



“Introduction” (à The Foundations of Arab Linguistics V. Kitāb Sībawayhi The Critical Theory, Manuel Sartori and Francesco Binaghi (éds.), 1-10. Leiden: E. J. Brill, coll. “Studies in Semitic Language and Linguistics” 107.)

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Introduction

Manuel Sartori and Francesco Binaghi

This volume contains a selection of papers presented at the Fifth Conference on the Foundations of Arab Linguistics (FAL V), hosted by Amal E. Marogy at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge on September 20–21, 2018. This conference constituted a sequel to the first four of the series: FAL I and FAL II had already been organized in Cambridge by Amal E. Marogy, respectively on September 3–4, 2010 and on September 13–14, 2012; afterwards, Georgine Ayoub convened the third conference (FAL III) in Paris on October 23–24, 2014, and Manuela E.B. Giolfo the fourth one (FAL IV) in Genoa on September 8–9, 2016 (for the proceedings of these conferences, cf. Marogy 2012, Marogy & Versteegh 2015, Ayoub & Versteegh 2018, Giolfo & Versteegh 2019).¹

This fifth opus of the Foundations of Arabic Linguistics conference series is special in several ways. First and foremost, the title is no longer exactly the same as the four previous editions. In the present title, *Arab* Linguistics replaces the previous *Arabic* Linguistics, which is an echo of the distinction sketched by Michael G. Carter in a prominent article of his (1987-1988); since this fifth conference was convened in his honor, it was then entitled *Foundations of Arab Linguistics*.

Far from an essentialist view of what the study of language is in the Arab and in the Western worlds, Carter defines these two approaches in terms of their object, the theoretical and epistemological framework in which they are elaborated, and finally their scope. He defines *Arab Linguistics* as encompassing not only this language's own linguistic tradition ("the study of the native science of grammar that has been continuously active since at least the eighth century A.D.", Carter 1987-1988: 205), but also the contribution of all

¹ Cf. also the reviews by Larcher 2015, Larcher 2018, Larcher 2019a, and Larcher 2019b. In the present volume, the same editorial guidelines as in the previous volumes have generally been followed, the only notable exception being the use of *ġ* instead of *j* for the transliteration of *ġīm*. The transcription of Arabic follows the system of *Arabica*, with one major difference: the initial *hamza* is systematically transcribed when it is morphological (*hamzat al-qaṭʿ*), but not when it is merely phonetic (*hamzat al-waṣl*, thus: *wa-ktub* "and write!", but *wa-ʾaktib* "and make write!"). Inflectional endings are fully transcribed in Qurʾānic and poetic quotations, as well as in grammatical examples; in other quotations and book titles we have opted for a simplified system, in which pausal rather than contextual forms are used. Yet, in some papers, full transcription can be used for specific needs.

those interested in it, including therefore Western scholars (“*all* those whose concern is with indigenous grammatical theory, whether in the Muslim world or in the long-established tradition of Arabic studies in the West, are counted as ‘Arab’ linguists”, *ibid*). By contrast, *Arabic Linguistics* identifies the study of Arabic through the lenses of modern linguistics, whose theories, standards and methods have started to be developed in Europe in the 18th century (“for the ‘Arabic’ linguist, whether a native speaker or not, the choice of Arabic as the object language is [at least in principle] a matter of total indifference, since the whole purpose is to deduce or apply a theory or test a model”, Carter 1987-1988: 206). Carter argues that this opposition is particularly flagrant when it comes to the difference in attitude to linguistic data: on the one side, traditional Arab grammarians—and henceforth Arab linguists—work on a defined and atemporal set of data, while Arabic linguists adapt their corpora to their needs or even produce as much data as is required (Carter 1987-1988: 213). Arabic linguistics’ goal is ultimately identified as context-free universality, whereas Arab linguistics is presented as a “humanistic discipline in the fullest sense” (*ibid*),² as it is concerned with the development of our knowledge of the Arabs themselves: their civilization, thought, etc.

