence type is سَرَتْ حَتَّى أَدْخَلْهَا “I went and indeed I entered it”. This sentence conveys the fact that there was an action of entering which occurred immediately after the action of going. In addition, it is understood that these two actions occurred in the past. Sibawayhi continues by comparing the example quoted above to the sentence سَرَتْ فَأَدْخَلْهَا “I went and I entered it”, because in both of them the action of entering, expressed using a verb in the rafʿ mood, occurred immediately after the action of going. Finally,

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9 Regarding this point, see footnote 6 above and al-Astarābādī’s view, presented in §3 below.
10 From two explicit remarks by Sibawayhi, it is inferred that the two actions must have taken place in the past. For these remarks, see Sibawayhi, Kitāb Derenbourg 1, 368, 16–17 and 368, 10–13/Hārūn 3, 20, 8–10 and 20, 1–4.
11 Ibid., Derenbourg 1, 367/Hārūn 3, 17. Further in this chapter (see Sibawayhi, Kitāb Derenbourg 1, 368/Hārūn 3, 20), Sibawayhi clarifies that the comparison made here between ḥattā and fa- is only meant to show that in both cases the two actions occurred sequentially in the past, but it certainly does not mean that the meaning of ḥattā is the same as the meaning of fa-. Cf. al-Ṣantamārī, Nukat 1, 701–702; 707.
he determines that ḥattā here becomes like ‘idā and the other ḥurūf al-ibtidā’; because in this pattern ḥattā does not have the meaning of ‘ilā ‘an or kay, and therefore no longer belongs to the category of particles causing the verb to take the naṣb.

d. In the second sentence type where the verb after ḥattā takes the raf’ mood, the action of the verb after ḥattā does not occur immediately after the action of the verb before ḥattā. Also, the action of the verb before ḥattā must have taken place in the past, whereas the action of the verb after ḥattā occurs in the present. Often the appropriate translation of ḥattā in this case is “so . . . that” or “such . . . that”, as in the following examples which Sibawayhi gives for this pattern:

لقد سرت حتى أدخلها ما أُمنع
“I went [so much] that I can enter it, without anyone preventing me [from doing so]”; 

لقد رأي متي عاماً أول شئنا حتى لا أستطيع أن أفهم العال بشيء
“he experienced from me last year such a thing, that I cannot speak with him this year about anything”; 

مرض حتى لا يرجعه
“he was so sick, that they (i.e. the people) lose hope regarding him”. Sibawayhi clarifies that in this pattern, as well as in the preceding one, the verb following ḥattā takes the raf’ mood exactly as the noun takes the ḥattā case in the pattern in which it follows ḥattā, because in these patterns ḥattā is one of the ḥurūf al-ibtidā’.  

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12 The technical term ḥurūf al-ibtidā’ refers to particles which do not affect the ‘irāb of the sentences following them, such as ‘innamā, a particle followed by the subject of a nominal sentence, which takes the raf’ case due to the influence of the ‘āmil named al-ibtidā’. Sibawayhi’s intention here is to clarify that in this pattern, ḥattā does not serve as an ‘āmil which syntactically affects the word following it. It should be indicated that Jahn, in his translation of al-Kitāb, is mistaken in translating the technical term ḥurūf al-ibtidā’ here as “the particles appearing at the beginning of the sentence”. See G. Jahn, Sibawahi’s Buch über die Grammatik, übersetzt und erklärt von Dr. G. Juhn (Berlin, 1895), 1.2, 141.

13 See Sibawayhi, Kitāb Deroenbourg 1, 367/Hārūn 3, 17–18.

14 There are two differences between the two sentence types in which the verb following ḥattā takes raf’ (c and d above): in the former the two actions are sequential and both must have taken place in the past, whereas in the latter the two actions are not sequential and the second is taking place in the present. For Sibawayhi’s thorough explanations of these differences, see Sibawayhi, Kitāb Deroenbourg 1, 368/Hārūn 3, 19–20.

15 Lane, Lexicon 1, 998b: “he experienced from him such a thing”.

16 See Sibawayhi, Kitāb Deroenbourg 1, 367 and 368/Hārūn 3, 18 and 20.

17 For the meaning of ḥurūf al-ibtidā’ here, see footnote 12 above. It is important to distinguish between the ‘āmil causing raf’ in these patterns: whereas the ‘āmil causing the noun after ḥattā to take the raf’ case is the ‘āmil named al-ibtidā’, the ‘āmil which causes the verb after ḥattā to take the raf’ mood is ‘its occurrence (i.e. of the verb) in a position which a noun can occupy’ (kayninatuhu fi mawdī ‘a l-ismi—see Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 236, Deroenbourg 1, 364/Hārūn 3, 10) and not the ‘āmil named al-ibtidā’ (I thank Prof. Aryeh Levin for helping me understand this point).
One of the proofs that ḥattā in this sentence type is indeed a ḥarf ibtidā’ is the fact that one can add to ḥattā an utterance beginning with the particle ‘inna, exactly as such an utterance can be added to ‘idā, which is one of the hurūf al-ibtidā’. In other words, the fact that one could say حَتَّى أَنَّهُ يَفْعَل ذَٰلِك “so [much] that he does it”, as one could say إِذَا أَنَّهُ يَفْعَل ذَٰلِك “here he does it”, proves that in this case, ḥattā is one of the hurūf al-ibtidā’.18

Other examples of this sentence type which Sībawayhi provides later in this chapter are: شَرِبت حَتَّى يَجِبُ الْبَعْرُ يَتْرِجُ بَطْنَهُ “I drank [such a great quantity of water] that the camel would drag its stomach [on the ground, if it drank such a quantity]”;19 مَرَض حَتَّى يَسْرُ عَلَى الْخَانَّ فَيْرُجُوهُ “he was so sick that the bird passes by him and feels sorry for him”;20 لَقَدْ ضَرَبَ أُمّ حَتَّى لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يَحْرَكَ الْيَوْمُ “he was beaten yesterday [so much] that he cannot move today”.21

For three of these four sentence types (b, c and d) Sibawayhi mentions the time that the verb following ḥattā conveys, whereas in one (a) this issue remains open: In b, in which ḥattā has the meaning of kay, the action of the verb after ḥattā has not yet occurred; in c, the two actions are sequential, and both must have taken place in the past; and in d, the two actions are not sequential, and the action of the verb after ḥattā occurs in the present. As for sentence type a, in which ḥattā occurs in the meaning of īlā ‘an, Sibawayhi himself does not say anything about the time of the verb following ḥattā.

Most grammarians adopt Sibawayhi’s views and attempt to explain them further and elucidate his intentions. It seems to me that the complexity of Sibawayhi’s explanations, as well as a desire to create a simple distinction between the two moods of the verb following ḥattā, caused the grammarians to propose their various theories on the matter.

18 See Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 238, Derenbourg 1, 368/Hūrūn 3, 18–19. Cf. al-Fārisī, Ta’līqa 2, 138, who adds that had ḥattā here been one of the hurūf al-jarr, ‘anna would have been expected to be joined to it rather than ‘inna. To the distinction between ḥattā ‘inna and ḥattā ‘anna Sibawayhi devotes chapter 270 (see Derenbourg 1, 420–421/Hūrūn 3, 143–145), where he explains that after ḥattā, which is one of the hurūf al-ibtidā’, ‘inna (and not ‘anna) should be used. The sequence ḥattā ‘anna is only possible, according to Sibawayhi, when it is the conjunctive ḥattā (ḥattā l-ʿāṭifa). Cf. Fleischer, Schriften 1.2, 406.
19 See Sibawayhi, Kitāb chapter 238, Derenbourg 1, 367–368/Hūrūn 3, 18.
20 See Sibawayhi, Kitāb Derenbourg 1, 368/Hūrūn 3, 19.
21 See Sibawayhi, Kitāb Derenbourg 1, 368/Hūrūn 3, 20.
Later grammarians, such as al-Zamaḥšarī (6th/12th century), offer the theory that naṣb is used when the verb after ḥattā indicates a future time, whereas raf’ serves to indicate the present. al-Zamaḥšarī says that in either mood the time of the verb after ḥattā may be relative or absolute: in the case of naṣb, the future time may be relative to the time of the occurrence of the verb before ḥattā (relative future) or to the time of speech (absolute future). Similarly, in the case of raf’, the present time may be relative to the time of the occurrence of the verb before ḥattā (relative or historical present, which he calls ḥikāyat al-ḥāl al-māḍiya) or to the time of speech (absolute present). Ibn Yaʿīš interprets al-Zamaḥšarī’s words here and explains that the ʿawāmil causing the imperfect verb to take the naṣb cannot influence such a verb when it indicates the present time, only when it indicates the future time. Therefore, a manṣūb verb after ḥattā necessarily means that the time of this verb is future—be it absolute or relative. An example for an absolute future, continues Ibn Yaʿīš, is the sentence أَلْلَهُ ﷲ “obey God so that he will let you into heaven!”, in which both verbs indicate an action which has not yet occurred, and an example for a relative future is the sentence سَرَتْ حَتَّى أُدْخِلَتُ الْجَلَّةُ “I went yesterday until its entering point and I exited it today.”

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These grammarians claim that although the verb following ḥattā in such examples does not indicate an action which has not yet occurred (absolute future), its occurrence at a future time relative to the action before it, allows it to take the naṣb mood (relative future).

The main problem with the above distinction is that it cannot be a definitive criterion for distinguishing between the naṣb and the rafʿ moods, but can only serve as an explanation for some of the examples in which the verb following ḥattā takes the naṣb mood. The reason is that the verb following ḥattā, be it in naṣb or rafʿ, indicates an action that occurs after the action of the verb before ḥattā. One can compare, for example, the first and the third sentence types that Sibawayhi introduces (see above), and realize that in both of them the action of the verb after ḥattā occurs after the action of the verb before ḥattā, whereas in the first naṣb is used and in the other—rafʿ.

3. al-Astarābāḏī’s Proposal of a Relationship between the Mood of the Verb Following ḥattā and the Speaker’s Intention

The first grammarian who raises and treats the problem mentioned above is al-Astarābāḏī (7th/13th century), the most famous of the commentators on Ibn al-Ḥājib’s al-Kāfiya. In his commentaries on Ibn al-Ḥājib’s discussion on ḥattā, al-Astarābāḏī justifies and praises the latter, who with regard to the possibility of the naṣb, does not mention the absolute but only the relative future. According to al-Astarābāḏī, putting the verb following ḥattā in the naṣb does not necessarily mean that the action which this verb indicates occurs in a future time relative to the time of speech (i.e. absolute future). The naṣb is possible, he states, when this action is in a future time relative to the occurrence of the first action, indicated by the verb preceding ḥattā, because during the occurrence of the first action, the naṣb of the second verb indicates that the action of this verb is expected to take place, whether, with regard to the time of speech, it has indeed occurred (in the past), is occurring (in the present), will occur after the time of speech (in the future) or shall not occur at all due to a certain action which has prevented its occurrence in reality.26 al-Astarābāḏī goes on to say that the time of the verb following ḥattā cannot be the sole definitive criterion for distinguishing between the naṣb and the rafʿ.

moods, because, as explained above, in both cases the action of the verb following ḥattā occurs after the action of the verb preceding it. Therefore, it is indeed correct to claim that the manṣūb verb following ḥattā reflects an occurrence in a future time relative to the occurrence of the first action, but this claim is by no means a definitive criterion for distinguishing between the two moods. This claim should be regarded solely as an answer to the following question: how is it possible that in the sentence سَرَتْ حَتَّى أَخْلَفْهَا, in which the action of the verb أَخْلَفْهَا can take place in the past, present or future, the verb can take the naṣb mood due to the influence of ‘an al-mudmara,27 which is ‘alam al-istiqbal? The answer to this question, according to al-Astarābāḏī, is that the naṣb of the verb following ḥattā, which is caused by ‘an (i.e. ‘an al-mudmara), is possible since the action of this verb is in a future time relative to the occurrence of the first action, expressed by the verb preceding ḥattā.28

After showing that the time of the verb cannot be a definitive criterion for distinguishing between the naṣb and the ṭafʾ moods, al-Astarābāḏī arrives at the important question: how can one distinguish between the two moods and decide when to put the verb following ḥattā in naṣb and when to put it in ṭafʾ? His answer to this question is that the distinction between the two moods is strongly connected to the speaker’s intention and to the question of what he wishes to express—in al-Astarābāḏī’s words: ذلك إلى قصد المتحك.” that (i.e. deciding if the verb takes naṣb or ṭafʾ) depends on the speaker’s intention”. al-Astarābāḏī explains that the naṣb mood can indicate two kinds of actions:

– one which has not yet occurred (that is, absolute future)
– one of which the speaker wants to say that it is meant to occur, without implying whether it has indeed occurred or not. This action, elaborates al-Astarābāḏī, may convey an occurrence in any of the three times (past, present or future), but it can also be that this action does not occur at all, due to another action which has prevented its occurrence in reality.

