

## Studies in Near Eastern Culture and History



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In memory of Ernest T. Abdel-Massih

Edited by

James A. Bellamy

With a memorial by

Ernest N. McCarus

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Ernest T. Abdel-Massih  
1928-1982

*Ernest Tewfik Abdel-Massih*

Professor Ernest T. Abdel-Massih was born in Giza, Egypt, on October 28, 1928. He trained in Cairo and Alexandria as a teacher of English; after obtaining a Ph.D. in Linguistics at the University of Michigan in 1968, he specialized in the teaching of Arabic as a foreign language. He did seminal work on Moroccan Arabic and Tamazight Berber and pioneering sociolinguistic studies of Egyptian Arabic, and had begun a long-range study of Pan-Arabic, an attempt to reconcile the problem of diglossia in Arabic.

Dr. Abdel-Massih established a firm reputation as an extremely effective teacher of Arabic, without peer in his field. He had the remarkable ability to inspire his students to perform beyond their capacity, in the process earning their affection and loyalty. A person of great energy and vitality and blessed with great tact and an infectious sense of humor, he was an able administrator, serving as director of the University of Michigan Center for Near Eastern and North African Studies from May 1980 until the time of his death.

His family and his church were central to his life. He was on the Board of Deacons of St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church of Greater Detroit, and was in charge of church education in southeastern Michigan; a manifestation of this is his English translation of the Coptic liturgy. He was closely associated with the Coptic Pope Shenouda III, and was made an Honorary Member of the Coptic Orthodox Cultural Center of Venice, Italy.

In his last years Ernest T. Abdel-Massih had encountered a series of grave medical crises but, through his indomitable spirit and almost as if by miracle, survived each one. When finally he expired on December 6, 1982 at the age of 54 it came as a shock to those who knew him—how could a man of such vitality, such drive and such faith not have pulled through once more? Only then did we learn that he had had cancer for twelve years, knowledge shared only with his doctor and his wife Cecile. Now we understood his boundless energy, his drive to accomplish objectives without wasted energy or time: he knew that what he was going to achieve had to be done without delay. And his achievements were many, as a scholar, teacher, administrator, and as a person.

He is survived by his wife Cecile and daughters Nagwa, Hala, and Mary.

Ernest N. McCarus



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## Selections from Sībawayhi

JAMES A. BELLAMY

University of Michigan

ONE of the most endearing characteristics of Ernest Abdel-Massih was his willingness to give unstintingly of his time and energy in the service of his colleagues and students. The translations from Sībawayhi presented here were completed several years before his death, so I had the opportunity to discuss them with him and profit from his observations. It is sad that they now must serve as a memorial to him, but, I hope, a fitting one, since they combine elements of scholarship and pedagogy, the two mainsprings of his professional career.

Anyone wishing to study the history of Arabic grammar must begin with the *Kitāb*, the 'Book', of Sībawayhi. This unique work has dominated the thinking of Arab grammarians about their language from the end of the eighth century A.D., when it was produced, down to the present time. Later writers, it is true, made refinements in Sībawayhi's terminology and diction, and even disagreed with him on numerous points; none of them, however, surpassed him or even contributed much that was new in those areas that he had dealt with. Even a superficial comparison of their works with his will clearly show how great his influence was, not only in the method of treatment, but also in trivial matters, such as the examples that are cited and the arrangement of the material.

Arabic grammar was not the invention of Sībawayhi's time. The study of the subject had been pursued for upwards of a century before Sībawayhi composed his book, and his citations from earlier scholars not only show his indebtedness to this tradition, but also, by their rarity, point up his own genius and originality. The work of his predecessors has not survived, so the 'Book' stands not only as the most comprehensive treatment of the subject that we possess but also the earliest—the source from which most subsequent developments arise.

Sībawayhi does not simply describe the morphology, syntax, and phonology of Arabic; he is also much concerned with how and why particular forms are generated, and to explain these phenomena he most frequently resorts to the principle of analogy. In fact, analogy is the distinguishing feature in the method employed by Sībawayhi and his followers, and, since they lived and worked in the city of Basrah, they are frequently referred to by scholars as “the analogical school of Basrah”.

This school holds that certain widely used morphological types and syntactic usages are “bases”, upon which analogical constructions can freely be made, while forms and usages which are rare are considered as anomalies, upon which analogical constructions cannot be built. The anomalies themselves, however, are usually explained by analogy.

Other, less commonly used principles are the “lightness” of a form regularly employed as against the “heaviness” of one that is rejected, the “frequency of use”, which is often appealed to in order to explain the omission of a part of a sentence or phrase, and “making do, contenting oneself with” a particular word or form in place of another which is either omitted or not in use.

The selection from Sībawayhi’s *Kitāb* translated here have been chosen for the purpose of illustrating these principles, and to show how Sībawayhi handles such important matters as the parts of speech, basic syntactic relationships, and some features of morphology.

In translating some of the technical terms I have attempted a compromise between Arab and western usage. Because the indicative and subjunctive endings *-u* and *-a* are the same respectively as the endings of the nominative and accusative, and because the use of the imperfect verb and the agent noun coincides in some respects, the Arabs give the name Verb-Resembling-Noun to the imperfect. They also use the same technical terms for nominative and indicative and for accusative and subjunctive. I have kept the latter terms distinct in most cases, but where the discussion turns on the resemblance between nouns and verbs, I have resorted to the unnatural compounds “nominative/indicative” and “accusative/subjunctive.”

### Chapter 1

#### Arabic Words

PARIS, I, 1; BULAQ, I, 2; CAIRO, I, 12; JAHN, I, I, 1; DE SACY, 152<sup>1</sup>.

Words are noun, verb, and particle. The latter is a word which conveys a meaning but which is neither a noun nor a verb.

Examples of nouns are: Man, horse, wall.

Verbs are (various) patterns taken from the form of those nouns which are (the names of) events (=verbal nouns). They are formed for what is past, for what will be but has not yet occurred, and for what is and has not yet come to an end.

Examples of the formation for what is past are: *dahaba* 'he went', *sami'a* 'he heard', *maku'a* 'he remained', and *humida* 'he was praised'.

Examples of what has not yet occurred are: (1) When you command, *idhab* 'go!', *uqtul* 'kill!', and *idrab* 'strike!'; and (2) when you make a statement, *yaqtulu* 'he will strike', and *yudrabu* 'he will be struck'. Identical with the latter group are the formations for that which is and has not come to an end, when you make a statement, *yaqtulu* 'he is killing', etc.

These are the (basic) patterns which are taken from the nouns (which are the names) of events, and they occur in many forms, which will be made clear, God willing. Events are (words) like *the beating*, *the praising*, and *the killing*. That which conveys a meaning but is neither noun nor verb is like *then*, *sawfa* (marker of the future), *by* (in oaths), and the preposition *of*.

### Chapter 3

#### *The Support and What Is Supported Thereon*

PARIS, I, 6; BULAQ, I, 7; CAIRO, I, 23; JAHN, I, I, 9; DE SACY, 152.

These are two elements which cannot do without each other and which the speaker cannot dispense with.

One type of this (combination) is the Beginning-Noun and that which is constructed upon it; e.g., *Abdu llāhi aḥūka* 'Abdallah (is) your brother', and *hādā aḥūka* 'This (is) your brother'. Another type is: *yadhabu Abdu llāhi* 'Abdallah is going'. The verb must have the noun with it just as the first noun has to have the second noun in sentences beginning with nouns, as above.

Other combinations which function like Beginning-Nouns are: *kāna Abdu llāhi / muntaliqan* 'Abdallah was departing', and *layta Zaydan / muntaliqun* 'Would that Zayd were departing!', since the first elements in each require what follows just as the Beginning-Noun requires what follows, in the earlier examples.

It should be noted that the primary status of nouns is as a Beginning-Noun in a sentence, for the factors governing the accusative, the nominative—other than its status as a Beginning-Noun—and the genitive affect only the Beginning-Noun. You will observe that only the Beginning-

Noun can be affected by these governing factors so that it ceases to be a Beginning-Noun, and you will not restore the sentence beginning with a noun so long as these governing factors remain. The only way to do so is to remove them. For example, if you say: *ʿAbdu llāhi muntaliqun* ‘Abdallah (is) departing’, you may prefix *raʾaytu* ‘I saw’ to it and get *raʾaytu ʿAbda* (acc.) *llāhi muntaliquan* ‘I saw Abdallah departing’, or you can say: *kāna ʿAbdu* (nom.)<sup>2</sup> *llāhi muntaliquan* ‘Abdallah was departing’, or *marartu bi-ʿAbdi* (gen.) *llāhi muntaliquan* (acc.) ‘I passed by Abdallah departing (=as he was departing)’. Thus the Beginning-Noun is primary just as the singular is the primary number and just as the indefinite comes before the definite.

### Chapter 6

#### *Correct and Absurd Sentences*

PARIS, I, 7; BULAQ, I, 8; CAIRO, I, 25; JAHN, I, I, 10.

These are five types: (1) Correct and good, (2) Absurd, (3) Correct and false, (4) Correct and bad, and (5) Absurd and false.

Examples of correct and good sentences are: I came to you yesterday; I shall come to you tomorrow.

The absurd sentence is when you nullify the first part of your sentence with the last part; e.g., I came to you tomorrow; I shall come to you yesterday.

Examples of correct and false sentences are: I carried the mountain; I drank the ocean, and the like.

Correct and bad sentences are when you do not put the words in the right places; e.g., Seen have I Zayd; So that Zayd will come to you<sup>3</sup>.

An example of an absurd and false sentence is: I shall drink the water of the sea yesterday.

### Chapter 104

#### *Adjectivals Describing Definite Nouns*

PARIS, I, 187; BULAQ, I, 219; CAIRO, II, 5; JAHN, I, I, 278.

Definite nouns<sup>4</sup> are of five sorts: (1) Proper nouns, (2) Nouns annexed to a following definite noun, unless you take them in the sense of nouns with the definite ending,<sup>5</sup> (3) Nouns taking the definite article, (4) The demonstrative pronouns, and (5) The personal pronouns.

Markers which are permanent and designate (one thing) specifically are (words) such as *Zayd*, *‘Amr*, *‘Abdallāh*, and the like. They are definite because they are nouns which are applied to a certain one (thing), by which it is known as an individual, and not to the whole of its class.

Words definite because they are annexed to a following noun are, for example: *hādā ‘aḥūka* ‘This (is) your brother’, and *marartu bi-‘abika* ‘I passed by your father’, and the like. These words become definite by virtue of the possessive pronoun which is attached to them, since one designates by the possessive pronoun the person himself and not his whole class.

As for (words with) the definite article, examples are: The camel, the man, the horse, and the like. These words are definite because when you use the definite article, you have in mind the thing itself and not its whole class, for if you say, “I passed by a man”, you mean only that you passed by someone to whom this noun applies, and not a particular man whom the person you are addressing knows, but when you add the definite article, then you remind him of a man whom he knows, and you say, “the man about whom such-and-such is the case,” so that he may call to mind the man whom he knows, about whom such-and-such is the case.

As for the demonstratives, *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, they are definite because they are nouns by which one points to a thing rather than to its class as a whole.

As for the pronouns<sup>6</sup> . . . , they are definite because, when you use them, you leave unexpressed a noun after you are aware that the one you are talking to already knows whom or what you mean, and you have in mind a particular thing.

A definite noun can be described only by a definite noun, just as the indefinite can only be described by an indefinite noun. The proper noun can be described by three things: (1) A word annexed to its like (i.e., a definite noun), (2) the definite article, and (3) the demonstrative. An example of the annexed noun is *marartu bi-Zaydin ‘aḥika* ‘I passed by Zayd your brother’; of the definite article: *marartu bi-Zaydin al-ṭawīlī* ‘I passed by Zayd the tall-one’, and the like; of the demonstrative: *marartu bi-Zaydin hādā wa-bi-‘Amrin hādā* ‘I passed by this Zayd and this ‘Amr’.

The noun annexed to a definite noun can be described by three things: (1) By that which is annexed in the same manner as it is, (2) by the definite article, and (3) by the demonstrative. Examples: (1) *marartu bi-ṣāḥibika ‘aḥī Zaydin* ‘I passed by your friend the brother of Zayd’; (2) *marartu bi-ṣāḥibika al-ṭawīlī* ‘I passed by your friend the tall one’; and, (3) *marartu bi-ṣāḥibika hādā* ‘I passed by this friend of yours’.

(Words with) the definite article can be described by (words with) the

definite article and by what is annexed to the definite article, because the latter stands in the same function as the former and becomes adjectival just as words annexed to other than the definite article become descriptive of what does not have the definite article, like “I passed by Zayd your brother”. An example of the two articles is: *marartu bi-al-jamīli al-nabīli* ‘I passed by the noble handsome-one’. An example of a word annexed to (a word with) the definite article is: *marartu bi-al-raǧulī dī al-māli* ‘I passed by the man (the) possessor of money’.

You cannot employ the words *your brother* to describe *the tall-one* because when *brother* is annexed, it becomes more particularized since it is annexed to something particular or to its pronoun, so you must begin with *your brother*,<sup>7</sup> and if this is not sufficiently definite, you may add to it something else that is definite by which its definiteness is further increased (e.g., an adjective with the article). What prevents *your brother* from being used as a description of *the tall-one* and *the man* is that the informant wishes in using *your brother* to bring something, that is, one thing and nothing else, near and to point to it so that you may know it with both your heart and your eye. But when he says *the tall-one*, he wishes only to make something known to you through you heart alone and not through your eye. For this reason, *your brother* can be described by *the tall-one*, but *the tall one* cannot be described by it, since it is more particular than *the tall-one*, inasmuch as the speaker wishes to make his hearer know something with the knowledge of both eye and heart, and when he says *the tall-one*, he is making known to him something through his heart and not his eye; for that in which two things are combined is more particular.<sup>8</sup>

The demonstratives may be described both by nouns with the definite article and by adjectives with the definite article. They are described by nouns with the definite article only because the latter and the demonstratives are practically the same thing; adjectives with the definite article function like nouns, and are not like those adjectives which are used with Zayd and ‘Amr when you say, “I passed by Zayd the tall-one”. (I accept the above explanation) because I do not wish to consider *this* as a particular noun and to follow it with an adjective by which it is made (more) definite (i.e., *hādā al-ṭawīlu* ‘this tall-one’ is not the same as *ʾaḥūka al-ṭawīlu* ‘your brother the tall-one’, in spite of the similarity of construction).

(The use of the demonstrative is) as if you were going to say *marartu bi-al-raǧulī* ‘I passed by the man’, but say “this man” only so as to bring the thing near and point to it (and not use *man* as a description of *this* to make it more definite). Proof of this is that you cannot have the dual

demonstrative followed by two singulars<sup>9</sup> (e.g., these-two tall-one and short-one) making it stand to the first noun as the singular demonstrative stands to one noun following; e.g., *this man*. Likewise you do not say: \**marartu bi-hāḍā ḍī al-māli* 'I passed by this the possessor of money', as you say, "I passed by Zayd the possessor of money".

Note that adjectives describing the definite noun stand to it just as the adjectives describing the indefinite nouns stand to them . . .

The pronouns cannot really be described since you employ the pronouns only when you are aware that the person spoken to knows whom you mean. They can, however, be followed by certain nouns which are generalizing and emphatic, but which are not descriptive, because the description indicates a personal quality such as "tall", or relationship such as "your brother" or "your friend", and the like, or it is like the demonstratives. However, these words under discussion are joined to the noun (=pronoun) and agree with it, and for this reason are (sometimes) called "descriptive" by the grammarians. For example, generalizing: *marartu bi-him kullihim* 'I passed by them all (of them)'; that is, I did not fail to pass by one of them. And for emphasis: *lam yabqa minhum muḥabbirun* 'There did not remain of them an informant'; (that is, no one remained to tell their tale) while (obviously some) of them did remain<sup>10</sup> . . .

### Chapter 132

#### *Beginning a Sentence with a Noun*

PARIS, I, 239; BULAQ, I, 278; CAIRO, II, 126; JAHN, I, I, 355.

The Beginning-Noun is any noun with which a beginning is made in order that a sentence may be constructed on it. Both the Beginning-Noun and the complement built on it are in the nominative. The beginning cannot exist except with the complement built on it. The Beginning-Noun is the first element and what is built on it is that which comes afterwards. These are the same as the Support and What is Supported Thereon (see above, p. 3-4).

The complement built on the Beginning-Noun must be identical with it, or the Beginning-Noun must be in a place or a time;<sup>11</sup> these three things may be mentioned after the Beginning-Noun. The complement which is identical with the Beginning-Noun upon which it is built is in the nominative by virtue of the Beginning-Noun, just as the latter is in the nominative by virtue of its being a Beginning-Noun. An example is: '*Abdu llāhi muntaliqun* 'Abdallah (is) departing'; '*Abdu llāhi* is nominative because it is mentioned so that *muntaliqun* may be built upon it, and *muntaliqun* is

nominative because that which is built upon a Beginning-Noun has the same status.

Al-Ḥalīl<sup>12</sup> insisted that he disapproved of saying *qā'imun Zaydun* 'Standing (is) Zayd'. However his disapproval is valid only if one does not consider *qā'im* as a predicate, placed in front, to be sure, but still constructed on the Beginning-Noun (i.e., Zayd), just as you transpose when you say *ḍaraba Zaydan 'Amrun* 'Amr struck Zayd', in which 'Amr is nominative by virtue of the verb *ḍaraba*, though normal usage would be for 'Amr to come first and Zayd last. The same common usage prevails in this construction as well, that is, that the Beginning-Noun comes first. However, reversing the order is also good Arabic; other examples are: A Tamimite (tribal name) am I. Hated (is) he who hates you. A man (is) Abdallah. Silk (is) your saddle-blanket.

If, however, this is not the idea they have in mind, but they rather conceive of *qā'im* as a verb, as in the sentences *yaqūmu Zaydun* 'Zayd is standing' and *qāma Zaydun* 'Zayd stood up', then that is bad, because *qā'im* is a noun. In their opinion (that is, of grammarians in general), it is good for a noun to function as a verb only when it is a descriptive word joined to something described, or when it is joined to a noun which governs it; just as there can be no object to the participle *ḍārib* 'striking' until it is construed with another word, for you say: "This (person is) striking Zayd" and "I (am) striking Zayd", in which *ḍāribun Zaydan* 'striking Zayd' (not a complete sentence) is not like *ḍarabtu Zaydan* 'I struck Zayd' and *ḍarabtu 'Amran* 'I struck 'Amr' (i.e., the subject does not appear in the participle as it does in the finite verb).

Just as this is not permitted, so also do they consider it bad for the Beginning-Noun to function like a verb, this so there should be some dividing line between the verb and the noun, even though they may agree with each other in many functions. For sometimes a thing may agree with another thing in some ways, then not agree with it in some other way, because it is not the same.

### Chapter 133

*That Which Fills the Function of the Beginning-Noun and  
Substitutes for it because it Indicates the Locality or Position of  
What Follows*

PARIS, I, 239; BULAQ, I, 278; CAIRO, II, 128; JAHN, I, I, 356.

That which governs the case of what follows the words which indicate locality, putting it in the nominative, is the same which governs it when



it precedes (i.e., its status as a Beginning-Noun). Each is necessary to the other, so when they are joined together, they form a complete sentence, and they are, as regards completeness, like the sentence: This (is) Abdallah. Examples are: In it (is) Abdallah. And similarly: There (is) Zayd. Here (is) Zayd. Where (is) Zayd? How (is) Abdallah? and the like. The meaning of *where?* is *in what place?* and of *how?*, *in what condition?* These last are employed first in the sentence before the noun only because they are interrogatives. In this respect they resemble *hal* and *ʿa* (interrogative particles used at the head of a question anticipating a yes or no answer), because they are used without *ʿa* (i.e., *ʿa* and *hal* are not used in conjunction with other interrogative particles). They do not function thus (i.e., do not substitute for the Beginning-Noun) except when they are interrogative (i.e., *where*, *when*, *how*, etc., when used in indirect questions, do not come first in the sentence).

#### Chapter 134

##### *Cases Where That Which Is Built on the Beginning-Noun Is Left Unexpressed*

PARIS, I, 240; BULAQ, I, 279; CAIRO, II, 129; JAHN, I, I, 356.

An example of this is the sentence *law lā ʿAbdu llāhi la-kāna kaḍā wa-kaḍā* 'Were it not for Abdallah (lit.: If not Abdallah), then such-and-such would be the case'. Then *such-and-such would be the case* is a phrase which is dependent on the phrase introduced by *law lā* 'were it not for'. *ʿAbdu llāhi*, however, is a part of the phrase introduced by *law lā*, and it is nominative by virtue of its status as Beginning-Noun, just as it would be nominative for the same reason after the interrogative particle *ʿa*, as in *ʿa-Zaydun ʾaḥūka?* 'Is Zayd your brother?' where *Zayd* is nominative just as it is in *Zaydun ʾaḥūka* 'Zayd is your brother', the only difference being that the former is interrogative and the latter a statement. In this case where the predicate is left unexpressed, it appears that what the predicate is built on does exist in a certain specific place; thus it is as if one said *law lā ʿAbdu llāhi kāna fī ḍālīka al-makāni* 'Were it not for Abdallah being in that place' and 'Were it not for the battle being at a particular time in a particular place', however, the predicates were omitted because of their frequent use in the phrase, just as the phrase (=protasis) is omitted when using *ʾimmālā* 'then at least'. Al-Ḥalīl asserts that they mean "If you will not do anything else, *then at least* do thus-and-so", but they omit the first phrase because it occurs so often in the phrase. . . . Many things are omitted in speech because they are employed so frequently. An example

of this is 'Any food?' that is, "Is there any food in a particular time or place?" . . . And similarly the answer: "There is no food (in a particular time or place)."

### Chapter 135

#### *Sentences in which the Beginning-Noun Is Left Unexpressed and What Is Built on It Is Expressed*

PARIS, I, 240; BULAQ, I, 279; CAIRO, II, 130; JAHN, I, I, 357.

This is when you see someone's figure and it is evidence to you of the identity of the person, so you say: "Abdallah, by my Lord!" It is as if you said, "That is Abdallah" or "This is Abdallah". Or you hear a voice and recognize its owner, for it is a sign to you of his identity, and you say: "Zayd, by my Lord!" Or you touch a body, or smell an odor, and you say: "Zayd!" or "Musk!" Or you taste something, and you say: "Honey!" Or if someone told you of the facial characteristics of a man, and that became a sign to you of his identity, you would say: "Abdallah!" Likewise a man might say: "I passed by a man who is kind to the poor and shows kindness towards his parents," and you would say: "So-and-so, by God!"

### Chapter 186

#### *Exceptions with ʾilla (except)<sup>13</sup>*

PARIS, I, 315; BULAQ, I, 360; CAIRO, II, 310; JAHN, II, I, 70.

The noun following ʾillā 'except' can be employed in two ways. The first is that you do not change the (case of the) noun from what it was before you prefixed ʾillā, just as you make no change when you prefix lā 'not' to a noun, as in lā marḥaban (acc.) wa-lā salāmun (nom.) '(I extend you) no welcome, and no peace (be upon you)!' You do the same with ʾillā, although it, like lā, does convey an (additional) meaning.

The second way is that the noun following ʾillā does not share in the construction of the noun before, which is governed by the preceding part of the sentence; (here ʾillā governs rather) as ʿiṣrūna 'twenty' governs what follows it (i.e., always in the accusative), for example, ʿiṣrūna dirhaman 'twenty dirhams'.

The first usage, in which the noun functions as it did before the insertion of ʾillā, is that you introduce the noun into a situation from which you exclude every other noun, for example: mā ʾatānī ʾillā Zaydun (nom.)

‘There did not come to me (anyone) except Zayd’, and *mā laqītu ʾillā Zaydan* (acc.) ‘I did not meet (anyone) except Zayd’ and *mā marartu ʾillā bi-Zaydin* (gen.) ‘I did not pass by (anyone) except Zayd’. Here you put the noun in the same case as you do when you say *mā ʾatānī Zaydun*, *mā laqītu Zaydan*, and *mā marartu bi-Zaydin* ‘Zayd did not come to me; I did not meet Zayd; and, I did not pass by Zayd’, but you introduce ʾillā in order to make the verbs affirmative as regards these nouns (=Zayd, in the examples) to the exclusion of all other nouns; these nouns become “excepted”. There is no usage possible for these nouns in this position other than to be in the same case as they were before the insertion of ʾillā. This is because they, when they follow ʾillā, are still construed with the same elements governing the genitive, nominative, and accusative as they were before ʾillā was added, and since you did not divert (the governing power of) these elements from these nouns by inserting other nouns before you added ʾillā to the verb. (For example, *mā ʾatānī ʾaḥadun ʾillā Zaydan*, in which the insertion of ʾaḥadun ‘anyone’ “diverts” the governing power of the verb over *Zayd* and thus puts it in the accusative. The nominative is also possible here, and is perhaps more common.)

### Chapter 236

#### *The Nominative/Indicative in Verbs-Resembling-Nouns*

PARIS, I, 363; BULAQ, I, 409; CAIRO, III, 9; JAHN, II, I, 136.

These verbs, when they are in the position of a Beginning-Noun, or of a noun built upon a Beginning-Noun, or in the position of a noun in the nominative which is neither a Beginning-Noun nor built upon a Beginning-Noun, or in the position of a noun in the genitive or accusative, are nominative/indicative. Their being in these positions forces on them the nominative/indicative and it is this (alone) that causes them to take the nominative/indicative.

The reason behind this is that what governs nouns does not govern these verbs in the same manner that it governs nouns, just as that which governs verbs and puts them in the apocopate or in the accusative/subjunctive does not govern nouns (in the same way). Rather it is their being in the *place* of a noun which puts them in the nominative/indicative, just as a noun is made nominative/indicative by its being a Beginning-Noun.

Examples. Verb in place of a Beginning-Noun: *Yaqūlu Zaydun ḍāka* ‘Zayd is saying (lit.: says Zayd) that’. In the place of a noun built on a Beginning-Noun: *Zaydun yaqūlu ḍāka* ‘Zayd is saying that’ (=Zayd (is)

the sayer of that). In the place of a noun which is neither a Beginning-Noun nor a noun built on a Beginning-Noun: *marartu bi-rajulin yaqūlu daka* 'I passed by a man (who was) saying that' (= *qā'ilin*, act. part. in gen. modifying *rajulin*), and *hādā yawmu ʾātika* 'This (is) the day I come to you' (*ʾātika* = a noun in the genitive following *yawmu*; cf. *kitābu al-rajuli*).

Likewise *hallā yaqūlu Zaydun dāka* 'Why is Zayd not saying that?' Here *yaqūlu* is (still) in the position of Beginning-Noun since *hallā* 'why not?' governs neither verb nor noun, and it is as if you said simply: *yaqūlu Zaydun dāka*. There are particles, however, which can precede only verbs which are in the position of a Beginning-Noun, for verbs are more inclined than nouns to this peculiarity; that is, that nothing can be mentioned after these particles except verbs (i.e., verbs are more likely to be preceded by non-governing particles than are nouns). We shall explain this later, God willing, and it has been explained before.

Likewise the sentence: *ʾitini ba-da mā tafruġu* 'Come to me after (what) you finish'; *mā* and *tafruġu*, taken together, function like *farāġ* 'the act of finishing'. *Tafruġu* is the extension (of the relative pronoun), and (so) it is a Beginning-Noun. The relation of *tafruġu* to *mā* 'what' is the same as its relation to *alladī* 'that', if you say *ba-da alladī tafruġu* 'after (that) you finish'; thus it is in the position of a Beginning-Noun because *alladī* cannot govern anything so nouns after it are Beginning-Nouns.

Those who claim that verbs are nominative/indicative by virtue of actually *being* Beginning-Nouns must also make them accusative/subjunctive and "genitive" whenever they are in a position in which a noun would be accusative/subjunctive or genitive. In reality verbs are nominative/indicative only when they are in the *position* of a noun (i.e., regardless of the case of a noun in the same position).

Likewise the sentence:<sup>14</sup> *kidtu ʾafʾalu dāka* 'I almost did that' and *kudta tafruġu* 'You almost finished'. *Kidtu* (alternate form: *kudtu*) does not put the following verbs in the accusative/subjunctive nor the apocopate, and *ʾafʾalu* here is in the same relation (to *kidtu* as it is to *kuntu* 'I was' in *kuntu (ʾafʾalu)* 'I was doing', except that (agent) nouns are not used after *kidtu* and its like (as they are after *kuntu*). Similarly *ʾasā yafʾalu dāka* 'he may perhaps do that'. *Kidtu* and words like it stand in the same relation as *kuntu* in their view, as if you said: *\*kidtu fāʾilan* and then put *ʾafʾalu* in the place of *fāʾil*. Arabic contains many similar things and you will see them, God willing. . . .

It is clear, when you say: *balaganī ʾanna Zaydan jāʾa* '(Word) has reached me that Zayd has come', that *ʾanna Zaydan jāʾa* 'that Zayd has come', taken as a whole, is a noun. You also say: *law ʾanna Zaydan jāʾa*

*la-kāna kaḏā wa-kaḏā* 'If Zayd came, so-and-so would happen', and its meaning is *\*law majīru Zaydin* 'If Zayd's coming', even though one does not actually say *\*law majīru Zaydin*. . . . And also: *qad jaʿala yaqūlu ḏāka* as if you said *qad šāra yaqūlu ḏāka* 'he proceeded to say that'.

This is how the nominative/indicative is used in Verbs-Resembling-Nouns.

It seems that the only reason that prevented them from using (agent) nouns with *kidtu* and *ʿasaytu* is that their meaning is the same as that of similar words which are used with the conjunction *ʿan* 'that', (and hence do not take a following agent noun), such as *ḥalīqun ʿan yaqūla* 'apt to say' and *qāraba ʿan lā yafʿala* 'he almost did not do' (lit.: he came close to (the point) that he did not do). You will have noticed that they do say *ʿasā ʿan ʿafʿala*, and the poet, by poetic license, may say *kidtu ʿan*. So since the meaning in these was tantamount to *ʿan* with the accusative/subjunctive, they did not adopt the construction with the agent noun so that the construction which has this meaning would not be like the other, and they constructed the phrase as they do with *kuntu* because it is a verb like the former. *Kidtu ʿan ʿafʿala* is permissible only in poetry because *kāda* is really like *kāna fāʿilan* and *yakūnu fāʿilan* (and therefore should take the nominative/indicative verb, as it does in normal prose usage). Likewise the meaning of *jaʿala yaqūlu* and *ʾaḥaḏa yaqūlu* is *qad ʾāṭara ʿan yaqūla* 'he chose to say' and the like.

Thus the agent nouns are forbidden here because the nominative/indicative verbs have the same meaning as those which are used with *ʿan*, so when they dropped *ʿan*, they kept the verbs, but they do not use the agent noun so as not to destroy this meaning (i.e., that the verbs here are the same as *ʿan* with the subjunctive).

#### Chapter 474

##### *Vocalization of the Prefix of the Verbs-Resembling-Nouns with I When You Use I with the Second Radical When You Say Faʿila*<sup>15</sup>

PARIS, II, 275; BULAQ, II, 256; CAIRO, IV, 110; JAHN, II, I, 605.

This occurs in the speech of all the Arabs except the people of Hijaz.<sup>16</sup> Thus they say *ʿanta tiʿlamu ḏāka*, *ʿanā ʾiʿlamu ḏāka*, *hiya tiʿlamu* and *naḥnu niʿlamu ḏāka* 'you know that, I know that, she knows, and we know that'; similarly all those verbs having *wāw* or *yā* as the second or third radical as well as verbs from doubled roots in which you say *faʿila*. Examples: *šaḳīta*, *ʿanta tišqā* 'you were/are wretched'; *ḥašītu*, *ʿanā ʾiḥšā* 'I feared/fear'; *ḥilna*,

*naḥnu niḥālu* 'we imagined/imagine'; *ʿaḍiḍtunna*, *ʿantunna ti-ḍaḍna*, *ʿanti ti-ʿaḍḍina* 'you bit/bite (fem.pl.), you bite (fem.sg.)'.

They vocalize the prefixes with *i* because they want them to be like the second radical of *faʿila*, just as they use *a* with the prefix when the second radical of *faʿala* has *a*, for the way to form the verb in their opinion is to make the prefixes run like the second radical of *faʿila*. So they say *ḍarabta*, *taḍribu*, *ʿaḍribu* 'you struck, you strike, I strike', vocalizing the prefix with *a*, just as they use *a* with the *r* in *ḍaraba*. The only reason that they do not put *i* with the second consonant (i.e., the first radical which is the consonant immediately following the prefix) as they do in *faʿila* is that it does not take a vowel, so the *i* is put with the prefix.

In all of these verbs, however, when you use the third sg. masc. *yafʿalu* and prefix the *y*, you use the *a*-vowel. This is because they disapprove of *i* with *y*, wherever they do not fear that some form will be lost, in which case, of course, the use of *i* would be tolerated. In the same manner, they disapprove of *y*'s and *w*'s with *y*'s and the like. In this category of verb no prefix is ever vocalized with *i* whose second radical in *faʿala* has *a*, like *ḍaraba*, *ḍahaba*, and the like.

They do, however, say *ʿabā*, *ʿanta tiʿbā*, *huwa yiʿbā* 'he refused, you refuse, he refuses'. This is one of the verbs in which the Verb-Resembling-Noun is always vocalized with *a* on the second radical, and it is not by analogy<sup>17</sup> that it has *a*, for it is an irregular word.

Since the verb runs like those which have *i* in *faʿila* (like *šaḳiyya*, *yašqā*, even though its past is really *ʿabā* = *faʿala*), they treat it in the same way. They even go further and put *i* with the prefix *y* and say *yiʿbā*. In doing so, they go against the rules of the verb class *faʿila* (according to which it should be *yaʿbā*, just as they do when they use *a* with the second radical (according to the rules it should be *yaʿbī*) and, when it is put into the *faʿila* class, they liken it to *yījalu* (rather than the regular *yawjalu*), since the *y* is next to a weak consonant.

Frequently the Arabs alter the most commonly used forms in their speech and treat them carelessly, when they are already irregular according to their view. Thus they say *murhu* 'command him!' and some say *ʿūmurhu* (both instead of the regular *\*urmurhu*); since the word is irregular at one point and is common in their speech, they feel free to make it irregular at another point.

All of these verb forms that we have been discussing have *a* (with the prefix) in the dialect of the people of the Hijaz, and that is the original form.

As for *yasaʿu* and *yaṭaʿu*, they have *a* with the prefix for the following

reason: They are of the pattern *faʿila*, *yafʿilu*, like *ḥasiba*, *yaḥsibu*, but they use *a* with the second radical because of the glottal stop and the *ʿayn*, just as they use *a* because of the glottal stop and the *ʿayn* when they say *yaqraʿu* and *yafzaʿu*. Since they are thus really formed on the pattern of those verbs whose *faʿala* has *a*, they do not use *i* with the prefix as they do with *taʿbā* (i.e., *tiʿbā*); this they do because the latter is formed on the pattern of those verbs whose *faʿila* has the *i*-vowel.

Proof of the fact that the original form with *faʿiltu* is that *yafʿalu* have *a* with the prefix according to the usage of the people of the Hijaz is that *a* is always retained with the prefix *y*, and also that the prefix never has *u* when *faʿula* has *u*. Thus *i* with the prefix is only a later development (lit.: accidental).

As for *wajila*, *yawjalu*, and the like, the people of the Hijaz say *yawjalu* and form the verb like *ʿalimtu*. All the other Arabs, however, instead of *tawjalu*, say: *hiya tījalu*, *ʾana ʾījalu*, *naḥnu nījalu*. When it comes to *yawjalu*, however, some Arabs say *yayjalu*, out of a dislike for the *w* with the *y*, and they liken it to *ʾayyām* (from an original *ʾaywām*), and the like. Others say *yājalu*, substituting *ā* for the *w*, out of a dislike for *w* with the *y*, just as they substitute it for the glottal stop without a vowel (e.g., *raʿs* > *rās*). Some of them say *yījalu*, apparently out of a dislike for *w* and *y* together, putting the *i* with the *y* so as to change the following *w* into *y*, since they know that *w* without a vowel when preceded by *i* becomes a *y*,<sup>18</sup> and they do not feel that the *w* following *y* can be changed (to *y*) when the *y* is vocalized with *a*. So they prefer to change it in the manner indicated (i.e., by first altering the vowel to *i*), and they dislike changing it in the other way (i.e., retaining the *a* and saying *yayjalu*).

You should know that in every verb which begins with a prosthetic glottal stop and has more than three letters in the *faʿala* you will use *i* with the prefix in the Verb-Resembling-Noun. This is because they want to use *i* with prefixes of these verbs, just as they do with the prefixes of those verbs which have only three consonants in *faʿala*, and since they prefer to handle the Verbs-Resembling-Nouns in this manner, they use the *i*-vowel with their prefixes, likening the one type of verb to the other.