Nevertheless, even if Carter considers that Arab linguistics’ and Arabic linguistics’ development will continue separately,³ he acknowledges that they represent the two ends of a scale between which one can find considerable overlap and sometimes confusion. Giolfo (2014: 3-4) stresses the importance of bringing together these two approaches and proposes to see Arab(ic) linguistics as a single discipline: in her view, such different approaches should be considered nothing more than the expression of the complexity of the phenomena they investigate. This is indeed the spirit of the papers presented in this volume, whose authors delve into medieval Arabic grammatical treatises and develop analysis mixing the two approaches and addressing both types of audience. In the same spirit as Giolfo (2014: 3), we consider that “the word ‘and’ between ‘Arab Linguistics’ and ‘Arabic Linguistics’ is not meant to carry an adversative meaning but rather a meaning that goes beyond ‘dangers

2 This excerpt and the philosophical approach more broadly presented in this article certainly explain the title (*Grammar as a Window onto Arabic Humanism*) of the *Festschrift* offered to Michael G. Carter in 2006 (Edzard & Watson, eds.).

3 As it goes for Larcher (1992, also mentioned in 2014:v-vi), who sketches a similar dichotomy between, on the one side, Arab(ic) linguistics made in departments of Arabic studies by Arabists who do not always have a background in linguistics and, on the other side, Arab(ic) linguistics made in departments of linguistics by scholars who lack a solid background in Arabic studies (whom Larcher identifies as mainly being Arabic mother-tongue speakers with a background in French or English studies).

of confusing the two' [Carter 1987-1988: 205]." However, if a label was needed, the FAL series would indeed be an expression of *Arab Linguistics*, rather than that of *Arabic Linguistics*: all the chapters take Medieval Arabic grammatical sources as the starting point for analysis.

If we wanted to go further down the description of our field, its history and its methods, we should also note that *Arab Linguistics* actually encompasses—without distinguishing between them—two different traditions. On the one hand, we have *Arabs' Linguistics*, that is to say the tradition of studies elaborated in the Islamicate world, written in Arabic and ultimately dealing with the Classical Arabic language.⁴ It broadly corresponds to what is known as the Arabic Grammatical Tradition. This is not only the intellectual product of the Medieval periods and pre-modern times, but some prolongations can be found until today, in that most of today's (Arabic-language) grammars of Arabic reproduce not only the closed and atemporal corpus of Classical Arabic, but also the methods and the theoretical framework of Medieval grammarians, and even some of their examples. This tradition is unresponsive to the developments of modern linguistics.

On the other hand, we have *Arabists' Linguistics*, that is to say the tradition of studies on Arabic grammar that has developed outside the Islamicate world since the late Medieval times, and whose works are mainly written in other languages than Arabic (i.e. the long-established tradition of Arabic studies in the West). While paying the due respect to the work of Medieval Arabic grammarians and acknowledging their extremely important contribution for the study of this language, the Arabists' tradition takes into account the new theories, concepts and methods developed by modern linguistics to enlighten, complete and enrich the description provided by medieval Arabic grammatical treatises. Moreover, since it addresses a non-Arabic speaking audience, it sometimes tends to adapt to the Greek and Latin grammatical system and adopt its taxonomy and terminology for the grammatical description.⁵

If this cycle of conferences can—in some of its contributions—address the latter, it nevertheless deals primarily with the former, focusing on its production and material, starting from the tutelary figure of Sibawayhi

4 The term *Arabs'* should not conceal the very important fact that most of these scholars were actually not of Arab descent, and that for some of them Arabic was not a mother tongue (Sibawayhi in the first place!), even though they had all been arabized linguistically. Just as the term *Linguistics* should not be taken here in the primary sense of a specific modern science, but rather in a wider way as "the study of language". The reader will forgive us here for this anachronistic use, which simply occurs for the sake of debate around Carter's label *Arab Linguistics*.