The ṭafʾ mood, on the contrary, according to al-Astarābāḏī, indicates that the action has occurred in the past or is occurring in the present and the

27 ‘An concealed in the mind of the speaker. For this term, see footnote 6 above.
28 See al-Astarābāḏī, Sarḥ al-kāfiya 4, 58.
intention of the speaker is to indicate that it has indeed occurred or is currently occurring.\footnote{See al-Astarābāḏī, Šarḥ al-kāfiya 4, 58 and 59. Ibn Hišām, al-Ušmūnī and al-Suyūṭī explicitly say that the verb after ḥattā must be put in naṣb when it indicates a future time relative to the time of speech (that is, absolute future), whereas when it indicates a relative future, it can be put in either naṣb or rafʿ, depending on the speaker's intention. See Ibn Hišām, Muḫni l-labīb ‘an kutub al-ʾaʿārīb (Cairo, 1328/1910) 1, 104; Ibn Hišām, al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḡīr fī l-naḥw, ed. A.M. al-Hirmīl (Cairo, 1400/1980) 173; al-Ušmūnī, Šarḥ al-Ušmūnī ʿalā ʾalfiyyat Ibn Mālik, ed. H. Ḥamd and I.B. Yaʿqūb (Beirut, 1419/1998) 3, 205; al-Suyūṭī, Ḥanm ʿal-hawāmiʿ fī šarḥ jamʿ al-jawāmiʿ, ed. A.A.S. Mukrim (Beirut, 1413/1992) 4, 11. From what Ibn Mālik and his son say it is also inferred that the intention of the speaker is an important factor in the decision as to which mood the verb after ḥattā takes. In reference to sentences in which the verb after ḥattā indicates the past, both of them explain that either naṣb or rafʿ are possible and the decision between them is taken according to the speaker's intention. See Ibn Mālik, Šarḥ al-kāfiya 2, 121; Ibn al-Nāẓim, Šarḥ Ibn al-Nāẓim ʿalā ʿalfiyyat Ibn Mālik, ed. M.B.ʿU. al-Sūd (Beirut, 2000), 481.}

It is interesting to note that some modern researchers seem to express the same idea that al-Astarābāḏī conveys in his theory concerning the strong connection between the speaker's intention and the decision regarding the mood of the verb following ḥattā. None of them, however, seems to rely on al-Astarābāḏī’s whole theory as described above.\footnote{One exception is al-Sāmarrāʾī, who does cite al-Astarābāḏī, but incompletely: he cites only the first part of al-Astarābāḏī’s words concerning the naṣb after ḥattā (that is, concerning the absolute future), but ignores the second part concerning the speaker’s intention to convey that the action is meant to occur, without implying whether it has indeed occurred or not. As a result, al-Sāmarrāʾī arrives at the false conclusion that the naṣb must mean, according to al-Astarābāḏī, that the action of the verb will occur in a future time relative to the time of speech. See F.Š. al-Sāmarrāʾī, Maʿānī l-naḥw (Amman, 1420/2000), 3, 376.}

Following is a summary of their words on this issue:

a. Vernier briefly expresses an opinion similar to that of al-Astarābāḏī.\footnote{See D.S.J. Vernier, Grammaire arabe composée d’après les sources primitives (Beirut, 1891–1892), 2, 498 (§1044).}

b. Reckendorf points to the two kinds of actions that, according to al-Astarābāḏī, the naṣb mood can indicate.\footnote{See H. Reckendorf, Die Syntaktischen Verhältnisse des Arabischen (Leiden, 1898), 735 (part of §241) and H. Reckendorf, Arabische Syntax (Heidelberg, 1921), 457 (beginning of §226).} He adds that even when the verb after ḥattā indicates an action which has occurred in the past, it is possible to find it in rafʿ, as an indicator of an “historical present”, or in naṣb, as an action about which the speaker wishes to convey that it is expected to occur.\footnote{See Reckendorf, Verhältnisse, 735 and 736.} According to Reckendorf, after a main clause in
which the verb indicates the past, the naṣb mood may indicate an action which, relative to the time of speech, has already occurred or not.34
c. Ḥasan also notes the important distinction which al-Astarābāḏī makes between the rafʿ and the naṣb moods. According to Ḥasan, rafʿ in the verb following ḥattā indicates that the action did occur in reality, whereas naṣb merely conveys that this action is expected to occur. Ḥasan goes on to say that rafʿ indicates that both actions, i.e. of the verbs before and after ḥattā, indeed occurred in reality, whereas naṣb indicates that the action of the verb before ḥattā indeed occurred and that the action of the verb after ḥattā is expected to occur in the future, without the speaker implying whether or not it is about to occur, even if this occurrence is a known fact.35

I find al-Astarābāḏī’s explanation convincing, since it fits both Sibawayhi’s theory of the four sentence types used after ḥattā and the examples from the living language. In addition, it also corresponds to similar characteristics of other particles, after which the verb may appear in naṣb and in rafʿ, such as the particle fa- (meaning “and then, as a result”): the naṣb mood represents an uncertainty of the speaker as to the occurrence of the verb, whereas the rafʿ mood, on the contrary, represents the speaker’s certainty as to the occurrence of this verb.36

Conclusion

In this paper I examined one important aspect related to the usage of an imperfect verb after ḥattā: the relationship between the time that such a verb conveys and its mood. Following a short section on the intensive preoccupation of medieval Arab grammarians with ḥattā (§1), the views of Sibawayhi, al-Zamaḫšarī (representing other later grammarians, too) and al-Astarābāḏī were introduced, mainly with respect to the question of the time which the verb following ḥattā conveys (§§2–3). Sibawayhi posits four different sentence types with an imperfect verb following ḥattā, the first of which is the only one for which he does not mention the time that the verb following ḥattā conveys (his example for this type is مَرَّ سَرَتْ حَتَّى

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34 See Reckendorf, *Verhältnisse*, 736.
36 On this point, see Sibawayhi, *Kitāb* chapter 241, Derenbourg 1, 376/Hārūn 3, 36.
In view of al-Astārābāḍī’s words, explained in §3, I believe that the verb following ḥattā in this sentence type may convey either an action which has not yet occurred (absolute future) or an action of which the speaker wants to say that it is meant to occur, without implying whether it has indeed occurred or not. This solution seems more probable than that proposed by al-Zamaḵšarī (and other later grammarians), detailed in §2. In addition, it fits other environments of the naṣb mood (see the end of §3).

References

Primary Sources


**Secondary Sources**


PART III

THE GRAMMAR OF OTHERS
ELEMENTS OF THE SYRIAC GRAMMATICAL TRADITION AS THESE RELATE TO THE ORIGINS OF ARABIC GRAMMAR

Daniel King

INTRODUCTION

The proposition that Arabic grammar had its sources in the Greek grammatical and/or philosophical traditions is well-worn territory that retains still the shadow of political and religious concerns. Any potential Syriac sources for Arabic grammar were ruled out by Merx and, with some exceptions, have hardly had a hearing since.¹ I shall not seek to overturn the status quo in either field. I do believe, however, that the debate about origins has generally taken too little notice of generic social and cultural issues surrounding the ‘academia’ of the era of Sibawayhi and his associates in the second half of the second century AH. It is manifestly not my purpose to propose new suggestions as to the origins of Sibawayhi’s theories—such is a matter for a much closer analysis of the text itself and must ultimately be decided on internal grounds. An understanding of those origins, however, requires not merely an appreciation of textual descent and debt but of the cultural environment in which textual phenomena arise. To this end, the current paper will be limited to an overview of the Syriac grammatical tradition, elaborating upon some of its salient trends and characteristics and describing as far as the evidence may allow the social and cultural contexts in which it was pursued, before rounding off with some consideration of the question of how this relates to and illuminates the question of the origins of the science of Arabic grammar. A very brief summary of the extant texts of the Syriac grammatical tradition is appended, a fuller version of which may be found elsewhere.² Naturally each and every text that is here mentioned in passing is worthy of more profound analysis and in many cases this scholarly task has hardly proceeded beyond the preliminaries.

¹ A. Merx, Historia artis grammaticae apud Syros (Leipzig, 1889), ch. IX.
² Viz. the introduction to the new English translation of Merx, forthcoming with Gorgias Press, Piscataway, NJ.
1. The Earliest Evidence

The Syrians’ reflection upon their own language *qua* language almost certainly goes back beyond the veil that conceals the far side of our earliest extant evidence. The oldest dated Syriac manuscript (AD 411) already contains a variety of markings, some designed to indicate which of two or more homographs should be understood, others to divide sentences and clauses. Thus before any grammatical texts as such came into being, scribes were already anticipating the major issues that would come to dominate the considerations of the grammarians themselves. It hardly needs pointing out that both the abovementioned types of marking have really one and the same purpose, namely to assist the reader (reading most likely to an audience) in converting a stream of consonants into meaningful speech; in others words, these points aim to mimic the forms of speech that are otherwise unrepresented on parchment, including both vowels and other intonations of the voice. Such a procedure presupposes abstract reflection upon what constitutes the logical divisions of speech, i.e. a proto-linguistics not yet systematised into a linguistics proper. The complexity of the system grew rapidly in different directions resulting in a variety of systems that can only sometimes and with difficulty be reconstructed.3

It must always therefore be kept in mind that the Syriac pointing systems (accentuation) and the grammatical reflections that grew therefrom were always grounded in the exercise of ‘reading’ texts, pre-eminently Biblical texts.4 ‘Reading’ of this sort (starting with the Psalter) was, unsurprisingly, the central element in the school system of the Syriac churches from at least the fifth century,5 and was in the special care of the *maqreyyana*

3 Merx aimed to describe as many systems as possible on the basis of lists found in manuscripts, but admitted that very often these were mixed up and could not be disentangled. J.B. Segal, *The Diacritical Point and the Accents in Syriac* (London, 1953), took a different approach and tried to understand the development of the systems from Biblical manuscripts alone without recourse to the grammarians’ theorizing about them; for a new interpretation of the pointing in the manuscript of 411, see F.S. Jones, “Early Syriac Pointing in and behind British Museum Additional Manuscript 12,150,” in *Symposium Syriacum VII*, ed. R. Lavenant (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1998).

4 Hebrew accentuation was also begun as an attempt to illustrate on the written page the hand movement of a ‘conductor’—E.J. Revell, “Hebrew Accents and Greek Ekphonic Neumes,” in *Studies in Eastern Chant IV*, ed. M. Velimirovic (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1979).

(lit. ‘reader’), a fully paid-up position at the school of Nisibis (doubtless also at similar institutions elsewhere). One such was the first author of a Syriac grammar of any sort, Joseph Huzāyā, who appears to have translated for ‘school’ use, sometime in the middle of the sixth century, the best known Greek handbook to grammatical studies, namely Dionysius Thrax’s *Technē Grammatikē*. Later manuscripts and other references, however, usually cite Joseph as its real author and are unaware of its Greek origin, and indeed this attitude makes good sense when we appreciate that Joseph adapted and moulded his material to a new purpose (the description of Syriac), albeit in a rather unusual way.