They are prevented from using *i* with the second consonant (i.e., the first radical) in the verb class *faʿila* only by the fact that it has no vowel, so they place the vowel on the first consonant (i.e., the prefix). They cannot, however, place the *i* on the third consonant (i.e., the second radical), for that would cause confusion between *yafʿilu* and *yafʿalu*. Examples of verbs with more than three letters are: *ʾistaḡfara*, *ʾanta tiṣṭaḡfiru*; *ʾihranjama*, *ʾanta tiḥranjimu*; *ʾigdawdana*, *ʾanta tiḡdawdinu*; *ʾiqʾansasa*, *tiqʾansisu*; *fur-*

ther, all those verbs the *faʿala* of which is *tafaʿaltu*, *tafāʿaltu*, and *tafaʿlaltu* vocalize the prefix in the same way (i.e., *tiṭafaʿalu*, etc.). This is because in their view the original form of these verbs is such as ought to have the prosthetic glottal stop in the *faʿala* because they have the same (general range of) meaning as *ʿinfīʿāl* (verbal noun of *ʿinfāʿala*, a verb pattern always having a middle or passive sense) and hence function like *ʿinfataḥa* ‘it (was) opened’ and *ʿintalaqa* ‘he departed’. However, they do not use the prosthetic glottal stop here because they consider the forms as given lighter. Omission of this glottal stop is quite frequent; we have mentioned it before and you will see other examples later on, God willing. Proof that these verbs originally had the glottal stop can be found in the fact that in them the prefix *y* takes *a* (as in all verbs with the prosthetic glottal stop having more than three letters, whereas those without it have *u* with the prefix). . . .

All of these prefixes are vocalized with *a* by the people of the Hijaz, and the Banu Tamīm (i.e., the eastern Arabs) do not use *i* with the prefix *y*, (but use *a* like the people of Hijaz).

Verbs of the pattern *faʿula* do not use *u* with the prefix as verbs in *faʿila* use *i* (i.e., one does not say *tufʿulu*, but only *tafʿulu*), because in their opinion the *u* is heavier and they dislike two *u*’s together, and, since they do not fear that two forms will be confused, they adopt the lighter form. Here they do not wish to make a distinction between two forms—as you wish to in the case of *faʿila*, that is, in making (the vowels of the prefix) follow the second radical in *faʿala*. If they did so, wish then, of course, the two *u*’s would have to be tolerated. Thus the *a* with the *i* is tolerable in their opinion, but they reject the *u* with another *u*.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> There are three main editions of the *Kitāb* of Sībawayhi, designated here by the place of publication: (1) *Le Livre de Sibawaihi; traité de grammaire arabe . . . Texte arabe publié par H. Derenbourg*, Paris, 1881-89. (2) *Kitāb Sibawayhi*, Būlāq, 1316-18. (3) *al-Kitāb; Kitāb Sibawayhi*, ed by ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, Cairo, 1966-1967. The edition of Būlāq is based largely on the Paris edition, so there is very little difference between the two; the former, however, contains some corrections, is more fully vocalized, and has marginal notes drawn from a medieval commentary. The Būlāq edition is thus more easily usable so I have made it the basis of these translations. There is one complete translation: *Sibawaihi's Buch über die Grammatik*, übersetzt und erklärt von G. Jahn, Berlin, 1895-1900. Several chapters (among them Nos. 1 and 3) were edited



with notes and translation by Silvestre de Sacy in his *Anthologie Grammaticale Arabe*, Paris, 1829.

<sup>2</sup> Nominative, but by virtue of the verb *kāna*, not by virtue of its status as a Beginning-Noun, which it lost when *kāna* was prefixed. Note that *kāna* 'he was' governs the complement in the accusative, as do all verbs in Arabic meaning *be*, *become*, *seem*, and the like.

<sup>3</sup> These sentences are "bad" in Arabic because the subject Zayd is placed between the particle and the verb.

<sup>4</sup> The term noun (=name) includes adjectives and pronouns.

<sup>5</sup> For example, *ḏāribu-ka* (=ḏāribun la-ka 'striking you, striker of you' is indefinite even though the personal pronoun is definite.

<sup>6</sup> The term *pronoun* includes subject, object, and possessive pronouns as well as the personal endings of the verbs.

<sup>7</sup> That is, you cannot say *al-ṭawīlu ḥūka* 'the tall your brother' but must say *ḥūka al-ṭawīlu* 'your brother the tall one'.

<sup>8</sup> Brother, and your brother even more so, are concrete objects that can be seen with the eye and conceived of by the heart (=the mind); "tall", on the other hand, cannot be seen, but can only be conceived of, since tallness is a quality and does not exist independently.

<sup>9</sup> Contrary to the construction of a dual noun with two singular adjectives, which is possible, e.g., *marartu bi-ḥawayka al-ṭawīli wa-al-qāṣiri* 'I passed by your two brothers the tall-one and the short-one'.

<sup>10</sup> That is, someone must have remained, otherwise no one would know enough about them to make the statement.

<sup>11</sup> Examples, not given by Sibawayhi, of complements indicating place and time are: *Zaydun fī al-bayti* 'Zayd (is) in the house' and *quḏūmu Zaydin al-yawma* 'The coming of Zayd (is) today'. A complement indicating time can occur only with a verbal noun as Beginning-Noun.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Ḥalīl b. Aḥmad, the teacher of Sibawayhi, was the first Arab lexicographer and also the first to formulate the rules of Arabic prosody. The following two paragraphs are typical of the style of argumentation in Arabic grammar. A correct example is cited and then said to be correct if interpreted in one manner but wrong if interpreted in another.

<sup>13</sup> This chapter is typical of many in the *Kitāb* which treat the functions of the various particles.

<sup>14</sup> Arabic has several auxiliary verbs, some of which are followed by the indicative verb or the agent noun, and others by the conjunction *ʾan* 'that', which governs the subjunctive. In general, the indicative and the agent noun are interchangeable in such constructions, but neither can be substituted for *ʾan* with the subjunctive. The discussion in the following paragraphs brings out these points and deals with certain exceptions to the common usage, specifically *ʾasa* and *kāda* (first pers. sg. *kidtu* or *kudtu*), which take the indicative or *ʾan* with the subjunctive, but *not* the agent noun.

<sup>15</sup> In literary Arabic the prefix of the imperfect active of the basic verb is always vocalized with *a*. In speech, however, only the people of western Arabia use *a* universally. The rest of the Arabs use *i* with the prefixes *t*, *n* and the glottal stop, when the vowel of the second radical is *i* in the *perfect*; but even they revert to *a* when the prefix is *y*. In the first part of this chapter Sibawayhi explains this phenomenon, and then proceeds to discuss several exceptions to the rule: *yibā*, in which *i* occurs with the prefix *y*, and *tasaʿu* and *taṭaʿu*, which come from perfects in *faʿila*, and so should have the prefix with *i*. The arguments are good illustrations of Sibawayhi's analogical method.

<sup>16</sup> The Hijaz is that part of western Arabia along the Red Sea coast in which Mecca and Medina are located.

<sup>17</sup> Analogy here would give \**yaʿbī*, *ʿabā* like *yabkī*, *bakā* or \**ʿabiya*, *yaʿbā* like *baqiya*, *yabqā*. The standard forms of literary Arabic are *ʿabā* (perfect) and *yaʿbā* (imperfect).

<sup>18</sup> Arab grammarians consider what we take to be a long vowel as a short vowel followed by a weak consonant without a vowel; thus *ī* = *iy* and *ū* = *uw*. Hence one can transliterate either *yījalu* or *yijjalu*.

## Teaching Hebrew of the Communications Media: Crosscultural Considerations

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*To Ernest—my source of inspiration,  
who for many years taught  
Arabic of the Communications Media*

### *Introduction: Media Texts in Second-Language Curriculum*

THIS article addresses the linguistic, cultural and social considerations in the teaching of Hebrew of the communications media (HCM). Following a general discussion of the language domains generally expressed using HCM, methodological questions concerning the development of language skills by students of Modern Hebrew are addressed, taking into account linguistic theory and practice, with an emphasis on the functions of language as a social communicative tool.

In today's communication oriented society a great deal of emphasis is put by the public on the communications media, which transport important local and global events to the living rooms of individual readers, listeners and viewers. The way in which a society addresses current issues in its news broadcasts provides an important key for understanding its focal concerns. The language utilized for such communicative purposes constitutes a common tool which provides linguistic cohesion within society.

Language curriculum developers have mostly ignored this central aspect of discourse and have excluded the media domain from existing academic programs, providing exclusively for the study of literary and historical texts. For a more meaningful acquisition of a second language, learners have to develop the necessary communicative skills and vocabulary repertoire to deal with the central issues which are of concern to the target culture. A change of attitude and an awareness of importance of the language of the media within language learning curriculum can provide

learners with the necessary access to this very important aspect of the target culture, allowing them not only to use their reading and listening skills but also preparing them for a meaningful and sophisticated interaction with members of the target language community.

When introducing media texts into the language learning curriculum, both learners and instructors have to develop a sensitivity and awareness of the uniqueness of both their own and the target language's linguistic, cultural, political and social functions of this specific language domain. While different societies do share common features of discourse in their news texts, there are important differences that must be observed, and which do become critical in preparing learners for decoding such texts.

### *The Functions of News Media*

It is generally recognized that the main function of the communications media in modern society is to report major events and happenings of both global and local significance in the political, economic, and cultural arenas. The events which are reported are for the most part considered to be of prime importance to the intended receivers, either directly or indirectly.

The informational aspect is not always the overriding consideration in news presentation. There are political bodies which control news transmission whose ideology and interests affect the content of the news to the point of reducing it to propaganda. There are also media channels which are profit-making bodies motivated by economic interests and whose judgment depends on popular ratings. They tend to reshape the news almost as a form of entertainment to keep a competitive edge. The entertainment aspect of the news has gained an unusual emphasis as television has come to dominate the media. Many major US television networks, for commercial considerations, view news presentations as filling the leisure time of the audience and as vehicles for introducing their commercials. News anchor-men and women have become popular public figures, celebrities in their own right, and are measured not so much by the content of their message, reflecting their reporting skills and general knowledge, but by their manner of delivery and their charisma. Such considerations affect not only form and content, but also the type of news which is selected for the viewing audience. In many areas in the world, and in networks controlled by special interests with an ideological bent, news broadcasts are used to a great extent as propaganda tools. The type and flow of information is tightly controlled and censorship is exercised over what is presented to the public.

Students of HCM, who do not belong to the community of native Hebrew speakers, have to be made aware of the above considerations. Such questions as who controls the news media, by what means, and to what extent, are important for those who focus on the study of this language domain. The comparative process of assessing the nature of the news transmission system in the target culture vis-à-vis one's own culture, raises students' awareness of things they may have taken for granted in their own society. This opportunity for examination and introspection is an invaluable part of the experience of learning a second language and culture. A crosscultural evaluation sharpens the focus of the students and directs them to think about the truth value of what they are used to accept as objective news without question as well as the presentation of news in another language. In dealing with the target language, such an assessment is not easy and cannot be done by relating to the text alone. The learners for the most part lack the necessary extratextual knowledge and linguistic tools to interpret texts as their intended audience would. However they can gain further insight into that aspect of the texts by pragmatic considerations as to who the collective originator and transmitter of the news is, what their function and intention is, and what system controls the news media.

News is transmitted not only in different channels, but also in different formats which are by no means uniform even within one society. In countries which enjoy free press, the listeners/viewers are bombarded by a variety of news formats: from the five minute local oriented hourly radio newscasts, to the lengthy news journal of public broadcasting corporations, and from the one minute highlights of the news which appear as television commercials, to lengthy in-depth reporting, such as the MacNeil-Lehrer daily news hour. In societies where the flow of information is regulated or controlled by governmental bodies, or where only one or two channels of news exist, the communication media is an exclusive and at times an all powerful tool which can shape the views of its listeners by the kind of information it provides them. Both the availability of sources and the format used in presenting the news are major considerations for learners, who will develop different expectations from different types of presentations.

Just as learners should be made aware of crosscultural differences, they should also be made aware of shared features. As mentioned above, there are differences across cultures in the presentation and dissemination of news, reflecting the nature of the societal differences. News media not only reflect such differences but also help shape the general and ideological outlook of individual societies. However, there is growing evidence that the news media has contributed to bringing different cultures and societies

closer to each other. There is a cross national community of viewers which is exposed to a common base of information, transmitted through satellites and other electronic means. Events which previously seemed too far to be of immediate interest or concern to the listening audience, have become items of prime importance by virtue of their being brought into the living rooms of the viewers or listeners. The recently coined term "the global village" captures the essence of this new reality which has brought geographically and culturally distant communities into immediate contact, and has transformed recipients-bystanders of news into involved participants. The technological advances which provide for a common information data base bring audiences of various cultures and languages together and create a community of viewers and listeners. This is of prime importance to the learner, for whom such a common base of information creates an important bridge with the target language community.

The news media performs not only a communicative function in the sense that it informs or educates the public, but it also sets certain linguistic standards which affect its listening public. The national news broadcasts in the US carried by the major networks share on the whole a standard American-English, an accepted language register for transmitting news. In Israel, the linguistic aspect of news transmission is of extreme importance, as it not only involves the use of an existing standard register of Hebrew, but also plays a very important role in forming that standard. One of the perceived roles of such news transmission is the instruction of the listening public in correct language usage and enhancement of the acquisition of desired language norms. This is seen as most important as Israeli society is still, to a great degree, an immigrant society, with speakers whose native languages, or those of their parents, are numerous. In addition, since Hebrew is a revived language and its revival involves a great deal of language planning, the news media plays a more important role in the development of norms and standards than in other societies, because of its unique linguistic history. The Hebrew Language Academy transmits through this medium many language innovations to the general public. HCM is the main medium in which spoken language and higher literary registers combine to create a new standard language which serves both purposes. The control of this language register is one of the most important functions of a language learner. The language register which characterizes the genre of the news media is without a doubt the common denominator within a given language speaking community, which provides the glue which keeps together different dialect and social classes, and cuts across a variety of other genres and registers. A student who can understand and use HCM,

will be able to also get a good start at preparing himself/herself to read other genres of prose fiction and non-fiction, and will be able to carry on an adult conversation.

### *The Nature of the Israeli Communications Media*

When undertaking the teaching and study of Hebrew of the communications media, the above considerations are of prime importance. Students of HCM within the setting of an American University are exposed to a wide spectrum of commercial and public broadcasting news services. Such a spectrum is not available to the Israeli audience, because of the size of the Israeli population and because of economic considerations. Both Israeli radio and television are state owned, and news broadcasts are considered a public service. There are several radio stations and one television channel. The radio stations share a central news broadcasting service, and in addition have their own special programs. The government owned television channel broadcasts news in both Hebrew and Arabic. Both media, radio and television, provide their listeners with a reasonable choice of programs, and with several in-depth radio and television news journals. In spite of the government ownership of the news media, individual commentators on the whole maintain a fair measure of independence. There is no competition between anchormen and women, who do not play as central a role as they do in American broadcasts, and on the whole such news transmitters are not regarded as celebrities. Newspapers are privately owned and provide an amazing array of daily publications.

### *Pedagogical Considerations in HCM Instruction*

The importance of the news media in shaping and affecting society and the centrality of the news transmission as part of Israeli life resulting from the precarious political situation, makes HCM a uniquely important area of study. There are two main settings for teaching such courses, each comprising a somewhat different intended audience. HCM is taught to students of Hebrew as a second language (non-Hebrew speaking students in Israel, who live within a Hebrew speaking community and for whom Hebrew will serve as a second language), and to students of Hebrew as a foreign language (taught to students outside of Israel, who acquire Hebrew not in the community of Hebrew speakers and for a variety of purposes). Our concern in this paper is with the latter group of students of Hebrew as a foreign language, which reflects the situation in American academic institutions. The motivation of both groups of students is generally very

high. They are genuinely interested in the content of the news being transmitted and eager to express themselves in the target language on focal topics included in the news. Students who have spent some time in Israel are particularly eager to master this language domain. They have often felt excluded when they were not able to discuss current events with native speakers, and when they were not able to participate as listeners, from the ritual of listening to the news, on radio or television.

### *The Challenge to Learners*

For students who undertake the study of HCM, it is of great importance to be aware of the media facilities in Israel and to have a general knowledge of the major political events which affect Israeli society. On any given day, the front pages of the major Israeli newspapers, and the main topics of radio and television broadcasts, are quite different from those being discussed by the media with which the learners are familiar. They differ in their content, emphasis, in their style of delivery, and in the nature of the commentaries on the news. Even when news items deal with the same events dealt with in the learners' native language, the reporting of the same events can exhibit great differences. A major occurrence with global implications, such as a disaster in a nuclear plant, is likely to make front pages and major headlines everywhere, and may even share news services reports (such as AP, Reuther and UPI), however, the placement and prominence given to such news differs radically, as well as the commentary provided for the interpretation of the event, influencing the perception of the audience.

Learners also have to take into account not only differences between cultures in the manner and style of news delivery but also pay attention to the channel of transmission: written, audio or visual delivery of news present different challenges to students. The nature of the medium to a large extent determines the way in which discourse is structured and information is conveyed. It is well recognized that a single picture can be worth a thousand words, since the visual presentations contain a great deal of extratextual information. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that a thousand words can include a great deal of information that one picture cannot transmit. Pictures can be just as selective a presentation of the total scene as words can be, and create inaccurate impressions of how representative of a general situation they are.

While news transmitted by all channels of communication share the same content and belong to the same language domain and register, the structure of the discourse is different and is dictated by the channels of communication. Of the two skills of listening comprehension and reading



comprehension, listening presents greater challenges to the students. Even though the syntax of the written newspaper articles tends to be more complex than that of radio or television broadcasts, the manner of delivery creates difficulties for students of HCM. The difficulty resides in the fact that the radio or television news text which is orally transmitted is never available to the listeners in its entirety at any given point. The text is transmitted sequentially, with only bits of information available to the receiver at one time. The rest of the information is stored in memory. The comprehension of one item depends on the comprehension of a previous bit of information. There is no way of retrieving information which has already been delivered, and so any inability to comprehend one or two details in the chain of transmitted components of the text can affect access to the complete text. A written text, on the other hand, is always present in its full form, and students can browse back and forth through the information presented to them. The reader does not have to approach the text in its sequential order but can review previous details or read ahead. Readers can spend more time on details which interest them or present some certain linguistic difficulties, and can also skip certain passages which seem less important. The context is always available for trying to guess the meaning of new words, and decode anaphoric and cataphoric references. The listener can engage in none of these above activities, which are so important to a learner. Once the sequences of words are read, they are no longer available to the listener (except when provided with a recorded broadcast, something that is not available in a learning environment). Decoding written texts gives the readers/learners additional advantages that are not available to the listeners and viewers; they can determine the pace for decoding the text.

Radio and television broadcasts have some advantages for the learners over written news items. In the case of television news, the most obvious advantage are the pictures which form part of the message and complete the orally transmitted text. Both radio and television-read news also include such features as features of intonation and pauses which constitute part of the text and help clarify its content. A special unique feature to Hebrew, is the fact that written texts are unvocalized, and a great deal of ambiguity can result when vowels are not included. Orally transmitted texts are complete with vowels, as they cannot be transmitted otherwise, and as such help disambiguate parts of the text.

The challenges that each mode of transmission presents to the learner should not be the basis for assigning priorities in teaching by concentrating on one type of news transmission over another. Newspaper reading and

television viewing are central activities for the Israeli news consumers, however radio news broadcasts, unlike their diminished role in the US, have a unique role in Israeli daily life. While for the learner it presents the greatest challenge, it is also a very important one. It constitutes almost a ritual act, and participating in this act is almost an initiation act into Israeli society. Public buses are equipped with radios and the drivers turn the radio on every hour on the hour when the news is broadcasted. Even though it is unlikely that every hour there will be anything new there is always an expectation of a crisis. This is part of the group behavior which characterizes the Israeli public. Because it has assumed such an importance, there is an unusual incentive for learners to be able to participate as listeners in such events.

### *Extratextual Information*

One of the key elements to effective learning of HCM is the ability to use external information. Learners can bring to the task of decoding of the news texts whatever specific information they have as well as their ability to draw conclusions from similar occurrences, and bring them to bear on the interpretation of the new information. In the transmission of daily news, regardless of channel of communication, most of the news consists of the addition of few new details to known contents. Even if a news item brings information about a sudden, one-time occurrence, it often belongs to a broader context that the receiver is familiar with: a strike in a factory, new taxes, an attack on an embassy, etc . . . are events that may be new for a given day, but belong to a given context which includes similar events. A knowledge of the economic situation in a country provides the background and context for a particular strike news item, or new taxes. Likewise, a knowledge of the political situation in the Middle East or in Central America will provide the context for such events as an attack on an embassy. Floods in the Midwest, a volcano eruption in Hawaii, or an earthquake in Mexico, while they may be new events for a given day, are not one-time occurrences, as natural disasters have occurred before and will occur again and constitute an accepted topic of news. Such news items are both expected and unexpected events—they have precedence, but it is usually impossible to predict their occurrence. The learners can approach them within the general framework of their experience and broad knowledge of the world, even though they may not be within their own personal experience.

The external knowledge of the outside world as well as knowledge of the target culture whose language the learner is studying, are important

sources of knowledge that can be drawn on for the understanding of the news transmitted by the various media in the target language.

The focus of the news in Israel, as expected, is on the political and economic arenas in Israel and the Middle East. Only a small part of the daily news is devoted to other topics. The students who want to acquire proficiency in HCM have to educate themselves in these areas. They must acquire the basic knowledge of the society, its governmental structure, the different political parties, important people in the news and their political learnings, etc. Much of this information can be acquired in the native language of the students. The native speakers are updated in most cases, even if they are not always sophisticated readers. They not only share the presuppositions of the society of which they are members, but also have certain expectations shared by other members of the society. The learner does not have the same shared presuppositions and expectations and has to acquire a sensitivity to the subjects which preoccupy the Israeli public, otherwise he will not be able to fill in the gaps in information, which is not always fully transmitted in a given news item, since previous knowledge is assumed.

The special nature of the discourse of news broadcasts may not be directly of central concern to the learners, but has to interest those who facilitate the learning process. Not only the text itself, but also prior information has to be incorporated into the classroom presentation. The learners have to be directed to the surface structure of the news item, and also to the information not specified but assumed. Here it is possible to be helped by discourse analysis, a linguistic realm which has made serious contributions to the understanding of linguistic structures, because it emphasizes the embedding of the linguistic utterance in a natural context and also the pragmatic aspects of different strategies of expression. The full comprehension of a text depends on understanding the intent of the transmitted of the text as well as the external circumstances, and not only the structure of the texts with its various linguistic ingredients. Even though news texts are presumed to be examples of objective writing, they often include quotes by involved parties and represent special points of view. Each text in addition to its face value demands a listening or reading between the lines. The native listeners, consciously or unconsciously, are able to discern such aspects of the text and pass judgment as to the truth value of the text and its relationship to external reality.

The learners, with the aid of the language facilitators, have to develop this type of skills which will eventually increase their sophistication in reading and evaluating the texts and the intent of the speakers.

It should also be kept in mind that there are several possible realizations of each text. Even native speakers who are members of the same language community can interpret the same text in a variety of ways, depending on such factors as their own political leanings, previous knowledge, experience, etc. It is not unusual for such an occurrence to happen even among very experienced readers and listeners. Recently, after listening to a speech by President Reagan, various commentators brought their own different interpretations as to what they thought the President said in his speech. The special orientation of the commentators was made clear by the way in which they understood the intention of the President. Following a stormy discussion, one of the commentators turned to his friend and said: "It seems that I heard a different speech. It is clear that both of us did not hear the same speech." Compounded by serious deficiencies in language, students are likely to have a variety of individual readings. The instructor must be aware of whether the different readings result from language deficiencies or present genuine differences in interpretation due to individual orientations. What a student is expected to do as a first reading is to deal with the text in its simplest literal meaning, only then can other questions of interpretation be raised.

The goal of any HCM language course is to bring the novice readers, the learners of Hebrew, to a simple comprehension of texts, be they written or oral. The communicative function of such news transmission is filled when the receivers, in this case the students, can comprehend and interpret a variety of presuppositions which are not expressed but are presupposed in the various utterances, and can begin to discern what is the old part of information on which the news item relies, and the new part of the information that it makes accessible for the readers.

The full realization and interpretation of the text can be achieved by the learners when some of the above considerations are taken into account in the learning process.

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## The Year 414/1023–4 in the Commercial Life of Zawīlah

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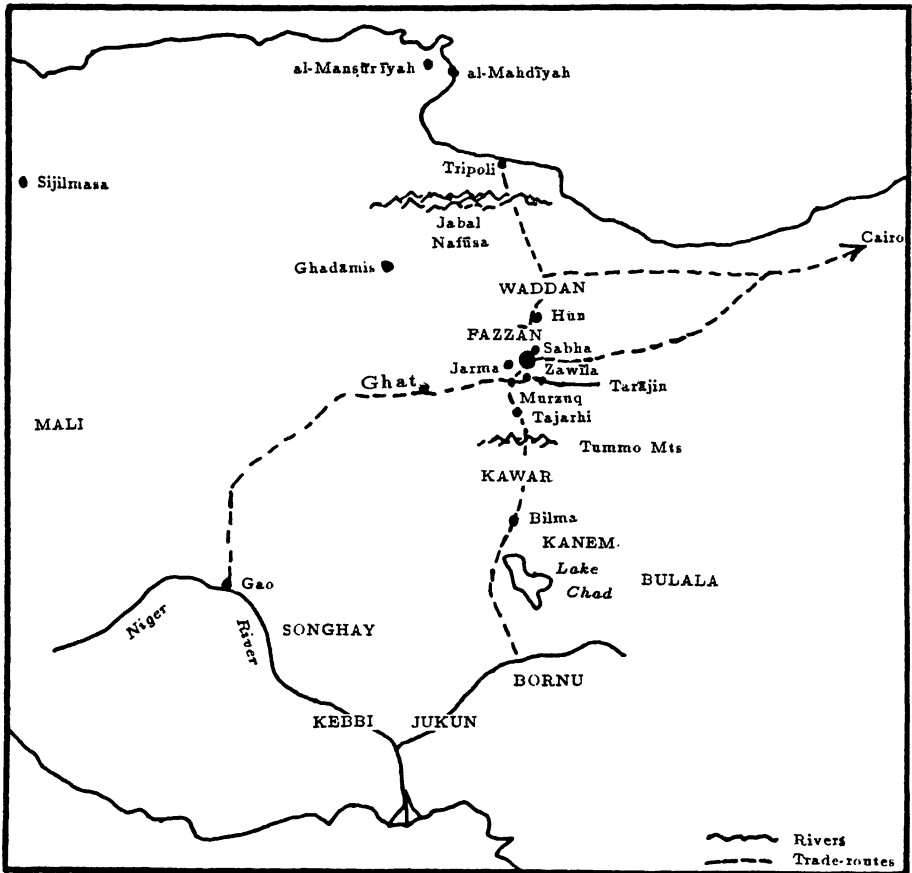
MEDIEVAL Zawīlah, a settlement in Fazzān, the south-western region of Libya, rose to prominence in the beginning of the fifth century of the Hijrah. Politically it served as the capital of the Berber family of the Banū Khaṭṭāb, which ever since A.H. 306/A.D. 918–919 had ruled over their Ibādī urban and nomadic followers.<sup>1</sup> A political integration of North Africa with Egypt under the commercially oriented Fāṭimid Caliphate, and the ensuing expansion of trans-Saharan and trans-Mediterranean trade enhanced the status of Zawīlah, which served as “the point where a subordinate trade and pilgrim route running east and west crossed the main north-south road. This east-west route now reached Cairo, where it entered the Fāṭimid city by the Bāb Zawīla or Zuwayla, the Zawīla Gate.”<sup>2</sup>

The name Zawīlah appears also on some extremely rare dīnār specimens dated A.H. 414. In the early 1960s, the surfacing of yet another such dīnār in Fazzān (Libya), prompted Dr. Mohamed Mostafa to offer a statement regarding this interesting numismatic phenomenon: “No doubt, this Dīnār is of special significance as it points out the city of Zuwayla as a coinage center and consequently as a place of great importance which played an essential part in the cultural history of Libya.”<sup>3</sup> In making this assertion, Dr. Mostafa echoed an earlier statement by Professor Hady Roger Idris, who listed Zawīlah as the site of one of the principal mints.<sup>4</sup>

While the importance of Zawīlah in the history of Libya cannot be disputed, its significance as a coinage center can hardly be established on the basis of extant numismatic and textual evidence. So far, the only evidence attesting to the existence of a mint in Zawīlah consists of eight gold coins, all of which happened to be struck in one and the same year, A.H. 414. If one were to attribute the survival of these specimens and the total absence of dīnārs struck there before and after A.H. 414 to mere chance, then one

*Illustration 1.*

Pilgrim and trade routes converging on Zawīlāh.



Based on a drawing in B. G. Martin, "Kanem, Bornu and the Fazzān: Notes on the Political History of a Trade Route," *Journal of African History*, 10, 1969, p. 20.

could entertain some thoughts about continued operations of a mint in medieval Zawīlah. However, in my opinion, the fact of survival of these dīnārs should be interpreted as evidence of *a rather exceptional event in the commercial and monetary life of Zawīlah, consisting of a temporary opening in A.H. 414 of a mint charged with the task of supplying the local markets with gold coinage*. In line with the latter interpretation this paper will attempt to suggest the circumstances and causes leading to what appears to have been a short-lived and exceptional episode in the history of Zawīlah.

### *I. Numismatic Evidence*

#### *a. The size of the sample*

Until now, a total of eight dīnārs, struck in A.H. 414 in Zawīlah in the name of Fāṭimid caliph al-Zāhir (A.H. 411–427/A.D. 1021–1036) has been established. They are listed here in the chronological sequence of the printed recording of their existence:

- Nr. 1 = #216 Lavoix, Henri, *Catalogue des monnaies musulmanes de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Vol. III, Paris, 1896, p. 86–87.
- Nr. 2 = #108k Lane-Poole, Stanley, *Catalogue of Oriental Coins in the British Museum*, Vol. IX, Part i, 1889, p. 320, pl. XVIII.
- Nr. 3 = #1081 *Ibid.*, p. 320.
- Nr. 4 = *Sotheby Auction Catalogue*, 1906, lot 349.
- Nr. 5 = #95 Farrugia de Candia, J., "Monnaies fatimites du Musée du Bardo," *Revue Tunisienne*, Nr. 27/28, 1936, p. 59.
- Nr. 6 = #G425 *Seaby's Coin and Medal Bulletin*, February 1963 = ANS 1963.<sup>5</sup>
- Nr. 7 = Mohamed Mostafa, *art. cit.*, p. 126, pl. LIII bis.
- Nr. 8 = Specimen in possession of Mr. Ali Mustafa Musrati (Tripoli, Libya).

Except for Nr. 4, I have examined all these specimens either directly (Nr. 1–3 and Nr. 6–8), or with the help of excellent photographic reproductions (Nr. 5).

#### *b. The standard of fineness*

The two specimens from the British Museum (Nr. 2 and 3) were examined by means of Neutron Activation Analysis to reveal a very good standard of fineness of 96% and 97.8%, respectively, which excelled the quality of the contemporary North African Fāṭimid dīnārs.<sup>6</sup>



*Illustration 2.*

Standard of fineness (% of purity of gold) of  
the Mahdīyah ○, Maṣṣūrīyah ●, and Zawīlah ● dīnārs.

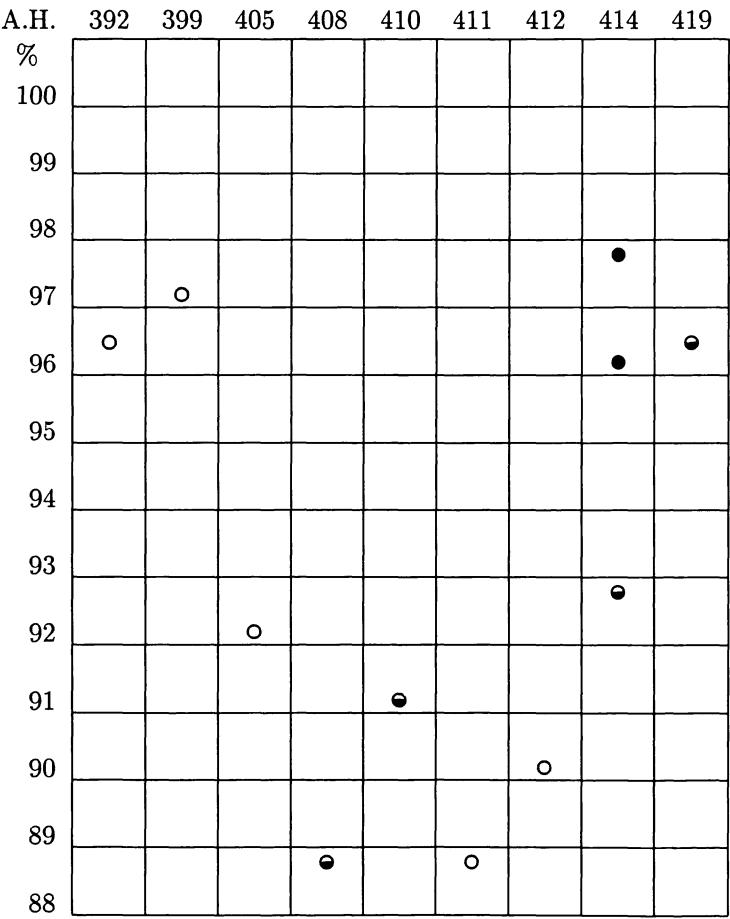


Illustration 3.

Weight frequency distribution of dīnār specimens.

Grams	Mahdīyah	Manṣūrīyah	Zawīlah
4.35	○	●	
4.3	○	●	
4.25		●	
4.2		● ●	
4.15	○	● ● ● ● ●	
4.1	○ ○ ○ ○	● ● ● ● ●	
4.05	○	● ● ●	
4	○	● ● ● ●	
3.95	○		
3.90	○	●	
3.85			
3.8	○		
3.75			●
3.7			● ●
3.65			●
3.6			● ●

*c. The size and weight of the Zawīlah dīnārs*

While the diameter of the Zawīlah specimens—ca. 22 mls.—corresponds more or less with that of the contemporary North African dīnārs, the same is not true of their weight. The weight of an overwhelming majority of North African dīnārs struck during the rule of al-Ḥākim and al-Zāhir (i.e. A.H. 386–427/A.D. 996–1036) falls within the 4.0–4.2 gram limits.<sup>7</sup> The weight of the Zawīlah specimens is much lower, fluctuating between 3.62 and 3.76 grams. (Nr. 1 = 3.72; Nr. 2 = 3.37; Nr. 3 = 3.74; Nr. 5 = 3.62; Nr. 6 = 3.76; Nr. 7 = 3.62).

*d. Inscriptions on the Zawīlah dīnārs*

North African dīnārs issued during the years of transition from the regime of al-Ḥākim to that of al-Zāhir are characterized by faulty inscriptions. For instance, the usual quotation of Verse 33 from the Ninth Sūrah (“*arsalahu bi-l-hudā . . . al-mushrikūna*”) sometimes appears unfinished<sup>8</sup> and sometimes irregular.<sup>9</sup> They show also irregularities in registrative inscriptions and in chronological inaccuracies, such as the posthumous listing of the name of al-Ḥākim.<sup>10</sup>

The Zawīlah specimens suffer from even worse deficiencies. The obverse of Nr. 1, 3, and 7 is marred by mistakes in each of the circular inscriptions. The reverse of Nr. 3 lists the word *dirham* instead of *dīnār* in the basic statement defining denomination of the coin.

*e. Volume of production*

The seven specimens constitute an adequate sample to allow speculation regarding the quantity of dīnārs issued in A.H. 414 by the mint of Zawīlah. To the extent one can speculate about the volume of coin production on the basis of the number of dies detected in a sample of coins belonging to the same mint-and-years series,<sup>11</sup> it is possible to suggest that the total number of dīnārs issued in A.H. 414 in Zawīlah was very high, especially if one considers its socio-economic environment. The Zawīlah sample reveals the use of at least 2 obverse and 3 reverse dies.

*Illustration 4.*

Errors in the inscriptions on the Zawīlah dīnārs (#1, #3, #6).

لا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له (١)



الدين كـ [له] (١) ولو

- (١) The words between brackets  
are missing in the text on the Dīnār.

*Illustration 5.*

Reverse of specimen nr. 3 showing the word *dirham* instead of  
dīnār.



## Pattern of die distribution in the Zawīlah sample.

Dīnār specimen	Obverse	Reverse
	Type of die	Type of die
BM #1081	A	A
BN #216	A	B
Mohamed Mostafa	A	B
BM #108k	B	B
Musée du Bardo #95	B	B
ANS 1963	B	B
Musrati	B	C

If the dies were used to their maximum productive capacity their identified number would indicate an output of 10,000 to 20,000 dinars.<sup>12</sup> Considering that the annual production of the chief Egyptian mint (Miṣr) amounted to  $\pm$  100,000 dīnārs,<sup>13</sup>—stimulated as it was by the magnitude and intensity of political and economic life of the capital city—an output of 10,000–20,000 dīnārs attained by the provincial mint of Zawīlah would constitute a truly impressive accomplishment.

## II. Textual Evidence

Until now no text has come to light attesting, explicitly or implicitly, to the activities of a mint in Zawīlah. In spite of its political status and its thriving commercial activities which allowed the rulers to amass enviable quantities of money,<sup>14</sup> Zawīlah is not reported to have possessed a mint of its own. Especially in the Fāṭimid period Zawīlah did not need to strike coins for its main trading zone since under normal political circumstances its monetary needs could be met by the influx of dīnārs originating from the North African mints of al-Manṣūriyah, al-Mahdiyyah, or from Egypt (Miṣr). The absolute lack of textual evidence is corroborated by the fact that there exist no specimens from Zawīlah other than the A.H. 414 dīnārs. Evidently, had it not been for the A.H. 414 numismatic phenomenon, the question concerning the mint in Zawīlah would not have arisen at all.