5 For an example of such a development, see Guillaume (2020).

(d. 180/796?). Contributors to this series are mainly historians of the grammatical and more generally linguistic tradition of the “Arabs”, rather than of the Arabists’ one (a history which is still to be done). Because of this, it might even be more accurate to speak here—at least for the moment being—of *Arabs’ Linguistics*.

The volume is also innovatory in the organization of its contents, which are no longer presented in the sheer alphabetical order of the contributors, as it was the case in the last three editions. Here, a thematic arrangement has been preferred, thus reviving the approach of the opening book of the series. The contributions are organized in two sections. The first one focuses on the status of Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb* and tries to evaluate its impact on following grammarians, as well as the debates and refutations it raised. It is this interest for the reception of the *Kitāb* that explains the subtitle “*Kitāb Sībawayhi: The Critical Theory*” given to the FAL V conference and, subsequently, to the present proceedings. The second section explores later developments in the grammatical and linguistic thought, and deals more precisely with the constitution of some grammatical categories.

Furthermore, if this volume is particular, it is also because none of its editors were involved in the organization of the FAL V conference. Just as Kees Versteegh stepped in to help with the edition of the proceedings of the last three editions (FAL II to FAL IV)—and this is also an opportunity to pay tribute to him—, we also intervened and replaced the conference organizer who was prevented from carrying out this task.

Last but not least, the end of this editing process has taken place during the Covid-19 pandemic, which has been imposing upon us a series of unprecedented containment measures. This will certainly mark the spirit of the beginning of the third decade of the 21st century. In this context, the sixth conference of the series (FAL VI), initially planned for September 2020, has had to be postponed twice, thus breaching the biennial rhythm of these meetings. Nevertheless, we hope that the FAL conference cycle will pass through this ordeal and continue for a long time, leaving its enduring mark on Arabic studies.

We wish to thank the contributors for their hard work and their commitment besides us in this adventure—commitment being a rare value that we have to cherish. Let those who act with commitment be warmly thanked. Credits would not be complete without mentioning Elisa Perotti from Brill, who has been enthusiastic about this project since the very first moment, welcoming and accompanying us on behalf of Brill publishing house.

The papers in the present volume are organised into two main sections: the first one deals explicitly with the critical theory of Sibawayhi's *Kitāb*, while the second one addresses further developments of the grammatical analysis. Michael G. Carter (chapter 1) inaugurates the first part with the examination of Sibawayhi's notion of "*ṭūl al-kalām*", which appears some two dozen times in the *Kitāb* with reference to the length of utterances or parts of utterances, as well as a number of other occurrences connected with the length of individual sounds. After outlining the contexts in which the term is used, the paper makes some interpretative comments and shows that *ṭūl al-kalām*, in common with the rest of the terminology of the *Kitāb*, is applied to elements at all levels of analysis from phoneme to syntagme. Furthermore, the feature of *ṭūl al-kalām* is strongly associated with Sibawayhi's master, Ḥalīl (d. 170/786 or 175/791), who displays a refined concept of morpheme boundaries in association with the rules of pause (*waqf*). Its link with vocative constructions lends weight to the assumption that the language under analysis was indeed a spoken form of Arabic. In conclusion, a few sporadic examples of *ṭūl al-kalām* from later grammar are presented, though the literature needs a more thorough examination, and the paper ends with some remarks about a possible echo in the treatment of the demonstratives in the modern pronunciation of Classical Arabic.