To illustrate: much of the time, when some aspect of Greek grammar appears to be of no use for describing Syriac, the translator of the *Technē* discards it. Thus the whole section on phonology is simply omitted. Smaller changes include the reduction of three verbal numbers to two, and the explicit rejection of the category of verbal conjugations. These contrasts are explicit (we frequently see the formula, ‘the Greeks do this … but the Syrians do this’). Elsewhere, however, the translator will try to force his language into the mould of its model. For instance, Dionysius says that in Greek there are two forms of superlative adjective, those in –τατος and those in –τος; Joseph also needs to have two types, and since one can construct a superlative in Syriac either from a construct phrase or from an analytical expression with ‘d’, so he can offer us two types as well! Dionysius’ complex description of noun ‘shapes’ is imitated in similar manner. To mimic Dionysius’ explanation of compound verbal forms the Syriac forms prefixed with *-eth* are offered as if analogous. To Joseph it must have appeared so. After all, he prefixes his

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6 G. Uhlig, ed., *Dionysii Thracis Ars Grammatica* (Leipzig, 1883); the Syriac was edited in Merx, *Historia*, as Appendix III, with a translation in chapter 2. Merx doubts the attribution to Huzāyā who is mentioned only in later mss, but R. Contini, “Considerazioni interlinguistiche sull’adattamento siriaco della ‘Techne Grammaticae’ di Dionisio Trace,” in *La diffusione dell’eredità classica nell’età tardoantica e medievale. Il Romanzo di Alessandro e altri scritti*, ed. B.M. Finazzi and A. Valvo (Alessandria: Edizioni dell’Orso, 1998), 99–100, finds no cause to suspect it.

7 The Syriac starts at 22,4 Uhlig.

8 30,5 Uhlig; Syriac at Merx, (17).

9 47,1–2 Uhlig; Merx, (17).

10 28,4–5 Uhlig; Merx, (11).

11 29,5–30,4 Uhlig; Merx, (12).

12 50,3–51,1 Uhlig; Merx, (17).
whole ‘translation’ with the words, “The wise men of the Greeks say . . . ,” revealing thereby a presupposed fundamentalism in which descriptions of language are descriptions of reality, comparable to Aristotelian logic, a presupposition which, as we shall see, pervades the Syriac tradition (of logic as well as of grammar).

2. The Masoretic Traditions

Now Joseph’s sometimes forced adaptation of the Technē Grammatikē did not exist in a cultural vacuum. As a teacher of ‘reading’ at the School of Nisibis, Joseph was concerned above all with the preservation of the traditions, as he and his colleagues saw it, of public scriptural reading and exegesis, and hence as guardians of church and people. This is the purpose that binds together all that we know about this particular reader. Barhebraeus attributes to Joseph the School’s decision to adopt a change in the official ‘reading system’ and we should associate with this information another report to the effect that Joseph was held responsible by later generations for the elaboration of the Syriac system of accents, the beginnings of which we mentioned above in connection with the manuscript of 411. The manuscript containing this latter report is the most important exemplar of what has (a little unfortunately) been called the East Syrian masorah, a substantial number of sometimes extended Biblical passages copiously provided with points to indicate accentuation and other marks for live speech delivery. This constituted what the Syrians called the maṣľmanuta (tradition), handed down by the readers (maqreyyane) in the schools, not in an uncontested fashion, for disagreements between authorities are part and parcel of this process, yet in such a way as to leave us in no doubt that here lies the cultural and also the theological context and justification for the study of grammar as such. Dionysius Thrax had instilled the notion that grammar was about ‘recognition’ (anagnōsis),

13 J.B. Abbeloos and T.J. Lamy, eds., Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon Ecclesiasticum (London and Paris, 1877), vol.3, p.78: he altered the reading method of Edessa to the eastern one which the Nestorians use even though throughout the time of Narsai they read like us westerners. This is surely what Barhebraeus means by qeryata, not that Joseph actually changed the dialect itself!

14 BL Add. 12,138, f.312a, quoted in Segal, Diacritical Point, 66, with a textual reconstruction which may be deemed unnecessary.

15 Named on the analogy of the Hebrew masorah, the Syriac really has a different character and need not live in the shadow of its better known namesake. See the new study of Jonathan Loopstra, Patristic Selections in the ‘Masoretic’ Handbooks of the Qarqaptā Tradition (Leuven: Peeters, Forthcoming).
by which he means the recognition of the basic grammatical forms of a written text as well as higher discourse levels such as metaphor etc., i.e. ‘reading’ in its fullest sense. From analysis of the constituent letters of the language to lists of difficult or foreign words, to basic exegetical scholia, all these were the meat and drink of the maślmanuta.

Whereas the abovementioned manuscript is the only extant exemplar of the East Syrian maślmanuta, that of the West Syrian church is rather better attested through a number of (sometimes early) manuscripts. Many of the readings and comments on phonology and orthography contained within these codices are attributed to the ‘Karkaphensian version’ and it was the insight of the Abbé Martin over a century ago to show that this referred not to a particular recension of the Bible but to the teaching tradition of one particular monastic school over a long period of time. It is in the context of such manuscripts that the earliest texts of the Syriac grammatical tradition (up to c. 800) are preserved. Even after this date when grammars were written for their own sakes (mostly by East Syrians, e.g. Elias of Ṭirhan, Elias bar Šinaya, Joseph bar Malkon) and not as appendices to the masorah, the material used to illustrate grammatical points was always drawn from the masorah, both that relating to the Bible and the so-called ‘patristic masorah’ of the Fathers of the Church.

To stay with the earlier period, however, one may readily gauge from any list of Syriac grammatical texts that these early quasi-grammatical texts ranged from simple lists of difficult words found in the scriptures, loanwords and homographs, to more complex accounts of morphology. Many of them reflect different stages in what was evidently a developing process. Thomas the Deacon’s list of accents and explanations of them, authored early in the seventh century, is a self-conscious elaboration of the system attributed to Joseph Huzāyā, and at least some of the anonymous treatises on accents are in turn indebted to Thomas as their predecessor. The works of Jacob of Edessa too are essentially a

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16 BL Add 7,183; Add. 12,178; Vat. Borg. K.VIII.6; Vat. Syr. 152; Paris Syr. 142.
18 The study of homographs formed the starting point of the discipline of Syriac lexicography. ‘Enanišo’ (see below) seems to have been the first to compile a significant lexicon of this kind; and Hunayn ibn Isḥāq’s revision of it (possibly under influence from the Kitāb al-ʿayn) constitutes the first real Syriac lexicon, a tradition brought to fruition in the voluminous works of Bar ʿAli and Bar Bahlūl. C. Balzaretti, “Ancient Treatises on Syriac Homonyms,” Oriens Christianus 89 (1997), provides an overview of the genre especially as it appears in Barhebraeus.
development of the *mašmanuta*, of which he was always seen as the most celebrated proponent; hence his works are generally preserved in the context of other ‘masoretic’ material, to which Jacob was also indebted.

Interestingly, it was within this process of development that the Syrians became concerned with the origins of their own grammatical tradition. One of the small treatises found in this collection attributed the invention of the very notion of accents to Epiphanius, the Greek heretic-hunter, and expressly links this with Aristotle’s division of all speech into five types of discourse.19 Thus we can see the same underlying conception as in the translation of the *Technē*, namely that grammatical systems were invented by the Greeks and are equally applicable to all languages. It is crucial to recognise that Syriac grammar did not really conceive of itself as a grammar of the Syriac language so much as a universal grammar adapted for specific use among Syriac-speaking students. Hence there need be only one ‘inventor’ of accents as such, whichever language this might have occurred in.20

This universalising trend within Syriac grammatical studies explains a very odd feature of the tradition, namely the extensive overlap, even confusion, that persisted between grammar and logic. A debate between the relative merits of the two disciplines such as we witness in ‘Abbāsid Baghdad is inconceivable in late antique Syria. Even among the more developed logicians of the seventh century we can see an identification being made between the subject matter of the *Technē* and that of Aristotle’s *De Interpretatione*,21 an identification that is expressly rejected in the Arabic literature.22

19 Epiphanius was chosen for this dubious honour most likely because he had already been given authorship of a list of Greek accents included in the masoretic material, in turn on the basis of his (genuine) discussion of the (Greek) alphabet and Origen’s text critical symbols in his *On Weights and Measures*, another text well known in Syriac masoretic circles. Jonathan Loopstra, “A Syriac Tract for the ‘Explanation’ of Hebrew and Foreign Words,” in *The Old Testament as Authoritative Scripture in the Early Churches of the East*, ed. V.S. Hovhanessian (New York: Peter Lang, 2010).

20 There was consistent and changing tension among Syrians as to the relative prestige of Syriac (a language uncorrupted by the pagans) and Greek (the language of education and knowledge). See Sebastian P. Brock, “From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac attitudes to Greek learning,” in *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, ed. N. Garsoian, T. Matthews, and R. Thomson (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1982).

21 E.g. Athanasius of Balad’s *Introduction to Logic* works its way systematically through the *Organon* and yet in place of any summary or description of the *De Int.*, we have instead a summary of the *Technē*.

22 A. Elamrani-Jamal, *Logique aristotélicienne et Grammaire arabe* (Paris: Vrin, 1983), 146, who points to the obvious parallel in Port Royal grammar, although in the Syriac case the identity was rather assumed than demonstrated.
It was on the back of this that theorists such as Thomas the Deacon, Jacob of Edessa, John Bar Zu’bi, and others elaborated the accent system on the basis of the Aristotelian types of discourse, working to the presupposition that the Greek philosophical divisions (concocting such divisions was the everyday work of pedagogical philosophy in all the late antique schools) represented an underlying reality which the accentual system must represent as completely as possible. In practice, this meant reinterpreting the meanings of certain signs, assigning what are essentially the same sign to different categories, and inventing new signs simply in order to fit the preconceived schema. Bar Zu’bi did this with the Stoic system as well as the Peripatetic.

3. Jacob of Edessa

Included among these masoretic para-texts are two that belong to the most renowned of early Syriac grammarians, Jacob of Edessa (d.708). His letter on orthography and a treatise on persons and genders both treat just those kinds of topics with which the mašlmanuta was concerned and hence their preservation here is hardly fortuitous. Jacob also wrote a full grammar (entitled twrṣ mmllʾ, The Correction of Speech), the first such to be written in Syriac (if we exclude Huzāyā’s translation) and, although extant only in small fragments even the order of which is uncertain, we can discern in Jacob a first rate mind and a true linguist. The grammar itself has been carefully and fully described elsewhere and this need not be repeated here, save to note that some specific suggestions have been

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24 For details, D. King, “Grammar and Logic in Syriac (and Arabic),” (Forthcoming).
25 Jacob has fortunately been the subject of renewed study recently, the result being two collected volumes on his very diverse œuvre, B. Ter Haar Romeny, ed., Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of his Day (Leiden: Brill, 2008), and G.Y. Ibrahim and G. Kiraz, eds., Studies on Jacob of Edessa (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2010).
26 On Persons and Genders is edited and translated in G. Phillips, ed., A Letter by Mar Jacob, Bishop of Edessa, on Syriac orthography (London, 1869), though the terms ‘person’ and ‘gender’ are not really what Jacob means by prsipe and gense. The first means the graphematic expressions of an inflected form (lit., ‘faces’, his first example being three vocalisations of the letters ʾwdʾ) while the second (lit., ‘genera, kinds’) refers to the difference between the first person singular perfect of the verb and the third person feminine, which in Syriac are homographic. Hence Jacob’s real interest in (masoretic) orthography and reading rather than morphology as such is readily recognised.
made regarding influences from Jacob on the Arabic grammatical terminology of the pre-Sibawayhi era.\textsuperscript{28}

It is rather more important to take note of the location of Jacob’s grammatical studies, both geographically and culturally. Jacob himself travelled to different parts of northern Mesopotamia and Syria in his efforts to improve spiritual and educational standards and especially to teach Greek in monastic schools. There is no doubt at all that these monastic schools, located all over the landscape of the Syriac-speaking communities, were the locus for both logical and grammatical studies and that these were carried on (as we have seen) with a view to the public reading of scripture, to its exegesis, and to spiritual edification generally.\textsuperscript{29} Jacob was admitted master of all these.