## III. What prompted the production of dīnārs in A.H. in Zawīlah?

The first years of the fifth century of the Hijrah saw a critical deterioration of political conditions in the Western provinces of the Fāṭimid

Caliphate. Al-Ḥākim's listless countermeasures against the spread of anti-Ismā'īlī feelings and the growing strength of the Sunnī Zīrī family produced a temporary tension between the latter and Cairo. Between A.H. 407 and 413 Ismā'īlī followers in Qayrawān, al-Manṣūrīyah and al-Mahdīyah were persecuted and massacred.<sup>15</sup> It is rather unlikely that the mints of al-Manṣūrīyah and al-Mahdīyah continued to issue dīnārs with pro-Fāṭimid inscriptions, which may be the reason why numismatic collections show no North African specimens dated A.H. 406, 409 and 413. Furthermore, a major revolt of the anti-Fāṭimid Zanāta tribes, which attacked major caravan routes,<sup>16</sup> must have impeded the circulation of gold coinage, possibly leading to a shortage of dīnārs in Zawīlah.

Although al-Ḥākim perished in A.H. 411, the official embassy proclaiming the regime of his successor al-Zāhir did not appear in the North African capital of al-Manṣūrīyah until A.H. 414. In that year reconciliation between the Zīrīds and the Fāṭimid suzerain was solemnly affirmed.

In the same year, on 25 Jumādā I, Mu'izz ibn Bādīs, the Zīrīd ruler, entrusted the vizirate to an outstanding administrator, Abū al-Bahār ibn Khalūf, who proved to be extremely successful in reestablishing internal stability and fiscal cohesion.<sup>17</sup> To proclaim restoration of Fāṭimid supremacy, and to resupply the markets with gold coinage, the mints of al-Manṣūrīyah, of al-Mahdīyah, and of Ṭarābulus resumed the striking of dīnārs in the name of the Ismā'īlī overlord in Cairo.<sup>18</sup> Apparently the production of these dīnārs or their distribution was deficient since in that same year of A.H. 414 a mint of Zawīlah joined in to strike Fāṭimid dīnārs.

According to the late George C. Miles, the mint in question was located not in the Zawīlah of Fazzān but in Zawīlah, the famous and prosperous suburb of al-Mahdīyah.<sup>19</sup> Although a pressing demand for an increased output of dīnārs might have been resolved by a temporary activation of a branch of the main Mahdīyah mint, the quality of the Zawīlah dīnārs contradicts the likelihood of such a solution. First, specialists employed to engrave the dies for the striking of dīnārs in the subsidiary mint of al-Mahdīyah could hardly have made the shocking inscriptional errors displayed by the Zawīlah specimens (see above, p. 35). Second, the standard of fineness of the Zawīlah specimens was markedly superior to that of the contemporary dīnārs from al-Mahdīyah and al-Manṣūrīyah. Finally, the light weight of these specimens constitutes a third argument against an identification of the dīnār-producing Zawīlah with Zawīlah the suburb of al-Mahdīyah.

In my opinion, the A.H. 414 Zawīlah dīnārs originated from Fazzān. There, a decrease in the influx of gold coins caused by insecurity of trade

created an unusual demand for the local production of gold coinage. The year of the experiment coincided with the reassertion of Fāṭimid preponderance expressed in the inscriptions on coins produced by the regular North African mints.

The improvised mint at Zawīlah should not have had much difficulty in refining the alloy for its dīnārs since gold ore coming from West African regions was of excellent natural quality,<sup>20</sup> hence the impressive standard of fineness of the Zawīlah specimens. However, it was the quantity rather than the quality of product which was of primary concern to the mint of Zawīlah. The mint achieved its objective by disregarding prevailing standards of weight and by issuing lighter and consequently more numerous dīnārs. The disregard for quality, as well as the haste, experience, or carelessness in the operations of the Zawīlah mint were all reflected in the inscriptions of its dīnārs.

Again, it would seem obvious that the mint of Zawīlah did not secure the services of an experienced engraver. The one responsible for the manufacture of the dies commanded neither the art of designing, engraving, calligraphy, or even orthography. There existed no earlier dīnārs to serve as prototypes. Significantly, the word Zawīlah constitutes the most poorly executed element in the entire set of inscriptions. On the other hand, the engraver must have used a relatively new coin for his model since the compositional arrangement of the inscriptions, including the listing of the name of the newly enthroned al-Zāhir, shows no innovative deviations. It is conceivable that the model consisted of a dirham. This and the carelessness or ignorance of the engraver would account for the appearance of the word "dirham" on some of the Zawīlah dīnārs. As mentioned above (see p. 35) some dīnārs showed errors in religious inscriptions. Obviously the quality control in that mint could hardly have been effective if faulty dies were allowed in production and its products allowed to leave the mint.

After the release in A.H. 414 of a considerable quantity of dīnārs for circulation—possibly as many as 10,000 to 20,000 pieces—the mint of Zawīlah discontinued its operations. Profound political, social, and economic changes affecting North Africa did not call for a continuation of the production of gold coinage in Fazzān.

Whatever the economic or monetary impact of the mint of Zawīlah might have been, today the only traces of its existence consist of the eight surviving dīnārs of A.H. 414. Few as these numismatic specimens are, they constitute a very important body of evidence singling out a year in the life of the commercial community of medieval Zawīlah—A.H. 414—the year of the opening of a mint in this remote but busy caravan trade center.



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Tadeusz Lewicki, 'La répartition géographique des groupements ibāḍites dans l'Afrique du Nord au moyen-âge,' *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, 21, 1957, p. 342-343; for a collection of relevant texts, written by medieval geographers and travelers, see Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm and Iḥsān 'Abbās, *Lībiyā fī kutub al-jughrāfiyah wa al-riḥlāt*, Benghazi, 1968.

<sup>2</sup> B.G. Martin, 'Notes on the political history of a trade route,' *Journal of African History*, 10, 1969, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Mohamed Mostafa, 'Islamic Objects of Art,' *Libya Antiqua*, 2, 1965, p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> Hady Roger Idris, *La Berberie Orientale Sous Les Zīrīds*, Paris, 1962, p. 539.

<sup>5</sup> According to an authoritative opinion of Dr. Michael L. Bates, Curator of Islamic Coins in the American Numismatic Society, item Nr. 4 may possibly be one and the same coin as Nr. 6 which in 1963 was acquired by ANS.

<sup>6</sup> I am indebted to Dr. W. A. Oddy from the British Museum Laboratory for kindly providing me the data for the graph.

<sup>7</sup> The graph illustrating this point is based on information derived from a scrutiny of the following numismatic works: J. Farrugia de Candia, *op. cit.*; S. Lane-Poole, *op. cit.*; *idem*, *Catalogue of the Collection of Arabic Coins preserved in the Khedivial Library at Cairo*, London, 1897 (hereafter S. Lane-Poole, *Kh.*); H. Lavoix, *op. cit.*; G. C. Miles, *Fāṭimid coins in the collection of the University Museum, Philadelphia*, and the *American Numismatic Society*, (Numismatic Notes and Monographs No. 121) New York, 1951 (hereafter *FC*), as well as on the data furnished by Dr. W. A. Oddy.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. A.H. 410—BM/IV/95; BM/IX/114c; A.H. 415—J. Farrugia de Candia, *op. cit.*, #67.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. A.H. 419—*FC*/245; A.H. 420—*FC*/246.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. A.H. 412 (al-Manṣūriyah)—J. Farrugia de Candia, *op. cit.*, #65; S. Lane-Poole, *Kh.*, #1057; A.H. 415 (Tripolis)—J. Farrugia de Candia, *op. cit.*, #67.

<sup>11</sup> A.S. Ehrenkreutz, 'Numismatics re-monetized,' *Michigan Oriental Studies in honor of George G. Cameron*, Ann Arbor, 1976, p. 215.

<sup>12</sup> A.S. Ehrenkreutz, 'Numismatico-statistical reflections on the annual gold production of the Ṭulūnid mint in Egypt,' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 20, 1977, p. 270, n. 10.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. A.S. Ehrenkreutz, *art. cit.*, p. 277.

<sup>14</sup> *Riḥlat al-Tijānī* in Muḥammad Yūsuf Najm and Iḥsān 'Abbās, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>15</sup> H.R. Idris, *op. cit.*, p. 143 f.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150, 159.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>18</sup> The mint of Tarābulus issued dīnārs in the name of al-Ḥākim, see above, note 10.

<sup>19</sup> *FC*, p. 50.

<sup>20</sup> Ronald A. Messier, 'The Almoravids—West African gold and the gold currency of the Mediterranean Basin,' *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 17, 1974, p. 36-37.

## The Flying Scroll in Zechariah 5:1–4

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**I**N Zechariah 5:1–4, in the sixth of Zechariah’s “night visions”, the prophet reports a curious vision of a “flying scroll” (*mēgillâ ‘āpâ*). The account of the vision is as follows:

1. Then I raised my eyes again and I looked and behold a flying scroll (*mēgillâ ‘āpâ*).
2. And he (the angel or messenger) said to me, “What do you see?” And I said, “I see a flying scroll. Its length is twenty cubits and its width is ten cubits.”
3. And he said to me, “This is the curse that goes forth across the whole earth. For every thief on this side like it has been acquitted and every one who swears (falsely) on that side like it has been acquitted.
4. I have brought (will bring) it forth—oracle of Yahweh and Hosts—and it will enter into the house of the thief and into the house of the one who swears by my name for a lie and it will lodge in the midst of his house and it will destroy it—both sticks and stones.” (Zech 5:1–4)

This short but intriguing passage causes us to ask the same question posed by the angel, “what did Zechariah see?” Some of the specific questions that this study will attempt to address are as follows: 1) What does the term “scroll” refer to here? 2) What is the significance of the dimensions of the scroll? 3) What is the significance of the message written on the scroll?

The term *megillah* poses no problems as it is the common term used for “scroll” throughout the Hebrew Bible. Many believe that it is “a shortened form of the phrase ‘rolled book’” (*mēgillat-sēper*) found in Psalm 40:8 (E7); Ezek 2:9 and Isa 34:4.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless the term by itself seems to be quite clear and must represent an ancient scroll much like those that have been discovered at Qumran in the last 40 years. That prophetic writings were

written on scrolls in the time of Zechariah is clear from the description of the scroll of Jeremiah (Jer 36). Scrolls consisting of both papyrus and parchment are known from early times; and we can only speculate as to the composition of the scroll in the vision.<sup>2</sup> The association of scrolls with prophets, in which a specially revealed scroll contains the words of the Lord, is also well known. Although the word “scroll” is not used, Jeremiah reports that he has eaten the words of the Lord and found them sweet (Jer 15:16). Ezekiel affirms that he has eaten the words of the Lord contained in a scroll and found them sweet in his stomach (Ezek 2:8–3:3). The case of John the Revelator in New Testament times is similar, but with an important difference; he found the scroll “sweet in his mouth but bitter in his belly” (Rev 10:8–11). The flying scroll in Zechariah, however, is not to be eaten but read. Besides this, it is clearly no ordinary scroll either in its proportions or in its airborne capabilities.

It is difficult to determine whether the statement of the dimensions of the scroll is part of the prophet’s response to the angel or simply an aside to the reader, but the fact that the dimensions are stated at all has led to much discussion as to their significance. Most commentators readily note that the measurements of this scroll, twenty cubits long by ten cubits wide (ca. 30 x 15 feet or 10 x 5 meters), besides being inordinately large, clearly do not fit the proportions of any known scroll from antiquity. Assuming that the first measurement refers to the horizontal dimension of the scroll, they are quick to point out that whereas the Qumran Isaiah scroll, one of the longest of the scrolls from Qumran, measures about 24 feet long (7.34 meters) it is only about 11 inches high. Therefore most commentators have concluded that the scroll itself must simply be a great sheet of leather or papyrus that is completely unrolled—a “flying billboard” of some sort.<sup>3</sup>

Furthermore the measurements of the flying scroll in Zechariah are the same as those given for the “porch” (*ʾûlām*) of Solomon’s Temple as described in 1 Kings 6:3. Much of the scholarly effort in the past has been expended in searching for a symbolic meaning of the dimensions of the scroll that is somehow related to the Temple. Since the Temple is a central theme in several of the other visions of Zechariah, numerous theories have been advanced which connect the dimensions of the scroll with those of the Temple, and which usually involve complex theological speculations about the message of the entire book of Zechariah.<sup>4</sup> While there may be some merit to this symbolism, the fact that a convincing relationship between the scroll and its message and the Temple is not apparent, and the attempts to demonstrate such a relationship are so varied and without any consensus, suggests that a simpler, more realistic or even obvious explanation may be

in order.

Underlying the following proposal is the assumption or theory that prophetic visions, like dreams, are ultimately rooted in actual often prosaic and commonplace elements and events. Sometimes they consist in nothing more than ordinary objects such as a basket of summer fruit (Amos 8:1–3) or an almond tree (Jer 1:11–12). In these cases the larger or deeper significance of the vision lies in an analogy, the link between the vision and the message being established by a play on words (*kēlûb qayis*//*qēs*: harvest time//end; *šāqēd*//*šōqēd*: almond branch//watching over the nation).

In other cases the vision itself includes unusual or remarkable features as is the case here. Scrolls as such are part of everyday life, well known to all, but especially in literate, literary, and priestly/prophetic circles. This particular scroll is remarkable in two respects: 1) it is flying and not by accident; and 2) it has very large dimensions. The key to understanding the former feature is that the scroll has its place of origin in heaven and comes from the divine court itself. The key to the other element is to be found in the ratio of the two dimensions specified, namely 2:1. This is entirely realistic and in order for scrolls generally and biblical scrolls in particular, as we know from later if not contemporary evidence. What is extraordinary is the great size of what the prophet sees.

An examination of the biblical scrolls from Qumran demonstrates that there is a general 2:1 ratio between the height and width of columns of writing in the scrolls. There is some variation in the dimensions of the written columns throughout each individual scroll, apparently due in part to the varying length of the leather pieces that are sewn together, and the fact that the columns are arranged on each piece to allow the seam to remain in the margin. Although these scrolls are of a much later date than the scroll in Zechariah's vision the 2:1 ratio of height to width may have been standardized in very early times.

Therefore we propose that the dimensions given for the flying scroll represent simply one column—the column to be read by Zechariah—of a gigantic heavenly scroll, and rather than having a purely symbolic meaning may simply reflect the commonly recognized dimensions of a column of biblical text but on a vast scale. The proposed solution is based on the attested practice of reading scrolls. Normally a scroll is rolled up, on one or two rollers, but when it is being read, it is partially unrolled. Since the prophet apparently could read what was written on the scroll, it must have been unrolled to the extent of exposing at least one column. What the prophet saw, therefore, was a single column or panel of the scroll, while the rest of the scroll remained rolled up.

One of the reasons that this solution apparently has not been suggested before is the way that the measurements are presented. When one reads that the scroll is 20 cubits long one immediately imagines this measurement to represent the horizontal dimension, while the 10-cubit measurement would represent the height or vertical dimension. Hebrew expressions of measurement, much like English expressions, seem to follow a regular pattern. Whereas in English measurements are given with the smaller dimension first (e.g. 2" x 4" piece of lumber, a 3" x 5" index card, or an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet of paper), in Hebrew the larger dimension uniformly appears first regardless of the terminology used: of length, height, width (or breadth), or depth. So in the case of essentially two-dimensional objects the space defined would measure 20 cubits in the larger dimension and 10 cubits in the smaller dimension, however these are specified. The only thing we can be sure of is that the larger number will be given first and the smaller one second.

Assuming that the dimensions given in the vision refer to a gigantic column of text (measuring 20 cubits x 10 cubits) we can hypothetically deduce the dimensions of the rest of the scroll. The dimensions of the Qumran Isaiah scroll, where the height of a column is roughly 25 cm. (exactly 26.2 cm./ 10 5/6 inches including the margins) and its width is 12.5 cm./5 inches (the average of the 54 extant columns is 12.6 cm.) will be used as a guide. Assuming a cubit is about half a meter this means that the columns are 1/4 of a meter high and 1/8 of a meter wide (ca. 10 inches by 5 inches), or 1/2 cubit by 1/4 cubit—which is a 1:40 ratio to the flying scroll i.e., the dimensions of the flying scroll are 40 times those of the Isaiah scroll. Since the Isaiah scroll is about 7 meters long (7.34 meters/ 24 5/16 feet), the flying scroll in Zechariah would be proportionally 280 meters long or 560 cubits and the letters correspondingly large. Taking the size of a letter to be between .50 and .75 cm. (actually they vary quite a bit depending on which letter of the alphabet is measured), this would make a letter on a scroll with columns of 20 by 10 cubits about 20–30 cm. high (1/4 of a meter/ 10 inches). This means that a letter on the flying scroll would be about the same height as an entire column of text in the Qumran Isaiah scroll.

Continuing with this hypothetical reconstruction of the nature and size of this heavenly scroll we can further speculate on the possible maximum distance at which the prophet saw the scroll so as to be able to read the writing on it. The standard measure of a 20/20 vision is the formula "5 minutes of arc at 20 feet," which means that an 8 mm. letter can be seen (in ideal lighting of course) by a person with 20/20 vision at 20 feet. Applied

to the letters of the flying scroll this means that a letter of 1/4 meter could be seen at up to 600 feet.<sup>5</sup> The prophet apparently is trying to make out the writing on a column of a huge scroll that was flying several hundred feet above the earth and in a night vision possibly illuminated by the moon or some other means. In any case he seems to have had difficulty making it out, whether because it was far away, moving rapidly, or wasn't very well illuminated. In any case he estimates its size in round numbers that represent the 2:1 ratio of the specific column that is open to his view.

As to what was written on the scroll Zechariah was able to make out two catch phrases: "every thief on this side has been acquitted" and "everyone who swears (falsely) on that side like it has been acquitted" (Zech 5:3). Is this scroll possibly written on both sides like the stone tablets of the Decalogue? Or perhaps it is like the scroll of Ezekiel which is said to have had "writing on the front and on the back" (Ezek 2:10)<sup>6</sup> and which as it flies through the air is turning from side to side so that Zechariah only caught a glimpse of what was written on each side about stealing and false swearing?

These indictments are immediately recognizable as similar to the terms of the Mosaic covenant found in the Decalogue and suggest a serious breach of this covenant. Rather than the terminology of the Decalogue found in Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 27:15-26, or Hosea 4:1-2, the specific language of these two indictments is more reminiscent of the first and the fourth terms of the Decalogue stated in Jeremiah 7:9 where Jeremiah enumerates the violations of the covenant as: "stealing, murder, adultery, swearing falsely, burning incense to Baal and going after other gods whom you did not know." The Book of Jeremiah was known to have been written on a scroll even before the destruction of Jerusalem (Jer 36) and must have been finished and in circulation by 560 B.C.E.<sup>7</sup> Therefore it would have been available to, and may even have been known by, the prophet Zechariah. Confirming or at least supporting evidence is to be found in the Book of Zechariah. Note especially the "seventy years" of exile predicted by Jeremiah in Jer 25:11 and 29:10 recalled by the later prophet in the accounts of his visions in Zech 1:12 and 7:5.

We conclude therefore that what Zechariah saw in this vision was indeed a scroll, flying in the sky, but more particularly a scroll opened so that a single column was exposed to view. This column was written on both sides, the writing being of sufficient size to be read by the prophet who was presumably on the ground, the distance being approximately 500 feet or more. This column itself had the normal ratio of height to width: 2:1, a ratio that is very common among the Qumran scrolls generally and

particularly uniform or constant among biblical scrolls. The overall dimensions, however, were enormous as befits a heavenly as opposed to an earthly scroll. In each particular the scroll in the vision is 40 times the size of standard or ordinary scrolls. We may suggest further that the scroll seen by the prophet belonged to the collection of such sacred writings of the heavenly palace itself—which provides a clue as to the dimensions of the palace and the members of the heavenly court. The ratio of 1:40 could be understood to apply to all the corresponding elements: i.e., the heavenly temple would be 40 times the size of the earthly replica whether tabernacle or temple (which were of different sizes but related by a simple ratio to each other) and presumably the heavenly personnel—or at least some of them.

### Notes

The author wishes to thank David R. Seely for help with the final revisions of this article.

<sup>1</sup> D. Petersen, *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) pp. 245-46.

<sup>2</sup> "Papyrus pieces datable to the eighth-seventh centuries have been found at Wadi Murabba'at, and some of the Dead Sea Scrolls were written on leather. M. Haran argues that the transition from papyrus to leather took place earlier in the postexilic period as part of a more general Aramaization of the ancient Near East ('Bible Scrolls in the Early Second Temple Period—The Transition from Papyrus to Skins,' *Eretz Israel* 19, (1982, 86-92)," Petersen 1984: p. 246.

<sup>3</sup> See for example the description proposed by H. Mitchell et al. *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Jonah*. International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1912). He describes it as "a flying roll . . . it was open . . . presenting as it passed through the air, the appearance of a great sheet of leather." (p. 168).

<sup>4</sup> This interpretation apparently was already known in the Rabbinic tradition by Rashi and others who noting the correspondence of the dimensions of the scroll with those of the porch of the Temple of Solomon "suggested that this scroll came from the Sanctuary to execute judgment upon sinners," A. Cohen, *The Twelve Prophets*, Soncino Books of the Bible series (London: Soncino Press, 1948), p. 287 n. 2. See Petersen p. 247 n. 5 for a list of some of the modern commentators who have proposed such a relationship between the dimensions of the scroll and the temple porch. Probably the most comprehensive and convincing assessment of the importance of the temple in the interpretation of the "night visions" in Zechariah 1-6 is B. Halpern, "The Ritual Background of Zechariah's Temple Song," *CBQ* 40, 1978, pp. 167-190. The section dealing with the flying scroll is found on pp. 178-179 where Halpern concludes that the "covenant oath" written on the scroll "may depict, impressionistically, the dispensation of justice at the foundation of the new temple."

<sup>5</sup> I was able to confirm the visibility of words on road signs at a distance of between .1 mile (=ca. 520 ft.) and .2 mile when travelling by car on an Interstate highway. The letters on directional signs e.g. EXIT, etc. are perhaps 8-10 inches high, or approximately

the same as those on the flying scroll, and are clearly legible at the distances suggested in this study.

<sup>6</sup> This depends on the interpretation of the difficult *mizzeh kāmôha* "on this side like it . . . on that side like it" (Zech 5:3) which is rendered in the RSV as "henceforth according to it." That it indeed refers to a scroll that is written on both sides is confirmed by Jewish tradition (See A. Cohen p. 287 n. 3,4) as well as some modern commentators—especially S. Amsler *Aggée, Zacharie, Malachie*. *Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament XIc* (Neuchatel—Paris: Delachaux & Niestle, 1981) p. 97.

<sup>7</sup> The last chapter of Jeremiah contains essentially the same postscript as 2 Kings 25 which gives the final date of the Primary History (Gen—2 Kings) as 561/0 B.C.E. This date and the lack of post-exilic changes and additions to the Primary History as well as the prophetic books such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel has led me to view that 561/0 actually represents the *terminus ad quem* for the compilation of these books. Jeremiah may well have been published as early as 582/1. See D.N. Freedman, "The Law and the Prophets," *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 9 (1963) pp. 250–65 and "The Earliest Bible," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 22:3 (1983) pp. 167–75 for a more complete discussion of this proposal as well as for further references.



## Brief Observations on the Syntax of RS 1957.702\*

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A COMMON feature of classical Phoenician syntax is the anticipatory clause serving to emphasize the subject or predicate of a sentence. In Ugaritic this same feature is thrice attested in RS1957.702, the addendum to a lease guaranteeing the return of a fifty silver-shekel deposit to a men's sodality (*mrzḥ*) by its landlord in the event of an illegal eviction. This unique legal document, first published by P. D. Miller in 1971,<sup>1</sup> has been the subject of considerable scholarly discussion in recent years,<sup>2</sup> but the meaning of the text remains in dispute. The principal obstacle to translation, as I shall attempt to demonstrate in this study, is syntax, in specific, the failure to perceive the several instances of anticipatory clauses and, in one instance, the presence of a temporal sentence with anticipatory clause. The syntactic structures in question have all direct parallels in Phoenician and, once these are recognized, the text may be seen to be logically and coherently presented. My immediate purpose is therefore to focus on syntax as it pertains to the meaning and intent of RS 1957.702.

Preliminary to an examination of the text itself, a word is in order concerning the legal background. A certain men's sodality had rented space for its periodic meetings in a building belonging to a landlord named Shamumānu. As a formal token of its good faith, in accordance with Ugaritic law, the sodality had deposited fifty shekels silver with the landlord. This transaction, together with the general terms of the lease, were set down in a document (not extant) and placed in the legal archives of the city. Subsequently, an addendum to the master lease (the present document) was filed in which the rights of the tenants were addressed, perhaps by reason of their suspicion that the landlord might evict them without due cause and seek to claim the deposit. The addendum to the lease is written in three logically sequenced legal clauses. In the first, the landlord is quoted to have stipulated to his tenants before witnesses that he will

repay their deposit in the event of an illegal eviction. The second clause requires the landlord to waive the right to contest this agreement in a court of law. In the final clause, which sums up the intent of the document, the tenants are assured repayment of their deposit upon demand.

We are to understand that Shamumānu, as any landlord, reserved the right to evict tenants for due cause and, if such cause could be demonstrated, was entitled to retain their deposit. The matter addressed in the present document involves the disposition of this deposit when due cause cannot be shown.

A second preliminary matter need be addressed. Peculiar to the orthography of RS 1957.702 is the bivalence of the grapheme W. In lines 5, 11, 14, 20 the grapheme is employed to represent the phoneme /w/ in the writing of the conjunction W-. However, this same grapheme is thrice used to represent the phoneme /h/: BTH (4), LHM (6), HM (6). This is purely a graphemic matter, not one entailing phonology, morphology or lexicon.

#### The Text

Obverse	MRZḪ	As for the sodality
	DQNY	which Shamumānu
	ŠMMN	has acquired (as tenants)
	B . BTH	in the house belonging to him,
5	WŠT . IBSA	he has fixed (the following) <i>indemnity</i>
	LHM . HM . AG-	(to be paid) to them: "If I (illegally) evict
	RŠKM .	you
	B . BTY	from the house belonging to me,
	KSP ḪMŠM	the fifty (pieces) of silver
10	[']S <sup>c</sup>	shall I <i>repay</i> !"
Reverse	WŠM { . } MN	As for Shamumānu,
	RB . AL. YDD	he shall not <i>undertake</i> a lawsuit.
	MT . MRZḪ	As for the members of the sodality,
	WYRGM . L-	when they say to
15	ŠMMN . TN .	Shamumānu "Give (back)
	KSP . ṬQL D <sup>c</sup> MNK	the weighed silver which is (deposited)
	ṬQLM . YS <sup>c</sup>	with you!", he shall <i>repay</i> the pieces.
	YḪ . IḪRŠP	The witness(es) are Iḫršp
	BN . UḏRNN	son of Uḏrnn
	W . ʿBDN	and ʿbdn
	BN . SGLD	son of Sgld.

*Comments*

In the first legal clause (1–10) lines 1–4 stand in anticipation of the main sentence (5–10). We may compare the syntax of Kilamuwa 11–13 (*KAI* 24) WMJ . BL ḤZ . PN . Š . ŠTY . B·L . ·DR . WMY . BL ḤZ . PN . ·LP . ŠTY . B·L BQR . WB·L . KSP . WB·L . ḤRŠ . WMY . BL . ḤZ . KTN . LMN·RY . WBYMY . KSY . BŠ. “As for whomever did not see the face of a sheep, I made him the owner of a flock. And as for whomever did not see the face of an ox, I made him the owner of cattle and the owner of silver and the owner of gold. And as for whomever did not see a tunic since his youth, in my days they dressed him in fine linen.” In Punic the anticipatory clause is very common, as illustrated by the two following examples: *CIS* i 3787.5–7 WKL ·DM ·Š GNB T MTNT Z NKST TNT [P]N B·L “As for anyone who shall steal this presentation, Thinnith-Phanebal shall kill him”; *CIS* i 4945.4–6 W·Š YRGZ T MTNT Z QBT TNT PN B·L “As for him who shall disturb this presentation, Thinnith-Phanebal shall curse him.”<sup>3</sup> Other examples of this usage will be discussed below in connection with the third legal clause (13–18).

The fifty pieces of silver mentioned in this legal clause were the deposit placed by the sodality in the keeping of the landlord as is clear from line 16, in which the money is said to be “with,” that is, in the possession of Shamumānu. We may compare the parallel use of the preposition in 1 Samuel 9:23: WY·MR ŠMW·L LTBḤ TNH ·T·HMNH ·ŠR NTTY LK ·ŠR ·MRTY· LYK ŠYM ·TH ·MK “And Samuel said to the cook, ‘Give (back) the portion which I gave you, which I told you “Set it aside by you” ’”. Here it should be observed that Samuel requests the return of the portion with the imperative of the verb /n-t-n/ in precisely the same manner as the sodality demands the return of its deposit in TN . KSP . ṬQL D·MNK (15–16). In 6, the term *IBSA*, as Halpern argues,<sup>4</sup> is surely the Akkadian *ibissu* (*ibissu·u*) “damages (indemnified); financial loss,” that is, the amount of the deposit to be forfeited by the landlord to his tenants upon an illegal eviction.

In the second legal clause (11–12) line 11 is in anticipation.<sup>5</sup> The precise meaning of the verb *YDD* is uncertain. However, the verb surely governs the substantive *RB*, which must be understood as *riḫa* (accusative) “lawsuit.” Contextual inference suggests, then, that *RB YDD* must denote the undertaking of a suit in a court of law, here for the specific purpose of contesting the terms of the lease requiring the return of the deposit.

In the third legal clause (13–17) line 13 is in anticipation. What follows is a virtual temporal sentence, lines 14–16 its subordinate clause and line 17

the main clause. Comparable syntactically are two examples in Phoenician of virtual conditional sentences with anticipatory clause: Kilamuwa 13–15 (*KAI* 24) WMY . BBNY Š . YŠB . THTN . WYZQ . BSPR Z . MŠKBM . ŠL YKBD . LBRRM “As for whichever of my sons shall sit in my place, if he damages this inscription, let not the *mskbbm* respect the *berrm*”; Ahiram 2 (*KAI* 1) WŠL . MLK . BMLKM . WSKN . BS<K>NM . WTMŠ . MHNT . ŠLY . GBL . WYGL . ŠRN . ZN . THTSP . HTR . MŠPTH . THTPK . KSŠ . MLKH . WNHT . TBRH . ŠL . GBL . “As for any king or any governor or any commander of the army in charge of Byblos, if he reveals this coffin, his sceptre of authority shall be stripped, his royal throne shall be overturned and peace shall depart from Byblos.”

Recognition of the presence in the text of the anticipatory clause permits rational translation, as does also the recognition in 14–17 of a virtual temporal sentence. In earlier interpretations of the document these syntactic structures are not observed, hence the abstruse character of the translations. This may be illustrated by the translations of lines 1–17 heretofore proposed.

#### Miller

The *marziḥ* which Šamumānu established in his house. Now I have provided a storeroom (*ibsn*) for you; (*lkm!*) and if (*wm*) I drive you out from my house, fifty (shekels) of silver I will pay. And Šamumānu is chief. Let not arise a man of the *marziḥ* and say to Šamumānu: “Give money, a shekel, which is in your possession.” Two shekels he will pay.

#### Dahood

The club which Šamumānu owned/set up in his house. “And I will make a stall (*ibsn*) for you (*lkm!*), and I will drive you out from my house.” Fifty (shekels) of silver had been removed, so Šamumānu brought suit lest the club members should begin to say to Šamumānu: “Give the silver, the shekels that are with you, the shekels (that) have been removed.”

#### Fenton

The *mrzh*-society which Šamumānu has established in his house assigning it (lit. “and he assigned”) as dining-quarters (*ibsn*) for you (*lkm!*). In the event that I expel you from my house I shall forfeit a sum of fifty (shekels). Further, (as regards) Šamumānu the President, let no member of the *marziḥ* arise

and say to Šamumānu, “Give up the fund, pay over what you have,” he will forfeit two shekels.

### Halpern

RE: The funerary society that Shamumānu established/acquired in/from *btw* (for a *btw*?). The assessment of expenses/damages (*ibsa*) he demanded (*lwm*): “(or?) I shall evict you from my house.” Fifty pieces of silver they paid over. Shamumānu pleaded; “Let not the funerary society depart.” But it was decreed to Shamumānu: “Give back the silver, the pieces that you have!” He has paid over the pieces.

### Friedman

The *mrzḥ* which Shamumānu established in his house: “I have provided our storeroom for them (*lwm*). If I drive you out, in my house fifty (shekels) of silver I shall pay. And Shamumānu is chief. Let not rise a man of the *mrzḥ* and say to Shamumānu, “Give money, a shekel which is in your possession.” They paid the shekels.

### Notes

\* The author wishes to express his appreciation to Mr. Morris Lieberman, former president of the Long Beach-Los Altos (California) Board of Realtors for his help in establishing the character of RS 1957.702 as an addendum to a lease.

<sup>1</sup> “The MRZḤ Text” in *Claremont Ras Shamra Tablets*. L. R. Fisher, ed. (Rome, 1971), 37–49.

<sup>2</sup> M. Dahood, “Additional Notes on the MRZḤ Text” in *The Claremont Ras Shamra Tablets*, *ibid.*, 52–54. T. L. Fenton, “The Claremont ‘MRZḤ’ Tablet, Its Text and Meaning,” *Ugarit Forschungen* 9 (1977), 71–76. B. Halpern, “A Landlord-Tenant Dispute at Ugarit,” *Maarav* 2/1 (1979), 121–140. R. E. Friedman, “The MRZḤ Tablet from Ugarit,” *Maarav* 2/2 (1979–80), 187–206.

<sup>3</sup> The syntax of these and numerous other Punic examples is discussed in detail in my article “The *Qatal* with Future Tense Reference in Phoenician and Punic” in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, 31 (1986), pp. 5–10.

<sup>4</sup> Halpern, *op. cit.*, 137, 139 n. 54. The reading of the final letter of this word is not clear, but IBSA is clearly preferable to IBSN, which makes no sense in the context.

<sup>5</sup> We may compare the syntax of *UT* 2059.26–27 (*PRU* V 81) W . AḤY . MHK B . LBH . AL . YŠT “As for my brother, let him play no care in his mind!”

## A Palestinian Journalist Looks Back

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THE writing of books of biography or autobiography is rarely undertaken in Arabic. There has always been a sense in Arab-Muslim society that it is inappropriate to write anything potentially embarrassing or critical about the dead; it has been felt that they should be left in peace, and that God, not man, should judge them. Consequently, works of biographies tend to be highly selective in their content and to lack that sense of intimacy and close understanding that commonly characterizes those written in other languages. For the same reason, Arabic autobiographies for Arab public figures prominent in the arts, culture or even political life have been rare. This seems to stem from a sense of personal privacy as well as a desire not to offend or even comment upon those who have had influence upon the course of the writer's life. This caution is easily understood in a society where the revelation of personal details might result in dishonor and even danger to oneself or to others.

This paucity of works of either biography or autobiography limits, of course, the understanding of Arab society at any period that one may acquire from reading, and it is therefore, refreshing and exciting to come upon a work by a contemporary figure, still alive, who reveals important details of the contacts he has had with many of the most prominent figures of his society throughout a long lifetime. The work is *al-Ḥibr Aswad*, *Aswad* (*The Ink is Very Black*), a recent memoir by the prominent Palestinian journalist Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Nashāshībī, born in 1924 to one of Jerusalem's elite families. His entree to public affairs was, as he freely acknowledges, facilitated by his family connections; his uncle Rāghib Bey al-Nashāshībī was a rival of Ḥājj Amīn al-Ḥusainī and his clan for leadership of the Arab Muslim community in Palestine during the Mandate period. At times this rivalry was strenuous and even violent, with each family representing a

different viewpoint concerning how best to serve the interests of the Arab community in its struggle with the Zionists for supremacy over Palestine.

In *al-Ḥibr Aswad, Aswad* (Beirut, no date but from internal evidence written in 1975), we gain much insight into the conflicts over personality and policy that have been significant in determining the course of events in Palestine and the Arab world in the past half century. The book contains an appendix of photographs depicting the author in close company with Arab leaders of the period. Their range is remarkable and the text of the book relates the author's impressions of meetings with and in some cases the personality of major figures of the revolutionary regime of Egypt, including Abdel Nasser and Anwar al-Sadat, as well as leaders of the Arab monarchies, King Abdullah of Jordan, Kings Faisal and Fahad of Saudi Arabia, King Faysal II of Iraq and his uncle Abdul Ilah, and King Hasan of Morocco. Along with these impressions there are also references to the prime ministers and other governmental leaders who served these heads of state. In addition, as a working journalist, al-Nashāshībī had personal contact with a range of literary figures and political commentators perhaps unrivalled in its breadth. Al-Nashāshībī does not engage in mere "name dropping;" he does not hesitate to draw out the nature of the policy issues these figures confronted and to comment on the errors of judgement he considers them to have made. For the mistakes that have been made by Arab leaders in these years are clearly many; and the tenour of the book is one of regret for the parlous nature of the Arab world in the 1970's. The tale al-Nashāshībī tells is one of lost opportunities and failed policies, and he gives the impression of seeing them all in an unusually clear and critical perspective from his retirement home in Geneva.