Ilyass Amharar and Jean N. Druel (chapter 2) approach the question of Sibawayhi's heritage through the lenses of the textual tradition, confronting the "canonical" text of Sibawayhi's teaching to two unedited manuscripts of the *Kitāb*. The investigation focuses on the specific question of whether it is permissible to form the diminutive of the names of the days of the week, as in *tunayyāni* 'a little Monday' or *tulayṭā* 'a little Tuesday'. Sibawayhi denies this possibility, arguing that these words ('Monday', 'Tuesday', etc.), along with the names of the months, are proper names that refer to only one item, not to a whole genus (*'umma*); there can be many Zayds and 'Amrs, some being smaller than others, but there is only one 'Monday', just like there is only one 'yesterday' or one 'tomorrow'; in other words, the names of the days of the week have less *tamakkun* ('declinability, flexibility, potentiality') than *zayd* and 'amr. Ġarmī (d. 225/839) and Māzinī (d. 249/863), followed by Mubarrad (d. 285/898 or 286/899), criticize Sibawayhi's position, while Ibn Wallād (d. 332/944) defends it. In this paper, the authors shed new light on this very specific debate thanks to fresh data from so far unedited manuscripts of Sibawayhi's *Kitāb* (Milan, Ambrosiana X 56 *sup.*; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France ar. 6499). The many variant readings give an insight into the gradual elaboration of the 'canonical' version of Sibawayhi's *Kitāb*, in dialogue with the early grammatical treatises, their commentaries, and their refutations.

Back to the origin of Sibawayhi's grammatical activity, Raoul Villano and Giuliano Lancioni (chapter 3) address the issues of his early reputation as a grammatical authority and of his relationship with his alleged most outstanding pupil, al-'Aḥfaš al-'Awsaṭ (d. 215/830). The analysis of biographical and historical sources clearly shows that Sibawayhi's reputation is already well established between the end of the 2nd/8th and the beginning of the 3rd/9th centuries. As for 'Aḥfaš, he is described, already in the first half of the 3rd/9th century, not only as the transmitter of the *Kitāb*, but also as the heir and successor of Sibawayhi's teachings. Moreover, all biographical and historical sources persistently record that the two scholars were part of, if not the same grammatical school, at least the same scholarly circle in Basra. Based on these considerations, the second and third sections of the paper offer a comparative analysis of the Qur'ānic material found in Sibawayhi's *Kitāb* and in 'Aḥfaš's *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*. Evidence demonstrates that the two books are rooted in a common ground originated in the 2nd/8th century's Basran intellectual milieu, and emerged from the same scholarly tradition, which should be identified with the circle of the *naḥwīyyūn*.

Shifting attention to the Arabic Linguistic Tradition after Sibawayhi, Hanadi Dayyeh (chapter 4) addresses the 'profile of the speaker' as a case study of how the critical theory examines and reinterprets Sibawayhi's heritage. Where the speaker appears in Sibawayhi's *Kitāb* as an originator and arbiter, it comes across as a learner in the works of his successors. This process begins with Mubarrad's *Muqtaḍab* and is achieved with Ibn al-Sarrāḡ's (d. 316/929) *'Uṣūl*. Notwithstanding some later attempts at restoring the profile of the speaker as an originator, notably in Ibn Ġinnī's (d. 392/1002), the study argues that such a change reveals a shift in approach to linguistic analysis away from Sibawayhi's. The causes of this shift and its impact on the development of the Arabic Linguistic Tradition will be examined.

Simona Olivieri's contribution (chapter 5) reminds that Sibawayhi's *Kitāb* epitomizes the linguistic debate that took place among the scholars of Arabic during the first and second centuries after the *hiğra*, and that it constitutes the evident result of the way the earliest grammarians interpreted substantial linguistic themes. According to the author, Sibawayhi's contribution to the development of the Arabic grammatical tradition is such that his view and approach lays the foundations of the subsequent linguistic thinking, becoming a grammatical source itself, together with the Qur'ān and the *kalām al-'arab*. Indeed, the data discussed in Sibawayhi's investigation are also included in numbers of examples provided by later grammarians, becoming a self-standing corpus. Hence, both the pioneering terminology he establishes and his data are to be adopted by scholars belonging to later and diverse traditions. On this basis, the paper investigates how the *qur'ān al-naḥw* is spoken of in

later grammarians' works and to what extent the exploitation of Sibawayhi's arguments is specious to defend Basran or Kufan theories. As a matter of fact, although the data available in later grammarians' treatises are substantially the same as those already presented and discussed by Sibawayhi, their interpretation sometimes shows interesting variations, usually functional to the specific theory they want to support.