His was also still the multi-lingual world of the ‘Umayyad administration. Most educated Syrians read Greek as comfortably as their own language and, although few people wrote in that language any longer outside the Byzantine empire, individuals were still commissioning grammars of Greek in Edessa even in the next century.\textsuperscript{30} Jacob himself was familiar with elements of the work of grammarians in Constantinople. Many of his ‘canons’ presuppose their Greek exemplars; the second century Homeric scholar Nicanor may well have been a specific influence;\textsuperscript{31} and he makes use of Thodosius’ \textit{Canons} (late fourth or early fifth cent.) and of Hesychius’ lexicon (fifth or sixth) in his philosophical work.\textsuperscript{32} His translation of the \textit{Categories} presupposes an acquaintance with the Greek text or at least

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\item \textsuperscript{28} Talmon, “Jacob of Edessa the Grammarian,” 174–6. While the first and third of Talmon’s offerings seem rather far-fetched, the second and the fourth are worthy of closer consideration. The borrowing he suggests from logic (p.176) is not at all surprising within the Syriac tradition.
\item \textsuperscript{29} On the Hellenistic \textit{Encyclios Paideia} as it was practised in the Syriac schools of the period, see J.W. Watt, “Grammar, Rhetoric, and the Enkyklios Paideia in Syriac,” \textit{Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft} 143 (1993), reprinted in \textit{Rhetoric and Philosophy from Greek into Syriac} (Ashgate, 2010), ch.1.
\item \textsuperscript{30} That written in 810 at the request of an Edessene citizen by Michael, a future Synkellus of the Byzantine church. D. Donnet, \textit{Le traité de la construction de la phrase de Michael Syncele de Jérusalem} (Brussels, 1982).
\item \textsuperscript{31} Merx, \textit{Historia}, 81–2, 86–8, perhaps on the basis of a suggestion in J.G.E. Hoffmann, ed., \textit{Opuscula Nestoriana} (Kiel, 1880), xi.
\end{itemize}
with a teacher who had one, and indeed the whole philosophical project conceived at the monastery of Qennešrē (where Jacob was trained) was designed for bilinguals who could read Aristotelian texts not yet translated.

4. Other Grammarians of the Age of Jacob

Although pre-eminent, Jacob was not the only active Syriac grammarian of the eighth century. Another was John the Stylite, who may have been a correspondent of Jacob of Edessa (the question of identity is uncertain). John’s grammar is largely derivative from Dionysius Thrax, although he does draw on some other sources unknown to us. He also incorporated some of the linguistic teaching of Jacob of Edessa and thus takes his place at the beginning of the process of the reception of Jacob’s grammar. John’s work seems to have been used in turn by grammarians of a later age. Its purpose was no longer simply to mimic the Greek patterns of the older grammars but to ground students in a basic understanding of the structures of language, probably as the first stage toward an introduction to the art of logic.

Dawidh bar Paulos belongs most likely to the same period. An engaging West Syrian (Jacobite) theologian (possibly a bishop), Dawidh was a writer thoroughly involved in church life who also wrote an introductory


34 R. Schröter, “Erster Brief Jackob’s von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 24 (1875), upheld the identity against Merx, who placed John the grammarian before Jacob of Edessa. A. Moberg, “Die syrische grammatik des Johannes Estonaja.” *Le monde oriental* 3 (1909), argued for Assemani’s older ninth century dating. A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), 258–9, sides with Schröter but seems not to notice the connection with the John the Stylite of a Paris ms. (Moberg, art.cit., 31; Baumstark, 342), who belongs to the same monastery as the grammarian and yet cannot be the same as Jacob’s correspondent.

35 Moberg, “Die syrische grammatik des Johannes Estonaja,” provides the only description we have of this grammar. There is no edition of the text, which still lies concealed in an Iraqi monastery.

36 Ibid.: 30.

37 Baumstark, *Geschichte*, 272–3. Depending on the reading of certain evidence, Dawidh may belong to the early ninth century. He appears to quote Ḥunayn, but this may be a later gloss.
text on the *Categories* as well as a number of tracts on grammar. Dawidh seems to have been concerned above all with basic phonology and even the cognitive aspects of linguistics,

> Speech is the turning of the tongue and the ordering of human words which are conceived in thought (*btrʿita*), born of cogitation (*men ḥušaba*), pressed forward to the opening by the understanding (*men huna*), and brought forth by the will,\(^38\)

as well as with subjects of perennial interest to the Syrians such as the origins of the alphabet (the Syrians took the idea from the Hebrews, it having been given to Moses, in accordance with the story in Epiphanius). Again like other Syrians, Dawidh holds to a fundamentalist conception of language structure in which the relationship between *signifiant* and *signifié* is anything but arbitrary: the noun comes before the verb because it is natural that a cause should precede that which is caused—the subject must precede the predicate.\(^39\)

Even in the period following Jacob of Edessa, Syriac grammar thus appears to have remained firmly connected with the *mašlmanuta*. Dawidh saw himself as one in a line of revered doctors, going back some 150 years or so to a certain Sabroy, to whom he attributes the invention of the masoretic marks and points.\(^40\) While we know little of Sabroy, we do know rather more of his son Ramišo’, whose monkish wanderings Dawidh describes in some detail and the results of whose grammatical and lexicographical labours are to be found in red ink all over the enormous manuscript of the Eastern *mašlmanuta*.\(^41\) We have remarked already that lexicography had its origins in the *mašlmanuta*, and Dawidh partook of this sphere too—the more comprehensive lexicons of the tenth century mention him as an authority from time to time.

The best known lexicographers of the same era, however, are the (already briefly mentioned) ‘Enanišo’ and Ḫunayn ibn Ishāq. The former was an East Syrian monk who engaged in philosophy as well as lexicography as an aid to monastic discipline;\(^42\) the latter is well known to Arabists for his other occupation in translating Greek (or Syriac) books for

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\(^39\) Ibid.: cxviii.

\(^40\) Ignatius Rahmani, ed., *Studia Syriaca I* (Lebanon, 1904), 44–46.

\(^41\) For the colophon to the ms describing his work, see Segal, *Diacritical Point*, 78–79.

the Arabic scientific market. It is hardly surprising that one who spent so much time translating technical treatises, often from Greek into Syriac, should come to construct something like a dictionary of terms, perhaps for the use of his ‘school’. To this extent at least Ḥunayn was a member of the Syrian school of grammar/lexicography. His (academic) grandfather had been the patriarch Išō’ bar Nun, another author of a work of synonyms; and Ḥunayn’s own work started by revising of the lexicon of ‘Enanišo’ and ended with some larger work which received the praise of the Syriac lexicographers of the tenth century.⁴³ There is no doubt that Ḥunayn also took careful account of Arabic lexicography (al-Ḫalīli) and grammar (Sībawayhi) as well,⁴⁴ and so with him we begin to see the process of influence from Arabic into Syriac which would eventually result in Barhebraeus’ synthesis of the Syriac grammatical tradition with the Arabic grammar of al-Zamaḥšārī, an influence that extended even to traditional Syriac strongholds such as phonology.⁴⁵

5. A Different Line of Development? The Catholicos Timothy I

If we backtrack a little, however, into the period when Sībawayhi was still working on the Kitāb, we come across a fascinating letter in Syriac, written in 785 by the Catholicos (Patriarch) of the Church of the East, Timothy I, to his friend Sergius, head of the monastic school of Abraham in Mosul.⁴⁶ In this letter, which has only recently been shown for the important text that it is, Timothy explains to Sergius his plans for the construction of a scientifically-based Syriac grammar to rival the work that he sees has been done in the Greek and Arabic fields (and this some years before the publication of the Kitāb!). Timothy outlines an exacting method which he believes will provide a firm foundation for a Syriac linguistics.

Timothy displays an ambiguous attitude with regard to the earlier grammatical tradition—he sees that his mother tongue has both an abundance and a poverty of material and thinks that all previous attempts at

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⁴⁴ His work was entitled گَلْبَاب احكام الأعراب على مذهب اليوتانيين مقاتنان. This was made use of by later Syriac grammarians, if not by Arab ones (Merx, Historia, 106).
⁴⁵ Ibid., ch.12.
grammar have been superficial (one recalls that in the Church of the East, all grammar teaching was still based on Joseph Huzāyā’s adaptation of the Technē and little of the richer reflections of Jacob of Edessa or John the Stylite may have reached Timothy) and yet to obtain texts with which to advance his learned project his first port of call was the library collections of the North Mesopotamian monasteries. It was not only in the sphere of grammar that he sought learning from the north; Timothy recognized that this was a repository of Hellenistic science and education which he sought to tap into and relocate to new centres of power in the south. To this extent, Timothy (and the other Syriac scholars of his century that have been mentioned) stood upon the cusp of two eras, able to look back with a degree of familiarity to a world of monastic schools which were still microcosms of the late antique system of higher education, as well as being able to catch glimpses of the wider horizons to come in ‘Abbāsid Baghdad.

Timothy believed that every language had a ‘characteristic form’ and that this could be elucidated only by means of a thorough grammatical analysis based on logical principles. He therefore planned to investigate and analyse Syriac in accordance with an Aristotelian logical system. We should recall in this connection that Timothy was something of an expert on the Organon and had been commissioned by al-Mahdi to translate the Topics into Arabic; in fact, he here seems again to partake of the Syriac penchant for taking grammar and logic as two parts of a continuum. As a result, just as with all his compatriots, he naturally fell foul of the belief in the non-arbitrariness of signs and the fundamental existence of the letters as elements of reality (“the letters, he says, will be assigned to the foundational genera of things” Braun, p.127/8).

For instance, he seeks there Aristotle’s (imaginary) second book of Poetics.

Berti, Timoteo I, chs.3,4, remain the principal orientation on this topic. See also the evidence in e.g. S.P. Brock, “Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy from the late eighth century on translations from Greek,” Arabic Sciences and Philosophy 9 (1999).

Syriac culture seems to have remained within its late antique bilingual frame until this time, but not after the end of the eighth century; Ḥunayn’s translation activity already looked back to a time that had passed away, although it could hardly have grown up without presupposing it—Watt, “Grammar, Rhetoric, and the Enkyklios Paideia in Syriac,” 50.

See the comparable comments of Dawidh bar Paulos (Gottheil, «Dawidh bar Paulos, a Syriac Grammarian,» cxv-vi); Paul the Persian used such an approach to syllogistics, Hugonnard-Roche, Logique d’Aristote, 233–54, and «Du commentaire à la reconstruction: Paul le Perse interprète d’Aristote (sur une lecture du Peri Hermeneias, à propos des modes et des adverbes selon Paul, Ammonius et Boèce),» in Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle, ed. J.W. Watt and J. Lössl (Ashgate: 2011). In the Cause de la fondation des écoles,
He confesses that he conceives his plan as part of an ongoing interaction with certain ‘scholars’. The term used here does not refer to any specific position within the Syrian churches and may well refer to Arabic-speaking scholars at the ‘Abbāsid court who had an interest in linguistics,\(^{51}\) i.e. representatives of the so-called Old Iraqi school and indeed it is hard to see who else could be meant when he speaks about the jealousy he feels when he looks at the achievements of Arab grammarians. It remains an open possibility that this is the sort of “evidence for exchanges between Syriac scholars and early Arab grammarians”\(^{52}\) which some have sought. The letter is strong testimony both to the existence and vivacity of that ‘school’ and to its interaction with the Syriac sphere at the very moment when the latter’s epicentre was being shifted from the monasteries of the upper Tigris and Euphrates to the environs of Seleucia and Baghdad.

The eighth century is thus a particularly ‘busy’ time in the history of Syriac grammar in both its eastern and western guises, such as would not be matched again until the eleventh and thirteenth centuries produced the classical compendia of Syriac grammar. The north Mesopotamian monasteries still interacted in a world involving Greek and Arabic in equal measure with Syriac (we have seen Jacob’s travels to teach Greek; Timothy’s researches in Syriac and Greek books from Mar Mattai and Mar Zina; Dawidh bar Paulos may have been responsible for the movement of Greek learning from the Euphrates to the Tigris regions too).\(^{53}\) The grammarians of that age were heavily involved in the basic teaching and higher elaboration of Aristotelian logic, of which linguistics was seen as but one branch. They were also deeply committed to their ecclesiastical traditions and conceived the task of preserving their language as tied up with problems of religious identity in an age of transition and potential threat.

6. **The Origins of Arabic Grammar**

What are we to make then of the interrelationship between Syriac and Arabic grammatical systems during the formative age of the latter? We have seen that Talmon believed he had found some elements in the

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Barhadbešabba ʿArbaya equates the physical elements of the universe with those of the alphabet, Becker, *Fear of God*, 131.

\(^{51}\) This is the suggestion of Berti, *Timoteo I*, 311.

\(^{52}\) Carter in *EP* IX,525a.