The following passage in translation is the entirety of the second chapter of his book. In it he takes us back to the 1940's and beyond, telling us of his own experiences as a journalist and a member of a prominent Palestinian family, giving valuable impressions of the Arab dilemma of the period and of the personalities of the leaders responsible for decision making. From this account we are reminded of various aspects of this ongoing struggle, and we gain new insight into why and how Arab Palestine became transformed into the Jewish state of Israel.

#### *A Journalist in Their Homes*

"No man born of woman, no matter who, can escape his destiny." Homer, *The Iliad*.

The Summer of 1945.

The Palestinian leader Mūsā al-ʿAlamī<sup>1</sup> asked me to join him in work in the “makātib al-ʿarabiyya,” the “Arab Offices,” an organization he planned to establish with funding from Iraq and from the Arab League—large-scale funding from the former, minimal from the latter.

When we met in the old Shepherds Hotel in Cairo, al-ʿAlamī told me, “The Palestine struggle, due to circumstances arising from the ending of World War II, is now entering a new, crucial stage. People everywhere know that the Jews suffered severe persecution from the Nazis and today they are demanding Palestine as compensation for their suffering. But people are not aware that Palestine has its own population and cause. What we lack is a forceful, intelligent voice with which to direct our point of view to the world. I have therefore decided to create “the Arab Office.” We will be joined by a group of young Palestinians who will be the nucleus of this organization in Jerusalem, London and Washington. How would you like to be a member in its headquarters, first in Jerusalem and then later abroad?”

I immediately accepted what my great friend offered.

I well knew that he had not invited me to join because of his admiration for me as a person or as a journalist; he had done so to please my since-deceased uncle, Rāghib Pasha al-Nashāshībī,<sup>2</sup> to win his friendship at a time when al-ʿAlamī would be engaging in fierce political warfare against Ḥājj Amīn al-Ḥusainī<sup>3</sup> and his group.

I returned to Jerusalem to begin my work with al-ʿAlamī in his old house in the Misrāra quarter, close by the city walls. Thus I found myself cut off from the world of journalism in which I had begun to live in Cairo. However, a letter from there arrived from Muḥammad al-Tābiʿī, telling me he was undertaking a complete reorganization of the magazine *Ākḥir Sāʿa*, planning to double the number of pages, and to change its content matter, print format and color. Moreover he wanted me to write a weekly article for his magazine for which I could set the fee.

How could I do this now? I telegraphed al-Tābiʿī apologising for my inability to accept the offer because of my having joined the “Arab Offices,” the contractual obligation for which prevented me from undertaking any work other than my official duties.

Next, al-Tābiʿī telegraphed me an unexpected suggestion: he would publish my articles under the pseudonym of “Nur al-Dīn.” And, he told me, he would accept no excuse. Consequently, on the insistence of this old friend of mine, I soon found myself sending him my first article.

Less than a week later the Jews blew up an entire wing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> Al-Tābiʿī telegraphed, asking me to wire him a



full account of the bombing of the hotel. I well know of al-Tābiṭ's affection for the King David. It was there he used to go to visit Asmahān, his life-long friend. In that same hotel al-Tābiṭ used to get news of Queen Nazli and her daughters, of Muṣṭafā al-Naḥḥās, Zaynab al-Wakīl, Aḥmad Sālim, King Zog, Amīna al-Bārūdī, some of the top leaders of Egypt, and also those of Britain who had resided in that hotel during the Second World War.<sup>5</sup>

The King David Hotel represents an integral part of the history of the Middle East. The walls of its rooms hold the most sensitive of secrets and those plots and plans that have delineated the future of the Arabs, the Jews, the British and others in the region.

It had been my habit to visit this hotel at all times of the day and night, meeting foreign journalists or Arab friends in its rooms, buying the foreign newspapers, and always seeking the latest news and secrets. At noon on that black day I was inside the hotel enjoying the friendship of that immortal actress Asmahān when the bomb went off in the right wing.

So I witnessed death and destruction. The Regency Room, where the world's elite would dance and spend their evenings, was transformed into a mass of rubble and bodies, flying champagne bottles mingling with screams of terror, shouts for help and wailing sirens. Some guests in the hotel came down from their rooms wearing sleep attire, some undressed. More than a hundred employees of the general secretariat of the government of Palestine were buried beneath the rubble. A pall of death and destruction hung over all of Jerusalem.

I sent off a wire to al-Tābiṭ describing in detail what I had witnessed, and the article was published in *Ākḥir Sā'a* under my new name of "Nūr al-Dīn." Muṣṭafā Amīn learned, through his own information sources, that I had associated with Al-Tābiṭ; wishing to confirm this, he wired, asking me to provide *Akḥbār al-Yawm* with a weekly article. And despite my connection with *Ākḥir Sā'a*, my weakness for Muṣṭafā's friendship was such that I did not hesitate to accept, after my friend and boss Mūsā al-ʿAlamī had agreed.

I well knew that the readers of *Akḥbār al-Yawm* would not stomach long or heavy articles; they wanted news that was scandalous, tragic or funny, "sandwich" pieces quickly eaten and digested. Such readers would be scared away by articles delineating the history of the Palestine cause, for example, or Zionist policy in the Middle East, or Britain's imperialist games against the Arabs. However, at the same time, I was not and could never be a scandal monger or tattle-tale writer or merely a news reporter. My concern in my profession as a journalist was first and last, to serve my

country's cause and my people's tragedy. This was a recurring problem for me every week when I would take a deep breath and set about finding some topic about my homeland that could satisfy my conscience and at the same time ensure its publication and acceptance by the Egyptian readers.

The world was still recovering from the war, and people still spoke in terms of export licenses; I wrote an article in *Akhbār al-Yawm* under the title "Export License Request" in which I sought permission to export ten of Egypt's leaders to Palestine so that they could participate in supporting and giving better expression to its cause and in opposing its enemies. I stated that Palestine was in need of "the eloquence of Makram 'Ubayd, the subtlety of Ismā'īl Ṣidqī, the energy of Aḥmad 'Abbūd, the devoted mysticism of Ḥasan al-Bannā, the competence of Aḥmad Ḥasanayn, the determination of 'Alī Māhir, the culture of Dr. Muḥammad Ḥusain Haykal, Pasha, the engineering skills of Ḥusain Sirrī, the revolutionary fervor of Ibrāhīm 'Abd al-Hādī, and the law of Najīb al-Hilālī."<sup>6</sup> I went on to analyze the special qualities of each of these in light of the various aspects of my country's cause, giving quick passing contrast to what existed and what was needed, to the qualities of Egypt and to the struggles of Palestine. My purpose was to sneak my country's cause into the minds of the millions in Egypt. And that was something neither easy nor popular. I wanted to extend my nation's fight beyond its borders to where there were the resources of men, money, weapons, army and state.

And so I did write a number of articles for *Akhbār al-Yawm*. I also told al-Tābiqī that I wanted from him no salary for providing news for *Ākhir Sā'a* so long as he would permit me to continue providing what I wanted to *Akhbār al-Yawm*. Thus months passed with me writing for the two greatest journals in Egypt; and this in the Arab world, too!

I asked Muṣṭafā Amīn for no salary and similarly expected none from al-Tābiqī. I lived off my wages from the "Arab Offices," satisfying my hobby of journalism in those two papers. This went on till a member of the Ḥusainī family in Jerusalem came to see me one day and said he had a permit to publish a weekly magazine and asked me to participate.

This magazine, called *al-Waḥda*, had in the past been devoted especially to the party of Ḥājj Amīn al-Ḥusainī, acting as its voice and defender. But its current owner wished to issue it as an independent magazine serving the Palestinian-Arab cause in that present critical stage of the history of Palestine that followed the end of the Second World War.

I did cooperate with al-Ḥusainī in producing this journal. And my friend Iḥsān 'Abd al-Quddūs<sup>7</sup> came to Jerusalem for his first visit there as a journalist; I accommodated him in my own home and invited him to

write several articles for *al-Waḥda*. Iḥsān wanted to come to grips with all aspects of the Palestine problem. He therefore met all the Arab leaders and later, without my knowledge, went and met some of the Jewish leaders, including David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Shertock,<sup>8</sup> who were at that time leading members of the Jewish Agency. Iḥsān went to Tel Aviv, Jaffa and Haifa, and wrote a lengthy story in *Rose al-Yūsuf* magazine under the title "A Girl from Tel Aviv." And although the story, like most of those he wrote, was purely fictional and despite the fact that his meetings with the Jewish leaders had occurred only on the basis of his work as a journalist, certain leading Palestinian writers launched an attack upon Iḥsān just as he was about to depart for Beirut. Iḥsān read those attacks and determined to respond. I placed the pages of *al-Waḥda* at his disposal and published for him several articles in which he explained in detail the motives and circumstances of his visits. *Al-Waḥda* proliferated and became the preferred newspaper in every home. But one day, to my surprise, there on the front page of the paper was an editorial written by the Palestinian leader, the now late Dr. Ḥusain Fawzī al-Khālidi,<sup>9</sup> in which he attacked Mūsā al-ʿAlamī and also the "Arab Office" of which I myself was a member.

I dropped the paper in surprise! I clearly could do nothing but choose between remaining in the "Arab Office" and stopping work for *Al-Waḥda*, or vice versa. So I chose the "Arab Office" and broke my relationship with *Al-Waḥda* and its director. I also decided to cease writing temporarily for the Cairo papers, confining my journalistic activities to my constant contacts with the foreign correspondents who were coming to Jerusalem to cover the ongoing developments of the Palestine problem.

In 1946 the Palestinian leadership decided to delegate Mūsā al-ʿAlamī to travel to Cairo to represent Palestine at the signing of the Arab League pact. Al-ʿAlamī then announced to me, "The delegation will be under my leadership, and you will be its secretary!"

Jerusalem radio broadcast news of the official formation of this delegation as having al-ʿAlamī as its leader and myself as its secretary.

So we reached Cairo and the Egyptian papers announced news of the Palestinian delegation as consisting of a variety of men, whose names were given. Al-ʿAlamī was visited by a senior British officer whom I later learned to be General Clayton<sup>10</sup>; he was accompanied by a young Arab in military dress and bearing the rank of a British officer, a lieutenant, Waṣfī al-Ṭall by name.<sup>11</sup>

Al-ʿAlamī subsequently got to know al-Ṭall and decided to add him to membership in the "Arab Office," after his release from the British army.

Then we went to Bustān Palace, on the New Cairo road, where the

sessions were held for the signing of the Arab League pact. I looked through the documents searching for a reference to Palestine and what it would gain and ultimately found in its final pages a separate addendum consisting of a few lines which defined the relationship of Palestine with the Arab League. This referred to it as being a country under British mandate which would, after becoming independent seek membership in the Arab League.

I was flabbergasted. I asked al-ʿAlamī what this meant, and he replied, "That's our lot from the Arab League!"

"And will you accept the situation and put your signature on the pact?" I asked.

Even more sadly, he replied, "But they don't need my signature."

Angrily, I commented, "This is a conspiracy against our country. The People of Palestine will not accept its relationship with the Arab nation to be this way. If the Arabs, I mean the leaders and kings of the Arab countries, were serious in their view of Palestine and its future, they would immediately announce its independence and at the same time its membership in the Arab League, so presenting the British, the world and the Jews with a *fait accompli*."

Al-ʿAlamī replied, "There is nothing we can do now." He then lapsed into pained silence.

I scrutinized the faces of the heads and members of the delegations, looking for anyone else who shared my pain and regret at what we were seeing, but I found no one.

That was how the British wanted it. This was their "League," the inspiration of Eden.<sup>12</sup> And such was indeed Palestine's lot in that pitiful League.

When the assembly was over, I left al-ʿAlamī in Shepherds Hotel and went over to the offices of the newspaper *al-Miṣrī*, in whose management I had a close friend, Ḥusain Abū al-Faṭḥ, a man whom I had known ever since his first visits to Jerusalem in the early forties. I told him, "I want to write an article for *al-Miṣrī* about the Arab League pact that was born several hours ago."

Abū al-Faṭḥ replied, "I am ready to publish it at once."

He gave me his office and I set about writing the article, entitled, "Palestine in the Arab League." Soon I handed to him the finished article which I had concluded with the words, "It is not Palestine I mourn in the Arab League. I mourn for the Arab League itself."

This was the very first article in the history of the Arab League which attacked it, exposed it and predicted its pitiful fate.

I never had any faith in this Arab League. As I said to ʿAbd al-

Raḥmān ‘Azzām<sup>13</sup> when we met in Geneva and were discussing its future after the June 1967 defeat, “Would it not have been better for the Arabs if they had not had such a league?”

‘Azzām replied, and in the presence of Prince Nawāf ‘Abd al-‘Azīz,<sup>14</sup> “The League is fine and its name is fine. Were it not, it would not have been able to hold up and remain in existence after all that has befallen the Arabs. But I do believe that the future of the League is better than its present state, and its present better than its past.”

I interrupted him with the question, “But what about this ‘present state’?”

“Well,” he replied, “it’s as you see it!”

The former Secretary-General of the League made no further comment concerning this “as you see it.” When the subject of conversation moved off to various other topics, I asked him, “In light of all that has befallen us since the end of the Second World War up to now, do you consider us to blame or is it all the result of the strength of our enemies against which we are simply powerless?”

‘Azzām replied, “We really were badly treated, all of us, victimized. We did try, as national leaders, kings, and the Arab League, to be realistic regarding a settlement of the Palestine question—King Farouk in Egypt, King ‘Abd Allah in Jordan, and even myself too.” ‘Azzām Pasha paused before continuing, “Yes, even myself. Ever since 1938 when we were in London attending the round-table conference. There in the delegation with us were ‘Alī Māhir Pasha and Prince ‘Abd al-Mun‘im. The British brought us together with Chaim Weizmann<sup>15</sup> and we began discussing solutions to the Palestine problem. I said on that occasion to Chaim Weizmann, “If you—I mean the Jews—need a state in the heart of the Arab world, that could be under joint international protection. Its government and its people would be yours, perhaps one, two or three hundred thousand people . . .” But Weizmann interrupted me, saying, “‘Abd al-Raḥmān wants to create a new ‘ghetto’ for the Jews!”

At that point I replied, “Well, praise be to God! You have saved my head from being beaten by every Arab for what I suggested to you. I withdraw herewith my proposal.”

The conversation with ‘Azzām reminded me of the latest proposals put forward as a solution to the Palestine problem. When the heroic freedom-fighters raised the slogan, “A Democratic State of Palestine,” my mind went back over the history of my country. Palestine’s history does not begin with 1967, when the Palestine resistance movement took practical shape. Its history began long ago, ever since the hated British occupation,

since Herbert Samuel<sup>16</sup> and the formulation of the mandate, the Balfour declaration,<sup>17</sup> and the plans to solve the Palestine problem. Throughout those years there were successive British suggestions made to Palestinian leaders seeking a political solution that would, on the one hand, respond to the hopes of the Jews to live on the land of Palestine, and, on the other hand, meet the aspirations of the Arabs to create a Palestine that was free, independent and Arab. In 1920 they proposed to the Arabs establishment of a "legislative assembly" and some leaders did accept this, while others rejected it.

Then later they came back with a proposal to create an "Arab Agency," on the model of the "Jewish Agency," to represent the Arabs, speak in their name and unite their voice. Some leaders accepted this establishment, while others rejected it.

Next came their White Paper proposing an end to immigration after a specific time interval, preventing the transfer of land, and suggesting the creation of an independent Palestinian state with a democratic, constitutional form with representation of Arabs and Jews proportional to their population. The Arabs were then the majority, while the Jews numbered less than half a million. Some leaders accepted this document, while others opposed it.

Those who were practical, realistic and patriotic, believing that their duty demanded that as much as possible be saved, those men were labelled "moderates," i.e., traitors. As for the radicals, the idealists who lived by the word "no," they were spoken of as "nationalists."

I am not trying to defend certain leaders of my country—not to mention my own relatives and uncles—against the charge of treason; I am merely trying to set down the facts before history for it alone to judge.

It was not our fault. I will go back to the point I reached after publication of my article about the Arab League in the Egyptian newspaper *al-Miṣrī*.

Mūsā al-ʿAlamī told me that our mission in Egypt as far as the Arab League was concerned was now over, and that he had one further urgent matter to conclude, after which we could return to Jerusalem.

He took me with him to the Iraqi embassy where we met the *chargé d'affaires*, Hikmat al-Jadirjī. From him we received—in accord with prior instructions from Baghdad—an Iraqi passport in the name of Jamāl al-Ḥusainī<sup>18</sup> who was at that time in the British islands of Seychelles.

The passport was sent to this gentleman at his address on the island so he could use it to return to Palestine. I understood that al-ʿAlamī had volunteered to facilitate al-Ḥusainī's arrival in the country not merely

because he was his brother-in-law, but because he wanted him to play the role of the country's sole leader now that Ḥājj Amīn al-Ḥusainī's leadership had lapsed following the end of the Second World War and the fall of Nazi Germany.

As we were returning to Shepherds Hotel, al-ʿAlamī told me, "Keep between us what you have just seen. I don't want anyone to know of it."

So we got our luggage together and took the Lydda train back to our own land.

I pause here briefly to recall certain memories. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAzzām disliked Mūsā al-ʿAlamī and could not stand his presence as Palestine's representative in the League. ʿAzzām favored the Ḥusainīs, while al-ʿAlamī was subservient to the Hashimites<sup>19</sup> in Baghdad.

Nūrī al-Saʿīd<sup>20</sup> shared ʿAzzām's dislike for al-ʿAlamī but tolerated him and responded to his requests both to please the palace, fearing that otherwise his political rival Šāliḥ Jabr<sup>21</sup> would become separately allied with it—and also to spite their mutual enemy, Ḥājj Amīn al-Ḥusainī.

Dr. Ḥusain Fakhrī al-Khālīdī, a member of the Higher Arab Association and one of Palestine's leaders, was one of al-ʿAlamī's closest allies. He, however, turned against al-ʿAlamī when al-ʿAlamī escaped from the control of Palestine's leaders and began acting freely and alone on his own account.

The faction of Ḥājj Amīn disliked Mūsā al-ʿAlamī but refrained from attacking him to mollify the majority of young and educated Palestinians who found in al-ʿAlamī someone cultured and positive, a new-style leader. It was in this heated atmosphere that Mūsā al-ʿAlamī had to work, serving and representing the Arabs of Palestine and opposing international Zionism.

The Anglo-American fact-finding commission came to Jerusalem early in 1946 and representatives for the "Arab Office" testified before it. Aḥmad al-Shuqairī<sup>22</sup> and Albert Hourani<sup>23</sup> were in their forefront and the aforementioned "office" itself presented to the commission a detailed report about the history of the Palestine problem. That report was in the view of all the fullest and most precise political report ever made up to then about that history since its beginnings.

Nevertheless, the forward movement of the "Office" then began to falter and its productivity to deteriorate, its members one after the other offering their resignations. When al-ʿAlamī found that this "Office" had gained him only the enmity of his colleagues in the leadership, the envy of his rivals and criticism from everyone, and that his sole consolation was in easing his own conscience before God and history, he decided, being

temperamental and sensitive by disposition, to close it down and end its activities.

I left my work in the "Arab Office," having resigned with a two-line note, and took a train to Cairo.

It was then early in 1947, and all the talk was of the arrival of an international commission to examine the Palestine problem "for the umpteenth time."

I was sitting alone on the balcony of the old Shepherds Hotel when I was approached by Ḥaydar al-Ḥusainī, the brother-in-law of His Excellency the Muftī. He told me that Ḥājj Amīn wanted me to see him. So I went to meet His Excellency in his house in the Zaitun district of Cairo.

When we were alone in a room enveloped by red velvet curtains behind which were hidden, as was always the case with him, guards or observers listening in and watching the visitors to protect the gentleman from any aggressive act, he said, "I have invited you to talk to you about the international commission coming to us from the United Nations. I have received reports concerning the biases of the commission members and their political orientations. Most of them are supporters of Zionism. This is what brother Emile al-Ghūrī and my nephew Rajāʾ al-Ḥusainī, who are both in New York, have asserted. I have decided to boycott this commission when it comes to us and to address our brothers in the Arab countries as well as the Arab leaders in Palestine on the essentiality of a boycott. I would like to ask you to contact 'uncle' Rāghib Bey al-Nashāshībī in his home in Jerusalem to ask his opinion and tell him mine as you have heard it concerning this commission."

Controlling my temper, I replied, "Would it not be more appropriate for the circumstances and for yourself to propose convening a meeting with the Palestinian leadership to discuss the matter?"

"We don't have enough time for that," he replied.

"But I'm afraid your colleagues in Palestine will have a different opinion than yours with a resulting schism in the Palestinian front," I objected.

"To have contacts with this commission would, in my opinion, be treason," he insisted.

"But some of your colleagues in Jerusalem may hold the opposite view. The arrival of this commission might give the Arabs a valuable opportunity to express their position and effectively publicise their viewpoint, countering Zionist claims with documents and arguments of their own. There could well be danger in boycotting it and leaving it to the mercy of the Jews alone."

The Ḥājj shook as he stated bluntly, "I have told you what I want.



And in anticipation of the views of others, I will announce that anyone giving testimony before this international commission is to be considered a traitor to this country and to his nation!"

I replied, "In light of such a viewpoint, the Arab states which strived to join the San Francisco charter and to achieve membership in the United Nations should withdraw from all international organizations because of the Zionist influence of which you speak."

"Why discuss details before receiving the views of our brothers, the leaders in Palestine?" he demanded.

Gesturing my dissatisfaction, I then said, "I do hope your Excellency will excuse me from undertaking this task; I know that the condition of Rāghib Bey's health is such as to prevent him from performing any political task at present." With that I rose and took my leave.

Returning to Shepheards I met with the now late Maḥmūd Abū al-Faṭḥ, owner of *al-Miṣrī*, seated on the hotel balcony amidst a group of Egypt's leaders and journalists. I told him what I had heard from Ḥājj Amīn, and he commented, "What are you doing here in Egypt? Your place now is in Jerusalem. Hundreds of members of the international press corps—many of whom I know personally—have left for Palestine to follow news and developments there. Why don't you leave, as they have, and send news and articles back to *al-Miṣrī*? The paper will be able to pay whatever salary you require, on the condition that you provide us information that the news magazines can't get. *Al-Miṣrī* currently has the biggest circulation of any of the Egyptian or Arab papers; our correspondent in Lebanon gets his news directly from Riyād al-Sulḥ, just as our man in Damascus gets us into all the secrets there. We want to know what the future hides for Palestine. If you are ready to cooperate with us, I will expect you in my office at *al-Miṣrī* to conclude the formalities."

A few hours later I was signing a contract as a journalist for *al-Miṣrī*. Next day I took the first train home for Jerusalem. Then I presented my papers to the Palestinian Press Administration and received my very first official card as a journalist.

Thereafter I began living in the corridors of the Press Administration, waiting for official announcements, meeting scores of world-class journalists, people who later became chief editors of papers like *The New York Times*, *Time* magazine and *The London Times*, personalities like Wyndham, Clifton Daniel, Teddy Hodgkin and many others.

Here I would like to comment on the contrast between my role as an Arab journalist allied to the Arab side in a critical cause like that of Palestine, and that of the foreign journalists, most of whom were allied to

others, whether that be London, Washington or Tel Aviv.

The Jewish Agency was the official organization on which the Jews of Palestine relied; it spoke for them. World journalism received news of the Jews, opinions of their leaders and information on their policy directions specifically from the headquarters building of this agency.

Foreign journalists, sitting at their desks in the Press Administration, could connect directly by telephone with the Jewish Agency and speak to Ben Gurion, Shertock, or others and they received news of the latest developments from them. The Agency secretariat took care of all foreign journalists, inviting them to their receptions, providing them with their publications, and giving them the access they wanted for their journalistic "scoops."

The Jews had emerged from the Second World War with their minds filled with images of the ovens and the concentration camps and Hitler's war of extermination. Having defeated Hitler they decided to make their struggle in Palestine a matter of destiny, survival, blood and victory. They therefore set about organizing themselves, uniting their voices and directing their battle against both the Arabs and the British mandate, bringing to bear every element of their material and moral power and potential.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the voice of falsehood should overcome the voice of right, with the pages of the world's newspapers being filled exclusively with the Zionist viewpoint. This is not the place for discussion of the Jewish front during the years that preceded the establishment of the state of Israel. But the honest writer cannot discuss the Arab front—the opposing side in the battle—in any other terms than those of pain, sadness and regret. And what did happen to that Arab front? Arab journalists—and even foreign ones too—sought hard but in vain for one Arab voice able to claim that it represented the Arab side, capable of understanding events, comprehending developments, interpreting the situation and responding to the opposing claims. The Palestinian Arab leaders present in Palestine did not speak up. If ever they did, it was to engage in invective criticism of one another. A "leader" in Cairo or Beirut would adopt positions quite divorced from the actuality of the circumstances, merely in accord with his whim or temperament. There was the "Higher Organization" which spoke for factions while representing no one. Then there was the "High Front," fragmented, internecine and bankrupt. And there was journalism trying to serve the cause as best it could, without direction, plan or preparation.

Indeed so, whereas the Jewish Brigade had come back from its bases in Europe fully armed and prepared, uniformed and flagged. It returned having participated with the Allies in a number of battles against the Nazis;

these had earned it the capabilities as required as a military force ready to engage in new battles on the land of Palestine. To them must be added the forces of the secret guerilla groups, the *kibbutzim* militia and the volunteers, along with a large variety of others, all aware that they were shortly going to engage in a military confrontation with the Arabs.

And were the Arab leaders aware of all these facts about the enemy when they proceeded to insist on Britain's withdrawal and departure from Palestine, as a number of them did in public testimony before the Anglo-American fact-finding commission in Jerusalem in 1946? Did the Palestinian leaders comprehend all these facts about their enemy when they insisted on rejecting all the British proposals advanced to them by the Labor government, headed by the Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, the Arab's friend, just before Britain's decision to abandon Palestine and leave the entire problem up to the United Nations?

And what did an Arab journalist like myself have to write under such circumstances? "Antar-like"<sup>23</sup> heroic statements, mindless, meaningless and ignorant, from certain Arab leaders threatening the very direst of consequences. Communiques full of confusion and exaggeration about specific military activities that were, in reality, non-existent. Muddled meetings in Arab capitals aiming for surrender with tactical manœuvres, then acceptance of partition and acquiescence in the status quo.

Deals for defective arms<sup>24</sup> and neighboring military preparations characterized by improvisation. "Secret" meetings in local cities attended by British officers claiming friendship for the Arabs who got to review the confidential decisions made, as in Bludan<sup>25</sup> and other towns.

Farces and disgraceful performances which would cause a storm or scandal, confusion and condemnation if one were to write about them candidly or give one a painful conscience, self-doubt and guilt if one were to remain silent about them.

I decided to relieve myself from such bitter experience and so travelled to Cairo, where I informed my great friend Abū al-Fatāḥ of my resolve to resign from *al-Miṣrī*.

Then I returned to Jerusalem to observe developments with the heart of a citizen rather than the pen of a journalist. I said good-bye to journalism, thinking I would never return to it, no, never again.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Mūsā al-ʿAlamī was born in May, 1897, the only son to one of Jerusalem's wealthiest Muslim families. His father held important provincial posts under the Ottoman administration including that of mayor of Jerusalem, a post his father had earlier held, and later he also served as a deputy representing that city in the central parliament in Istanbul. After schooling in Jerusalem and service as a clerk in the Turkish army during World War I, Mūsā went to Cambridge where he took a law degree. During the British mandate over Palestine he served as a crown Counsel under several of the High Commissioners and as a Private Secretary and ultimately as Government Advocate under Sir Arthur Wauchope. A Royal Commission sent to Palestine in 1937 to analyse the growing disorder there between Arabs, Jews and the British Administration suggested the appointment of a British Senior Government Advocate, and in October al-ʿAlamī was informed of his compulsory retirement from government service and exile to Beirut. He was allowed to return to Palestine only in 1941. Previously an occasional participant in official discussions in London and the Middle East with the British authorities over resolution of the Palestine problem, al-ʿAlamī attended as chief Palestine delegate both the Preparatory Conference in Alexandria in the summer of 1944 and the Arab League ratification conference in Cairo, 1945. Thereafter al-ʿAlamī secured funding for the Arab Development Society, designed to assist Palestinian villagers, and himself directed the 'Arab Office' he established to promulgate the Palestinian-Arab viewpoint in Western capitals. Rival activities by the Higher Arab Committee under Ḥājj Amīn al-Ḥusainī, the long-time exiled Mufti of Jerusalem, eventually undercut funding for the Arab Office, which closed in late 1947. Dispossessed of his considerable real estate holdings in Palestine following the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel in 1948, al-ʿAlamī thereafter devoted himself to creating an orphanage for Palestinian refugee boys and a model farm on land he reclaimed from desert near Jericho. He died in 1984. See: Furlonge, Geoffrey: *Palestine is my country—the story of Musa Alami*, London, 1969.

<sup>2</sup> Rāghib al-Nashāshībī (1880-1951) was appointed by Sir Ronald Storrs, British Governor of Jerusalem, in 1921 to be Mayor of Jerusalem in place of Mūsā Kāzīm al-Ḥusainī who had adopted the position of leader and spokesman of the Arab opposition to the mandate and was therefore viewed negatively by the British authorities. Storrs refers to al-Nashāshībī as "an able and determined ex-Deputy of the Ottoman Parliament." (*Orientalism*, London, 2nd edition 1945, p. 334). Later al-Nashāshībī founded and led the "al-Difā" ("Defence") party which favored some kind of accommodation with the British authorities and the Jewish settlers and was opposed by the more radical nationalist groups led by the Mufti, Ḥājj Amīn al-Ḥusainī.

<sup>3</sup> Ḥājj Amīn al-Ḥusainī (1893-1974) received his initial schooling in Jerusalem, where he was born to a prominent, long-established Muslim family. Following a period of study at al-Azhar in Cairo, he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and returned to Jerusalem. He served as a clerk in the Turkish army during World War I and as a translator, bureaucrat, teacher and journalist thereafter. Convicted in absentia by a British military court of incitement to violence in journal articles published prior to Arab-Jewish disturbances in April, 1920, al-Ḥusainī took refuge in Transjordan. Later that same year Sir Herbert Samuel, the first British High Commissioner for Palestine, responded to Arab petitions and included al-Ḥusainī in the general amnesty he had announced for all those convicted by military courts. Following the death in April, 1921 of Kamāl al-Ḥusainī, the Mufti of Jerusalem and Amīn's half-brother, the High Commissioner engineered the appointment of Amīn to the post and soon thereafter made him president of a newly-formed Supreme

Muslim Council which was to control all *waqf* (religious trusts) and *sharī'a* (Muslim religious) courts in Palestine. His dual appointments thus gave him great financial as well as moral power throughout the twenties and thirties, a period of frequent conflict between the newly-arriving Jewish settlers, the indigenous Arab population and the British administration. In 1936 he became president of the Arab Higher Committee, an organization combining representation of all Arab religious and political groups. Responding to appeals from the kings of Saudi Arabia, Transjordan, Iraq and Yemen, in October, 1936 he called off the general strike and civil disturbances that had gripped the country for several years past. The conclusions reached and recommendations made the following year by a British Royal Commission, known as the Peel commission after its chairman, failed to calm the unrest and in September, 1937, the Palestine administration removed him from leadership of the Supreme Muslim Council, proscribed the Arab Higher Committee and deported five of its leaders to the Seychelles Islands. Ḥājj Amīn, after a brief period of seclusion in the *Ḥaram al-Sharīf* Muslim sanctuary of Jerusalem, made his way secretly to Beirut and so into an exile from Palestine from which he was never to return. He continued, however, to enjoy great inter-Arab support as a leader of Palestine. After periods in Iraq and French-occupied Syria, he spent much of the World War II years in Germany. He advocated Arab support for the Nazis and received their support for Arab views on the Palestine problem and Arab independence. He was briefly held by the Allies in France after the war until, in June, 1946, he made his way to Egypt, where he was given asylum and recognised as the head of the Arab Higher Committee of Palestine. He remained an influential figure in the Arab world, residing mainly in Egypt and Lebanon, until his death in 1974. For a biased but well-documented account, see Joseph B. Schechtman: *The Mufti and the Fuehrer*, London and New York, 1965.

<sup>4</sup> The bombing of the King David hotel in Jerusalem occurred on July 22, 1946; a total of ninety-one British, Arab and Jewish employees of the Palestine administration and the hotel were killed.

<sup>5</sup> The "King Zog" mentioned in this list of elite visitors to Jerusalem refers to Aḥmad Bey Zogū who was his country's Prime Minister before becoming the second king of modern Albania, from 1928 to 1939. Following the communist takeover of Albania, he lived in exile in the Middle East, chiefly in Cairo, where he was a welcome member of the court circle of King Farouk. He died in 1961.

<sup>6</sup> The list includes, of course, many of the most prominent intellectual and political figures of Cairo of the time.

<sup>7</sup> Iḥsān 'Abd al-Quddūs (b. 1919) continues to be one of the Arab world's most popular and influential novelists and political commentators.

<sup>8</sup> David Ben Gurion (1886-1973) and Moshe Shertock (also known as Moshe Sharett) (1895-1965) were founding leaders of Israel's Labor Party, and each served as Israel's prime minister.

<sup>9</sup> Ḥusain Fawzī al-Khālīdī, a member of the prominent al-Khālīdī family of Jerusalem, was leader of the Palestinian *al-Shabāb* (Youth) party, and a member of the Arab Higher Committee.

<sup>10</sup> Presumably Brig. I.N. Clayton is referred to here. A brother of General Gilbert Clayton who had been General Allenby's Chief Political Officer after the British conquest of Palestine in 1919, Brig. Clayton was the chief contact in Cairo between the British Middle East Office and the Arab League.

<sup>11</sup> Waṣfī al-Tāll (1921-1971) later served as Prime Minister of Jordan.

<sup>12</sup> Sir Anthony Eden, later Lord Avon, (1897-1977) was a prominent figure in British politics for several decades. An elected Member of Parliament for the Conservative Party, he served as Britain's Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister. His confrontational

policies during the Suez Canal nationalization crisis of 1955 led to the "Suez War" of the following year in which Britain and France colluded with Israel in a disastrous attempt to regain control over the canal. See his memoirs, *Full Circle*, London, 1960.

<sup>13</sup> 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Azzām was born in Egypt in 1893 and educated at London University. He served as ambassador for Egypt before becoming the first secretary-general of the Arab League.

<sup>14</sup> Prince Nawāf ibn 'Abdel 'Azīz was born in Riyadh in 1933. He studied in the United States and was Chief of the Royal Cabinet under King Sa'ūd and King Faiṣal.

<sup>15</sup> Chaim Weizmann (1874-1952) was born in Poland. A chemist, he taught at the universities of Geneva and Manchester, and was director of the British Admiralty laboratories during World War I. A dedicated Zionist, he is credited with having been instrumental in persuading the British government to issue the Balfour Declaration (see note 17 below). He was president of the World Zionist organization, of the Jewish Agency for Palestine and of Israel after its establishment. See his memoirs, *Trial and Error*, New York, 1949.

<sup>16</sup> Sir Herbert Samuel (later Viscount Samuel), a British Jew, was appointed first High Commissioner for Palestine on July 1, 1920. He served there until 1925, being replaced by Lord Plumer.

<sup>17</sup> On 2 November, 1917, Arthur James Balfour (1848-1930), British Foreign Secretary serving under David Lloyd George as Prime Minister, issued a letter, since known as the "Balfour Declaration" to Baron de Rothschild, a prominent British Jew. The wording of this document had been formulated after lengthy negotiations with Zionist leaders in Britain, Europe and the United States. Its text read: "His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." This statement was interpreted by Zionists as giving formal legitimacy to their aspirations to establish a Jewish state in Palestine.

<sup>18</sup> Jamāl al-Ḥusainī, a relative of the Mufti of Jerusalem and a brother-in-law of Mūsā al-'Alamī, was a member of the Arab Higher Committee and a leader of the Arab Palestinian Party. He escaped capture and fled to Syria after the September, 1937 arrests of Arab leaders charged with complicity in violent disorders in Palestine. Later resident with the Mufti's staff in Iraq, he was charged with involvement in the abortive pro-Nazi coup there led by Rashīd 'Alī al-Gailānī in April, 1941, and he was subsequently exiled to the Seychelles Islands for the duration of the war.

<sup>19</sup> The Hashimites: the dynastic Arabian family tracing its descent directly back to the Prophet Muḥammad via his grandson Ḥasan. Family leaders have traditionally been entrusted by the Muslim community with guardianship of the Holy Places of Hejaz. Two sons of King Ḥusain of the Hejaz, 'Abd Allah and Faiṣal, were ultimately awarded control, by the British authorities, over Transjordan and Iraq respectively. The line lives on in the continuing monarchy in Jordan; in Iraq it ended with the massacre by republican and army forces of the royal family in July, 1958.