The issue of Sibawayhi's *Kitāb* heritage and textual tradition is also evoked in Francesco Binaghi's contribution (chapter 6), which closes the first section of the book. The paper evaluates the *radd* genre that, nowadays overshadowed by the most famous *al-Radd 'alā al-nuḥāt* by Ibn Maḍā' (d. 592/1196), seems to have been particularly flourishing in al-Andalus and attests to the Andalusī intellectual activity in the field of grammatical studies. It presents a list of 25 titles, which include the name of some of the most important Andalusī grammarians either as authors or as targets of these refutations, and tries to evaluate the content and impact of these treatises: even though almost all these texts (with the notable exception of Ibn Maḍā's *Radd*) have not been preserved, indirect information provided by other grammatical works or biobibliographical sources sheds some light on the issue. Two opposing groups emerge, on the basis of which the author proposes a first sketch of scholarly trends in al-Andalus. The fraction lines among them seem to develop along two main issues: the question of the primary reference for grammatical studies—the *Ġumal* of Zaġġāġī (d. 337/949), or the *'Idāh* of Fārisī (d. 377/989)—, and the epistemological definition of grammar's purpose: an instrumental discipline or a speculative science? The author ends his investigation wondering whether these fraction lines are eventually linked to the textual history of Sibawayhi's *Kitāb* and to a struggle for Sibawayhi's heritage.

The second part of this volume opens with a contribution that goes back to the period of standardization of the grammatical theory (4th/10th century) and focuses on the encounter between grammar and philosophy. Wilfrid Hodges and Manuela E.B. Giolfo (chapter 7) analyze some of the sources presenting this encounter as an open confrontation with a notable interest for the figure of Fārābī (d. 339/950). As a matter of fact, it has sometimes been suggested that Fārābī's views about grammar put him in conflict with the Arabic grammarians of his time. The authors examine the evidence and conclude that, although not a grammarian himself, Fārābī is closely in touch with leading grammarians of his time, and describes features of Arabic which can be illustrated in detail with examples from Sibawayhi or Sīrāfi: not points of conflict are thus to be noticed. However, although Fārābī casts his explanations in terms that should apply to any language, the authors suspect he may not have had a fluent knowledge of any language other than Arabic.

The book continues with a contribution focusing on taxonomic issues in the Arabic grammatical tradition. Hideki Okazaki (chapter 8) examines the classification of *mušabbah bi-l-maf'ūl* ("pseudo-object") by Ibn al-Sarrāḡ based on the grammatical concept of *faḍla*, which corresponds to *laḡw* in the *Kitāb* of Sibawayhi. Ibn al-Sarrāḡ's major 4th/10th-century work, *Kitāb al-'Uṣūl fī al-naḥw*, is one of the oldest grammatical works that classified *maf'ūl* into five categories with well-defined terminologies. His treatise is characterized by the classification of each grammatical category based on the principles of comprehensive divisions, and by the arrangement of chapters according to this classification. However, his manner of dividing *mušabbah bi-l-maf'ūl* is less assertive than his clear-cut classification of *maf'ūl*. According to his description, one may say that he recognizes five types of "objects" (the five *maf'ūl*-s), as well as five types of "pseudo-objects" (*ḥāl*, *tamyīz*, *istiṭnā'*, *ḥabar kāna wa-'aḥawātihā*, and *ism 'inna wa-'aḥawātihā*). Ibn al-Sarrāḡ classifies these pseudo-objects based on two aspects: the semantic relation between *manṣūb* and *marfū'*, and the grammatical category of *āmīl* (operator). However, the paper argues that he fails to account for the reason why *nidā'* (vocative) and *nafy bi-lā* (negation with *lā*) are excluded from the category of pseudo-objects. Although Ibn al-Sarrāḡ's taxonomy of *mušabbah bi-l-maf'ūl* is accepted by Ibn Ġinnī and Ġurḡānī (d. 471/1078), the classification of some of the categories is modified, at least after the 7th/13th century, by grammarians like Ibn Mālik (d. 672/1274), 'Astarābādī (d. 688/1289), and their successors.