\(^{53}\) Brock, “From Antagonism to Assimilation,” 24–5.
grammar of Jacob paralleled in the Kufan/Old Iraqi school. These minor conjectures are, however, insufficient evidence on which to ground any general reconstruction as to just how the early nahwiyyūn might have taken material from Syriac grammatical textbooks. It must at all times be recalled that the Syriac tradition is only extant in very scattered fragments and large parts of our knowledge of that history are wholly absent, starting with most of the grammar of Jacob himself who was so influential both in his own day and beyond. It would be well nigh impossible to trace individual instances of influence.

We have seen that Syriac grammar was almost wholly focused on issues immediately arising from the pressing problem of preserving a liturgical language in the face of the natural processes of language change, and thus spent most of its energy on phonology and orthography (pointing). Within these limited fields there can be no doubt that the parallels between Arabic and Syriac traditions are not fortuitous. Parallels of this sort abound and should be a cause of no surprise. Let us enumerate a few of them:

1. Sibwayhi’s use of daraba “to strike” as his paradigmatic verb can hardly be unconnected with the fact that tuptō “to strike” was the verb of choice in all Greek grammars, and mhā “to strike” in Syriac. Canons and lists containing such paradigms were two-a-penny in the late antique schools, whether Greek or Syriac.
2. Contrary to some modern opinion, it seems to me almost perverse to deny any organic relationship between Aristotle’s division of all speech into nouns, verbs, and a third category of words with no signification, and Sibawayhi’s tripartite classification of nouns, verbs, and ḥarf jā’a li-ma’nan laisa b-ʾism wa lā fiʿil “particles giving a meaning that is neither verb nor noun”. The connection, however, did not arise through Sibawayhi’s having read Aristotle (the argument about the relative dating of the Kitāb and the Arabic Aristotle being therefore irrelevant),

54 See n.29 above. In his larger consideration of the question entitled *Eighth-century Iraqi grammar: a critical exploration of pre-Ḥalīlian Arabic linguistics* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003), Rafael Talmon mentioned Dawidh bar Paulos briefly but otherwise does not much consider the question of Syriac influences.
55 Originally in the appendix to the *Technē* (whence into Syriac) and then with every possible inflection in the Theodosian canons (fifth century), in Choeroboscos’ ninth century commentary on the canons, and in Byzantine handbooks in general after that.
56 *Merx, Historia*, 26.
57 *Poetics* 1456b38–7a6. Is it significant that Timothy had read the *Poetics* (probably in Syriac) and that he viewed it as a work of logic, perhaps as part of the substructure for his proposed Grammar.
but through the logical compendia which littered the educational landscape of the late antique school system in Syriac and Greek and which often already drew grammar and logic into a single conceptual sphere.\textsuperscript{58} 

For instance, Athanasius of Balad wrote in his *Introduction to Logic*, that “the principal parts of speech are the noun (lit., name) and the verb; then there are others some of which take on the character of a noun, others the character of a verb, and others by themselves indicate nothing at all.”\textsuperscript{59} Athanasius’ handbook mixes grammar with logic in a manner typical of late antique philosophical pedagogy and his work can be shown to draw directly on Greek ‘introductions’ of the same type.\textsuperscript{60}

3. The names of the vowels and simple phonetic terms.\textsuperscript{61}

4. The manner in which diacritical points are used to represent those vowels.\textsuperscript{62}

5. The *ḥurūf al-ʾiḍāfa* “particles of connection” are the equivalent of the Syriac letters B-D-W-L, which the Syriac grammarians used to parallel the notion of the Greek case system.\textsuperscript{63}

It may be remarked that the question of Syriac ‘influence’ and that of Greek are not unrelated. If the Greek traditions exerted any force upon

\textsuperscript{58} Merx, *Historia*, 143, never suggested that Sibwayhi really did read Aristotle. He argued that this relationship was best viewed through the lens of Ammonius’ commentary which makes clear just what Aristotle (was believed to have) meant by ‘non-signifying’. Whilst Elamrani-Jamal, *Logique aristotelicienne et Grammaire arabe*, 21–35, is a pointed and right-minded critique of Merx’s presuppositions, it is by no means answers all of his concrete evidence. It was rather unfortunate that Elamrani-Jamal restricted his comments to a shorter summary Merx made in a later lecture rather than to the detailed discussion in his 1889 monograph. We simply take a more holistic view of the whole process rather than trying either to draw or erase direct lines of ‘borrowing’. In the case of Sibawayhi, ‘sources’ are merely repositories of inspiration or starting-points.


\textsuperscript{60} As a comparison with the first part of John of Damascus’ *Fount of Knowledge* will readily indicate. The two are both based on a lost source (in Greek) summarising the teaching of the Alexandrian schools of late antiquity.


\textsuperscript{62} Again Versteegh (see previous note). E.J. Revell, “The Diacritical Dots and the Development of the Arabic Alphabet,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 20 (1975), showed long ago how the different Semitic systems of diacritics were organically related.

\textsuperscript{63} See Talmon’s comment in S. Auroux, *History of the language sciences: an international handbook on the evolution of the study of language from the beginnings to the present* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000), I:249a. This was a masonic concern, Merx, *Historia*, 30–31.
the early development of Arabic grammar, this must have come via the Syriac sphere, not by translations alone, but by an ongoing living tradition of grammar-teaching. With regard to no. 3, it has been forcefully argued that Sibawayhi is making an analysis of the particles that is all his own and is not dependent on Aristotle.\(^6^4\) Quite so; the content of the Arabic grammar was autochthonous, but the environment within which it was conceived and grew was no island. It is no coincidence that grammatical reflection developed out of the liturgical requirements of a religion ‘of the book’ at the same time (eighth century), in the same place (Mesopotamia), in three different languages (Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew).

It should be stressed here also that the question of the whether the Hintergrund of Arabic grammar was Greek philosophy or Greek grammar evaporates when one appreciates the late antique context in which the former was conceived.\(^6^5\) As Athanasius of Balad’s Introduction illustrates, the two disciplines were drawn together in educational terms—Greek grammar drew on a Stoic reading of Aristotelian logic;\(^6^6\) and Greek logical handbooks often included grammatical categories as if these were ontological.\(^6^7\) The Syrians adopted both modes in their own version of


\(^{65}\) Merx argued for philosophy rather than grammar. Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur’anic Exegesis*, 26, suggests the opposite. For those still considering the important question of the extent of the Greek influence on early Arabic grammar, more account must be taken in the future of the Syriac handbooks. The old argument (J. Weiss, “Die arabischen Nationalgrammatik und die Lateiner,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 64 (1910), repeated by, e.g., R. Baalbaki, “Introduction,” in *The Early Islamic Grammatical Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), xxii) that Greek influence cannot have been present in the days of Sibawayhi does not hold in the face of our greater knowledge both of Syriac grammar and of philosophy; nor is there any real need to push the credentials of Ibn al-Muqaffa’ in this regard (e.g. as F. Rundgren, “Über den griechischen Einfluss auf die arabischen Nationalgrammatik,” *Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis* 2 (1976), and R. Talmon, “The Philosophizing Farra’: An Interpretation of an Obscure Saying Attributed to the Grammarian Ta’lab,” in *Studies in the History of Arabic Grammar II*, ed. M.G. Carter and K. Versteegh (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1990), 270 etc.).


\(^{67}\) The basis for this goes back to Ammonius’ *Commentary on the De Interpretatione*, in which the Alexandrian master conflates Aristotelian terminology with that of grammatical teaching, e.g. the passage at p.11,8–12,15 (A. Busse, ed., *Ammonius in Aristotelis de interpretatione commentarius*, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca IV,5 [Berlin: Reimer, 1897]).
Greek higher education, and thus even a dichotomy between a ‘Greek’ thesis and a ‘Syriac’ thesis lies more in the mind of the modern scholar than in the sources.68

That the early Arab grammarians derived such phenomena as those listed above from the elementary teaching of the Syriac schools is hardly surprising. These had long before assimilated and watered down much of the philosophical and grammatical teaching of the old Alexandrian masters. Syriac manuscripts of the era are so full of ‘introductions’ like the above-mentioned by Athanasius of Balad, that the nahwiyun would have been hard pressed to avoid them. The genius of Sibawayhi was no less a genius for having been a phenomenon of its age, nurtured and rooted in a fecund environment in which the fires of Greek paideia had yet completely to fade away.

For the essence of Arabic grammar was, as we have said, certainly its own. The presence of elements from other traditions amounts to neither influence nor borrowing.69 Indeed Sibawayhi treated the task of grammar quite differently from the Syrians (and Hebrews). The Syriac writers, for instance, never interpreted their own language according to the triliteral-root system as was the case in Arabic grammar from its inception.70 The Syrians also followed the Greek and Hebrew traditions in concerning themselves almost exclusively with the written language and worked on the assumption that this written language was the ‘given’ in need of careful preservation.71 Sibawayhi’s turn to the spoken word of the Bedouin shows another mind at work. Maybe Timothy was already aware of this interest in the tribal ‘iʿrāb “Arabism” when he sought to find Syriac’s own ‘characteristic form’,72 its own tribal nature that would give it a specific

70 G. Bohas, «Le traitement de la conjugaison du syriaque chez Bar Zu’bi: une langue sémitique dans le miroir de la grammaire grecque,» in Actes du Colloque ‘Patrimoine Syriaque’ IX (Damascus: 2004), online at http://ens-web3.ens-lsh.fr/gbohas/tme. For the alternatives in use among the Syrians see the other work of this scholar, especially «Radical ou racine/schéma, l’organisation de la conjugaison syriaque avant l’adoption de la racine,» Le Muséon 116 (2003), 343–76.
71 A. Möberg, Buch der Strahlen, die grössere Grammatik des Barhebräus (Leipzig, 1907,1913), 18*. For the Hebrew, the contribution by G. Khan in the present volume.
72 Elamrani-Jamal, Logique aristotélicienne et Grammaire arabe, 34–5, is right to break any connection between ‘iʿrāb and hellenismos. The notion that grammar is about the ‘preservation’ of ‘correct’ forms is so nearly universal as hardly to require an external origin.
identity in a new era. The interaction between Arabic and Syriac grammar in later ages meant that ‘grammar’ would forever be a nationalistic issue.

It is clear, then, that any account of the rise of Arabic linguistics must take account of the incontrovertible fact that northern Mesopotamia (and by Timothy’s date Baghdad as well) was in the eighth century a fertile ground indeed for grammatical and linguistic study, in Greek as well as in Syriac. We have seen too how this tradition was carried on largely in a monastic and pedagogical context—not in a reclusive manner, for the Syrian scholars were au fait with the very latest Greek science.\(^73\) Hence the close connection between ‘linguistics’ and the public recitation and exegesis of scripture must also be allowed to control how we perceive this tradition. Almost all Syrian grammarians appear to be connected in some way with the maššmanuta, the tradition of annotating Biblical codices with marks for accentuation and vowel quality and at the same time producing subsidiary lists of difficult words, grammatical explanations etc. That Arabic grammar emerged out of Islamic exegesis, and especially out of the process of public reading, is hardly a fortuitous parallel, given the central role of religious professionals within both spheres. We have seen evidence that Syrian teachers sometimes even taught Arabic pupils the art of reading, and Arabic vowel marking seems indebted to its Syrian forerunners.\(^74\) What do the Arabic qāriʾūn (or, muqriʾūn) owe to the traditions of the Syrian maqreyyānē? Of course, if the qāriʾūn and their successors in Kufa were as mistaken in their whole conception of Arabic linguistics as the later tradition supposed, then the Syriac influence upon them may actually have been a negative one.\(^75\)

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\(^74\) Versteegh, Arabic Grammar and Qur’anic Exegesis, 29; Merx, Historia, 43.

\(^75\) If the role of the qāriʾūn/muqriʾūn and maqreyyānē were seen as one and the same, then a locus for the exchange of ideas can be found. There is, however, no evidence known to me that such an identity was ever made.
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THE MEDIEVAL KARAITE TRADITION OF HEBREW GRAMMAR

Geoffrey Khan

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, important advances have been made in our knowledge concerning the contribution of the medieval Karaites to the study of the Hebrew language. This has been largely due to the discovery and investigation of a range of new manuscript sources. A large number of these sources are in the Firkovitch collections of manuscripts that are in the possession of the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg. These collections were acquired in the nineteenth century by the famous Karaite bibliophile Abraham Firkovitch (1787–1874) but have only been made fully available to international scholarship in the last few years. The manuscripts relating to the linguistic activities of the Karaites are found mainly in the so-called second Firkovitch collection, which was acquired by Firkovitch in the Near East between the years 1863 and 1865. It consists of more than 15,000 items, including Hebrew, Arabic, Judaeo-Arabic and Samaritan manuscripts. The majority of the collection appears to have originated from the Karaite synagogue in Cairo. Some important manuscript sources relating to this field have been preserved also in other collections, especially those of the British Library in London, and in the Cairo Genizah.