<sup>20</sup> Nūrī al-Sa'īd (1888-1958) was born in Baghdad and was trained for the Turkish army in which he became an officer. Exile by the Ottoman authorities to India for Arab nationalist activities was followed by his participation in the Arab Revolt of 1916-1918 in which he served under its Hejaz Hashimite leaders. He became defense minister in Iraq under King Faiṣal from 1925 to 1930 and subsequently served there fourteen terms as prime minister. An architect of Iraq's modernization and prosperity based

on oil revenues, he was criticised by his country's opposition factions for a too close association with Britain. He was killed following the July, 1958 army-led revolution under Colonel Kassem that assassinated King Faiṣal, his uncle 'Abd al-Ilāh and their families and abolished the Iraqi monarchy.

<sup>21</sup> Ṣāliḥ Jabr was a leading Iraqi Shi'ite politician who often served in ministerial positions under Nūrī al-Sa'īd and was himself prime minister from March, 1947 to January, 1948. Later a personal antipathy developed between Nūrī and himself as he formed his own *Umma* socialist party. He died in May, 1957 shortly after delivering a vigorous attack in the Iraqi parliament against the government and its persistence in maintaining martial law.

<sup>22</sup> Aḥmad al-Shuqairī (1908-1980) was born in Acre and trained as a lawyer; he served as Saudi Arabia's representative at the United Nations. In the early sixties al-Shuqairī received backing from the republican governments in Egypt and Iraq and recognition as Palestine's representative in the Arab League and at the United Nations. He advocated and began establishment of a Palestinian army of liberation but ultimately his leadership in it was subsumed by Yāsir 'Arafāt.

<sup>23</sup> The reference is to the heroic pre-Islamic poet 'Antara b. Shaddād whose verses are famous for their expression of powerful bravado.

<sup>24</sup> In the months preceding the July, 1952 overthrow of King Farouk, Egyptian army officers began distributing pamphlets maintaining that their poor performance in the fighting and the consequent loss of the 1948 Palestine war to the Israelis had occurred because their forces had been issued defective arms knowingly purchased. Their complaint was seized upon by the Egyptian popular press as a way of attacking the government, and the ensuing scandal is considered a major cause in the establishment of the Republican regime under Gamal Abdel Nasser.

<sup>25</sup> The Syrian mountain resort town of Bludan near Damascus was the site of an important inter-Arab conference in late 1937 which had expressed its unequivocal support for the Arab Higher Committee, and its rejection of partition of Palestine into Jewish, Arab and Mandated areas, as had been suggested by the Peel Commission report of July of that year. In June, 1946 Bludan was the site of an Arab League Council meeting to consider the Anglo-American Committee's report on the Palestine problem.

## Rules for Forming Noun Plurals in Modern Standard Arabic

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NOUN plurals have always been a source of difficulty and confusion to students of Arabic. The standard textbook treatment of plurals is not very helpful, for it tends to emphasize the diversity of plural patterns associated with each singular pattern. Grammars have even advised students, in the words of the *M.E.C.A.S. Grammar of Modern Literary Arabic* (1965) to “learn the appropriate plural(s) of each word individually” (p. 16).

Arabic noun plurals are complicated but not nearly as difficult and irregular as they appear on the surface. The rules that follow predict 90 to 95 percent of all noun plurals, as listed in Wehr’s *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*.<sup>1</sup> Even setting aside the hundreds of nouns that take sound plurals or quadriliteral plurals, regularities long recognized, these rules overall predict about 80 percent of the broken plurals there listed. The exceptions, as with English verb forms, tend to occur among high frequency words and so seem more prominent and widespread than they really are.

For teaching purposes it seems useful to focus less upon the undeniable complications and exceptions in Arabic plural formation and more upon the regularities. If I were teaching Arabic plurals, I would introduce the rules below, one by one, without the parts entitled “Refinements” and without the variations encountered in geminate and weak roots. In the most simplified form, the rules are:

1. Derived nouns take sound plurals.
2. Quadriliterals take quadriliteral plurals *mafāʿil* or *mafāʿil*; non-human *faʿīla* and *fāʿil(a)* behave as quadriliterals, taking plurals *faʿāʿil* and



*fawā'il* respectively.

3. *fi'la* and *fu'la* take plurals *fi'al* and *fu'al* respectively.
4. All other feminine nouns take the sound feminine plural.
5. *fa'l* take plural *fu'ul*, while *fi'l*, *fu'l* and *fa'al* take plural *af'āl*.
6. Non-human *fV'Vl* (any vowel combination) take plural *af'ila*.
7. Human *fa'il* take plural *fu'alā'*; while human *fā'il* take plural *fu'āl*.

After the student had worked with geminate and weak verb forms, I would introduce the refinements and variations in similar noun plurals. I would turn to the "Refinements" of rules 4, 6 and 9 much later—when the relatively small increase in predictability they afford would not be offset by the substantial complication and potential confusion they entail.

Meanwhile, when introducing individual vocabulary items in the plural, I would state (by marking) which were rule-predicted and which exceptional, trying where possible to concentrate on the former. In teaching each rule, I would forthrightly present exceptional plurals already encountered as exceptions, but would point out the regularities that occur within groups of exceptions—the kind of information set forth under "Minority Plurals" following each rule below. In looking at the minority patterns and the percentages of nouns of a given class to which they apply, the reader should bear in mind that many nouns have two or more alternate plurals (so percentages within each class will add up to well over 100 percent).

This presentation does not purport to cover every singular pattern or kind of noun, let alone every kind of exception. Nor does it cover the common biliteral nouns, where the plural is best memorized with the singular. As is traditional, the term "noun" includes both substantives and adjectives. Transliteration is like that in Wehr's *Dictionary* except that: *hamza* is transliterated as ʾ, *ghayn* as ġ, *khā'* as x, and *alif maqṣūra* as ā(y).

**Rule 1:** *Nouns derived from other words, regardless of form, take the sound plural.*

- -ūn if they are masculine and human
- -āt otherwise

as do nouns of the form *fa'āl* and *fa'āla*, foreign words and alphabet letters.

	-ūn (m. hum)	-āt (other)
Derived nouns	participles  nisbas	verbal nouns, nouns of one time, nouns of unity abstract nouns of quality female nouns of variable gender
Others taking sound plurals	nouns of profession form <i>faʿāl</i>	other nouns of form <i>faʿāl(a)</i> foreign words, alph. letters

## Detail and examples

## 1 Participles

Participles derived from Form I verbs, when functioning as participles, take the sound plural, e.g.,

from *kataba* ‘to write’

*kātib* ‘writing’ pl. *kātibūn*

*kātiba* (f.) pl. *kātibāt*

from *ḥaṣala* ‘to collect’

*maḥṣūl* ‘collected’ pl. (m. hum.) *maḥṣūlūn*

*maḥṣūla* (f.) pl. *maḥṣūlāt*

But when functioning as independent items these generally take a broken plural instead, e.g.,

*kātib* ‘clerk’ pl. *kuttāb* or *kataba*

*maḥṣūl* ‘crop’ pl. *maḥāṣil*

Participles of the derived verb forms almost always take the sound plural, even when functioning as independent items, e. g.,

from *ʿarraxa* ‘to write the history of’ (Form II)

*muʿarrix* ‘writing the history of’ or ‘historian’ pl. *muʿarrixūn*

from *ijtamaʿa* ‘to meet’ (Form VIII)

*mujtamaʿ* ‘gathered’ (m. hum.) pl. *mujtamaʿūn*, ‘society’ pl. *muj-tamaʿāt*

## 2 Verbal nouns

Verbal nouns *other than* those derived from Form I take the sound feminine plural, e.g.,

from *ij̣tamaʿa* ‘to meet’ (Form VIII)

*ij̣timāʿ* ‘meeting’ pl. *ij̣timāʿāt*

from *bāḥaṭa* ‘to discuss’ (Form III)

*mubāḥaṭa* ‘discussion’ pl. *mubāḥaṭāt*

### 3 Nouns of one time

Nouns of one time, which indicate a single occurrence of an action, are derived from the verbal noun by addition of the feminine suffix *-a(h)*. In Form I, where the verbal noun takes various forms, the noun of one time is regularly of the form *faʿla*. Nouns of one time take the sound feminine plural, e.g.,

from *ḍaraba* ‘to hit’ (Form I) VN *ḍarb*

*ḍarba* ‘blow’ pl. *ḍarabāt*<sup>2</sup>

from *ibtasama* ‘to smile’ VN *ibtisām*

*ibtisāma* ‘smile’ pl. *ibtisāmāt*

### 4 Nouns of unity

Nouns of unity are derived from collective nouns by addition of the feminine suffix *-a(h)* and designate a single item of that which their base nouns designate collectively. Nouns of unity take the sound feminine plural, e.g.,

from *šajar* ‘trees’ (coll.)

*šajara* ‘tree’ pl. *šajarāt* (individuated)

### 5 Female nouns of variable gender

Female nouns of variable gender are derived from masculine base forms designating animate beings by suffixation of *-a(h)*. Female nouns of variable gender take the sound feminine plural, e.g.,

from *kalb* ‘dog’ (m.)

*kalba* ‘bitch’ pl. *kalbāt*

from *xādim* ‘servant’ (m.)

*xādimā* ‘servant girl’ pl. *xādimāt*

from *samīn* ‘fat’ (m.)

*samīna* (f.) pl. *samīnāt*<sup>3</sup>

## 6 Nisba nouns of relation

Nisbas are derived from other words, usually nouns, by suffixing *-īy*. They take the sound plural, e.g.,

from *amrīkā* ‘America’

*amrīkīy* ‘American’ (m.) pl. *amrīkīyūn*

*amrīkīya* (f.) pl. *amrīkīyāt*

## 7 Abstract nouns of quality

Abstract nouns of quality are derived from nisbas by suffixing *-a(h)*. They take the sound feminine plural, e.g.,

from *qawm* ‘people’ and *qawmīy* ‘national’

*qawmīya* ‘nationalism’ pl. *qawmīyāt*

## 8 Diminutives

Diminutives are derived from other nouns by inserting *u* after the first radical, *ai* after the second, and *i* after the third (if the underlying noun is a quadriliteral); the suffix *-a(h)* is frequently added. Diminutives take the sound feminine plural, e.g.,

from *waraq* ‘paper’ and *waraqa* ‘piece of paper’

*wurayqa* ‘little piece of paper’ pl. *wurayqāt*

## 9 Nouns of profession and others of the form *fa‘āl(a)*

Nouns of the form *fa‘āl(a)* frequently denote followers of an occupation, or devices or places where an activity is carried out. They generally take the sound plural, e.g.,

*fallāḥ* ‘peasant’ pl. *fallāḥūn*

*fallāḥa* (f.) pl. *fallāḥāt*

*raffāṣ* ‘propeller’ pl. *raffāṣāt*

*ḥammām* ‘bath’ pl. *ḥammāmāt*

*darrāja* ‘bicycle’ pl. *darrājāt*

## 10 Nouns of foreign or unfamiliar origin

Nouns of foreign or unfamiliar origin, including nonsense words, take the sound feminine plural, e.g.,

*tīlifūn* pl. *tīlifūnāt*  
*lūrd* ‘lord’ pl. *lūrdāt*

## 11 Alphabet letter names

Names of letters of the alphabet take the sound feminine plural, e.g.,

*lām* pl. *lāmāt*  
*‘ayn* pl. *‘aynāt*

**Rule 2:** *Masculine trilateral nouns with short vowels take plurals:*

- *fu‘ūl* for singular *fa‘l* other than human, or radical *w*
- *af‘āl* for all others.

### Detail and examples

1. *fa‘l* regular plural (80%) *fu‘ūl*  
*talj* ‘snow’ pl. *tulūj*  
*ra’s* ‘head’ pl. *ru‘ūs*
2. *fa‘l* human, regular plural (61%) *af‘āl*  
*šaxš* ‘person’ pl. *ašxāš*  
*rabb* ‘lord’ pl. *arbab*
3. *fa‘l* radical *w*, regular plural (82%) *af‘āl*<sup>4</sup>  
*wazn* ‘pattern’ pl. *awzān*  
*lawn* ‘kind’ pl. *alwān*  
*naḥw* ‘part’ pl. *anḥā* [< *anḥāw*]
4. *fi‘l* and *fu‘l*, regular plural (83%) *af‘āl*  
*tiql* ‘weight’ pl. *aṭqāl*  
*ḥukm* ‘rule’ pl. *aḥkām*
5. *fa‘al* (and others of two syllables), regular plural (90%) *af‘āl*  
*xabar* ‘news’ pl. *axbār*  
*baṭal* ‘hero’ pl. *abṭāl*
6. Geminate and weak roots, regular plurals like strong roots  
*bayt* ‘house’ pl. *buyūt*  
*diyn* ‘religion’ pl. *adyān*  
*buwq* ‘trumpet’ pl. *abwāq*  
*except* for singulars *fa‘l* with radical *w*, see Group 3 above.

Certain combinations then change, just as in final weak verbs  
*lahy* ‘jawbone’ pl. *luḥīy* [< *luḥūy*]

*šilw* ‘fragment’ pl. *ašlāw* [<*ašlāw*]  
 cf. *banā(y)* [<*banaya*] ‘he built’ (Form I)  
 pass. part. *mabnīy* [<*mabnūy*]  
 and *rajā* [<*rajawa*] ‘he hoped’  
 VN *rajāw* [<*rajāw*]

Medial weak nouns of the form *faʿal* show their middle radical only in the plural,

*bāb* [<*bawab*] ‘chapter’ pl. *abwāb*  
*nāb* [<*nayab*] ‘fang’ pl. *anyāb*  
 Doubly weak nouns work as the above  
*ṭayy* [<*ṭawy*] ‘fold’ pl. *aṭwā* [<*aṭwāy*]

#### Minority plurals

1. The pattern for the inapplicable part of the main rule, i.e., for *faʿl* minority plural (22%) *afʿāl*  
*raqm* ‘numeral’ pl. *arqām*  
*baḥṭ* ‘study’ pl. *abḥāṭ*, also *buhūṭ*  
 for others (10%), including *faʿl* human (34%) or with radical *w* (18%), minority plural *fuʿūl*  
*ʿadl* ‘just’ pl. *ʿudūl*  
*wajh* ‘face’ pl. *wujūh*  
*jisr* ‘bridge’ pl. *jusūr*  
*juḥr* ‘hole’ pl. *juḥūr*, also *ajḥār*  
*šajan* ‘twig’ pl. *šujūn*  
*malik* ‘king’ pl. *mulūk*
2. Minority plural *fiʿāl* (12%), applying to concrete nouns  
*kalb* ‘dog’ pl. *kilāb*  
*ṭawb* ‘clothing’ pl. *ṭiyāb* [<*ṭiwāb*], also *aṭwāb*  
*samj* ‘ugly’ pl. *simāj*  
*ẓill* ‘shadow’ pl. *ẓilāl*, also *azlāl*, *zulūl*  
*jabal* ‘mountain’ pl. *jibāl*, also *ajbāl*
3. Minority plural *afʿul* (5%) for a few nouns, most concrete  
*nahr* ‘river’ pl. *anhur*, also *anhār*  
*rijl* ‘foot’ pl. *arjul*

**Rule 3:** *Feminine trilateral nouns with short vowels take plurals:*

- *fiʿal* for singular *fiʿla*
- *fuʿal* for singular *fuʿla*
- the sound feminine plural *-āt* for all others.

## Detail and examples

1. *fiʿla* and *fuʿla*, regular plurals (93%) *fiʿal* and *fuʿal*  
*bidʿa* ‘heretical doctrine’ pl. *bidaʿ*  
*furṣa* ‘opportunity’ pl. *furaṣ*
2. *faʿla*, regular plural (84%) *faʿlāt* or *faʿalāt*<sup>5</sup>  
*našra* ‘publication’ pl. *našarāt*  
*badla* ‘suit’ pl. *badalāt*
3. *faʿala*, regular plural (86%) *faʿalāt*  
*ḥaraka* ‘movement’ pl. *ḥarakāt*
4. Geminate and weak roots, regular plurals like strong roots  
*qiṣṣa* ‘story’ pl. *qiṣaṣ*  
*ʿumma* ‘community’ pl. *ʿumam*  
*qiyma* ‘value’ pl. *qiyam*  
*ḍabba* ‘lock’ pl. *ḍabbāt*  
 Certain combinations then change, just as in final weak verbs  
*ʿurwa* ‘bond’ pl. *ʿur<sup>an</sup>* [<*ʿuraw<sup>un</sup>*]  
*jizya* ‘tax’ pl. *jiz<sup>an</sup>* [<*jizay<sup>un</sup>*]  
 Cf. *yubnā(y)* [<*yubnayy*] ‘it is built’

Medial weak nouns of the form *faʿala* undergo the same change in both singular and plural

*ǧāra* [<*ǧawara*] ‘raid’ pl. *ǧārāt* [<*ǧawarāt*]  
 cf. *ǧawr* VN of *ǧāra* ‘to penetrate’

## Minority plurals

1. The patterns for the inapplicable parts of the main rule, i.e.,  
 for *fiʿla* and *fuʿla*, minority plural (16%) *-āt*  
*xidma* ‘service’ pl. *xidamāt*, also *xidam*  
 for *faʿla* and *faʿala*, minority plural (9%) *fuʿal* or *fiʿal*  
*dawla* ‘state’ pl. *duwal*  
*jazma* ‘pair of shoes’ pl. *jizam*, also *jazmāt*
2. Minority plural *fiʿāl*, (15%) applying to concrete nouns  
*buḡa* ‘place’ pl. *biḡā*, also *buḡaʿ*  
*haḍba* ‘hill’ pl. *hiḍāb*, also *haḍabāt*  
*jarra* ‘jar’ pl. *jirār*  
*šabaka* ‘net’ pl. *šibāk*

**Rule 4:** *Masculine trilateral nouns that are non-human and have a long vowel in the second syllable take the plural afʿila*

*Refinement:* there are three subgroups that are as likely to take an alternative plural form:

- Strong roots with  $\bar{a} fV\bar{a}l$  that are abstract take plural *afʿila* or plural *-āt*
- Strong roots with *i* or with  $\bar{i} fi\bar{a}l$  and  $fa\bar{i}l$  that are concrete take plural *afʿila* or plural *fuʿul*
- Geminate roots with  $a fal\bar{V}l$ , take plural *afʿila* or plural *falāʾil*
- All others take plural *afʿila*

#### Detail and examples

1. Non-human  $fV\bar{a}l$ , regular plural (55%) *afʿila*  
*matāʿ* ‘luggage’ pl. *amtīʿa* (would not be in Group 2 below because it is concrete)  
*miṭāl* ‘example’ pl. *amṭīla* (would not be in Group 3 below because it is abstract)  
*raṣīd* ‘sum to be paid later’ pl. *arṣida* (would not be in Group 3 below because it is abstract)  
*suʾāl* ‘question’ pl. *asʿila*  
*ʿamūd* ‘post’ pl. *aʿmida*
2. Strong and abstract  $fV\bar{a}l$ , plural (64%) *afʿila* or (45%)  $fV\bar{a}lāt$   
*miṭāl* ‘example’ pl. *amṭīla*  
*suʾāl* ‘question’ pl. *asʿila*  
 but *ḍamān* ‘guarantee’ pl. *ḍamānāt*  
*ḥisāb* ‘account’ pl. *ḥisābāt*
3. Strong and concrete  $fi\bar{a}l$  and  $fa\bar{i}l$ , plural (46%) *afʿila* or (65%) *fuʿul*  
*silāḥ* ‘weapon’ pl. *asliḥa*  
*raṣīf* ‘pier’ pl. *arṣifa*  
 but *kitāb* ‘book’ pl. *kutub*  
*ḥaṣīr* ‘mat’ pl. *ḥuṣur*
4. Geminate roots with first vowel  $a fal\bar{V}l$ , plural (37%) *aḥilla* or (53%) *falāʾil*<sup>6</sup>  
*dalīl* ‘evidence’ pl. *adilla* [*<adlila*]  
 but *ḡamām* ‘clouds’ (coll.) pl. *ḡamāʾim*  
*ḥašīš* ‘grass’ pl. *ḥašāʾiṣ*  
*samūm* ‘hot sandstorm’ pl. *samāʾim*



## 5. Weak roots, regular plurals like strong roots

*xayāl* ‘imagination’ pl. *axyīla*  
*hawā* [<*hawāy*] ‘air’ pl. *ahwiya*  
*binā* [<*bināy*] ‘building’ pl. *abniya*  
*sarīy* ‘little creek’ pl. *asriya*

Certain combinations then change, just as in final weak verbs

*duā* [<*duāw*] ‘prayer’ pl. *adīya* [<*adīwa*]

cf. *rujiya* [<*rujiwa*] ‘it was hoped’

## Minority Plurals

1. The patterns for inapplicable parts of the main rule (recall that *afīla* is potentially applicable to *all* singular patterns), i.e., for abstract singulars and those without a vowel *i* or *-ī* *faāl* and *fuāl* and *faūl* and *fuūl*, minority plural (12%) *fuul*  
*nadīr* ‘warning’ pl. *nudur*  
*mitāl* ‘example’ pl. *mutul* and *amṭila*  
*niḏām* ‘rule; system’ pl. *nuzum*, also *anzima*, *niḏāmāt*  
for concrete singulars and those without a vowel *ā* in the second syllable, i.e., *faāl* and *fVūl*, minority plural (18%) *-āt*  
*qiṭār* ‘train’ pl. *qiṭārāt*, *qutur*  
*wuṣūl* ‘receipt’ pl. *wuṣūlāt*  
for non-geminate roots, minority plural (6%) *faā’il*  
*ḍamīr* ‘conscience’ pl. *ḍamā’ir*
2. Minority plural *fīlān* or *fuḷān* (9%)  
*ḡurāb* ‘crow’ pl. *ḡirbān*, also *aḡriba*  
*qaḍīb* ‘rail; branch’ pl. *quḍbān*  
*xarūf* ‘sheep’ pl. *xirfān*, also *xirāf*<sup>f</sup>

**Rule 5:** *Masculine human faāl take plural fuālā*

*Refinement:*

- Geminate and final weak *faāl* take plural *afīlā*
- All other *faāl* take plural *fuālā*

## Detail and examples

1. Human *faāl*, regular plural (70%) *fuālā*  
*ʿadīb* ‘man of letters’ pl. *ʿudabā*  
*faqīr* ‘poor’ pl. *fuqarā*

2. Geminate and final weak roots, regular plural (72%) *afʿilā*<sup>8</sup>  
*ṭabīb* ‘doctor’ pl. *aṭibbā* [<*aṭbibā*>]  
*ḍakīy* ‘intelligent’ pl. *aḍkiyā*

### Minority plurals

1. The pattern for the inapplicable part of the main rule but only rarely.  
 For non-geminate non-final weak *faʿīl*, minority plural (3%) *afʿilā*  
*qarīb* ‘relative’ pl. *aqribā*
2. Minority plural *fiʿāl* (21%) (human nouns are concrete) particularly  
 where the adjective is related to a stative verb *faʿūla*<sup>9</sup>  
*kabīr* ‘great; big’ pl. *kibār*  
 cf. *kabura* ‘to be or become big’
3. Minority plural *faʿlā(y)* (7%), applying to adjectives denoting the  
 result of a misfortune (*baḥīya*)<sup>10</sup>  
*marīḍ* ‘sick’ pl. *marḍā(y)*  
*ʿasīr* ‘prisoner’ pl. *ʿasrā(y)*, also *ʿusarā*
4. Minority plural *fuʿul* but rarely (6%)  
*jadīd* ‘new’ pl. *judud*

**Rule 6:** *Feminine triliteral nouns that have a long vowel in the second syllable take plurals:*

- *faʿāʾil* for singular *faʿīla* that are *not* derived
- the sound feminine plural *-āt* for all others

#### *Refinement:*

- *faʿīla* *not* derived take plural *faʿāʾil*
- *fiʿāla* and *faʿūla* that are concrete take plural *faʿāʾil*
- All others take the sound feminine plural *-āt*

### Detail and examples

1. Singulars other than *faʿīla* and concrete *fiʿāla* and *faʿūla*, regular plural (88%) *-āt*  
*jamāʿa* ‘group’ pl. *jamāʿāt*  
*xurāfa* ‘superstition’ pl. *xurāfāt*

- dirāsa* ‘study’ pl. *dirāsāt* (would not be in Group 3 because it is abstract)  
*darūra* ‘necessity’ pl. *darūrāt* (would not be in Group 3 below because it is abstract)  
*ḥukūma* ‘government’ pl. *ḥukūmāt*  
 2. *fa‘īla*, regular plural (97%) *fa‘ā’il*  
*darība* ‘tax’ pl. *darā’ib*  
*‘aqīla* ‘wife’ pl. *‘aqā’il*,<sup>11</sup> also *‘aqīlāt*  
 3. Concrete *fi‘āla* and *fa‘ūla*, regular plural (88%) *fa‘ā’il*  
*biḍā‘a* ‘commodity’ pl. *baḍā’i‘*  
*rakūba* ‘mount’ pl. *rakā’ib*  
 4. Geminate and weak roots, regular plurals like strong roots  
*dalāla* ‘meaning’ pl. *dalālāt*  
*quṣāṣa* ‘clipping’ pl. *quṣāṣāt*  
*šadīda* ‘misfortune’ pl. *šadā’id*  
*‘imāma* ‘turban’ pl. *‘amā’im*  
*xayāla* ‘fantasy’ pl. *‘xayālāt*  
*xiyāna* ‘treason’ pl. *xiyānāt*  
*nufāya* ‘waste’ pl. *nufāyāt*

Certain combinations then change,  
*hirāwa* ‘stick’ pl. *harāwā(y)*<sup>12</sup> [*<harā’iw*]  
*baqīya* ‘remainder’ pl. *baqāyā* [*<baqā’iy*]

#### Minority plurals

1. The pattern for the inapplicable parts of the main rule, i.e., for *fa‘īla* (7%), and concrete *fi‘āla* and *fa‘ūla* (33%), minority plural *-āt*  
*bināya* ‘building’ pl. *bināyāt*  
 for others, minority plural (19%) *fa‘ā’il*  
*zarāba* ‘ruin’ pl. *zarā’ib*  
*šinā‘a* ‘art, skill’ pl. *šanā’i‘*, also *šinā‘āt*  
*ḥumūla* ‘family’ pl. *ḥamā’i‘*<sup>13</sup>
2. Minority plural *fu‘ul* for a few nouns (6%)<sup>14</sup>  
*madīna* ‘city’ pl. *mudun*, also *madā’in*  
*jazīra* ‘island’ pl. *juzur*, also *jazā’ir*

**Rule 7:** *Masculine human fā’il, when not functioning as a participle, takes the plural fu‘āl.*

*Refinement:*

- Final weak *fāʿil* take plural *fuʿāl*
- All other *fāʿil* take plural *fuʿāl*

#### Detail and examples

1. Masculine human *fāʿil*, regular plural (58%) *fuʿāl*  
*rākīb* ‘passenger’ pl. *rukkāb*  
*zāriʿ* ‘farmer’ pl. *zurārʿ*
2. Geminate and medial weak roots, regular plural like strong roots  
*ḥājj* [<*ḥājj*>] ‘pilgrim’ pl. *ḥujjāj*  
*ṣāʾig* [<*ṣāwig*>] ‘goldsmith’ pl. *ṣuwwāg*
3. Final weak roots, regular plural (96%) *fuʿāl*  
*qāḍī*<sup>n</sup> [<*qāḍiy*<sup>un</sup>>] ‘judge’ pl. *quḍāt* [<*quḍaya*>]

#### Minority plurals

1. Minority plural *faʿala* (27%)  
*ḥāmīl* ‘porter’ pl. *ḥamala*  
*kāhin* ‘priest’ pl. *kahana*, also *kuhhān*  
*ṣāʾig* ‘goldsmith’ pl. *ṣāga* [<*ṣawaga*>], also *ṣuwwāg*
2. Minority plural *fuʿal* (23%)  
*ḥāmīl* ‘roving’ pl. *hummal*  
*xāʾif* ‘afraid’ pl. *xuwwaf*
3. Minority plural *fawāʿil* for a few masculine nouns<sup>15</sup>  
*nāṭir* ‘guard’ pl. *nawāṭir*, also *nuṭṭār*
4. Minority plural *fuʿalā*, as though the singular were *faʿīl*, for a few nouns (4%)  
*ʿālim* ‘scholar’ pl. *ʿulamā*
5. Minority plural *fuʿūl* for a few nouns (6%)<sup>16</sup>  
*ḥāḍir* ‘present’ pl. *ḥuḍūr*
6. Minority plural *afʿāl* for a few nouns (3%)  
*ṣāḥib* ‘owner’ pl. *aṣḥāb*

**Rule 8:** *fāʿil* and *fāʿila* that are non-human take plural *fawāʿil*

#### Detail and examples

1. Non-human *fāʿil*, regular plural (92%) *fawāʿil*  
*fāriq* ‘distinction’ pl. *fawāriq*

2. Non-human *fāʿila*, regular plural (91%) *fawāʿil*  
   ʾāṣira ‘bond’ pl. ʾawāṣir
3. Geminate and weak roots, regular plurals like strong roots; certain combinations then change  
   *mādda* [<*mādida*] ‘subject’ pl. *mawādd* [<*mawādid*]  
   *dāʾira* [<*dāwira*] ‘office’ pl. *dawāʾir* [<*dawāwir*]  
   *bādiya* ‘desert’ pl. *bawāḏ*<sup>n</sup> [<*bawāḏiy*<sup>un</sup>] *except* that initial *w* roots avoid a plural *\*wawāʿil* and instead take the sound feminine plural *-āt*  
   *wārid* ‘export’ pl. *wāridāt*

### Minority plural

1. The sound feminine plural *-āt*  
   *qāḏifa* ‘bomber’ pl. *qāḏifāt*

### Rule 9: *Quadriliteral singulars take plurals:*

- *mafāʿil* for singulars with a short vowel before the last radical
- *mafāʿil* for singulars with a long vowel before the last radical

*Refinement:* Certain subgroups of quadrilaterals with a medial weak root or with gemination take the sound feminine plural *-āt* (recall that the medial geminate forms *faʿāl* and *faʿāla* regularly take the sound plural under Rule 1)

- Medial weak roots with the singular form *mafāl* and *mafāla* take the sound feminine plural *-āt*
- Medial geminate quadrilaterals that are feminine and have different vowels, i.e., *faʿula*, *fuʿala*, *faʿūla* and *fuʿāla* take the quadriliteral plural *or* the sound feminine plural *-āt*
- Quadrilaterals from geminate roots, i.e., *mafall*, *mifall*, and *mafalla*, *mifalla* take the quadriliteral as *mafāll* *or* the sound feminine plural *-āt*
- Other quadrilaterals take the quadriliteral plurals *mafāʿil* *or* *mafāʿil*, depending upon the length of the vowel before the last radical.

## Detail and examples

1. The regular quadriliteral plural  
*maṣḍar* ‘source’ pl. *maṣādir*  
*ʿaxmaṣ* ‘arch of the foot’ pl. *ʿaxāmiṣ*  
*marḥala* ‘stage’ pl. *marāhil*  
*maydān* ‘field’ pl. *mayādīn*  
*šaḥrūr* ‘blackbird’ pl. *šaḥārīr*  
 The rule also applies to human nouns  
*qunṣul* ‘consul’ *qanāṣil*  
*sultān* ‘sultan’ *salātīn*
2. The feminine medial geminate exception, the quadriliteral plural (47%) *or* the sound feminine plural *-āt* (60%)  
*turraha* ‘hoax’ pl. *turrahāt*  
*barrīma* ‘drill’ pl. *barrīmāt*  
*kurrāsa* ‘notebook’ pl. *karārīs*, also *kurrāsāt*  
 Compare masculine nouns with similar patterns  
*sukkar* ‘sweetmeats’ pl. *sakākīr*  
*dukkān* ‘shop’ pl. *dakākīn*
3. The geminate root exception, both masculine and feminine, the quadriliteral plural (59%) *or* the sound feminine plural *-āt* (69%)  
*mamarr* ‘corridor’ pl. *mamarrāt*  
*milaff* ‘reel’ pl. *milaffāt*  
*maḥall* ‘place’ pl. *maḥāll* [<*maḥālīl*], also *maḥāllāt*  
*midaqqa* ‘pestle’ pl. *madāqq* [<*madāqīq*]
4. The medial weak root exception, both masculine and feminine, *mafāl* and *mafāla*, regular plural (86%) the sound feminine plural *-āt*  
*majāl* [<*majwal*] ‘area’ pl. *majālāt*  
*majāʿa* [<*majwaʿa*] ‘famine’ pl. *majāʿāt*
5. Other weak roots, i.e., medial weak not of the form *mafāl(a)* and final weak, regular quadriliteral plural  
*maʿīša* [<*maʿyiša*] ‘way of life’ pl. *maʿāyiṣ*  
*zurbīya* ‘carpet’ pl. *zarābīy*  
 Certain combinations then change  
*marm*<sup>an</sup> [<*marmay*<sup>un</sup>] ‘aim’ pl. *marām*<sup>in</sup> [<*marāmiy*<sup>un</sup>]  
*kursiy* ‘chair’ pl. *karās*<sup>in</sup> [<*karāsiy*<sup>un</sup>]
6. Singulars with two long vowels treat the first as providing a second radical letter, and take a quadriliteral plural (cf. *fawāʿil* as plural of *fāʿil*, Rule 8)  
*ṣārūx* ‘rocket’ pl. *ṣawārīx*

*dūlāb* ‘wheel’ pl. *dawālīb*  
*mīṭāq* [<*miwṭāq*] ‘covenant’ pl. *mawātīq*

### Minority plurals

1. The pattern for the inapplicable part of the main rule, i.e., for medial weak nouns of the pattern *mafāl(a)*, the quadriliteral plural *maǧāra* [<*maǧwar*] ‘cave’ pl. *maǧāwir*, also *maǧārāt* for others, especially feminine nouns, the sound feminine plural *markaba* ‘cab’ pl. *markabāt*  
*babǧā* ‘parrot’ pl. *babǧāwāt*
2. Minority plural *faʿālisa*, applying to masculine human quadriliterals only  
*jahbād* ‘great scholar’ pl. *jahābida*  
*tilmīd* ‘pupil’ pl. *talāmida*, also *talāmīd*

**Rule 10:** *Certain diptotic and non-declined singulars have special plural forms:*

- Adjectives of color and defect, *afʿal* fem. *faʿlā* plural *fuʿl*
- Diptotic *faʿlān*, fem. *faʿlā(y)* plural *faʿālā(y)*
- *faʿlā(y)* (fem.) plural *faʿālā(y)*

### Detail and examples

1. Adjectives of color and defect *afʿal* and fem. *faʿlā*, regular plural *fuʿl*  
*aḥmar ḥamrā* (f.) ‘red’ pl. *ḥumr*  
*aṭraṣ ṭarṣā* (f.) ‘deaf’ pl. *ṭurṣ*  
 Geminate and weak roots follow the same pattern, with the usual changes  
*aswad sawdā* (f.) ‘black’ pl. *suwd*  
*aʿmā(y)* [<*aʿmay*] *ʿamyā* (f.) ‘blind’ pl. *ʿumy*, also *ʿumyān*  
*aratt* [<*artat*] *rattā* (f.) ‘afflicted with a speech defect’ pl. *rutt*
2. Diptotic *faʿlān* and fem. *faʿlā(y)*, regular plural *faʿālā(y)*  
*sakrān sakrā(y)* (f.) ‘drunk’ pl. *sakārā(y)*  
*wahmā(y)* (f.) ‘a craving for certain foods (of pregnant women)’ pl. *wahāmā(y)*, also *wihām*
3. *faʿlā(y)*, regular plural *faʿālā(y)*  
*šakwā(y)* ‘complaint’ pl. *sakāwā(y)*

## Minority plurals

1. The quadriliteral broken plural or the sound feminine plural, as though the suffixes  $-ā(y)$  and  $-ā'$  were radicals  
*daʿwā(y)* 'claim' pl. *daʿāwīn* [ $<daʿāwīy^{un}$ , also *daʿāwā(y)*  
*ṣaḥrā* 'desert' pl. *ṣaḥārīn* [ $<ṣaḥārīy^{un}$ ], also *ṣaḥrāwāt*, *ṣaḥārā(y)*
2. Minority plural *fiʿāl*  
*ḥarrān* 'fervent' pl. *ḥirār*, also *ḥarārā(y)*  
*ḥasnā* 'beautiful' pl. *ḥisān*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This article summarizes and simplifies part of my dissertation, *The Plural of the Noun in Modern Standard Arabic* (Univ. of Mich. 1971). The principal source of data was Hans Wehr's *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (1965), based on writings from all over the Arab world, from which I extracted every noun with its plural. These data were supplemented, explained and clarified by an informant, a native of Jerusalem, who was a former journalist and teacher, and by a corpus of Arabic writings that I reviewed and analyzed.

<sup>2</sup> The *a* after the second radical is discussed under Rule 3 below.

<sup>3</sup> The masculine nouns of variable gender follow their own rules, as do the few feminine human nouns that are *not* derived and therefore *not* nouns of variable gender, e.g., the plurals of the above, *kilāb*, *zuddām*, and *simān*; also (*not* derived) *ḥāmīl* 'pregnant' pl. *ḥawāmīl*, *qābila* 'midwife' pl. *qawābil*.