Classical Arabic falling essentially within the written level of the language, this one takes precedence in its descriptions, even if Medieval Arab Grammarians sing praises of an effective and relevant *'irāb* which is supposed to be regularly uttered. However, it does not seem possible to identify clear traces of the integration of suprasegmental elements in medieval Arabic grammatical thought, such as intonation for example. This is the purpose of Manuel Sartori's paper (chapter 9), which takes the distinction to be made between *badal* and *'atfal-bayān* as a practical case study. Interestingly enough, not only does this question not find an immediate answer, but there is nothing to differentiate two examples given by Ibn Ġinnī and illustrating respectively *badal* and *'atfal-bayān*: *qāma 'aḥūka zaydun* and *qāma 'aḥūka muḥammadun*. Moreover, a grammarian and logician like 'Astarābādī states explicitly that he does not see any clear difference between *badal al-kull min al-kull* and *'atfal-bayān*. In fact, the answer given by the Medieval Arabic grammars may seem in some ways confusing, *'atfal-bayān* being an intersection between the *badal* and the *ṣifa*. This might be the reason why Arabists' grammars of Arabic often avoid addressing the difference between *badal* and *'atfal-bayān*. Two criteria are traditionally exhibited by medieval Arabic grammarians to differentiate between them: an inflectional criterion in the very restricted context of the

vocative (*nidā'*), and a semantic and pragmatic criterion. This latter is based on the fact that the *badal* is the essential term compared to its *mubdal minhu*, whereas the *'atf al-bayān* is only an accessory element. The paper underlines, however, that another criterion of distinction between these two appositions exists if one wants to *listen carefully* to the old Arabic grammarians: this criterion is neither distributional, nor inflectional (therefore syntactical), nor even semantic and pragmatic, but suprasegmental. In conclusion, the author argues that medieval Arabic grammarians were actually not *deaf* to suprasegmental criteria and considerations.

Finally, Haruko Sakaedani (chapter 10) closes this volume with a study on the pronoun *huwa* in Q. 112/1, where she indicates that *qul huwa allāhu 'aḥadun* is often interpreted as a subject, *allāhu* being its predicate, and *'aḥadun* this latter's apposition or the second predicate. Her paper examines interpretations of *huwa* both in *Tafsīr*-s and in Arabic grammatical books. The author underlines that, around the time of Zamaḥṣarī (d. 538/1144), this *huwa* comes to be recognized as a cataphoric *ḍamīr al-ša'n* (a pronoun of the matter). According to the author, there are two more "pronouns of the matter" in the Qur'ān: Q. 18/38 *lākinnā huwa llāhu rabbī* and Q. 34/27 *bal huwa llāhu l-'azīzu l-ḥakīmu*; here, however, *huwa* is not explained as a *ḍamīr al-ša'n* either. The paper postulates that also in the case of these last two verses the reasons for such an analysis are that the *ḍamīr al-ša'n* in the Qur'ān mainly appear as suffix pronouns, and that preceding contexts of these two verses enable *huwa* to be interpreted as an anaphoric pronoun.

Even though the title of this fifth chapter of the series recalls once more the name and central place of Sībawayhi within the grammatical tradition, the papers successfully prove that his heritage and the critical theory that develops around his *Kitāb* are far more complex than a simple reorganization of its grammatical matter, to the point that—after all—Sībawayhi can almost be considered as a potential divisive factor among later grammarians. The articles also provide some new interpretative tools which will certainly contribute to deepen our understanding of the Arabic grammatical tradition.

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