The key figures in the history of Karaite grammatical thought whose works have come down to us from the Middle Ages are ʾAbū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ and ʾAbū al-Faraj Hārūn ibn Faraj. These two scholars belonged to the Karaite community of Jerusalem.

1. Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ and the Early Karaite Grammatical Tradition

Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ’s work is datable to the second half of the tenth century. The surviving works that are explicitly attributed to him in the colophons all have the form of Biblical commentaries. These include commentaries that are primarily exegetical in nature, a commentary that is concerned primarily with translation and a grammatical commentary.²

Ibn Nūḥ was heir to a tradition of Hebrew grammar that had developed among the Karaites of Iraq and Iran. This was brought to Jerusalem in the migrations of Karaites from the East during the tenth century. Ibn Nūḥ himself was an immigrant from Iraq. I shall refer to this grammatical tradition as the early Karaite tradition of Hebrew grammatical thought. ’Abū al-Faraj Hārūn continued some of the elements of this tradition, but was innovative in many ways, both in method and content.

During most of his adult life ’Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ (known in Hebrew as Joseph ben Noah) resided in Palestine. According to Ibn al-Hītī, who wrote a chronicle of Karaite scholars, he had a college (dār li-l-ʿilm) in Jerusalem, which appears to have been established around the end of the tenth century.³

One Hebrew grammatical text that is attributed to Yūsuf Ibn Nūḥ is extant. This work is referred to in the colophons either simply as the Diqduq or as Nukat Diqduq ‘Points of Grammar’.⁴ In what follows I shall refer to it by its shorter title. It is written in Arabic, though much of the technical terminology is Hebrew.

’Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ is likely to be identical with ’Abū Yaʿqūb Yūsuf ibn Baḵtawaih (or Baḵtawi) who is mentioned in some sources. Baḵtawaih may have been the Iranian equivalent of the name Nūḥ or Noah (cf. Persian baḥt ‘fortune, prosperity’). Yūsuf ibn Baḵtawaih is stated to have been a grammarian who composed a book called al-Diqduq. There are references to the ḥaṣer (‘compound’) of ibn Baḵtawaih, which is likely to be identical with Ibn Nūḥ’s college, referred to by Ibn al-Hītī by the

⁴ A critical edition of Ibn Nūḥ’s Diqduq to the Hagiographa with an analysis of its content is presented in Khan, Karaite Tradition.
corresponding Arabic term dār. Ibn Baḵtawaih is described as ‘the Babylonian’ and ‘teacher of the diaspora’ (mu’allim al-jāliya), which indicates that his career had begun in Iraq.

The Diqduq of Ibn Nūḥ is not a systematically arranged description of the Hebrew language with the various aspects of grammar presented in separate chapters but rather a series of grammatical notes on the Bible, together with sporadic exegetical comments. Occasionally a general principle of grammar is discussed, but in most cases grammatical concepts are not explained and their sense must be inferred from the context in which they are used. The work covers the entire Bible, selecting words and phrases that are deemed to require elucidation and analysis. It consists of a series of entries headed by a phrase from a Biblical verse that constitutes the subject of the comment. The entries are arranged according to the order of verses in the Biblical text. By no means all verses, however, are commented upon. The work was clearly intended to be used as an aid to the reading of the Bible. It does not offer instruction on the rudiments of Hebrew grammar but rather concentrates on points that Ibn Nūḥ believed may be problematic for the reader or concerning which there was controversy. As is the case with many of the Karaite philological works, some of the extant manuscripts of the Diqduq contain an abridged version of the original text.

The main concern of the Diqduq is the analysis and explanation of word structure. On various occasions aspects of phonology and also the syntactic and rhetorical structure of a verse are taken into account, but this is generally done as a means of elucidating the form of a word. The pronunciation of the letters and vowels or syntactic structures are rarely, if ever, the primary focus of attention. There is no systematic treatment of syntax or rhetorical structures. The Diqduq, therefore, is not a comprehensive grammar of Hebrew, either in its arrangement or in its content. It concentrates on what are regarded as problematic grammatical issues. This is reflected in the title of the work Nukat Diqduq, which is found in

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one manuscript. The Arabic term nukat can have the sense of ‘questions, difficult points’ or ‘notes explaining difficulties’. These problematic issues are generally referred to as masāʾil (singular masʾala ‘question’) within the text of the Diqduq.

In his analysis of word structure, Ibn Nūḥ attempted to find consistent rules governing the formation of words. The ultimate purpose of his grammatical activity was the application of grammatical analysis in order to elucidate the precise meaning of the Biblical text and to demonstrate that there was nothing random or inconsistent about the language of the Bible. Differences in forms must be explained by positing differences in the process of derivation. The aim was to show that the language had a completely rational basis in its structure and differences in structure were in principle rationally motivated and intended to convey differences in meaning.

In the system of derivational morphology that is presented by Ibn Nūḥ, most inflected verbal forms are derived from an imperative base form. The imperative base is not an abstraction but is a real linguistic form. In some cases the imperative form that is posited as the base of an inflected verb does not actually occur in the language, e.g. נְתֹן nəṯōn for נָתַתְנֻ nå̄ṯannū ‘we gave’ (1 Chron. 29:14), חֲלֹḵ hălōḵ for חֲלַא לִ tihālaḵ ‘it (fs.) goes’ (Psa. 73:9) and בַּקְשֶׁה baqšē for בִּקְשָׁה biqšå̄ ‘it (fs.) has sought’ (Ecc. 7:28). The motivation for positing an imperative base such as בַּקְשֶׁה baqšē is to present the derivation of the form בִּקְשָׁה biqšå̄, without the dagesh in the qoph, as fully regular and not an anomalous inflection of the imperative base בַּקֵּשׁ baqqēš with dageš. The result of this process was that Ibn Nūḥ extended the language beyond what is found in the extant corpus of the Bible. The new forms that were postulated in this way were not intended to be used for the writing of creative literature. Indeed no Karaite author has been found who used these postulated forms in a creative Hebrew text. The purpose of the expansion of the language was rather to clarify and explain the Biblical Hebrew language rationally.

In a few cases the base of a form that has the appearance of a verb is a noun. Ibn Nūḥ explains small differences in some forms by proposing that one form is derived from an imperative whereas the other is derived from a noun. In the class of verbs which we refer to as final geminates, for example, there is variation in the position of stress in the past forms,
e.g. וּלָ֣ק qállū ‘they are swift’ (Job 9:25) vs. וּלָ֣ק qallú ‘they are swift’ (Hab. 1:8). According to Ibn Nūḥ this is not an arbitrary variation, but rather the forms with the penultimate stress are derived from a noun base whereas the forms with final stress have an imperative base.

Differences in form also had significance on the level of meaning. The distinction in the types of base of forms such as וּלָ֣ק qállū and וּלָ֣ק qallú, for example, should be reflected in their Arabic translation (tafsîr), one being translated with a nominal adjective form and one by a verbal form.

Another dimension of structural variation that Ibn Nūḥ believed should be taken into account when interpreting the text was the distinction between pausal and context forms. The use of a pausal form of a word was interpreted as having the purpose of performing a particular function on the level of meaning, namely the expression of some kind of semantic disjunction. In many cases, for example, a pausal form is said to mark the boundary between a statement and an elaborative comment that supplies the reason or justification for what precedes. In conformity with this principle Psa. 93:1 שׁיְהוָ֣ה מָלָ֥ךְ גֵּא֩וּת לָ֫בֵ֥, יָהוּ מָלָ֥ךְ גֵּא֩וּת לָ֫בֵ֥, in which the verb מָלָ֥ךְ is a pausal form, is interpreted as having the sense of ‘The Lord has become king, for he is clothed in majesty’, i.e. what shows his kingship is the fact that he is clothed in majesty.9

A similar concern with demonstrating the rationale behind the structure of the language of the Hebrew Bible on the level of discourse interconnectivity is exhibited by Ibn Nūḥ in an exegetical commentary on the Pentateuch, which has come down to us in an adaptation made by his pupil Abū al-Faraj Hārūn. In this commentary, which has recently been studied in detail by Miriam Goldstein,10 there are numerous observations regarding the function of discourse structure, especially regarding the ordering of verses. This concern for demonstrating the rationale of compositional structure is, indeed, found in the works of other Karaite exegetes of the period.


The *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ is the earliest extant text that can be identified with certainty as a Karaite grammatical work. Ibn Nūḥ, however, was certainly not the earliest Karaite grammarian. Other Karaite scholars of his generation wrote grammatical works. Judah Hadassi, for instance, refers to a grammar book of Sahl ben Maṣliaḥ. A number of grammatical concepts are found in the Bible commentaries of Yefet ben ‘Eli. Ibn Nūḥ himself refers to other anonymous scholars (ʿulamāʾ) of grammar. Indeed some anonymous Karaite Bible commentaries that are extant contain grammatical concepts relating to the early Karaite tradition, such as a commentary on Hosea that has been reconstructed from Genizah fragments by Friedrich Niessen. Some of the grammarians mentioned by Ibn Nūḥ are referred to as deceased. ’Abū al-Faraj Hārūn attributes some grammatical concepts to the teachings of earlier Karaite grammarians in Iraq. The traditions of this earlier Iraqi school described by ’Abū al-Faraj correspond closely to what we find in Ibn Nūḥ’s *Diqduq*. Ibn Nūḥ was an immigrant to Palestine from Iraq, where he was, it seems, a pupil of the Iraqi circle of Karaite grammarians.

According to a passage in one anonymous medieval Karaite source, the discipline of grammar began in Iṣfahān. The Karaite al-Qirqisānī, writing in the first half of the tenth century, refers to Hebrew grammarians from Iṣfahān, Tustār and Baṣra. This indicates that already during the time of Saadya Gaon Karaite schools of grammar were well developed in Iran. The teachings of the early Karaite grammarians of Iran are also referred to in an anonymous Karaite grammatical text that was written in the eleventh century. These are referred to in the past tense, which implies that they were active at a period that predated that of the author.

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12 E.g. II Firk. Evr. Arab. I 4323, fol. 9a: hāḏā huwa madḫab baʾd al-ʿulamāʾ rahimahu ʿallāh ‘This is the opinion of one of the sages, God have mercy upon him’, where the blessing rahimah ʾmahāh suggests that the man in question is deceased.
13 E.g. al-Kitāb al-Kāfī (ed. Khan, Gallego and Olszowy-Schlanger, II.16.12): ʿallādī dāḥaba ʿdā dālīka... min al-diqdūqiyyīna qawm min al-ʿirāqiyyīna ‘those who have held this opinion from among the Hebrew grammarians are a group of the Iraqis’; dālīka qad taqadāḥu baʾd al-diqdūqiyyīna min mašāyiḫinā al-ʿirāqiyyīna raḥimahum ʿallāh ‘This has been undertaken by Hebrew grammarians among our Iraqi elders, may God have mercy upon them’ (I.22.55).
16 See N. Vidro, “A Newly Reconstructed Karaite Work On Hebrew Grammar,” *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 54 (2009a). The text, which has been identified by Vidro as *Kitāb al-Uqūd fī Taṣārīf al-Luğā al-ʿIbrāniyya* (‘Book of the Connections with regard to the Grammatical Inflections of the Hebrew Language’) mentions on a number of occasions the grammatical teachings of the ‘ajam (i.e. Persians). For further details on this text see below.
Some fragments of Hebrew grammatical texts that are written in Judaeo-Persian have, indeed, been preserved in the Cairo Genizah. These include fragments of a text that clearly belongs to the early Karaite tradition of grammar. This text is a grammatical commentary on the Bible that is very close, both in format and content, to the *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ. The theory of grammar is virtually identical to that of the *Diqduq*. The derivative base of verbs is said to be imperative forms. It is likely to be a product of the early Iranian schools of Karaite grammar, which appear also to have been the ultimate source of the grammatical tradition that is reflected in Ibn Nūḥ’s *Diqduq*. A further source demonstrating the Iranian background of the early Karaite grammatical tradition is a Judaeo-Persian commentary on Ezekiel that was published recently by Thamar Gindin (2007). This text, although primarily exegetical in nature, contains several grammatical comments that exhibit a grammatical terminology and theory and a style of presentation that conform to what is found in Ibn Nūḥ’s *Diqduq*.