Note that as a rule only adjectives modifying human nouns appear in plural form; those modifying non-human nouns usually appear with the feminine singular suffix  $-a(h)$ .

<sup>4</sup> This is unusual because weak roots usually take the same plural pattern as strong roots with the same vowel pattern, and when they do not, see the Refinements of Rules 5, 7 and 9, the exceptional pattern applies to both *y* and *w* roots.

<sup>5</sup> Many of these are derived—nouns of one time, nouns of unity, or female nouns of variable gender—and predictably take the sound feminine plural under Rule 1 above.

Wehr's *Dictionary* vocalizes the plural without *a* after the second radical in geminates and medial weak nouns, with *a* in final weak nouns, and variably in others. The informant preferred the plural with the *a* in most nouns other than the geminate and medial weak nouns.

<sup>6</sup> This form is not unexpected, for it is a typical quadriliteral plural pattern, as though *ḡamām* above were really *ḡamwam* with a plural *ḡamāwim* becoming *ḡamā'im*. Moreover, it is the regular plural for *feminine* non-human nouns of the form *faʿīla*, see Rule 6 below. Except for the geminate roots, however, it is quite rare among the Rule 4 nouns.

<sup>7</sup> Plurals of the form *fiʿāl* are very unusual among Rule 4 nouns. Note that as elsewhere this is a concrete noun.

<sup>8</sup> *afʿīlā* corresponds to the general plural for non-human nouns of the same pattern (*afʿīla*), for the suffix  $-ā$  is a variant feminine suffix. Compare *dalīl* 'evidence' pl. *adilla*,



and *sarīy* 'little creek' pl. *asriya*. A few human nouns have the latter as a variant plural, e.g., *jalīl* 'honorable' pl. *ajillā* or *ajilla*.

<sup>9</sup> These adjectives are not derived from the verb; the relationship is probably the other way around.

<sup>10</sup> The suffix *-ā(y)*, like *-ā*, is a variant feminine suffix. Thus masculine nouns with a long vowel in the second syllable tend to have a plural with some feminine suffix.

<sup>11</sup> Unlike most human nouns of this particular form, *ʿaqīla* is *not* derived, and so takes a broken plural.

<sup>12</sup> The final *(y)* (alif maqṣūra) is unusual; final *w* roots as well as final *y* roots regularly have the broken plural as *faʿāyā*, as *baqāyā* above.

<sup>13</sup> The informant vocalized this singular with an *a*—*ḥamūla*; with this vocalization the broken plural would be predicted by the main rule, see Group 3 examples.

<sup>14</sup> Note that this is a regular plural pattern for the masculine concrete *faʿūl*.

<sup>15</sup> This is the regular plural for non-human nouns of this pattern and for female nouns of this pattern without the feminine suffix, e.g., *ḥāmīl* 'pregnant' pl. *ḥawāmīl* compare *ḥāmīl* 'porter' in Minority plural Group 1 above.

<sup>16</sup> Except here, *fuʿūl* and *afʿāl* are almost never associated with triliteral masculine nouns other than those with short vowels, see Rule 2 above.

## Islamic Rhetoric and the Persian Historians 1100–1300 A. D.

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PERSIAN historical texts of the later sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries, the source of much admiration in their own day because of their style, have often caused latter day readers to lament on account of this same style, especially because it seems to lack clarity and succinctness and to impede the search for information useful to the modern historian. Muhammad Iqbal, for example, said of Rāvandī's *Rāḥat al-Ṣudūr*, “. . . the beauty of the book is to a great extent marred by a large amount of extraneous matter—lengthy digressions, frequent citation. . . and a large quantity of poetry.”<sup>1</sup> Then there is Browne's gloss on what Rieu said about Vaṣṣāf who took this development far beyond Rāvandī in the eighth/fourteenth century: “. . . as Rieu says . . . ‘It was unfortunately set up as a model, and has exercised a baneful influence on the latter historical compositions in Persia.’ That these criticisms are fully justified will be denied by no one who has had occasion to use the work, and indeed the author himself declares that to write in the grand style was his primary object, and that the historical events which he records served merely as the material on which he might embroider the fine flowers of his exuberant rhetoric.”<sup>2</sup>

The purpose here is to suggest how Persian historical writing came to this figured style, as I shall call it, and to present an argument in which I attempt to account for the nature of the style in these works. In such a connection it seems clear that some discussion of rhetoric, as it applied to the scribes in this period is in order, for the histories are in many cases the work of scribes who were transferring the figured style they used in writing documents to the composition of histories. As one would expect, the use of rhetorical figures is very much the same.

It can be shown fairly easily that the documents and histories from the hands of trained scribes often reveal the use of such devices as centering

and proportional arrangement, devices which, it now appears, they have in common with some classical, medieval and renaissance works of the West.<sup>3</sup> In addition to these arrangement devices, further scrutiny of the texts, as well as more attention to what the scribes themselves say about their work, indicate that they followed principles of a figured style which resembled the use of figures in the West, although the devices they made use of were naturally adapted to their own purposes and described in Islamic, chiefly Arabic, terms. It is possible to apply the Latin names for the parts of a document to certain classes of Islamic documents with a fair degree of success, as Busse did.<sup>4</sup> Even those documents or letters which do not match the Western model as well often have parts which can be called exordium, narration, exposition, etc. This much applies to many documents from the entire period, from the Ghaznavids to the Ilkhanids.

Helmut Ritter, in his introduction to his edition of Jurjānī's *Asrār al-Balāghah*,<sup>5</sup> points out that the Arabs had little use for the first two of the three branches (genera) of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, the deliberative and the judicial, since they ". . . had hardly occasion in their public meetings to influence the decisions of those present by political speeches; nor were there courts in which the jury could be worked upon by eloquence." Ritter's view seems to me to oversimplify the Islamic tradition, for there is at least a literary convention of disputes before rulers, in which it was supposedly very much a question of exhorting or dissuading, and there are certain indications in the texts that spoken eloquence, including the ability to convince, was much admired. It is hard to see how there could have been a literary tradition which existed entirely in the absence of a parallel, oral one.

In any case, there is no doubt that the Iranian scribes made conscious use of a rhetoric, even if it was not one derived directly from Western models. This cultivation of rhetoric requires the attention of the researcher who makes use of their work, in the form of either documents or histories. The task of describing the particular rhetorics used in various places at various times, as well as the consequences of their use for the modern historian, is a lengthy one which will not be attempted here. In this discussion I shall confine myself to the question of the figured style.

The use of figured style in a text will inevitably affect the work of any researcher who wishes to use it, even one who claims to be interested only in the "facts" which can be distilled from it. The precise way in which the figured style modifies the "factual content" of a text, however, is difficult to spell out, since it involves such knotty issues as the meaning of meaning and the nature of metaphor. Suffice it to say that, from a variety of points

of view, the use of a figured style is considered to move us away from the meaning that might be communicated in plain style or one closer to the "degree zero" writing in a particular culture.<sup>6</sup> The arguments over such matters tend to become very involved, but it may be useful to include a couple of simple examples. In the first place, the use of such devices as rhyming, parallel periods, in which there is no modification of the basic meaning, or only a slight modification, takes up space which in "plain style" might be used for the inclusion of more detailed information, that is, a given length of running text in figured style will contain less "factual detail" than an equivalent length of plain text. But this is in fact a tricky question. One might say that a text containing more factual detail is one which deals with more external referents with a given number of characters, but such a definition depends on the resolution of difficult issues. Here, more or less following Eco,<sup>7</sup> one might say that a certain historical situation may have been necessary for the production of the "historical" text, but it is not a part of the text's later "semiotic functioning" in other environments.

In addition, the use of figures which involve some type of metaphorical substitution, for example, will involve the substitution for a "degree zero" of another which carries only some of the semes, or basic units of meaning, of the expression it replaces, plus others which interfere with the "plain understanding" of the text and may be considered "noise" by researchers. It will be seen in the discussion which follows that it is also possible to understand the "excess" semic content elements as supplying useful information. But there is no doubt that the metaphors affect the meaning, however one chooses to deal with them. According to Group Mu, ". . . metaphor is not, properly speaking, a substitution of meaning, but a modification of the semantic content of a term. This modification is the result of the conjunction of two basic operations: addition and suppression of semes."<sup>8</sup>

To turn to the appearance of this figured style in the Iranian chanceries, there are indications that the interest in it must go back to the late fifth/eleventh century, in the case of the Saljuq bureaucracy. Rādūyānī's *Tarjumān al-Balāghah*, which was written about this time, recommends the use of figures to both poets and scribes, although the examples themselves are entirely from poetry.<sup>9</sup> This seems to be an Eastern Iranian work, perhaps from a place like Marv. It was later read by the famous poet-scribe of the Khvārazmshāhs, Rashīd al-Dīn Vaṭvāt, who decided to write his own treatise, since he did not like Rādūyānī's examples.<sup>10</sup> Both Rādūyānī's recommendations to the scribes and Rashīd al-Dīn's use of his work suggest an interest on the part of the scribes of the Eastern chanceries in treatises

on the rhetorical figures. The difficulty in being more precise about the date, or period, is a result of our inability to find chancery documents from the Earlier Saljuq period. We do not get documents until the early part of the sixth/twelfth century. Rādūyānī's text actually precedes any certain examples from the chanceries.

The connection is made in this fashion, rather than citing Rashīd al-Dīn's own epistles and poetry, in order to suggest the possibility that Jurjānī's treatises in Arabic rhetoric, especially *Asrār al-Balāghah*, may have helped spark this interest in the figured style. Jurjānī, of course, was all his life at the Ziyārid capital, the seat of that small Eastern court which seems to have been so influential in the development of Arabic letters in the Iranian world. As Ritter says of Jurjānī's works on rhetoric, "These two books revolutionized the study of rhetoric in the East."<sup>11</sup> The examples of influence which Ritter cites (beginning in 606/1209–10) are too late for our concerns. We would have to assume a more immediate impact on the scribes of the later fifth/eleventh century, and this is something I have not been able to verify up to this time.

It does seem as if some such influence from the Arabic was at work in the Saljuq chancery by the early sixth/twelfth century. Muntajab al-Dīn Badī, the man who served as chief of Sanjar's chancery for some twenty years (ca.528/1133–1134 to 548/1153–1154) says in the introduction to his collection of compositions, the *Atabat al-Katabah*,<sup>12</sup> that the Persian-writing scribes of the East were forced to learn Arabic and Arabic style in order to deal with the Caliphate and "Arab kings." I assume that the move of many Khurasanian scribes, who belonged to the Samanid-Ghaznavid chancery tradition, to the West with the Saljuqs helped force their attention on Arabic. It is also interesting to note that Muntajab al-Dīn tells us that he was inspired to begin his career as a scribe in Marv after seeing some of the Arabic letters of one of his grandfathers who served with the Ziyārids. In any case, we can assume that the figured style was already in favor at Marv in 516/1122–23 when the author began his career, for that is the style in which he was trained and for which he became famous.

Thus it looks as if it will be possible to trace the development of a figured style in Persian chancery prose under the influence of Arabic. One pathway of this influence may have been the general interest taken in the work of Jurjānī. Another must have been the move of the Khurasanian scribes west into an Arabic-using area—travelling along in the wake of the Saljuq conquests. I am going to leave this question in what cannot be called more than a suggestive stage and turn to the textual evidence which the scribes themselves offer us about their craft and the way in which it was

employed, in hopes of beginning to understand the place of ornament in the figured style. I will state the case first, then give some examples of the evidence.

It will seem obvious after a little reflection, but it is important to note that the scribes were acutely conscious that their work was always subject to the most critical scrutiny by other scribes, including superiors, envious peers and sworn enemies. Their work was always on display. And the notion of display of skill, even virtuosity, is important for understanding how they came upon the figured style, since one of the purposes of an official letter or document was just that, the display of elegance and fine workmanship. The documents were tokens in a system of exchange among members of the ruling elite. The most important ones were read aloud in solemn assembly and were expected to be among the most perfect examples of the craft. The rhetorical figures must have seemed a welcome addition to the repertoire of stylistic devices by scribes who were called upon to produce displays of skill. It gave the craft a new dimension and allows the practitioners to develop an ornate, artful Persian prose which came to be regarded as the only appropriate style for this type of interchange among members of the ruling class. In the same way that the rulers vied in exchanging gifts, or in having the best *qasidahs* dedicated to themselves, they hired the best scribal talent and vied in the exchange of correspondence. There are indications in the texts, the *‘Atabat al-Katabah*, for example,<sup>13</sup> that an elegant response to such an epistle was regarded as a matter of great importance. Detailed communication among the elite on matters of mutual interest could be handled by emissaries themselves who might speak from written instructions.<sup>14</sup> Evidence for the scribes' view of their work can be found in Muntajab al-Dīn's introduction to the *‘Atabat al-Katabah*, already referred to, and in the introduction to Bahā al-Dīn Baghdādī's collection.<sup>15</sup> Aside from numerous specific remarks about what might be regarded as a lapse in performance, the whole tenor of Mayhanī's manual, *Dastūr-i Dabīrī*.<sup>16</sup> supports this view.

Mayhanī's information allows us to go even further. He explains how a letter should have an overall purpose (*maqṣūd*) which relates to the character of the exchange between the communicating parties.<sup>17</sup> The *maqṣūd* might be, for example, *tahnīyat* (congratulations), and it was to be organized and ornamented to serve that purpose. The use of headings in some of the *inshā'* collections tends to support the idea of the *maqṣūd* as the dominant organizing concept, in that there are headings for some of the letters and documents which indicate the particular *maqṣūd*, such as diplomas for investing people with various posts, letters of congratulation

or condolence, requests for moeny, invitations, etc. All the usual situations are covered, along with appropriate answers. Mayhanī treats in detail the matter of organizing the flow of discourse (in the *tashbīb*, for example) and the ornament, especially the use of metaphorical constructions, so as to carefully serve the *maqṣūd*.

The ideas stated above about excellence in the scribal craft and its function in elite society can also be applied to the histories. They were also regarded as displays of skill, and they are sometimes clearly written for a purpose which involved some kind of social or economic transaction, as tokens to be appropriately ornamented. I shall review briefly some examples.

Stephen Fairbanks believes that Najm al-Dīn Qummī, the author of the *Tārīkh al-Vuzarā*, the earliest of my examples (548/1188–89), did not want to be known,<sup>18</sup> but he certainly wanted his work to be known and regarded his rather peculiar ornate style as a display. His way of treating ornament in relation to his subject makes it obvious that he considered the figures at least as important as the history of the bureaucrats he mentions. His *maqṣūd*, as Fairbanks points out, is perhaps an attempt to make the reader aware of the nature of Fate (*rūzgār*).

Rāvandī's *Rāḥat al-Ṣudūr* (ca. 599/1202) is not full of extraneous matter, as Iqbal would have it, at least not from the author's point of view. It is all of a piece, a package of what he must have regarded as elegant and entertaining matter, a display of his eloquence and learning which was designed (here is his *maqṣūd*) to get him a position with the Rum Saljūq Sultan, Ghiyāṣ al-Dīn Kay Khusraw. Doubtless, in his view, the elaborate exordium, which must have cost him so much effort, was worth far more than the skeletal history of the Saljuqs which he took mostly from the work of Ṣahīr al-Dīn Nishapūri's *Saljūq Nāmah*.

The *Nafsat al-Maṣdūr* of Nasavī (ca. 632/1234–35) is obviously a display of the author's scribal virtuosity, using as its theme the life of the last Khvārazmshāh. It is dedicated to one Sa'd al-Dīn, perhaps a notable of Nasavī's own home area. One might call its purpose (*maqṣūd*) that of "lament over the times." *Nafsat al-Maṣdūr* means something like "pained breath," and the editor of the text, Amīr Ḥasan Yazdgardī,<sup>19</sup> makes it clear that it is used in this case in the sense of "lament over the times, or fate, and comment on unhappy [lit. unwholesome] events." It is also possible to construe its purpose as "consolation," although it strikes us moderns as strange that such an unbelievably bloody series of events as the Mongol Invasion should be treated in this way. However, it was not unusual at all for scribes who were regularly called upon to deal with the death of the

great and the near great in condolence letters and who were trained to be ready for any sort of occasion which might call for their epistolary talents. By Nasavī's time the figured style had long been considered adaptable to any conceivable theme or occasion.

Juvaynī's *Tārīkh-i Jahān Gushā* (ca. 650/1252–3 to 658/1259–60) deals with the Mongol Conquest, the most terrible calamity in the history of Islam, and, again, the scribe turns his art to the purpose. He himself says, ". . . the purpose (*qharaz*) of recounting these tales and declaring and delineating the shape of events (*ṣūrat-i vāqi'āt*) compriseth two objects, viz. the achievement of spiritual and temporal advantage."<sup>20</sup> He goes on to explain these in detail. He also begs to be excused for any lapses in style, indicating that he expects to come under expert scrutiny. The part of his work I have been able to examine in detail up to now show that his conception of the relation between the overall *maqṣūd* and what one might call the subordinate *maqṣūds* of smaller units in his work accords fairly closely with the ideas of Mayhanī.

Browne's reference to Vaṣṣāf's stated intentions<sup>21</sup> will have to suffice for that ultimate work of stylistic complexity, as I have not yet been able to deal with it. Vaṣṣāf's intention, as paraphrased by Browne, accords well with my contention that, in these histories, as in the documents, the figured style was a very important part of the scribe's effort, an integral part of his art. In some cases, such as that of the *Rāḥat al-Ṣudūr*, the work fits precisely under one of the headings in the *inshā'* collections. In other cases the works seem to have been conceived and written as ornament and arrangement in the service of a *maqṣūd*, even though the purpose was not one which received regular treatment in the manuals and collections of *inshā'*. All of these works, whether they were tokens in some particular social or economic exchange or not, seem to have been thought of as ornate objects, to be presented to and, if the authors' ambitions were realized, admired by the members of the elite and the literary men of the age. They belonged to a larger class of works which included non-historical books like the *Marzubān Nāmah*. That they were classified this way is suggested by the "recommended reading list" which Varāvīnī, the author of this work, has in his introduction.<sup>22</sup> There are collections of fables, *maqāmāh* literature, *inshā'* collections, and histories. They all somehow meet Varāvīnī's standards for skill in the use of the figured style.

To conclude, it seems to follow from what has been said above that the modern researcher cannot use these histories by simply "extracting the facts." The nature of the whole work is important if we are to understand the entirety of the author's message. We must be aware of the writer's



purpose and of the way in which he arranged and ornamented his work to serve that purpose. Beyond the words themselves is the message of skill. How that message was sent, even how well it was sent, is part of the history of the system of relationships in which the work functioned. Moreover, this notion of purpose served by arrangement and ornament affects the smaller segments of these works, and it is important for us to understand these smaller-scale relationships in attempting to interpret correctly the meaning of a paragraph or a sentence. What does the author in fact say about a particular event or circumstance? What is the whole message he attempts to send regarding some particularity? To answer these questions we have to understand and appreciate his figured style, and this means that we have to pay much more attention to rhetorical matters than some of us have hitherto been accustomed to do. It is asking a great deal when we consider how remote these people are from us in time, space and outlook, but it is no more than they themselves would expect.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Rāvandī, Muḥammad, *The Rāḥat-us-Ṣudūr wa Āyat-us-Surūr*, ed. Muḥammad Iqbāl, London: Luzac and Co. (G.M.S. n. s. Vol. II), 1921, p. XXII.

<sup>2</sup> Browne, E. G. *A Literary History of Persia*, Vol. III, pp. 67–68.

<sup>3</sup> Peterson, R.G. "Critical Calculations: Measure and Symmetry in Literature," *PMLA*, Vol. 91. No. 3 (May 1976), pp. 367–375.

<sup>4</sup> Busse, H. *Untersuchungen zum Islamischen Kanzleiwesen*, Abhandlungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Islamische Reihe, Bd. I, Cairo, 1959.

<sup>5</sup> 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *Asrār al-Balaghāh: The Mysteries of Eloquence*, ed. Helmut Ritter, Istanbul: Government Press, 1954, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Group Mu, for example, on treating rhetorical figures as deviation from a norm: "While every concept of deviation calls for a norm, or degree zero, it is extremely difficult to give this norm an acceptable definition. We might be content with an intuitive definition, that is a 'naive' discourse without artifice, without connotations, in which 'a hole is a hole.' However, difficulties arise in judging whether a certain text is or is not figured. Every speech act, every word, in fact is the act of an addressor. No speech act can be presumed innocent without great caution." *A General Rhetoric*, tr. Burrell and Slotkin, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1981, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Eco, U., *A Theory of Semiotics*, Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1976, p. 58.

<sup>8</sup> *General Rhetoric*, p. 106.

<sup>9</sup> Al-Rādūyānī, Muḥammad b. 'Umar, *Kitāb Tarjumān al-Balāghah*, ed. Ahmet Ateş, Istanbul: İbrahim Horoz Basımevi, 1949. See p. 7, for example.

<sup>10</sup> Vaṭvāt, Rashīd al-Dīn, *Hadāyiq al-Sihr*. ed. 'Abbās Iqbāl. *Dīvān-i Rashīd al-Dīn Vaṭvāt*, ed. Sa'īd Nafīsī. Tehran: Bārānī, 1339 Š.

<sup>11</sup> *Asrār*, "Introduction," p. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Ed. 'Abbās Iqbāl. Tehran: Shirkat-i Sihāmī-yi Chāp, 1329 Š. p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> P. 3. Muntajab al-Dīn relates how he was having difficulty satisfying his master in the chancery and how he finally overcame his problems: "I was in this state of lamentations and supplication until the end of the day when I came out and went to my master [Sharaf al-Dīn Ṣāḥīr-i Bayhaqī]. He handed me a letter which one of the great ones among the learned of the age had written to him, containing eloquent phrases and expressions, and meanings which were both precise and charming, and said, 'Take a look at this and, if you know you can write an answer, write a suitable response to it.' What he said affected my heart, and the sense of resentment and loss left my mind. I rose and went to my room, and with vehemence of nature and a burning mind, wrote the answer to that letter and went back to him in haste and gave it to him. He considered it carefully, and the signs of ease and cheerfulness appeared in the lines of his face. Every few moments he would put it down and tell me how amazed he was, then pick it up again and read until he finally read it to the end. He folded it and said, 'Real correspondence is like this, and the art of the secretary is thus.'"

<sup>14</sup> Some modern historians have used the letters and documents as evidence for the substance of an exchange, or the actual working details of a position for which we have a diploma of investiture. But many of the letters, at any rate, indicate that the accompanying emissary is to deal with matters of substance, and there are also examples of written instructions which were to guide the emissary in the conduct of his discussions. The use of emissaries also speaks to the question of deliberative rhetoric in Islamic settings, since an oral presentation or discussion presumes the use of some kind of discourse aimed at "exhorting or dissuading."

<sup>15</sup> Bahā al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mu'ayyid-i Baghdādī, *Al-Tavvasul ilā al-Tarrasul*, ed. Aḥmad Bahmanyār. Tehran: Shirkat-i Sihāmī-yi Chāp, 1315 Š. pp. 9–12.

<sup>16</sup> Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Khāliq al-Mayhanī (Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Ḥālīk al-Mayhanī), *Dastūr-i Dabīrī*, ed. Adnan Erzi, Ankara: Imprimerie de la Société d'Histoire Turque, 1962.

<sup>17</sup> Pp. 20–21, 31–32.

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Charles Fairbanks, "THE *TARĪKH AL-VUZARĀ'*: A HISTORY OF THE SALJUQ BUREAUCRACY," diss., U of Michigan, 1980, pp. 7, 45. The text of this work has been edited and published by Muḥammad Taqī Dānish Pazhūh: Najm al-Dīn Abū al-Rajā' Qummī, *Tārīkh al-Vuzarā'*, Tehran: Mu'assisah-i Mu'ālī'āt va Taḥqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1363 Š.

<sup>19</sup> Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad Khurandizī Nasavī, *Nafṣat al-Maṣdūr*, ed. Yazdgarī, Tehran: Idārah-i Kull-i Nigārish-i Vizārat-i Āmūzish va Parvarish, 1343 Š., pp. *shast va do* (62).

<sup>20</sup> 'Alā' u d-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik-i Juwaynī, *Tārīkh-i Jahān-Gushā*, ed. Muḥammad Qazvīnī, Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1912 (G. M. S. XVI, 1.), Part I, p. 7. Tr. J. A. Boyle, *The History of the World-Conqueror*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1958, Vol. I, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> Above, p. 90.

<sup>22</sup> Varāvīnī, Sa'd al-Dīn, *Marzubān Nāmah*, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan, Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Īrān, Nr. 217, 2535 Shāhanshāhī, pp. 5–6.

# A Case of Semantic Reconstruction: The Egyptian Arabic Verbal Prefix Bi-

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INTERNAL reconstruction is defined by Wallace Chafe (1959:478) as “a procedure for inferring part of the history of a language from material available for a synchronic description of the language, and from that alone.” Such history has typically been the history of sound changes based on irregular morphological forms. Chafe (1959:483) adds “Indeed, some kind of change occurring at some time during the history of a language is inferable from any morphophonemic alternation.” Whereas internal reconstruction has almost exclusively involved phonology in a morphemic environment, Jeffers and Lehiste (1979:47) add that the phonological history of a language can be inferred from lacks of symmetry in the sound pattern alone, citing as an example that the lack of a phoneme /p/ in Old Irish, where /t/ and /k/ occur along with /b d g/, invites the inference that an early /p/ had been lost; this hypothesis is confirmed by comparative evidence from related Gaelic languages. The charts below show the actual lack of symmetry (left) and how a hypothetical /p/ restores the symmetry (right):

	t	k
b	d	g

p	t	k
b	d	g

This principle can be illustrated with examples from Modern Standard Arabic (MSA); the chart below lists the stop consonants of MSA plus /f/ and /j/:<sup>1</sup>

—		t	ṭ		k	q	ʾ
b		d	ḍ		—	—	
	f						
	—						
				—			
				j			

The dashes indicate asymmetries, or gaps, in the pattern; since voicing distinguishes contrasting sets of consonants, such as /t d/, /ṭ ḏ/, /s z/ and /š ž/, the lack of voiceless counterparts for /b/ and /j/ (i.e., /p/ and /č/ respectively) and of voiced counterparts for /k/, /q/ and /f/ (/g, G, v/ respectively) constitute such gaps. If we hypothesize that /f/ derives from an original /p/, both being voiceless labial consonants, and that /j/ likewise derives from an original /g/, a phonetic change attested in many other languages, then four loose ends are neatly tied up in place as shown in the chart below:

<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>ṭ</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>q</i>	<i>ʾ</i>
<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>ḏ</i>	<i>g</i>	—	

Comparative evidence from other Semitic languages supports this hypothesis; where Akkadian and Hebrew, for example, show the reflex /p/ of Proto-Semitic \*/p/ Arabic shows /f/, and where Akkadian and Hebrew exhibit /g/ for Proto-Semitic \*/g/ Arabic has /j/:<sup>2</sup>

Proto-Semitic	Akkadian	Hebrew	Arabic	
*p	<i>pītū, patū</i>	<i>pātaḥ</i>	<i>fataḥa</i>	‘to open’
*g	<i>gammalu</i>	<i>gāmāl</i>	<i>ḡamalun</i>	‘camel’

There is no material to work with to find a voiced counterpart to /q/; indeed, there is some question about the voicing of the original \*q itself.<sup>3</sup>

This illustration is strictly phonological; one that is morphophonemic in nature involves the Arabic definite article /l/, which assimilates to a following homorganic, i.e. coronal, consonant. The situation in MSA is illustrated below:

Anterior Position	Coronal Position	Back Position
<i>aḷ-baabu</i> ‘the door’	<i>an-nuuru</i> ‘the light’	<i>aḷ-qamaru</i> ‘the moon’
But:	<i>aḷ-ḡabalu</i> ‘the mountain’	

/j/, being coronal, should assimilate the /l/ as does coronal /n/, but such is not the case. We can posit the following set of sound changes to explain this anomaly:

1. Original State: no assimilation; original /g/.

*aḷ-baabu   aḷ-nuuru   aḷ-gabalu   aḷ-qamaru*

## 2. Sound Change 1: Assimilation of Definite Article l.

$$\begin{array}{ccc} l & \longrightarrow & C / \quad C \\ \text{[def. art.]} & & \text{[+cor]} \end{array}$$

/n/, being coronal, assimilates coronal /l/, whereas /g/, which is [-coronal] (velar), does not assimilate it.

## 3. Sound Change 2: Affrication of /g/. All /g/'s become /j/'s.

al-baabu    an-nuuru    al-ǧābalu    al-qamaru

Sound change 1 was complete and had become inoperative before sound change 2 took place, so that /l/ never assimilated to coronal /j/ in Standard Arabic, although that has happened in dialectal Arabic. This “explains” the non-application of the assimilation rule to /j/ in Classical and Modern Standard Arabic, and also establishes the relative chronology of the sound changes.<sup>4</sup>

We can say that in effect internal reconstruction is the explication of an irregular feature by reconstructing an earlier stage of the language where that feature is perfectly regular. It may be that *any* irregular feature is potentially a relic from an earlier regular structure—that is, that it is a possible clue to historical change in that language—and that this applies to all components of the language. What I propose to do here is to take a syntactic-semantic irregularity in the occurrence of the verbal prefix /bi-/ in Egyptian Arabic and reconstruct the stages of its evolution.<sup>5</sup> Henceforth the term “Egyptian Arabic” will refer specifically to the Cairene variety of Egyptian Colloquial Arabic.

The irregularity involves the moods of the Egyptian Arabic (EA) verb. The EA verb has three moods, the *imperative*, e.g.

ruuḥ ‘go!’ (masc. sing.)

The *subjunctive* mood is formed by prefixing a subject-marker prefix to the imperative:

yiruuḥ ‘(that) he go’

The subjunctive is usually required by some preceding expression denoting necessity, hope, desire, permission, purpose, etc. as in

laazim      yiruuḥ    ‘he must go’  
necessary    he go

Since the imperative and the subjunctive never occur with /bi-/ they are not central to the topic of this paper and will be dealt with only peripherally.

The *indicative* is formed by prefixing the mood marker /bi-/ to the subjunctive, with proper adjustments for syllable structure:

biyruuḥ ‘he goes’

Depending on the context the indicative may be construed with the following kinds of meaning:

a. *Habitual*, with expressions signifying repetition or recurrence of action, such as “every day”, “often”, “sometimes”, “never”, etc.:

(1) baruuḥ maktabt ilgam’a *kull kaam yoom*.<sup>6</sup> ‘I go regularly to the university library *every few days*.’ (9)

(2) batkallim ma’aahum ‘arabi *dayman*. ‘We speak Arabic together *all the time*.’ (5)

b. *Progressive*, with expressions denoting a point in time or where the time context of the sentence itself is present time (“now”, “right now”):

(3) wiḥaaliyyan hiyya btištaḡal fibank min ilbunuuk hina. ‘*Now* she’s working in a bank here.’ (8)

(4) inta btidris tariix maṣr? ‘*Are you studying* Egyptian history?’ (8)

c. *Generic* or *dispositional* refers to action that the subject is predisposed to perform, whether by nature (generic) or by training or experience (dispositional). These occur in contexts of general truth value, especially in proverbs, sayings, etc. I did not find a good example of a generic, but the following illustrates dispositional meaning:

(5) bass inta btitkallim ‘arabi kwayyis ‘awi. ‘But *you speak* Arabic very well!’ (5)

d. *Stative* verbs are characterized by the absence of any action; some English examples are “know, want, love, own”.<sup>7</sup> Illustration:

(6) biḡhibb maṣr ‘awi. ‘[*He*] loves Egypt dearly.’ (6)

Stative meaning is of course not a function of context but is inherent in the verb. Since stative verbs are actionless they cannot denote progressive action, but can denote the other various contextual meanings.

To summarize: In Egyptian Arabic the indicative mood with /bi-/ is imperfective in aspect; verbs denoting actions may have the contextually determined meaning of habitual action or progressive action.

The sentences below illustrate an irregularity in the use of the indicative prefix /bi-/, in that the verb forms in italics are indicative in meaning and function and yet occur without the indicative prefix:

(7) ittilimiiz zayy magdi *yidduulu* wagibaat kull yoom fimaṣr. 'Students like Magdi *are given* homework every day in Egypt.' ["Students like Magdi *they give him* homework every day."] (28)

(8) *aḥibb* aʿullukum 'May I say . . . ' ["*I want* that I say to you"] (16)

(9) *tiʿrafu?* '*Do you know him?*' (6)

(10) ilmaṣriyyiin *yihibbu* ššaay sukkar ziyaada. 'Egyptians *love* tea with plenty of sugar.' (7)

(11) *maʿrafš* '*I don't know.*' (29)

If the meaning is habitual, as in sentence (7) above, the /bi-/ prefix is optional;<sup>8</sup> in this illustration the verb /yidduulu/ 'they give to him' has habitual meaning and occurs without the prefix. The form with prefix, /biyidduulu/, would mean the same thing. Stative verbs, as in sentences (8, 9, 10), seem to occur in the indicative without the prefix more often than with. The prefix is especially rare with a negative stative, as in (11). On the other hand, the prefix /bi-/ is obligatory if the meaning is progressive, as in (3, 4) above.

Thus we have a state of affairs where the indicative mood marker /bi-/ is obligatory if the meaning of the verb is progressive, optional but usual if the meaning is habitual, and usually deleted if the meaning is stative. On the basis of these data I will reconstruct the semantic development of this prefix for Egyptian Arabic.

#### Phase I. Pre-Egyptian

INDICATIVE			SUBJUNCTIVE	
Progressive	Habitual	Stative	Non-Stative	Stative
ʿaktubu		ʿaʿrifu	ʿaktuba	ʿaʿrifa
'I'm writing'	'I write'	'I know'	'(that) I write'	'(that) I know'

This pre-Egyptian phase is assumed to be equal to Classical Arabic: mood markers still existed in speech, with a distinction between indicative (-u) and subjunctive (-a) moods but not between statives and non-statives.

#### Phase II. Proto-Egyptian

INDICATIVE			SUBJUNCTIVE	
Progressive	Habitual	Stative	Non-Stative	Stative
ʿaktub		ʿaʿrif	ʿaktub	ʿaʿrif
'I'm writing'	'I write'	'I know'	'(that) I write'	'(that) I know'

In Phase II the phenomenon of pause, whereby word-final short vowels are deleted before silence, has been generalized to an unconditional deletion, resulting in permanent loss of suffixed mood markers. Thus a form like *ʾaktub*, with no mood suffix at all, is used for all moods. This probably happened in the first centuries of the Islamic era, as Arabic came to be spoken by many substratum peoples.

Phase III. Introduction of progressive marker /bi-/

INDICATIVE			SUBJUNCTIVE	
Progressive	Habitual	Stative	Non-Stative	Stative
<i>baktib</i>	ʾaktib	ʾaʿraf	ʾaktib	ʾaʿraf
'I'm writing'	'I write'	'I know'	'(that) I write'	'(that) I know'

In Phase III /bi-/ is introduced as a marker of progressive meaning, creating the opposition progressive/non-progressive.

Phase IV. Stative - Non-Stative

INDICATIVE			SUBJUNCTIVE	
Progressive	Habitual	Stative	Non-Stative	Stative
<i>baktib</i>		ʾaʿrif	ʾaktib	ʾaʿraf
'I'm writing'	'I write'	'I know'	'(that) I write'	'(that) I know'

In this period the prefix is extended to include habitual meaning. It now indicates either progressive or habitual action, and its absence implies stativeness.

Phase V. Indicative - Subjunctive

INDICATIVE			SUBJUNCTIVE	
Progressive	Habitual	Stative	Non-Stative	Stative
<i>baktib</i>		<i>baʿraf</i>	ʾaktib	ʾaʿraf
'I'm writing'	'I write'	'I know'	'(that) I write'	'(that) I know'

By Phase V, the present day, /bi-/ has spread to cover statives as well as non-statives; it is now the sign of the indicative as opposed to the subjunctive mood.

This reconstruction of the spread of the use of /bi-/ correlates with its semantic usage in present-day Egypt: the prefix was introduced specifically to mark progressive meaning, and its use with verbs in progressive contexts today is obligatory. It then became well identified with habitual action as well, and usually occurs in such contexts today. Its spread to stative verbs was relatively recent,<sup>9</sup> and is limited in this usage.



This would imply that the feature of habitualness is closer to stativity than it is to progressiveness, or that it shares some dimensions with stativeness.

In this paper I have not taken a morphological irregularity and reconstructed an earlier regular stage, but have traced the syntactic/semantic spread of a verbal prefix introduced a thousand years ago. Can this hypothesis be substantiated by evidence from literary sources? There seems to be general agreement (Cohen 1924:63, Blau 1981:121) that by the fourteenth century at the latest it was not unusual to find /bi-/ prefixed to imperfect tense verbs in writings by Christians and Jews, who were less constrained than Muslims to maintain the purity of the written language. Blau (1981:121) gives as an illustration (in Hebrew script) the text FM B MLH 'I don't do it', which may be read as something like /fa-maa ba'maluh/, which contrasts with Classical /fa-maa 'a'maluhu/. It remains to go to the literary sources to examine all such cases of this Middle Arabic to validate or disprove the reconstruction.