According to a statement by ’Abū al-Faraj Hārūn, the practice of deriving verbal inflections from the imperative, which was the hallmark of the early Karaite grammatical tradition, was also followed by the Küfan school of Arabic grammar. It is not possible, however, to identify such a practice in the extant Arabic grammatical literature and it is not at all clear that it is a concept that is borrowed from Arabic grammatical thought. The concept may, indeed, reflect the Iranian background of the Karaite tradition, in that in Middle and New Persian the imperative form has a clearer structural relationship to both the present and past forms of the verb than in Hebrew and Arabic, e.g. New Persian kardan ‘to do’: kar (imperative base), mi-kar- (present base), kard (past base).

The Hebrew term *diqduq* is found in sources predating the rise of Hebrew grammatical thought. In Rabbinic literature the verbal form diqdeq is used in the sense of attention to fine details of pronunciation and also with the meaning of ‘investigating thoroughly’ the content of Scripture. The verbal noun *diqduq* is often used in Rabbinic literature in the sense of ‘the details that are revealed by careful investigation’, e.g. *diqduqe ha-torah* ‘minute details of biblical exposition’. Among the texts

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17 The text is published in Khan, *Early Karaite Grammatical Texts* (Atlanta, 2000b).
19 Babylonian Talmud, Baba Qama 38a.
relating to the activities of the Masoretes, the term is used in the title of the most famous collection of masoretic rules, the *Diqduqe ha-Ṭeʿamim* compiled by Aharon ben Asher.\(^{21}\) This refers to the subtle details of the use of accents in Scripture. The author assumes that the general rules are known and focuses on the fine points and the exceptions to the general principles.\(^{22}\)

The title of Ibn Nūḥ’s work, the *Diqduq* seems to have retained the sense of ‘investigating the fine points of Scripture’ and did not denote simply ‘investigation of the language’. The discipline of *diqduq* as reflected in Ibn Nūḥ’s work concentrated on selected details in the analysis of Scripture. It was concerned mainly with the details that were judged to be problematic and in need of particular attention, which are general referred to as *masāʾil* (‘questions’, ‘issues’). Ibn Nūḥ assumed that the general rules of the language were already known to his audience.

When discussing such *masāʾil*, Ibn Nūḥ frequently cited various alternative opinions. Some of these may have reflected the differing opinions of scholars who were active in the Karaite grammatical circles in the tenth century. It is likely, however, that in most cases the primary purpose of the proposal of such alternatives is pedagogical, in that it was a method of inviting the reader to explore a variety of possibilities without them being necessarily attributable to any particular scholar. It encouraged enquiry and engagement rather than passive acceptance of authority. Indeed the text of Ibn Nūḥ’s work appears to be closely associated with the oral teaching of grammar in the school room rather than drawing on a preceding written source.

In the early Karaite tradition, therefore, *diqduq* was a method of investigating Scripture by the study of the subtle details of its language. The purpose of this investigation was both to establish the fine details of its meaning and also to demonstrate that the language conformed to a logical system.

The discipline of *diqduq* as exhibited by the work of Ibn Nūḥ was closely associated with the activity of the Masoretes, who applied themselves to the study of the details of the reading tradition and written transmission of the Biblical text. A central feature of Ibn Nūḥ’s method of presenta-

\(^{21}\) Aharon ben Asher was active in the first half of the tenth century, though the material that he assembled together in the *Diqduqe ha-Ṭeʿamim* was mostly composed by earlier generations of Masoretes; see Baer and Strack (1879, xvi), A. Dotan, *The Diqduqé Haṭṭĕʿamim of Aharon ben Moshe ben Ashér* (Jerusalem, 1967), 4.

\(^{22}\) See Dotan, *Diqduqé*, 31.
tion is the explanation as to why a word has one particular form rather than another. This often involves comparing closely related forms that differ from the form that is under investigation only in small details. The issue that is addressed is why these fine distinctions in form exist. This may be compared to the practice of the Masoretes to collate words that were similar in form but differed only in details. This was a central feature of the masoretic method and lists recording these collations are found throughout the masoretic notes that were attached to Bible codices. The purpose of this was to draw attention to fine details of form to ensure that they were preserved in the transmission of Scripture. Collations of two closely related forms of word were also compiled in independent masoretic treatises, such as ‘Oḵlah we-ʾOḵlah’. By the tenth century, the Masoretes also compiled treatises that formulated rules for the occurrence of some of these fine distinctions in form with regard to vowels and accents. The most famous work of this kind is the Diqduqe ha-Ṭeʿamim ‘The rules of the details of the accents’, which was compiled in the first half of the tenth century by Aharon ben Asher.

As remarked, the Diqduq of Ibn Nūḥ was concerned principally with morphology. It was intended, it seems, to complement such treatises as Diqduqe ha-Ṭeʿamim, the exclusive concern of which was pronunciation and accents.

The grammatical activity denoted by the term diqduq in the early Karaite tradition, therefore, was closely associated with the work of the Tiberian Masoretes. This is further shown by an early text published by Allony (1964) that contains a list of technical terms for the various aspects of biblical study. These are described in the text as diqduqe ha-miqra, which has the sense of ‘the fine points of Scripture established by detailed investigation’. The list includes masoretic, grammatical and hermeneutical terms. These correspond closely to the terminology and concepts of Ibn Nūḥ’s Diqduq. The range of the topics of analysis denoted by the terms also parallels the scope of analysis that is found in the Diqduq, though, as we

23 The treatise ‘Oḵlah we-ʾOḵlah is named after the first two words of the first list (‘eating’ [I Sam. 1:9] ‘and eat’ [Gen. 27:19]), which enumerates pairs of words, one occurring with the conjunctive waw and the other without it. For a general discussion of the background of the text see Yeivin (1980: 128–131). An edition of the text based on the best manuscripts has been made by F. Diaz Esteban, Sefer ‘Oklah we-ʾOklah: colección de listas de palabras destinadas a conservar la integridad del texto hebreo de la Biblia entre los judios de la Edad Media. Textos y estudios “Cardenal Cisneros”, 4, (Madrid, 1975) and B. Ognibeni, La seconda parte del Sefer ‘Oklah weʾOklah: edizione del ms. Halle, Universitätsbibliothek Y b 40 10, ff. 68–124, (Madrid-Fribourg, 1995).

24 The definitive edition of this text is by Dotan, Diqduqé.
have remarked, the focus of the Diqduq is more on the grammatical and hermeneutical aspects than on the masoretic. It is more accurate to say that the masoretic works and Ibn Nūḥ’s Diqduq combined cover the range of topics contained in the list. The Masora and the grammatical work of Ibn Nūḥ complement each other to establish the diqduqe ha-miqra. This list was not intended primarily as a foundation for the study of grammar per se, but rather as a methodology for establishing the correct interpretation of Scripture.

Allony, in his edition of this list of technical terms, claimed that it was of Karaite background. One should be cautious, however, of being too categorical on this issue. Certain details of its content suggest that it was composed in the early Islamic period. It would, therefore, come from a period when Karaism was in its embryonic stages of development. The main evidence that Allony cites for its being a Karaite work is the reference in the text to the ‘masters of Bible study’ (ba’ale ha-miqra). This term was used in some texts in the Middle Ages to designate Karaites. It is found, however, already in Rabbinic literature in the sense of ‘those who study only the Bible and not the Mishnah or Gemara’. It should be noted, moreover, that in masoretic texts it is sometimes used as an epithet of the Masoretes, who were professionally occupied with the investigation of the Bible. The contents of the list were incorporated by a number of later authors into their works. These included not only Karaites but also Rabbanites, such as Dunaš ben Labraṭ.

The fact that some of the grammatical terms found in Ibn Nūḥ’s Diqduq are Hebrew is significant for the dating of the origins of the Karaite grammatical tradition. The list of diqduqe ha-miqra is entirely in Hebrew. This is in conformity with the use of Hebrew in masoretic works before the tenth century. The Hebrew technical terms of Ibn Nūḥ’s Diqduq would be vestiges from this early period. Some of this Hebrew terminology can, in fact, be traced to Rabbinic texts. It is clear, however, that the Karaite grammatical tradition also took over elements from Arabic grammatical

25 It is used frequently in this way by the Karaites Salmon ben Yerumon and Judah Hadassi.
26 Cf. Bacher, Älteste Terminologie, 118.
thought. The *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ contains some Arabic technical terms. Moreover, many of the Hebrew terms that are found in the list of *diqduqe ha-miqra* and also in Ibn Nūḥ’s *Diqduq* appear to be calques of Arabic terminology. R. Talmon (1998) has shown that some of the Arabic terms that correspond to the Hebrew of the list *diqduqe ha-miqra* are found in the earliest layers of the tradition of Arabic grammar and Qur’ānic exegesis in the eighth and ninth centuries. This early tradition differed from the tradition based on the teachings of Sībawayhi, which became the mainstream school in Arabic grammar after the ninth century. It is relevant to note that Arabic grammatical thought in its early stages was closely associated with Qur’ānic exegesis and only later became a distinct discipline.\(^{30}\) This would parallel the association between grammar and exegesis reflected by the *diqduqe ha-miqra* list and also the fact that the *Diqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ has the structure of a Biblical commentary rather than a systematic description of grammar.

The *diqduqe ha-miqra* list and the masoretic treatises such as *Diqduqe ha-Ṭeʿamim* belong to the Tiberian Masoretic tradition. How are we to reconcile the proposed close relationship of the early Karaite grammatical tradition to the Tiberian Masora with the proposal that the Karaite grammatical tradition had its roots in the East in Iraq and Iran? The explanation is doubtless that the Tiberian masoretic tradition was not restricted to a local diffusion but rather was regarded as a prestigious tradition by Jewish scholars, Rabbanite and Karaite, throughout the Near East. The Karaite al-Qirqisānī writing in the first half of the tenth century in Iraq explicitly states the superiority of the Tiberian tradition. There are references in medieval sources to the fact that scholars from Tiberias travelled long distances to teach the Tiberian tradition. Moreover scholars from the eastern communities of Iraq and Iran came into contact with the Tiberian masoretes by migration to Palestine. This applied to numerous Karaites, including Yūsuf ibn Nūḥ himself. It is also relevant to note that the masoretic material in early Tiberian Bible codices contains numerous elements originating in the Babylonian Masora (Ofer 2001: 260–274). This can be explained as a reflection of the migration of masoretes from East to West.

A few fragmentary texts are extant that are closely associated with Ibn Nūḥ’s *Diqduq* and belong to the early Karaite grammatical tradition. We have already mentioned a Judaeo-Persian grammatical commentary,

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which parallels the *Diqduq* both in grammatical theory and in structure. In addition to this, we have large fragments of an early Karaite grammatical text that is not in the form of a Biblical commentary but rather is a systematic classifications of the morphological patterns of Biblical Hebrew verbs and nouns.31 This classification represents the core grammatical thought that developed within the early Karaite discipline of *diqduq*. The text is attributed to a certain Saʿīd. It is likely that this should be identified with the grammarian Saʿīd Shīrān, who was a pupil of Ibn Nūḥ.32 The text exhibits many parallels with the grammatical work of Ibn Nūḥ, in its grammatical theory, terminology and argumentation. It consists of a series of chapters, each of which is devoted to verbs with imperative bases of one particular pattern. A full inventory is given of the verbs in each category, problematic issues are discussed and a complete paradigm of a representative verb is presented. In its overall structure, the treatise differs from Ibn Nūḥ’s *Diqduq*, which, as we have seen, consists of grammatical notes on the Bible arranged in the order of the biblical verses. It, nevertheless, exhibits a similarity to the *Diqduq* in its method of discussing problematic issues. As is the case in the *Diqduq*, these discussions frequently offer a variety of different opinions concerning the derivation of a form. The fact that such attention is given to masāʾil indicates that the work was not intended as an elementary grammar of Hebrew. A distinctive feature of the text is the presentation of paradigms of verbs containing the various inflections. Full paradigms are given even of verbs that are of unique occurrence and appear prima facie to be anomalous, with all of their inflections being recovered by analogy. This applies, for example, to the unusual prefix conjugation form יִשְׁפּוּט֥ yišpūṭū́ ‘they judge’ (Exodus 18:26), which is not interpreted as an irregular variant form of the normal 3pl. prefix conjugation but rather part of a completely separate paradigm (imperative: שְׁפוּטֶה šəpūṭē, prefix conjugation: יִשְׁפּוּטֶה yišpūṭē, suffix conjugation: שְׁפוּטִיתִי šəpūṭīṯī).33 Such apparently exceptional and anomalous forms are thereby shown to be entirely regular when the full potential system of the language is reconstructed.

31 These two texts, together with the Judaeo-Persian grammatical text, are published in Khan, *Grammatical Texts*.
2. The Grammatical Works of ʿAbū al-Faraj Hārūn and Dependent Treatises

ʿAbū al-Faraj Hārūn ibn Faraj lived in Jerusalem in the first half of the 11th century. According to the chronicler Ibn al-Hītī, he was the student of Yūṣuf ibn Nūḥ and was attached to the Karaite college in Jerusalem. After the death of Ibn Nūḥ, ʿAbū al-Faraj took over the leadership of the college.\(^\text{34}\)

ʿAbū al-Faraj Hārūn wrote several Arabic works on the Hebrew language. The largest of these is a comprehensive work on Hebrew morphology and syntax consisting of eight parts entitled *al-Kitāb al-Muštamil ʿalā al-ʾUṣūl wa-l-Fuṣūl fī al-Luġa al-ʾIbrāniyya* (‘The Comprehensive Book of General Principles and Particular Rules of the Hebrew Language’), which was completed in 1026 C.E.\(^\text{35}\) This consisted of eight parts, which may have originally been produced as separate books. He composed a shorter version of the work called *al-Kitāb al-Kāfī fī al-Luġa al-ʾIbrāniyya* (‘The Sufficient Book on the Hebrew Language’).\(^\text{36}\) The earliest known manuscript of this work has a colophon dated 1037 C.E.\(^\text{37}\)


\(^{37}\) II Firk. Evr. Arab. I 4601, fol. 107a. A note in the margin of fol. 110a indicates that the manuscript was the property of the author’s two sons, Faraj and Yehudah.
of extant manuscripts containing the work. We have a few fragments of a text that appears to be an epitome of *al-Kitāb al-Kāfī*.

A further work of ʿAbū al-Faraj Hārūn, which has survived in various manuscript fragments, is an introductory treatise on grammar entitled *Kitāb al-Madḥal ʿilā ʿIlm al-Dīqduq fi Ṭuruq al-Luğā al-ʿIbrānīyya* (‘Book of Introduction into the Discipline of Careful Investigation of the Ways of the Hebrew Language’). According to the preface of this text, ʿAbū al-Faraj wrote it after his completion of *al-Kitāb al-Muṣṭamil* and *al-Kitāb al-Kāfī*. The work includes a discussion of the terminology that was used by the earlier Karaite grammarians. These include many of the Hebrew terms that are found in the *Dīqduq* of Ibn Nūḥ and related early texts but not used by ʿAbū al-Faraj himself in his own grammatical works.38

Most of the grammatical works of ʿAbū al-Faraj Hārūn are systematically arranged studies of the Hebrew language as an independent discipline. He, indeed, sometimes goes beyond a description of specifically Hebrew grammar and discusses general principles of human language. In some sections of his works he addresses philosophical issues such as the origin of language and its nature.39 The perspective of these works, therefore, differs from that of Ibn Nūḥ’s *Dīqduq*, the primary purpose of which was the investigation of Scripture by grammatical analysis and the demonstration of the logical structure of the language of Scripture. His comprehensive approach to grammar contrasts with Ibn Nūḥ’s practice of concentrating on the problematic issues (*masāʿīl, nukat*). Another divergence from the approach of Ibn Nūḥ is the categorical approach of ʿAbū al-Faraj. He rarely presents alternative opinions.

ʿAbū al-Faraj refers to the grammarians of earlier generations such as Ibn Nūḥ as *al-dīqduqiyyūna*. He did not use the term *dīqduqiyyūna* to designate all people engaged in the study of grammar. He makes an explicit terminological distinction between the Arabic grammarians (*al-nuḥā*) and the early Karaite Hebrew grammarians (*al-dīqduqiyyūna*).40 Moreover, the way he uses the term *dīqduqiyyūna* in his writings implies that they were a set of scholars distinct from himself and that he did not regard himself

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38 A large section of this work has been preserved in II Firk. Evr. Arab. I 4601, fol. 10a ff.
40 See Khan, “ʿAbū al-Faraj Hārūn,” 318, for discussion of the relevant passages.
as one of their number.\textsuperscript{41} There was, nevertheless, a certain degree of continuity of grammatical thought from the teachings of the *diqdūqiyyūna* in the works of ’Abū al-Faraj. He was, indeed, the student of Ibn Nūḥ and took over some elements of his master’s teaching into the edifice of his own work. This relationship between master and student is reflected in the exegetical commentary of Ibn Nūḥ on the Pentateuch which was adapted by ’Abū al-Faraj. As shown by Miriam Goldstein, in this adaptation the original text of Ibn Nūḥ is interwoven with the elaborations, clarifications and sometimes the criticisms of the student.

The primary purpose of ’Abū al-Faraj in his grammatical works was the systematic investigation of the language, whereas the main objective of some of the earlier Karaite grammarians, such as Ibn Nūḥ, was the elucidation of the problematic grammatical details of Scripture. As we have seen, attempts were made already by certain circles of Karaite grammarians before the time of ’Abū al-Faraj to systematize grammatical knowledge. This consisted mainly in the classification of verbs and nouns according to their patterns and inflections. These treatises, however, lacked the scope of the grammatical works of ’Abū al-Faraj.

’Abū al-Faraj follows closely the approach to grammar that had been adopted by most Arabic grammarians of his time. This was the approach of the so-called Başran school of Arabic grammarians, which had become the mainstream tradition by the 10th century. The dependence of ’Abū al-Faraj on the Başran tradition is seen in the scope of his works, in his grammatical theory and in his Arabic technical terminology. Much of the terminology of the earlier Karaite tradition, by contrast, was Hebrew. One example of this relating to grammatical theory is his claim that the derivational base of verbs is the infinitive rather than the imperative form. As we have seen, the derivation of verbs from the imperative was a central feature of the earlier Karaite grammatical theory. Unlike Ibn Nūḥ’s work, it is clear that ’Abū al-Faraj’s work draws on written sources belonging to the Arabic grammatical tradition, and indeed his sources can be identified.\textsuperscript{42}

It is important to note, however, that ’Abū al-Faraj’s comprehensive work


on grammar al-Kitāb al-Muštamil and its short version al-Kitāb al-Kāfī are concerned principally with morphology and syntax. They do not contain treatments of the Masoretic reading tradition. ‘Abū al-Faraj composed a separate work on biblical reading called Hidāyat al-Qāri’ (‘Guide for the Reader’), which has been preserved in a long version and various shorter versions. It presents a description of the pronunciation of the consonants and vowels in the Tiberian reading tradition as well as the system of accents. This dichotomy between grammar (morphology and syntax) and biblical reading in the works of ‘Abū al-Faraj can be regarded as a feature of continuity from the earlier Karaite tradition. One should contrast this with the grammatical work of Saadya Gaon, Kitāb Faṣīḥ Luġat al-ʿIbrāniyyīna ‘The Book of the Elocution of the Language of the Hebrews’, which contains extensive treatment of various features of the Masoretic reading tradition, the source of much of which can be identified in extant Masoretic treatises such as Diqduqe ha-Ṭeʾamin.

A number of other medieval Karaite grammatical works are extant that are largely dependent on the writings of ‘Abū al-Faraj Hārūn and were written in the eleventh century. One such work is the grammatical treatise written in Hebrew known as Meʾor ‘Ayīn that has been published by M.N. Zislin (Moscow, 1990) on the basis of a single surviving manuscript. The text was written by an anonymous author in Byzantium some time during the second half of the eleventh century. According to the colophon, the manuscript was written in 1208 in the town of Gagra. The work is largely derivative from the works of ‘Abū al-Faraj Hārūn, especially, it seems, al-Kitāb al-Kāfī. Some elements, however, are drawn directly from the early Karaite grammatical tradition. An Arabic grammatical work that is closely related to Meʾor ‘Ayīn is Kitāb al-ʿUqūd fī Taṣārīf al-Luġa al-ʿIbrāniyya ‘(Book of the Connections with regard to the Grammatical Inflections of the Hebrew Language’). This work was erroneously identified by Hirschfeld as being by ‘Abū al-Faraj himself. An important advance in the reconstructon of the Karaite grammatical corpus was

43 For a detailed study of this text see I. Eldar, The Study of the Art of Correct Reading as Reflected in the Medieval Treatise Hidāyat al-Qāri (=Guidance of the Reader), Jerusalem (1994).
45 II Firk. Evr. IIA 1921. An important contribution to the assessment of this text is made by A. Maman in his review of the edition of Zislin, Lĕshonénu 58 (1994).
recently made by Nadia Vidro, who has demonstrated that the fragment published by Hirschfeld that contains the title Kitāb al-ʿUqūd is the beginning of a work dealing principally with verbal inflections that exists in various manuscripts and is to be attributed to an anonymous author who was the contemporary of ʿAbū al-Faraj Hārūn.47 A feature of Meʾor ʿAyīn and Kitāb al-ʿUqūd is the classification of verbal forms by mnemonic catchwords (see Nadia Vidro's article in this volume). This system of classification is also found in the works of ʿAbū al-Faraj. It is not found in the earlier work of Ibn Nūḥ, but according to ʿAbū al-Faraj it was originally developed by one of the earlier diqduqīyūna (Kitāb al-Kāfī i.22.1.). The use of such mnemonic devices, which are generally referred to by the Hebrew term siman or the corresponding Arabic text ʿalāma, is reminiscent of the use of mnemonics for abbreviated reference in the Masoretic tradition, also known as simanim.

In addition, several fragments are extant in various collections that contain grammatical technical terms and a methodological presentation that are characteristic of Karaite grammatical works but appear to belong to different works from those mentioned above. These fragments give us some indication of the extensive nature of the corpus of Karaite grammatical literature in the Middle Ages.

As far as we can establish in our present state of knowledge, the Karaite grammatical tradition, which had exhibited such creativity in the tenth and eleventh centuries, became virtually defunct in the twelfth century. Manuscripts of the medieval works, especially those of ʿAbū al-Faraj Hārūn, continued to be copied in later centuries. It appears, however, that little original contribution to Hebrew grammatical thought was made by Karaites in the later Middle Ages. The Karaite Judah Hadassi, for example, who was active in Byzantium in the twelfth century, presents a section on Hebrew grammar in his ʾEškol ha-Kopher that is dependent on the system of the Spanish grammarians Ḥayyūj and Ibn Janāḥ.48 The same applied to the fate of medieval Karaite lexicography, which is not considered in detail in this paper. In the 10th and 11th centuries Karaite scholars such David ben Abraham al-Fāsī and ʿAbū al-Faraj Hārūn made important contributions to this field. In the later Middle Ages, however, Karaites appear to be heavily dependent on Rabbanite lexicographical works. This is

48 See Maman (1996a), 95–96.
demonstrated by the lexicographical work *al-Taysir*, written by the Karaite Solomon ibn Mubarrak ibn Ṣāʾīr at the end of the 13th or beginning of the 14th century, identified among the Firkovitch manuscripts by José Martínez Delgado, which is mainly based on Rabbanite sources.49

Only limited knowledge of the medieval Karaite grammatical works was transmitted to the West. This applied especially to the works of the early Karaite grammatical tradition. Some of the medieval Hebrew grammarians of Spain were aware of *al-Kitāb al-Muštamil* by ’Abū al-Faraj Ḥārūn, but this work did not make any clearly recognizable impression on the Western tradition of Hebrew grammar, which has predominated down to the present.

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49 This important text has recently been published by J.M. Delgado, *Libro de la facilitación Kitab At-Taysir: diccionario judeo-árabe de hebreo bíblico* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2010).
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