Finally, a word about the origin of /bi-/. The general consensus is that it is in origin the preposition /bi-/ 'in'.<sup>10</sup> In Classical Arabic the preposition /bi-/ may introduce the predicate in an equational sentence, especially a negative one, as in

'a-lam yarawna 'anna-allaaha **bi-qaadirin** 'alaa 'an yuḥyiya-l-mawtaa? 'Do they not see that God *has the power* ["*is able*"] to bring the dead to life?' (Wright 1951:159)

maa hum **bi-mwminiina** 'They are not *believers*.' (Wright 1951:158)

maa 'anaa **bi-daahibin** 'I am not *one who goes, am not going*'.

It is then a logical step to transfer this preposition to the indicative verb to reinforce progressive meaning. It is reasonable to propose that the negative predicate with /bi-/ followed by active participles, which often have progressive meaning, served as the model for the transfer of this preposition to the indicative verb with progressive meaning,<sup>11</sup> and that the domain of the new prefix then spread to all uses of the indicative verb.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Subscript dots are used in this paper to denote emphasis and the voiceless pharyngeal fricative /ħ/. Other symbols are ġ, the voiced velar fricative /ğayn/; ʕ, the voiced pharyngeal fricative /ʕayn/; ɖ, the voiced interdental fricative /ɖaal/, and G, a voiced uvular stop.

<sup>2</sup> These examples are from Gray 1934: 15, 16.

<sup>3</sup> See Blanc (1969) "The Fronting of Semitic "g" and the *qal-gal* Dialect Split in Arabic."

<sup>4</sup> See also Brame 1970, 19-20.

<sup>5</sup> A verbal prefix /bi-/ occurs also in Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian, Jordanian, Libyan and some Peninsular dialects of Arabic but with varying meanings; only Egyptian Arabic is considered here.

<sup>6</sup> All Egyptian Arabic citations are taken from Abdel-Massih (1978) *A Comprehensive Study of Egyptian Arabic*, which constitutes a body of natural sentences with ready-made contextual translations which were of course not made with the present semantic concerns in mind. Italics highlight the determining contextual expressions; page numbers where the original sentences are found are given in parenthesis. Since the translations tend to be free, literal translations are supplied in brackets when it is desirable to show the structure of the Arabic original.

<sup>7</sup> English statives typically do not occur in the progressive form, like \*"I am wanting to go." For Arabic statives see McCarus (1976) "A Semantic Classification of Arabic Verbs" 14-18, 22-24.

<sup>8</sup> Mona Kamel of the American University in Cairo pointed out to me this feature of verbs with habitual meaning.

<sup>9</sup> Hala Talaat of Cairo tells me that Egyptian movies of the nineteen-thirties show much less frequent use of the prefix /bi-/ than is the case today.

<sup>10</sup> This agrees with Comrie's (1976:103) theorization that progressive constructions are locative in origin. For other theories on the origins of the Arabic verbal prefix /bi-/ see Cohen (1924:63).

<sup>11</sup> I owe this suggestion to Dr. A. Gaber Asfour of Cairo University.

## Toward a Method for Historical Lexicography of Semitic Languages

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*It is a good indication of the wisdom and experience of Ernest Abdel-Massih, that even his casual remarks were frequently stimulating and productive of insights into fields of academic research that lay far beyond his own area of specialization. It is especially appropriate that this essay is dedicated to his honored memory, for several key principles elaborated upon here derive from his observations.*

IN spite of a couple of centuries of intensive academic exploration of the language of the Hebrew Bible, there still is little agreement on many matters of crucial historical import. A generation ago, for example, one scholar could assert confidently that almost none of the Psalms were post-Exilic in date, while another equally confidently asserted that none were pre-Exilic. Similar arguments have raged over many other Hebrew texts. The situation still today is analogous to an inability to distinguish between the language of the King James Bible and the New English Bible. A major reason for this anomaly is simply an unconcern for or even dismissal of “mere history,” as one preacher put it. The concern to exploit the Sacred Book for the legitimation of modern social and cultural phenomena—the authority of the Bible religious drive—has driven out the concern to understand the historical process, to which the biblical faith was so extremely sensitive. Already in rabbinic Judaism the dictum that “there is nothing early and nothing late in Sacred Scripture” illustrates the anti-historical bias of the post-biblical religious traditions.

We may add to this attitudinal complex the fact that the reconstruction of the biblical history, and especially the pre-monarchic period is so difficult that there is relatively little on which scholars can agree. In turn, this inability to reach consensus is caused primarily by an inability to agree upon the dating and sources of the various parts of the text that purport to describe the early, formative period of ancient Israel.

Modern attempts at the reconstruction of the biblical history began actually only about 50 years ago, and it is not surprising that much of this endeavor still remains naive historically. On the other hand, the discipline of historical linguistics is itself only a couple of decades old. It should not be surprising, then, to find that scholars seem to assume that the Hebrew language was let down from heaven at Mt. Sinai and remained unchanged to the present day. It is true that the present text of the Hebrew Bible has been homogenized by the process of transmission, so that it is difficult, though not impossible, to distinguish linguistic contrasts between various parts of the text and various ages.

The present essay is a preliminary and still experimental proposal for a more sophisticated and historically based method for recovering the dialectic history of ancient Hebrew language. The method begins with a number of observations that are axiomatic: assumptions that can be relied upon in a more or less orderly universe.

1. Language is an extremely sensitive indicator of cultural conventions and cultural change. As culture changes, which it did repeatedly in the turbulent history of biblical times, language changes. Linguistic history must, therefore, be correlated with social and cultural history. This is both a working hypothesis and an observed fact, though only the gross changes that took place with the Exile have been much studied.<sup>1</sup>
2. The most constant, rapid, and observable of linguistic changes is the semantic: new meanings and usages are constantly being introduced in any language, and especially in times of accelerated cultural change.
3. In relatively simple pre-modern societies the total inventory of words in normal use in any given time and culture is not likely to be more than four or five thousand items.<sup>2</sup>
4. Ernest Abdel-Massih observed some years ago that the most important indicator of dialect is lexicon, not phonetics or morphology. This is the more important for ancient languages for which phonetic information is minimal. Speakers of any language can make allowances for variations in pronunciation, grammar and syntax, but usage of an unknown word brings communication to a sudden halt.<sup>3</sup>
5. Today, as in antiquity, language is not homogeneous over any large social field. Above all, urban language contrasts sharply to that of villages, and the village dialects differ similarly among themselves. Village dialects are strongly conservative, and are usually looked upon

as old-fashioned and crude. It is in villages that old traditions and speech patterns are preserved sometimes for incredibly long periods of time, while the city and its political establishments are characteristically the instigators of cultural and linguistic change.<sup>4</sup>

6. Etymological relationships are therefore extremely important historical evidence. Etymology is actually preserved linguistic history, and therefore social history, since language is itself a social phenomenon. It is a powerful means for the recovery of forgotten social relationships and historical processes.

### *I. Patterns of External Relationships*

Decades ago I noted with curiosity and puzzlement the fact that the Hebrew lexicons almost always cited cognates to the Hebrew words and roots, but why should a large number have cognates in Arabic, for example, while others had cognates only in Aramaic and Akkadian? Before the decipherment of the Byblos Syllabic texts<sup>5</sup> it was virtually impossible to find any order in the seemingly random distribution of cognates. It was indeed fashionable in some circles to disregard them entirely as of no further significance.<sup>6</sup>

Now it seems quite clear that the distribution of lexical cognates falls into five classes that correlate extremely well with what we know of social and cultural history from the Early Bronze Age to the Persian Empire. The differentiation of different Semitic languages and dialects had already taken place in the Early Bronze Age, and if anyone wishes to posit a common socio-linguistic source for all of them, it is clear that he must look far beyond the Early Bronze Age to the Chalcolithic at least, if not the pre-pottery Neolithic.

Several years ago, I began examining the voluntary vocabulary of a number of biblical passages, to find out whether or not there were identifiable patterns in the occurrences of cognates to the roots in Hebrew. A secondary purpose was to discover whether there were chronologically bound changes in the distribution of those patterns. Because the problem was such a complex one the procedure was simply to take the first 52 'voluntary' roots in a given passage, and by examining the attested cognates assign them to different classes. This statistical sampling is of course subject to a considerable margin of error, but the purpose was primarily a heuristic one that could easily be expanded to cover larger text segments as time and the accumulation of data progressed. By 'voluntary' roots, I mean non-obligatory words, which then excludes proper names, necessary

grammatical particles, and other such items in which a speaker or writer has no choice of vocabulary.

To test chronological variation, a series of texts the dating of which is generally agreed upon, such as Judg 5, Deut 2, Lam 1, Gen 17, was chosen for controls, and a number of texts the dating of which is very uncertain or controversial such as Gen 14 and 15, Exod 15 and 21, Deut 32 and Prv 22. Preliminary studies have been devoted to yet other segments of text, but the results are not yet fully tabulated. The present conclusions are intended as an indication of possibilities—and indeed probabilities that may become highly important in the near future.

## *II. Classification of External Relationships*

First, for the classification of roots. They fall quite neatly into five different groups. It is, of course, an enterprise fraught with uncertainties, in view of the sparseness of documentation especially for the Inland Class, but as the old saying goes, 'you don't have to drink the whole ocean to know that it is salty.' The absence of a root is crucial to the method, which of course could lead to wrong conclusions, but there are in most cases means by which to reduce this kind of uncertainty—which will be discussed below. With a very few exceptions the vast majority of Hebrew vocabulary items fall into one of the following five classes:

1. **Class S: Common Semitic.** These roots are attested in Old Akkadian as well as Arabic, pre-Islamic Arabic and Ethiopic, and usually in the West Semitic dialects as well. In any given passage, the **Class S** roots vary between a low of 21.1% (Exo 15) to a high of 48% (Gen 17). The average is roughly 30%. This low figure is a dramatic illustration of the long existent differentiation of vocabulary among the various regional languages and dialects.
2. **Class W: Common West Semitic.** Attested in several of the tongues between the Tigris and the Mediterranean, and including Arabic. Not in Akkadian before the Amorite dynasties of the 19th Century.
3. **Class C: Old Coastal Semitic.** This includes the Byblos Syllabic, of course, the remnants preserved in those Ugaritic lexical items that have cognates *only* in Arabic, and in the Phoenician/Hebrew roots with cognates in Arabic/Ethiopic, but not in Aramaic, Amorite personal names, and Akkadian.<sup>7</sup>
4. **Class I: Inland Dialect.** This includes primarily the various Aramaic dialects, the area of high population density from the Habur triangle to the Taurus Mountains to the North, and to Damascus to the

South. Amorite should be included here also. The Western border is the Amanus Mountain massif. The language must have been just as distinct from the Coastal region as the material culture is also. With no evidence for Aramaic before the 9th century, there is no way except through lexical distribution to determine how great that distinction was. The same is true of the differentiation between the Eastern (Amorite) dialects and the Western ones of the Aleppo-Hama-Damascus axis. The Semitic of the Ebla documents, when it becomes accessible and usable should throw a considerable light on both of these problems.

This class shows perhaps the most important statistical variation, for it seems to be chronologically linked: with a notable exception, the later the text, the higher is the percentage of Inland Class roots. The lowest percentage is yielded by Deut 32 with only 7.7%, while the highest is found in Lamentations 1 with 30.7

5. Class L: Local Dialect. No convincing external cognates known so far. Statistics for this class range from a low of 2% in Gen 17 to a high of 9.6% in Deut 2. Average is 5.9%.

### *III. Criteria for Class Assignments*

Verbal roots are, of course, abstractions, and languages do not operate on the basis of abstract but real lexical forms. However, whether we are dealing with internal or cross-linguistic phenomena it is obvious that it is only the root, not a concrete form that can furnish the evidence for a real-world relationship between two words. Those relationships are of great importance for social and linguistic history.

A criterion of prime importance for determining the class of a particular root is whether or not that root in a given language is productive. If the word is isolated—has no other cognate forms in the language, while it is highly productive in other Semitic languages, then it is most probable that the isolated word is a loan.

Another criterion involves “parallel pairs.” Frequently the first of such a pair is the word in common use, while the second may occur, for example, only in poetry. The probability is that the second word is foreign, but familiar (at least to the educated)?

The phenomenon of “root doublets” is also of considerable importance. In this case, two roots with different forms but related semantically, are quite good proof of different histories. Quite often such root doublets are semantically specialized, e.g. the famous doublet *nādar* ‘vow’ and *nazār*



'one vowed: Nazirite'. Like English 'shirt' and 'skirt', they came into the language through different dialect routes.

Another criterion of considerable value is that of "semantic distance." Virtually all vocabulary items are characterized in any language by a range of uses (meanings) in different contexts. It is normally not difficult to determine a base meaning from a derived one, whether figurative, transferred, or other semantic process. If a word is used in one language only in a transferred meaning, the base meaning is frequently preserved in another language of source. A classical illustration involves the copula verb 'to be', root *kwn*. In Byblos Syllabic, Phoenician, and Arabic this is the normal verb. In Biblical Hebrew the Qal stem does not occur, and the root is used only in derived conjugations with the derived meaning 'make/cause to be'. The Inland dialect verb, attested at Zenjirli and Old Aramaic of Se-fire, and most certainly in Amorite personal names has replaced the base meaning of *kwn*, while the Divine Name YHWH probably has excluded causative/factitive meanings of the root *hwy*.

A final observation is in order. Since this is a method for tracing the **early** history of Semitic roots, and therefore of Semitic languages, it is probably of little use from the period of the Persian Empire on, when Aramaic became the *lingua franca* of the entire Near East, and old lexical contrasts became enormously blurred.

#### *IV. Observations on Selected Segments of Biblical Language*

The statistics in Charts I and II derive from a sample of the first 52 roots of each text, except for Jud 5 and Gen 14, where the entire text has been examined. Small variations in each column have no significance. The dramatic gross contrasts in percentages of words stemming from each of the five classes are a fact of enormous potential significance, though it is clear that a much larger body of data will be necessary before firm conclusions may be reached.

In the first column it will be noticed that there is a progressive reduction in the number of OCS roots from the high of 52% in the 20th century syllabic texts from Byblos (the other 48% consists of Common West and Common Semitic, plus nearly 10% of roots otherwise unidentified), to a low of 13.5% in Gen 14A. However, there is an interesting and important exception to this observation: Deut 2, that dates at least five centuries after Jud 5, has a virtually identical percentage of OCS roots, while the other samples of the archaic poetry fall also well into the same range. The later poetry as well as prose shows a much diminished percentage of OCS roots.

*Chart I*  
*Comparative Statistical Distribution*

OCS	%	Inland	%	Com West	%	Com Sem	%	Local	%
*	52		0		25		13		9.6
Jud 5:	38.4	Lam 1:	30.7	Gen 15:	25	Gen 17:	48	Gen 14A:	9.6
Deu 2:	36.5	Exo 21:	23	Gen 14A:	25	Gen 14B:	42.5	Deu 2:	9.6
Prv 22:	34.6	Gen 14A:	21.1	Exo 15:	21.1	Gen 15:	36.5	Exo 15:	7.6
Deu 32:	32.6	Exo 15:	19.2	Deu 32:	19.2	Deu 32:	36.5	Jud 5:	5.7
Exo 15:	30.7	Deu 2:	19.2	Exo 21:	17.3	Exo 21:	34.6	Prv 22:	5.7
Gen 14B:	27.6	Prv 22:	17.3	Gen 17:	15.3	Jud 5:	30.7	Lam 1:	5.7
Lam 1:	21.1	Gen 17:	17.3	Prv 22:	13.4	Gen 14A:	28.8	Gen 15:	4
Gen 15:	21	Gen 14B:	14.8	Lam 1:	13.4	Lam 1:	26.9	Exo 21:	3.8
Exo 21:	19.2	Jud 5:	13.4	Jud 5:	13.4	Deu 2:	25	Deu 32:	3.8
Gen 14A:	13.5	Gen 15:	9.6	Gen 14B:	10.6	Prv 22:	23	Gen 14B:	2.1
Gen 17:	13.5	Deu 32:	5.7	Deu 2:	7.6	Exo 15:	21.1	Gen 17:	2

\* The first 52 roots of the Byblos Syllabic Glossary are provided for comparison.

The phenomenon of Deut 2 constitutes a dramatic illustration of the thesis that language is an extremely sensitive indicator of cultural trends; the text itself stems from a time when there was a systematic, politically inspired attempt to return to old tradition: the so-called "Reform of Josiah." The revival of the old Mosaic/Federation tradition inevitably brought back an increased usage of vocabulary that was relatively infrequent in the preceding three centuries.

The similarity between Deut 2 and Prv 22 is illusory. In the first place, there is only one root of OCS that these two passages have in common (the common verb *šh* 'to make'. Secondly, Prv 22 is probably among the earliest sections of Proverbs, and because of its close ties to the Egyptian wisdom tradition strongly reflects the old Canaanite wisdom tradition of urban Jerusalem. It has twice the percentage of the Common West vocabulary, but otherwise it is remarkable how closely parallel are the statistics for these two passages. Deut 2, on the other hand, is a reflection of archaic village dialect that became influential in the regime of Josiah because of the role of the *ʿam hā-āreš* in his restoration to the throne after the assassination of his father, Amon by the urban bureaucracy.

Conversely, the percentage of Inland Dialect roots increases over the

centuries from zero in Byblos Syllabic (for technical reasons)<sup>8</sup> to 30.7% in Lamentations 1. It is important to note that here also we do not witness a neat gradual increase. The percentage of ID roots is a function of time, but not *merely* a function of time. The highest percentage of ID roots (30.7%) is found in Lamentations 1 which is securely dated to the sixth century B.C. How, then, can one explain the second highest percentage of ID roots (23%) in Exod 21, that antedates the reign of David? Again, the high sensitivity of language to cultural realities is illustrated; Exod 21 is the local adaptation of an age-old Amorite—therefore, Inland Dialect—legal tradition to the specific situation of a covenant-bound coalition of populations within the coastal region, where the two dialects had already been merged for more than a half millennium.

The legal tradition, in other words, necessarily carried with it a specialized vocabulary that derived from the Amorite social and cultural tradition. The close substantive parallels between the "Covenant Code" of Exodus 21–23 and the Code of Hammurapi have thus an important analog in comparative lexicography. A reciprocal observation is the fact that this sample of archaic legal language has also the next to lowest percentage of Old Coastal Semitic roots—just above Gen 14A.

The statistics for Deuteronomy 32 are also interesting and important, for there is a most significant correlation with the other archaic poetic segments examined, Jud 5 and Exo 15. The extremely low percentage of ID vocabulary is entirely in keeping with the posited source of the poem in the central hill country villages of the mid-11th century B.C. (the prophet Samuel). It does not, however, reflect the relatively parochial language of Exo 15, for it has nearly twice the percentage of Common Semitic roots. It is therefore very difficult to place this poem into the period of the Divided Monarchy, as some scholars are now suggesting.<sup>9</sup>

Chart II arranges the texts in what I believe to be their rough chronological order, illustrating the progressive diminution of the OCS vocabulary usage, and the increase in ID vocabulary. One should not expect a neat precision in such an undertaking as this, but as pointed out above, where there is a gross deviation from what otherwise is the normal pattern, there is abundant historical evidence that accounts for that deviation.

Chart II requires relatively little comment other than to observe the astonishingly high percentage of Common Semitic vocabulary in the Abraham narratives except for Gen 14A. This fact correlates extremely well with the thesis I have argued elsewhere<sup>10</sup> that the Abraham narrative came into the biblical tradition in the time of the United Monarchy as a device by which to affirm the common ancestry of *all* the populations under the rule

*Chart II*  
*Sample Contrasts in Chronological Order*

Century	Text	OCS %	Inland %	Com West %	Com Sem %	Local %
xx	BybSyl	52	0	25	13	9.6
xii	Jud 5	38.4	13.4	13.4	30.7	5.7
xi	Exo 15	30.7	19.2	21.1	21.1	7.6
xi	Deu 32	32.6	7.7	19.2	36.5	3.8
xi	Exo 21	19.2	23	17.3	34.6	3.8
x	Gen 15	21	9.6	25	36.5	4
x	Gen 14B	27.6	14.8	10.6	42.5	2.1
x	Prv 22	34.6	17.3	13.4	23	5.7
vii	Gen 14A	13.5	21.1	25	28.8	9.6
vi	Deu 2	36.5	19.2	7.6	25	9.6
vi	Lam 1	21.1	30.7	13.4	23	5.7
vi	Gen 17	13.5	17.3	15.3	48	2

of David, and to legitimize his acquisition of the old pagan urban centers and their territories through the old device of the divine grant.

These preliminary results are reassuring as a possible means by which to assign various sections of the Hebrew Bible to their appropriate historical and social context. Obviously much more work needs to be done in order to accumulate a larger and therefore more reliable sample of data. The correlation of vocabulary distribution with the various "sources" (JEDP) needs to be done, as well as the examination of passages that might give further evidence of the northern dialect (Hosea, Elijah/Elisha narratives?), and the contrast between the standard dialect of Jerusalem over against the Yahwistic villages of Amos and Micah.

The possibility exists that the phenomena discovered are random, but it does not seem likely. The increase in preference for Inland Dialect vocabulary correlates too well with the fact that at the end of the eighth century the educated elite of Jerusalem could understand and speak Aramaic. There can be no doubt that at that time Aramaic was a prestige language, otherwise the bureaucracy would not have bothered to learn it. Very probably they unconsciously began to prefer vocabulary items that were cognate to that language, and before long were actually writing it.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For a recent updating of the evidence for rapid linguistic change in the time of the Exile, see Andrew E. Hill III, *The Book of Malachi: Its Place in Post-Exilic Chronology Linguistically Reconsidered*. University of Michigan dissertation, 1981.

<sup>2</sup> According to Antonio Houaiss, a Brazilian linguist who has been studying world language trends for more than 40 years, it took modern languages about 1000 years to go from 4,000 to 9,000-word vocabularies by the mid-19th century, but it has taken only 100 years to expand to 400,000 or 500,000 words. *Christian Science Monitor*, Dec. 7, 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Note also the observation concerning a totally unrelated complex of dialects: "It was found that a comparison of lexical material provided the most reliable evidence." I.e. for a connection between New Guinea Pidgin and Samoan Plantation Pidgin. Peter Muhlhausler, "Samoan Plantation Pidgin English and the Origin of New Guinea Pidgin," p.50, in *The Social Context of Creolization*, Ellen Woolford & William Washabaugh, eds. (Karoma, Ann Arbor, 1983).

<sup>4</sup> The same was true in ancient Rome: "Since surviving sources are of course mostly the work of men who valued literature, it is not surprising to find in them many contemptuous references to yokel accents and lack of education. Country folk had read no books, their choice of words was out of date and uncouth, they dropped their aitches; in contrast *urbanitas*, meaning city fashions but above all those of the capital itself." *Roman Social Relations*, by Ramsay MacMullen (New Haven, 1974) p.30.

<sup>5</sup> G.E. Mendenhall, *The Syllabic Inscriptions From Byblos*, Beirut, 1985.

<sup>6</sup> *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament*. By James Barr (Oxford, 1968), p.304: "The time is past, however, when the primary creative and positive contribution of comparative study was the production of individual philological solutions."

<sup>7</sup> Marvin Pope, at the First International Symposium on the Antiquities of Palestine, Aleppo, 1981. The proceedings are in press. Cf. also a forthcoming dissertation by Fred Renfro, Yale University, that will deal with Arabic cognates in Ugaritic.

<sup>8</sup> Since at this date it is not possible to distinguish between CD and ID lexical items, any root that is attested also in ID sources would automatically be classified as Common West.

<sup>9</sup> F.M. Cross, Jr., *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, 1973), p.264, n.193.

<sup>10</sup> "The Nature and Purpose of the Abraham Narratives," in *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*. Ed. P. D. Miller, et al., (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 337-56.

## Bāqillānī's Critique of Imru' Al-Qays

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### *Preliminary*

THE Qurʾān, claiming to be a book from God, challenged the Arabs to produce a work like it if they thought it was composed by Muḥammad, and said that their attempts to match it would fail.<sup>1</sup> Muslim thinkers later developed the Qurʾānic claim into what is known as the doctrine of the “matchlessness” or “inimitability”—*ijāz*—of the Qurʾān. Of the works written to argue the case for Qurʾānic *ijāz*, the *Ijāz al-Qurʾān*<sup>2</sup> of Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī (950–1013) is usually accorded a very high place. This paper attempts to show that one of the lines of argument taken by Bāqillānī in establishing Qurʾānic *ijāz* is not only vulnerable, but also counterproductive.

Among the several arguments Bāqillānī adduces in support of Qurʾānic *ijāz* is that of Qurʾānic *naẓm* (“[ideal] relationship between words and meanings”; literally, “order, coherence, organization”).<sup>3</sup> In his attempt to demonstrate the superiority of the *naẓm* found in the Qurʾān to that found in human discourse, Bāqillānī argues that the language of the Qurʾān is, in respect of choice of words, beauty of construction, and nobility of thought, far superior to the language of Arabic poetry, which emerges from the comparison badly bruised. To drive his point home, Bāqillānī singles out Imru' al-Qays, generally considered the greatest of pre-Islamic Arab poets, for his critical favors.<sup>4</sup> After making a scathing criticism of two-fifths of Imru' al-Qays' *muʿallaqah*, Bāqillānī pronounces the verdict:<sup>5</sup> the Qurʾān is beyond doubt *muʿjiz* (“matchless, inimitable”), for, if a poet like Imru' al-Qays is weighed in the balance and found wanting, then, as the Persian saying has it, *tā ba dīgarān chih rasad?*

It is Bāqillānī's treatment of Imru' al-Qays that I propose to discuss in this article, and I shall try to show that (1) from a grammatical-literary

point of view, the treatment leaves much to be desired, and (2) if Bāqillānī's reasoning is accepted, then some of his objections to Imru' al-Qays would apply to the Qur'ān as well. Although I believe it is possible to answer point by point most of Bāqillānī's criticisms of Imru' al-Qays, it would hardly be necessary to do so in this article, which will have achieved its purpose if it cites a sufficient number of representative examples as evidence for its thesis, and this evidence I shall try to present. Also, in order to limit the discussion to essentials, I shall concentrate on the views and comments of Bāqillānī himself, ignoring, generally, the opinions of other writers he cites on Imru' al-Qays' *mu'allaqah*. Finally, I shall ignore the strictures that Bāqillānī the moralist passes against Imru' al-Qays.

### *Basic Flaw in Bāqillānī's Approach*

Bāqillānī in his critique of Imru' al-Qays shows a hearty disregard for the difference between the nature of literary analysis and that of logical analysis. Literary analysis calls for sympathy and involvement on the critic's part, makes an allowance for the subjective and imagistic aspects of the discourse, and takes into consideration the charged nature of the language used by the writer. Logical analysis, on the other hand, requires cold objectivity, looks for definitional clarity and consistency, and demands strict adherence to the rules of formal or material logic. If this distinction is correct, then to evaluate a metaphor by using tools of logic would be like taking a butterfly through a car wash. Unfortunately, that is the impression one gets upon reading Bāqillānī's remarks about Imru' al-Qays. As a result of his confusion of the literary with the logical, Bāqillānī, in his discussion of Imru' al-Qays' poetry, sees contradictions where none exists, fails to appreciate significant departures from normal usage and ordinary syntax, turns an unappreciative eye to subtle semantic shifts, picks holes in apposite metaphors, and brings unwarranted charges of redundancy. This is my basic criticism of Bāqillānī—I have others, which I shall briefly mention at the end—and in the following pages I shall try to establish its validity. Under several headings, I will first state Bāqillānī's objections to Imru' al-Qays' poetry, and then offer my response.

### *Contradictions*

(1) After requesting his friend to make a stop at his beloved's old dwelling-place, the poet in vs. 2 says that the traces of the abode are not yet effaced (*lam ya'fu rasmuhā*). According to Bāqillānī, the words *lam ya'fu rasmuhā* are contradicted by vs. 4, whose second hemistich reads:

*fa hal ʿinda rasmin dārisin min muʿawwal*. This hemistich, according to Bāqillānī, means: Is there a *muʿawwal* (see below) by remains that have become obliterated? ʿAfā and *darasa*, Bāqillānī argues, are synonymous, and the poet contradicts himself because he first says that the remains of the place exist, and then, that they do not.<sup>6</sup>

Bāqillānī's point is difficult to appreciate. He peremptorily rejects the simple, and plausible, explanation<sup>7</sup> that *lam yaʿfu rasmuhā* need not signify complete obliteration. It is a commonplace of language that words have a certain semantic range, and that the meaning of a word in one context may vary from its meaning in another, and that the precise meaning of a word, both in terms of intension and extension, will be determined by the context in which it occurs. In Imru' al-Qays' verse, it is not at all necessary that ʿafā mean total effacement. Let us look at two verses by Abū Dhuʿayb al-Hudhalī in which he uses the same word in the same sense in which it is used by Imru' al-Qays:

*li man ʿalalun bi l-muntaḍā ghayru ḥā'ilī*  
 ʿafā ba'da ʿahdīn min qitārīn wa wābilī  
 ʿafā ba'da ʿahdī l-ḥayyī minhum wa qad yurā  
 bihī da'su āthārīn wa mabraku jāmīlī.<sup>8</sup>

In these verses ʿafā is used twice, each time without the implication of total obliteration. In vs. 1 the poet first speaks of the remains, which exist and are visible, and then says of them: ʿafā. In the second verse, he first uses the word ʿafā, and then adds that certain marks and traces of the old dwelling-place can still be seen. I am sure Abū Dhuʿayb did not for a moment think he was contradicting himself, for clearly by ʿafā he did not mean complete effacement. Let us now look at Q. 4:36: *yā ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū āminū . . .* ("O those who have believed, believe . . . !") Is the verse contradicting itself? It must be, according to the rule Bāqillānī seems to be setting up, but it is not; it is simply enjoining the weak of faith to become strong in faith. In other words, the first *āmana* denotes faith that is less than complete, whereas the second *āmana* denotes complete faith. Or take Q. 12:99, in which Joseph welcomes in these words the members of his family upon their arrival from Canaan into Egypt: *udkhulū miṣra āminīna* ("Enter Egypt in peace.") A critic might say that *udkhulū* ("Enter!") contradicts the *fa lammā dakhālū ʿalā yūsufa* ("When they entered into the presence of Joseph") in the same verse, for how could Joseph tell them to "enter into Egypt" when they had already done so? Obviously the second *dakhala* in the verse has a slightly different meaning—it is a formal expression of welcome—than that of the first, which represents the physical



act of entering a place. Why is it not possible to say, with reference to Imru' al-Qays' verse, that *lam ya'fu rasmuhā* in vs. 2 does not signify complete effacement, so that there will be no contradiction between vs. 2 and vs. 4?

There is another point which Bāqillānī seems to have completely missed. Grammatically, *lam ya'fu rasmuhā* is a verbal sentence, whereas *rasm dāris* occurs in a nominal sentence. A nominal sentence has no tense (*ghayr muqtaran bi zamān*). In other words, the tense of a nominal sentence will be determined by the context in which it occurs. In the present case the context is supplied by *lam ya'fu rasmuhā*. Accordingly, *rasm dāris* does not mean "remains that *have been* obliterated," but "remains that are *in the process of* being obliterated." Thus once again there is no contradiction between vs. 2 and vs. 4.

(2) Vs. 4 of Imru' al-Qays' *mu'allaqah* reads as follows:

*wa inna shifā'ī 'abratun muharāqatun*  
*fa hal 'inda rasmin dārisin min mu'awwal.*<sup>9</sup>

Bāqillānī says that the two hemistichs of the verse contradict each other: if the poet's tears are his remedy (first hemistich), then why does he need another *mu'awwal*?<sup>10</sup> Bāqillānī takes *mu'awwal* to mean an "object upon which one might rely." But it is possible to take the word to mean *mawdi' 'awīl* or *mabkā'*<sup>11</sup> ("weeping-place"), in which case the verse would mean, not that the poet's cure lies in tears shed and *yet* he needs something else to console him, but that he would like to cry and is *therefore* looking for a proper place to cry in. But even if *mu'awwal* is interpreted as an "object upon which reliance may be placed," the verse would only mean that the poet wants to cry and needs a shoulder to cry on. In either case the relationship between the two hemistichs is not that of antithesis but that of complementarity.

### *Constraints of Meter and Rhyme*

In several places Bāqillānī accuses Imru' al-Qays of using a certain expression or construction for no better reason than that of maintaining meter or rhyme. Irrespective of how cogent, in this regard, Bāqillānī's criticisms are, it may be asked whether deference to meter and rhyme necessarily makes for inferior discourse. The Qur'ān, Bāqillānī would say, is not poetry. And yet it employs the device of *saj'* ("rhymed prose"), and often caters to the needs of rhyme (*ri'āyat al-fawāsil*). Here are a few examples. When the Qur'ān mentions Moses and Aaron, it regularly mentions them in that order—first Moses and then Aaron (6:84; 7:122;

10:75; 21:48; 23:45; 25:35; 26:48; 37:114, 120; also 2:248)—except in 20:70, where Aaron is mentioned first. Can it be denied that the construction *hārūna wa mūsā* is at least in part determined by the need to maintain the rhyme in the sūrah? Q. 78:28 uses *kidhdhāban* as a *maṣḍar* instead of *takdhīban*. Is not the need to rhyme part of the reason why this is done? *Fulk* ("ship") is used in Arabic both as a masculine and as a feminine word. In several Qur'ānic verses, e.g. 2:164 and 14:32, it is used as a feminine, but in 26:119, 36:41, and 37:140 it is used as a masculine, partly, if not exclusively, for reasons of rhyme. The regular plural of *maḍḥirah* is *ma'ādhirah*, but 75:15 has *ma'ādhīrah*, which is certainly in accord with the rules of the language but at the same time makes the verse rhyme with the preceding verse. The assumption that a discourse should be free from all constraints of meter and rhyme is thus a faulty one. We shall now look at some of Bāqillānī's specific criticisms of Imru' al-Qays.

(1) The first hemistich of vs. 11 runs: *wa yawma dakhaltu l-khidra khidra ʿunayzatin* ("And the day I entered the litter—the litter of ʿUnayzah"). Bāqillānī says: the repetition of *khidra ʿunayzatin* is necessitated by the meter, otherwise it is redundant. In reply to this it would suffice to cite a parallel from the Qur'ān (48:26): *idh jaʿala lladhīna kafarū fī qulūbihimu l-ḥamiyyata ḥamiyyata l-jāhiliyyati* ("When the disbelievers developed in their hearts fierce prejudice—the fierce prejudice of the Jāhiliyyah"). Is it meter that obliged the Qur'ān to repeat the words *ḥamiyyata l-jāhiliyyati*? Obviously neither the Qur'ān nor Imru' al-Qays is guilty of needless repetition. Both make apt use of the rhetorical device of *tawḍīḥ baʿd al-ibhām* ("explication after obscurity") or *tafṣīl baʿd al-ijmāl* ("detail after a concise statement"). In the Qur'ānic verse, the word *al-ḥamiyyah*, with its definite article, raises in the reader's mind the question, What kind of *ḥamiyyah*? The reader's curiosity aroused, the answer is provided: *ḥamiyyata l-jāhiliyyati*. In Imru' al-Qays' verse, similarly, *al-khidr* raises in the listener's mind the question, What litter? "The litter of ʿUnayzah," comes as the answer. From the point of view of *balāghah*, moreover, a construction of this kind achieves a certain dramatic effect. Imru' al-Qays himself is in no doubt what *khidr* he is talking about—ʿUnayzah's—and so he "smugly" uses the word with the definite article. As soon as he uses it, however, he realizes that the listener would require more detail, and so he quickly adds that he is speaking of ʿUnayzah's litter.<sup>12</sup>

(2) The second hemistich in vs. 2 of Imru' al-Qays' *muʿallaqah* reads: *lī mā nasajathā min janūbin wa shamʿak*.<sup>13</sup> Bāqillānī objects to the use of the word *nasajat*. The occasion demands the masculine form, *nasaja*, he says, but meter forced the poet to use the feminine form, which he does,

making *rīḥ* ("wind"), which is feminine but has not occurred in the text, the antecedent of the pronoun contained in *nasajāt*.<sup>14</sup> Bāqillānī's objection is not a strong one, for it is based on a simplistic view of the use of pronouns and pronominal particles. I do not doubt that Bāqillānī was aware of the complex ways in which pronouns and pronominal particles are used in Classical Arabic. But it is surprising that he forgot that the objection he is making against Imru' al-Qays can be made against the Qur'ān as well. Before we present evidence from the Qur'ān, we shall note another, similar objection Bāqillānī raises with regard to the second hemistich of vs. 2 of the *mu'allaqah*. In this hemistich Imru' al-Qays says that the traces of the beloved's abode have not disappeared (*lam ya'fu rasmuhā*). While the hemistich does not admit of an objection on grounds of meter, Bāqillānī does say that Imru' al-Qays should have said *rasmuhū* instead of *rasmuhā*, for the reference is to *manzil* ("abode"; feminine) in vs. 1, and *manzil*, being masculine, requires a masculine pronoun; and if the antecedent of the pronoun in *rasmuhā* is the implied *dār* ("abode"; masculine), then this, too, says Bāqillānī, is a flaw (*khalaḥ*).<sup>15</sup> The following examples from the Qur'ān would cover this objection of Bāqillānī's as well.

(a) In Q. 6:57 we read: *qul innī 'alā bayyinatīn min rabbī wa kadhdhabtum bihī*.<sup>16</sup> The masculine pronoun in *bihī* has the feminine *bayyinah* as its antecedent. The explanation is that *bayyinah* here stands for Qur'ān, which, being masculine, justifies the use of the masculine pronoun.<sup>17</sup>

(b) Q. 77:31–32 are as follows: *lā ṣalīlīn wa lā yughnī minā l-lahabī innahā tarmī bi shararin ka l-qaṣri*.<sup>18</sup> The feminine pronoun *innahā* in vs. 32 should have a feminine antecedent. But the antecedent, occurring in vs. 31, is masculine: *lahab*. The explanation is as follows. *Lahab* ("flame") implies fire (which is feminine in Arabic), and it is this fire that justifies the use of the feminine pronoun.<sup>19</sup>

(c) Q. 7:4 reads: *wa kam min qaryatin ahlaknāhā fa jā'ahā ba'sunā bayātan aw hum qārīlūna* ("Many a town there is that We have destroyed, Our punishment coming upon it at night or in broad daylight when *they* were taking rest"). Note the italicized *they*, which, strictly speaking, has no antecedent, but for which *qaryah* ("town"), interpreted (as in 12:82) as "people of the town," serves as the antecedent.

(d) The use of the demonstrative pronoun *hādhā* ("this") in Q. 3:191 is quite appropriate, even though its antecedent is "the heavens and the earth." The antecedent, obviously, is the heavenly bodies taken as a single collectivity and not individually or separately, for otherwise the appropriate pronoun would be *humā* (as in 2:255) or *hunna*.

In vs. 2, then, Imru' al-Qays is perfectly justified in using *nasajāt*

(the subject of the verb being (*rīḥ*) instead of *nasaja*, and *rasmuhā* (the feminine pronoun making reference to the implied *dār*) instead of *rasmuhū*. One wonders why Bāqillānī would criticize Imru' al-Qays for making use of a linguistic convention that is well attested in the Qur'ān.

(3) Describing his trysts, Imru' al-Qays says (vs. 22) that he used to steal past guards who would have liked nothing better than to lay their hands on him—*law yusirrūna maqtalī* (“only if they could kill me in a sneak attack”). Bāqillānī says that meter compelled Imru' al-Qays to use the imperfect *law yusirrūna* instead of the expected perfect, *law asarrū*<sup>20</sup> Bāqillānī is not entirely right, for the use of the imperfect instead of the perfect yields, as a rhetorician would say, the meaning of *ḥikāyat al-ḥāl* (“depiction of the present situation”; cf. enallage). Consider Q. 2:214: *am ḥasibtum an tadkhulū l-jannata wa lammā yatikum mathalu l-ladhīna khalaw min qablikum massathumu l-ba'sā'u wa d-ḍarrā'u wa zulzilū ḥattā yaqūla r-rasūlu wa l-ladhīna āmanū ma'ahū matā naṣru llāhi*.<sup>21</sup> Note the word *yaqūla* in the verse. By using the imperfect form of the verb instead of the perfect (*qāla*), which the reader expects, the Qur'ān enlarges the scope of the application of the verse: not only the prophets and their followers *in the past*, but also Muḥammad and his followers *today* face trials and tribulations so that they call out, “When will the aid of God come?” The use of the imperfect in the verse, it cannot be denied, is quite strategic and constitutes one aspect of the *ījāz* (“terseness, succinctness”) of the Qur'ān. Imru' al-Qays, too, by saying *yusirrūn* instead of *asarrū*, indicates that not only in the past but also in the present he is on the wanted list.

#### *Condition as Emphasis*

In vs. 6 Imru' al-Qays, speaking of his two lady-loves, says that when they get up, the aroma of musk from their bodies spreads all around (*idhā qāmatā tadawwā'a l-misku minhumā*).

Bāqillānī asks: Why should the aroma spread only when the women get up? Why not at all times?<sup>22</sup> The objection is amusing, but is made by Bāqillānī in all seriousness. It is misplaced because a conditional expression does not always give the meaning of condition; it may be used simply to lend emphasis, as the words *idhā qāmatā* have been in Imru' al-Qays's verse. Consider Q. 24:33: *wa lā tukrihū fatayātikum 'alā l-bighā'i in aradna taḥaṣṣunan* (“And do not force your female slaves to prostitution if they want to remain chaste”). What if they do *not* want to remain chaste? Could they be forced to engage in prostitution? The words *in aradna taḥaṣṣunan*, though formally conditional, are obviously not meant to be conditional; they only signify that the act of forcing slaves to prostitution, a heinous

act in itself, would become more heinous if done against their will. In Imru' al-Qays' verse, similarly, the words *idhā qāmatā* are not conditional, but only imply that the aroma spreads far and wide when the women get up and move about.<sup>23</sup>

### *Definite and Indefinite*

Vs. 10 of Imru' al-Qays' *mu'allaqah* reads as follows:

*fa zalla l-adhārā yartamīna bi laḥmiḥā  
wa shaḥmin ka huddābi d-dimaqsi l-mufattālī.*<sup>24</sup>

Bāqillānī says:

. . . it [verse] is considered beautiful, and the simile [in it] is considered to be elegant [*malīḥ*] and appealing to the heart [*wāqī*]. But there is a flaw in it: he [poet] makes *laḥm* ["flesh"] definite but [leaves] *shaḥm* ["fat"] indefinite, so that it is not known that it is her [she-camel's] fat that he is describing. Moreover, he offers a simile for one of the two things [fat] . . . but fails to offer one for the first part, which, as a result, hangs loose.<sup>25</sup>

To this criticism a three-fold answer may be given.

(a) Bāqillānī is probably the only reader of Imru' al-Qays ever to have thought that the "fat" in question, simply because *shaḥm* is grammatically indefinite, may not belong to the slaughtered beast. Only a blatant disregard of the context can make one conjecture that it was, or could have been, the fat of another animal. Bāqillānī's logic, if accepted, would produce some odd results. Think, for example, of the fate the following verse of Farazdaq would meet at Bāqillānī's hands:

*a lam taranī āhadtu rabbī wa innanī  
la bayna ritājīn qā'imun wa maqāmī.*<sup>26</sup>

What do the words *ritāj* ("door") and *maqām* ("spot") in the verse stand for? The context provides the answer: *ritāj* stands for *ritāj al-ka'bah* ("the door of the Ka'bah") and *maqām* for *maqām ibrahīm* ("Abraham's spot"; see Q. 2:125). If Bāqillānī's argument were accepted, *ritāj* and *maqām*, being indefinite, could never be properly identified, and the second hemistich of the verse would be meaningless. Now let us take an example from the Qur'ān. Q. 47:24 says: *a fa lā yatadabbarūna l-qur'āna am 'alā qulūbin aqfālūhā* ("Do they not reflect on the Qur'ān, or do hearts have their locks on them?") The word for "hearts," *qulūb*, is indefinite. Does this mean

that the hearts in question belong, or might belong, to people other than those criticized in the verse? Consistency on his part requires that Bāqillānī reply in the affirmative.

(b) Although *shaḥm* has a *tanwīn* and is thus indefinite, it is definite insofar as it is qualified by the phrase, *ka huddābi d-dimaqsi l-mufattalī*. According to a well-known rule of Arabic grammar, an indefinite noun, when qualified by a word or phrase, loses its indefiniteness and for all practical purposes becomes definite. That is why, for example, *qawlun ma'rūfun* in Q. 2:263 is fit to be a subject, or, in Q. 96:15–16, *nāṣiyatin kādhibatīn khāṭi'atin* (vs. 16) can be in apposition to *an-nāṣiyah* (vs. 15). If *shaḥm* thus becomes definite, Bāqillānī's criticism would not apply.

(c) Bāqillānī objects that Imru' al-Qays fails to offer a simile for *laḥm*. But, first of all, why should it be necessary for Imru' al-Qays to offer one, so that his failure to do so should be held against him? Second, it is evident that it was the pieces of fat which, for their silky whiteness, appeared remarkable to the poet, who then likened them to raw silk. If so, then the indefiniteness of *shaḥm*, far from being a flaw, becomes highly significant, for it represents *tafkhīm* ("magnification"): by making the word indefinite, the poet indicates that there was something special about the fat; and the qualifying phrase, *ka huddābi d-dimaqsi l-mufattalī*, explains what was special about it. Incidentally, in the above-cited Q. 2:263, too, the indefiniteness of *qulūb* is for *tafkhīm*, the only difference being that the *tafkhīm* in the Qur'ānic verse is of a negative kind (*taṣghīr* ["diminution, humiliation"]), whereas in Imru' al-Qays' verse it is of a positive kind (*taẓīm* ["exaltation"]). In the above-cited verse of Farazdaq also, the indefiniteness of *ritāj* and *maqām* is for *taẓīm*.

#### *Taqdīm and Taḥkīr*

In vss. 21–25 Imru' al-Qays speaks of his amorous adventures. Vss. 21–23 describe scenes of love-making, vss. 24–25 his arrival at the women's quarters. Bāqillānī remarks that Imru' al-Qays reverses the proper sequence since the "arrival" verses (24–25) should have preceded the "love-making" verses (21–23). What ought to have come first has been postposed (*taḥkīr*) and what ought to have followed has been preposed (*taqdīm*).<sup>27</sup> Bāqillānī's objection is understandable, but not necessarily valid. From the point of view of *balāghah*, the normal order of two things may be reversed if that will produce a heightened effect.<sup>28</sup> Take Q. 7:77–79. Vs. 77 says that the people of Thamūd killed the she-camel which Ṣāliḥ, their prophet, had forbidden them to harm; vs. 78 says that punishment overtook them for the transgression; and vs. 79 says that Ṣāliḥ departed from

his people, criticizing them for not heeding his words. It is obvious that Ṣāliḥ criticized his people and emigrated from the land *before* the meting out of the punishment, and that vs. 79 should therefore have preceded vs. 78. The Qurʾān alters the chronological sequence of crime-emigration-punishment to that of crime-punishment-emigration in order to emphasize that the punishment was the *direct and immediate* result of the killing of the camel.<sup>29</sup> I suspect that Imruʾ al-Qays deliberately positioned vss. 21–23 of his *muʿallaqah* where he did because he wanted to emphasize to Fāṭimah (the coy beloved of whom he speaks in vs. 16 and whom he addresses in vss. 17–20) that women find him irresistible, and that Fāṭimah would do well to yield to him. If this analysis is correct, then vss. 24–25, if put after vss. 19–20, would mar the effect the poet wants to achieve.

#### Miscellaneous

(1) Imruʾ al-Qays begins his *muʿallaqah* by asking his traveling companion<sup>30</sup> to stop with him at the site where his beloved once dwelt, so that they might weep in remembrance of the days the poet spent in the beloved's company. Here is the opening line: "Halt! Let us weep in remembrance of a [certain] beloved and a [certain] dwelling-place." Against this beautiful and touching line of poetry Bāqillānī raises objections whose puerility is matched only by the seriousness with which they are made. Bāqillānī's first objection is that the companion might have been asked to weep at the plight of the poet, but not in remembrance of the poet's beloved—for, after all, "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba/That he should weep for her?"<sup>31</sup> His second objection is that if the poet really wants his companion to shed tears of a lover, then he should be ashamed of the very thought, for what lover would allow his friend to flirt with his beloved?<sup>32</sup> Bāqillānī is again off the mark. The poet is neither inviting his companion to start shedding tears simply at the mention of the beloved nor asking him to play the lover. He is only asking him to commiserate with him and share in the nostalgic mood generated by the occasion. For there must be some truth to the fact that, to borrow the words of Mutammim ibn Nuwayrah, "one sorrow gives rise to another" (*inna sh-shajā yabʿathu sh-shajā*),<sup>33</sup> though Bāqillānī appears to be unwilling to grant that tears might well up in one's eyes at the sight of a friend's haplessness.

Bāqillānī, it seems, feels uncomfortable at the use of the plural *nabki* ("let *us* weep"), and would perhaps withdraw his objection if the poet were to say *abki* ("let *me* weep"). But imagine the ruinous effect this alteration would have on the line, for the line would then mean something like this: Friend, be so good as to stop here for a few minutes so that *I* might cry in

remembrance of my beloved, and after *I* am done crying, we shall resume our journey. The change from the emotional plenitude and natural warmth of *nabki* to the emotional anemia and cold artificiality of *abki* is too obvious to need any comment.

(2) In vs. 18 Imru' al-Qays asks his beloved whether she thinks his heart will do whatever she commands it to do? The metaphor of the heart receiving the command is criticized by Bāqillānī on the ground that the heart is not something to which orders may be issued.<sup>34</sup> I am sure that a similar expression occurring in the Qur'ān would be explained by Bāqillānī as an instance of *majāz mursal* (synechdoche), though evidently he is unwilling to extend the same courtesy to Imru' al-Qays. He forgets that, in the same vein in which he criticizes Imru' al-Qays one may criticize Q. 7:179, *lahum qulūbun lā yafqahūna bihā*, for hearts do not have the capacity to understand, or Q. 22:46, *wa lākin ta'mā l-qulūbu llatī fī ṣ-ṣudūri*,<sup>35</sup> for hearts are not possessed of vision, or Q. 47:24, *am 'alā qulūbin aqfāluhā* (cited above), for hearts are not placed under lock and key, or Q. 79:8–9, *qulūbun yawma'idhin wājifatun abṣāruhā khāshī'atun*,<sup>36</sup> for hearts do not have eyes. And what would Bāqillānī say about Q. 18:77, *jidāran yurīdu an yanqadda*,<sup>37</sup> for walls, of course, are not possessed of will?

(3) Describing the dwelling-place of his beloved, Imru' al-Qays in vss. 1–2 mentions the names of several places that lie in its vicinity. Bāqillānī remarks that the list of names is too long and serves no purpose, and that it would have sufficed to mention some of the names.<sup>38</sup>

The list is not at all irrelevant. First of all, it helps locate the dwelling-place with exactness; the names give solidity and authenticity to the description. Second, to the poet, if not to Bāqillānī, the names are not simply words, but are associated with the dwelling-place of the beloved and evoke fond memories; upon sighting them, the heart of the journeying poet beats faster, for the abode of his beloved is next. Third, the conjunction Imru' al-Qays uses in giving the series of names is *fā'* and not *wāw*. Bāqillānī cannot, of course, accuse the poet of using *fā'* because of metrical reasons. I think the use of *fā'* is significant because, unlike *wāw*, *fā'* denotes order or sequence. The poet, then, is indicating the order in which the said places ought to be mentioned, either from the point of view of their proximity to the beloved's residence or from the point of view of approaching it (as the poet and his companion are) from afar. Fourth, I wonder whether Bāqillānī would agree that the list of pagan deities given in Q. 71:23 is too long and should have been cut down to one or two names.



### Conclusion

Bāqillānī bends over backwards to prove that Imru' al-Qays' poetry is riddled with defects. In the foregoing I have tried to show that quite a few of his criticisms would not stand the test of scrutiny. More important, I have tried to show that some of his criticisms, if accepted, will have to be taken to be applicable to the Qur'ān as well, a thought that would be unpalatable to Bāqillānī.

Not only is Bāqillānī less than cogent in his critique of Imru' al-Qays, he is also unfair. This can be seen from the fact that when he praises Imru' al-Qays, he damns him with faint praise.<sup>39</sup> Also, on occasions Imru' al-Qays finds himself between the devil and the deep blue sea: if he talks about something which, in Bāqillānī's view,<sup>40</sup> another poet has already talked about, he is accused by Bāqillānī of lack of originality;<sup>41</sup> and if he appears to have innovated, he is criticized by Bāqillānī for not speaking in the style of such-and-such a poet.<sup>42</sup> Another curious remark Bāqillānī makes about Imru' al-Qays is that even if the latter's poetry were not subject to his criticisms, some of the poets of later ages would in any case be regarded as superior to him,<sup>43</sup> and that Imru' al-Qays excels neither ancient nor modern poets.<sup>4</sup> This remark is hardly relevant in a book on Qur'ānic *ijāz*. For, if there are better poets than Imru' al-Qays, then, since Bāqillānī's ultimate aim is not to criticize Imru' al-Qays but to establish Qur'ānic *ijāz*, it would remain for Bāqillānī to prove the Qur'ān's superiority to the work of *those* poets. And I wonder how Bāqillānī would react if the work of those poets were presented as a challenge to the Qur'ān. I suspect that he would pick as many holes in their poetry as he does in the poetry of Imru' al-Qays.

In a word, Bāqillānī's critique of Imru' al-Qays is negative in character, and, since it has the effect of exposing the Qur'ān to the same criticism to which he subjects Imru' al-Qays, Bāqillānī cannot be said to have provided solid grounds for the vindication of Qur'ānic *ijāz*.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Qur'ān 2:23; 11:13; 17:88; 52:33-34.

<sup>2</sup> Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn aṭ-Ṭayyib al-Bāqillānī, *Ijāz al-Qur'ān*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Egypt: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1954?) Dhakhā'ir al-'Arab, 13. References to Imru' al-Qays' verses are from this edition. The translation of the Qur'ānic verses cited is my own.

<sup>3</sup> For a brief statement and discussion of the arguments see my *Coherence in the Qur'ān* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1986)), pp. 12–14.

<sup>4</sup> Bāqillānī also offers a critical treatment of a poem by the 9th-century poet Abū 'Ubādah al-Walīd ibn 'Ubayd (Allāh) al-Buḥturī. For our purposes, however, it will be sufficient to look at Bāqillānī's critique of Imru' al-Qays.

<sup>5</sup> Bāqillānī, pp. 328–329.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 245–246.

<sup>7</sup> Attributed to Aṣma'ī. See Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyā ibn 'Alī ash-Shaybānī, known as at-Tibrīzī, *Sharḥ al-Qaṣā'id al-'Ashr*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī d-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Egypt: Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣabīḥ wa Awlāduhū, 2nd printing, 1384/1964), p. 59.

<sup>8</sup> *Dīwān al-Hudhaliyyīn* (Cairo: Ad-Dār al-Qawmiyyah li ṭ-Ṭibā'ah wa n-Naṣh, 1385/1965), 1:140. The translation is as follows: "To whom do the remains at Muntaḍā belong? They have been, subsequent to [the tribe's] stay [in the place], effaced by drizzles and heavy rains—even though a year has not passed over them. They have been effaced after their tribe's stay there, though marks of heavy treading and a resting-place for camels can still be seen in them."

<sup>9</sup> "Indeed my cure lies in tears shed. Is there, then, a *mu'awwal* [see text below] by remains that are becoming obliterated?"

<sup>10</sup> Bāqillānī, pp. 247–248.

<sup>11</sup> See Tibrīzī, p. 58.

<sup>12</sup> Two more examples, one from the Qur'ān and one from poetry, may be noted. The Qur'ānic example is 85:18: *hal atāka ḥadīthu l-junūdi fir'awna wa thamūda* ("Has the news of the troops reached you—[the troops] of Pharaoh and Thamūd?"). Qays al-'Amirī says (*Dīwān Majnūn Laylā*, ed. 'Abd as-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj [Egypt: Dār Miṣr, 1963?], p. 170): *amurru 'alā d-diyāri diyāri laylā/ uqabbilu dhā l-jidāra wa dhā l-jidāra* ("I visit the dwelling-places—the dwelling-places of Laylā—kissing this wall and that." It does not require an extraordinary keenness of mind to appreciate the simple beauty of such constructions, though it is surprising that Bāqillānī should have missed it.

<sup>13</sup> "[The traces of the dwelling-place are not obliterated] on account of the [dust-depositing and dust-clearing] patterns that the southern and northern winds have woven over them."

<sup>14</sup> Bāqillānī, p. 246.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>16</sup> "Say: I am [speaking] on [the strength of] a manifest proof from my Lord, but you have denied it."

<sup>17</sup> Iṣlāḥī, *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān*, 8 vols. (Lahore, 1967–1980), 2:443.

<sup>18</sup> "It will provide no shade and will offer no protection against flames; it will be shooting castle-like flames."

<sup>19</sup> Iṣlāḥī, 8:143.

<sup>20</sup> Bāqillānī, p. 262.

<sup>21</sup> "Do you think that you will enter paradise, when you have not experienced the like of what people who lived before you experienced. They were stricken by misfortune and adversity and were shaken up, until, finally, the prophet and those with him who had believed say: When will the aid of God come?"

<sup>22</sup> Bāqillānī, p. 248.

<sup>23</sup> Bāqillānī (p. 248) has another criticism of the verse: it is anticlimactic to mention clover after musk. He means that the natural progression would be from less to more (from clover to musk), and not from more to less (musk to clover). But, first of all, this rhetorical principle—if one were to grant that this is one—is not inviolable. The Qur'ān itself violates it; 35:27 has *gharābību sūdun*, whereas the "normal" order would be *sūdun*

*gharābību*. Obviously, the Qurʾān says *gharābīb*, makes a pause, and then, for the sake of emphasis (*taʿkīd*), adds *sūd*. Second, Imruʾ al-Qays' verse is not anticlimactic for the simple reason that it contains two distinct images which are not necessarily arranged in a more-to-less or less-to-more sequence.

<sup>24</sup> "The virgins then began to pelt one another with her [she-camel's] flesh, and [with] fat that was like fringes of twisted raw silk."

<sup>25</sup> Bāqillānī, p. 252.

<sup>26</sup> *Dīwān al-Farazdaq*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir and Dār Bayrūt, 1380/1960), 1:212. The translation is: "Did you not see that I made a pledge to my Lord, standing as I was between a door and a spot?").

<sup>27</sup> Bāqillānī, p. 267.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. the literary device of beginning a narrative *in medias res*.

<sup>29</sup> Islāhī, 2:681. Another example of this type is to be found in Q. 71:25-28. See *ibid.*, 7:604.

<sup>30</sup> The imperative used in the verse is the dual *qifā*. Strictly, it means "Stop, the two of you." It is, however, grammatically possible to interpret the dual to mean the singular.

<sup>31</sup> William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act II, scene ii.

<sup>32</sup> Bāqillānī, p. 244.

<sup>33</sup> Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah*, 4 vols., ed. Aḥmad Amīn and ʿAbd as-Salām Hārūn (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Lajnat at-Taʿlīf wa t-Tarjamah wa n-Nashr, 1371-1373/1951-1953), 2:797.

<sup>34</sup> Bāqillānī, p. 257.

<sup>35</sup> "It is, rather, the hearts inside the breasts that become blind."

<sup>36</sup> "On that day, hearts shall be trembling, their eyes downcast."

<sup>37</sup> "[They found in the town] a wall which was about to collapse [literally, intended to collapse]."

<sup>38</sup> Bāqillānī, p. 245.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 259, 261, 264, 270, 271, 272, 276-277. In his discussion of *badīʿ* ("novel/innovative expression"), Bāqillānī does cite a number of verses by Imruʾ al-Qays to illustrate aspects of *badīʿ* (see, for example, pp. 106 ff.) But even there Bāqillānī hardly exhibits any enthusiasm for the poetry of Imruʾ al-Qays.

<sup>40</sup> I say "in Bāqillānī's view" because in some cases at least (e.g. on vss. 1-2 [p. 144]) Bāqillānī would appear to be wrong in denying Imruʾ al-Qays the distinction of being the first to have sung of certain subjects.

<sup>41</sup> For example, Bāqillānī, p. 252.

<sup>42</sup> For example, *ibid.*, p. 272.

<sup>43</sup> For example, *ibid.*, pp. 247, 256.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

Reflexes of Classical Arabic *šay'un* 'thing'  
in the Modern Dialects:  
Synthetic Forms in Language Change

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*I. Introduction*

ARABIC is a fertile field for research in language change. Several dimensions make it particularly attractive: we have over a millennium of written records in the language; its geographical spread is historically documented; it evidences a score of provocative sociological variables; and there are clear-cut linguistic contrasts both among the various dialects and between the dialects and the classical language.

Moreover, we can place it in a rich linguistic background including both the older Semitic languages attested only in written form (Ugaritic, Akkadian, South Arabian) and the still-living sister languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and the Semitic languages of Ethiopia) which can, like Arabic, be documented through a long literary history; any models we postulate for Arabic can be tested in light of evidence from this "family situation." In addition to the wealth of literature in Arabic dating from the seventh century C.E. to the present, from as early as the eighth century we have detailed grammars of the classical language; they sometimes make reference to divergent dialectal forms.

The geographic spread of the language is a matter of historical knowledge since its mechanism was the seventh-century expansion of Islam, which originated in Saudi Arabia and eventually extended as far as Morocco and Spain in the west, and Turkestan and India in the east. Today Arabic is no longer spoken in Spain; and in other non-Arab areas—Cyprus, Turkey, Iran, and Turkestan—the language survives only in small communities. The situation of Malta is anomalous: the island is not part of the Arab world, and

yet Maltese, an Arabic dialect, is its native language. The political and cultural unity of the Islamic empires at their height, extensive trade and travel, especially on the Mediterranean Sea, and the pan-Arabism of today: all these must be considered factors encouraging dialect convergence, despite the fact that the wide geographic spread might be expected to induce only dialect divergence.

The geographic spread of Arabic speakers has entailed a variety of bilingual situations, and any bilingual situation encourages language change. Some of the languages Arabic has co-existed with are from its Semitic family (e.g., Aramaic); others, though related, are genetically more distant (e.g., in Egypt, Coptic; in Ethiopia, many of the Cushitic and Omotic languages; and in North Africa, Berber). In the east, early Islam co-existed with Byzantine Greek and Sassanian Persian. With the Turkic invasions of the Middle Ages and the eventual Ottoman rule, much of the area was exposed to Turkish and congeners. With the European colonialism of this and the previous century, French, English, and Italian have served variously as superstrata in the Arab world. Thus there has always been the stimulus to language change which bilingualism offers.

More integral to the language itself is the diglossia brought about by the coexistence of the "literary" language and the spoken colloquials. From the eighth century, when grammarians first formalized rules accounting for the Arabic of the Qurʾān, down to the present, their prescriptions have been followed most scrupulously by educated Muslims and by other Arabic scholars. Classical Arabic has been the language not only of almost all writing, but also of much preaching, teaching, and other formal spoken interchange. The end-product of the development of Classical grammar through a rich and busy era of modernization and rising literacy is commonly called Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). This is used in all media in the Arab world in addition to writing and formal speech; the rare exceptions occur in the Egyptian-dominated cinema and local theater. It is likely, as Abdel-Massih suggested to me, that there are differences beyond those of vocabulary between MSA and eighth-century Classical Arabic; nonetheless it has changed much less than the dialects. Indeed, the notion of change is alien to native-speaker understandings of written Arabic; the dialects, by contrast, present no such conservative resistance to change. The differences between the dialects and Classical Arabic/MSA are manifest at phonological, morphological, and syntactic levels. At the syntactic level, scholars (e.g., Blau, 1969) have noted that the direction of language change is from synthetic-type structure in Classical Arabic (in brief, obligatory inflectional endings on nouns and verbs) to analytic structure in the dialects (without

inflectional endings).

Other social factors affect language changes in Arabic. The life-style split between bedouin and settled people is reflected in the more conservative language of the former (especially as indicated by the retention of such features as gender inflection for the plural forms of verbs, a full range of dual forms, even nunation, etc.). Settled people may be divided further into urban and rural; there are surprisingly substantial differences between the language each group speaks, as I found out in comparing the Arabic speech of the village of Bet Safafa to that of nearby Jerusalem (Obler, 1975). Such differences obtain particularly at the phonological and lexical levels. The great cities of the Arab world exhibit religious diversity, and this too has linguistic consequences; the Muslims, Christians, and Jews of Baghdad, for example, use distinct forms of the spoken language.

Additional factors such as political and cultural leadership may enter into language change, by presenting "high status" forms to be imitated. Damascus and Baghdad were Arab centers in medieval times, sponsoring much intellectual activity. Today Cairo produces the bulk of Arabic films, and Cairene Arabic is understood throughout the Arabic-speaking world best of all non-local dialects (Abdel-Massih, 1975). Arab leaders and scholars are aware of linguistic diversity, and there is discussion of a resolution of the diglossia "problem" by imposition of language academy fiat or by standardization of a given dialect. (See Altoma, 1969, Kaye, 1970, Blanc, 1960.)

The final magnet attracting the student of language change to work in this field is the body of work already done: within the last century a sizable corpus of Arabic-dialect texts has been gathered and transcribed. Many field workers have gone further to give descriptive grammars of their texts (e.g., the eight-volume "dictionary" based on ninety pages of text given in Marçais-Abderrahman, 1959) or to produce textbooks. These materials facilitate the study of any particular phenomenon across the dialects. Major study has been devoted to three particular problems: the theoretical issue of the functional status of Classical Arabic across time (e.g., Rabin, 1955), the interference between dialect and MSA in various sociolinguistic situations (Blanc, 1960, Harrell, 1960, Bishai, 1966), and the reconstruction of phonological change in Arabic using synchronic dialectal evidence (e.g., Cowan, 1960, Birkeland, 1972, Janssens, 1972).

There are, it should be noted, some difficulties with choosing Arabic as a field for language-change research. A minor one is the limitation of the above-mentioned dialect texts to relatively standardized narrative. The folktale is a highly conventionalized form in Arabic culture, and the conven-

tionality could easily influence the language forms chosen; the language of such texts must not be confused with that of everyday conversation. Only rarely do scholars provide conversational texts (e.g., Johnstone, 1967) or intermix personal narrative with folktales (Abdel-Massih, 1974, and Schmidt and Kahle, 1918, 1936).

A second difficulty arises from the fact that the various European and American linguists treating Arabic over the last century have chosen diverse systems for their analyses. This is most evident at the level of phonologic transcription; at the syntactic level the problems are often subtle—certain features may simply not be discussed. The absence in a given dialect of undiscussed features cannot be assumed unless explicit mention to that effect is made. For our purposes it is distressing that various types of morphological boundaries are marked or left unmarked with no justifying explanation. Thus some affixes within a dialect may be treated as separate morphs (this is suspicious since it may result from thoughtless adherence to graphemic conventions of the written language), others may be conjoined, and still others separated by hyphens, with no key to explain whether the morphs are productively bound morphemes in the dialect in question.

For long-range historical study of the dialects, the prospects are not good: the wealth of literature is preserved in the literary language. To retrieve information about the dialects in pre-modern times we must rely on the unsystematic observations of the early grammarians and on interpretation of deviations from the classical language in what texts we have. The most fruitful investigations of such deviations have focused on the literature of non-Muslim authors, who had less motivation to keep to Qur'ānic conventions. (Blau has contributed to such investigation in his analysis of hypo- and hypercorrections, see especially 1965, 1970.)

In our discussion so far, it has been tacitly assumed that just as the modern dialects come after the earliest stages of the Classical language, so they may be thought to follow from the Classical. This is a problematic assumption, however, since the debate about the relative natures of the Classical language and the dialects is unresolved. In fact the Classical may NOT be representative of any particular dialect spoken in the Arabian peninsula in the seventh century, not even that of Muhammad's tribe, the Quraish (except perhaps phonologically, e.g., with respect to hamza-deletion) (Rabin, 1951). Rather, it is probably a composite based on the cross-dialectal poetic *koine* common to the Arabian peninsula. Observations of the nature of oral poetry have led some scholars (like Monroe 1972) to view Classical Arabic as based on an artificial structure spoken by no one. Other scholars have hypothesized as the source for the Classical lan-

guage a (complex of) "military" *koine(s)* that would underlie the dialects as well.

This paper assumes that Classical Arabic, whatever its status, can in any case be taken as representative of a form of Arabic earlier than that of the modern dialects. This assumption is validated in part by observation that its phonological system, its irregular verbs, and its general pattern of flexion are closer to those of the earlier attested (Semitic) languages than are those of the dialects. The assumption is problematic, however: it is important to assume only those items that do occur both in the Classical language and in a convincing number of the other Semitic languages to have obtained in Proto-Arabic (the ultimate antecedent of all forms of Arabic), and at the same time not to argue for non-existence of items from the mere fact that they do not happen to occur in the finite Qur'ānic corpus. At the same time, the use of this working assumption is not overly confining since one need not rely entirely on diachronic reconstruction to discover principles of language change in Arabic: some more modern linguistic techniques can supplement diachronic study with conclusions drawn from careful synchronic analysis.

The relevance of the Classical-dialect relation to notions of language change in Arabic needs to be specified. The dialects can be considered either lineal descendents of the Classical language or of a *koine* resulting, for example, from the mixing of pre-Islamic tribes in the military forces which carried Islam (see Ferguson, 1959, Cohen, 1962, Blau, 1969). (The hypothesis that each dialect could be traced back to a pre-Islamic dialect in the peninsula is historically far-fetched.) The melting-pot *koine* would account for a number of commonalities among the dialects without necessarily calling upon the somewhat romantic notion of "language drift," which would be required by the postulate of common descent. Cohen (1967) and Blau (1969) point out that the notion of drift can also be avoided by supposing that change was transmitted in waves: forms would have converged due to frequent interactions among diverse speakers after the Islamic expansion. In any case, inasmuch as phonological elements and syntactic forms in the dialects taken together can be judged to be relatively more distant than those of the Classical language from the common source (be it the Classical itself or some antecedent), it is justifiable to assume that dialectal Arabic is representative of a later form of Arabic than the Classical language and do contrastive work on this basis.

Finally I must note there has been little cross-dialect descriptive work in the field of Arabic (e.g., Singer 1958 and Cowan 1960) and more is obviously necessary to undergird and extend work in historical linguistics.



tics. In this paper I propose to demonstrate two substantially different patterns of language change, both associated with the single Classical morpheme *šayrun*. One pattern, the *š* question forms, shows an east/west split, whereas the other, negative *š*, evidences a coastal/non-coastal split. A cross-dialectal review of the range of variation should make my point.

## II. The Problem

The Classical lexeme *šayrun* is limited to meaning 'thing, something, anything' and has no special syntactic status. The word has, however, many frequently used reflexes in the dialects with functions which are hardly intimated in the literary language. These reflexes are often not simple lexical items but function words and grammatical morphemes. They range from markers of negation and interrogation, to markers of indefiniteness and possession. This class of reflexes is spread to greater or lesser extent throughout the dialects and is often represented at more than one point in the grammar of a single dialect. This paper discusses the range and variation of *š*-forms interdialectally in order to gain insight into principles underlying language change in Arabic.

This problem is of particular interest inasmuch as the spread of *š*-forms represents a synthetic process at work in a stage of Arabic generally labelled "analytic" (in contrast to the "synthetic" nature of the Classical language). This typology of language opposes reliance on inflection (synthetic) to reliance on word order and separate function words (analytic) to mark the semantic/syntactic role of any word in a sentence. Blau (1969) particularly elaborates the difference between synthetic Classical Arabic and the analytic dialects. It is my contention (contra, e.g., Hodge 1970) that synthetic and analytic are not states of a language but rather of language-processes; both synthetic and analytic developments are at play at any given point in the evolution of a language.

## III. The Forms Under Consideration

### A. Dialectal *šay* 'thing,' *ši* the indefinite marker, and *šwayya*

The Classical word *šayrun* 'thing, anything, something and somewhat' (Lane, 1863) seems to possess the highly unstable root structure *š-y-ʔ*. It has among its historically attested plurals *ašyāʔu*, *ʔašyawātun*, *ʔašaway*, *ʔašāyā*, and *ʔašāwihu*; these forms clearly evidence the instability of the root, with its final hamza in combination with a medial semi-vowel.

The meaning of the Classical lexeme is associated in the dialects with cognate words which show a diphthong in the singular, e.g., *šay* or *šey* (even if shorter forms such as *ši* or *š* obtain in the same dialect in various grammatical functions); some dialects have *ši* or *iši* as a word for 'thing.' In Jewish Baghdadi the form is *šen*, likely taking on pseudo-nunation for a more stable final consonant. (Comparable Maltese *šeyn* is a negative form, 'nothing.') Cognates of both the singular and first-cited plural form (e.g., *ašyā*) are common throughout the dialects; *šiyāt* is preferred as the plural form in Southeastern Anatolia and in Central Asia.

There are synonyms for *šay* used in many of the dialects (e.g., *ḥāja/ḥawāyij* in North Africa, *gharaḍ* in Palestinian, *šagli* in Lebanese), but *šay* appears to be a common term except perhaps in Egypt and Tunisia. Interestingly, *šay* and other dialect cognates encroach on the function of some Classical lexemes (especially *mā* the indefinite and relative pronoun with which it is close to synonymous). Thus we get a number of pairs which might be considered semantic reduplications:

- ši kam* 'some' Lebanon
- ši ḥāja* 'something' Malta and North Africa
- fardši* 'something' Baghdad
- ḥadši* 'one' Oman and Zanzibar
- waḥadši* 'one' Bukharia
- šuma, ašma* 'whatever' Palestinian
- šima* 'as soon as' Greater Syria

Also closely linked to the Classical lexeme *šayʿun* is the quantitative or partitive particle *ši*, related to the Classical meaning 'somewhat.' *ši* serves as an indefinite particle along the Mediterranean coast, in Malta (but apparently not on Cyprus), and in Yemen; it marks a specific indefinite noun in Moroccan (cf. Peterson, 1974). In both usages it precedes a noun unmodified by the definite article prefix *ʾal*; the noun can be singular (concrete or abstract), plural, or collective. The English translation of the particle varies, since English categorizes its indefinites in ways different from the Arabic dialects. Some examples are:

- ši sigāriya* 'a cigarette, any cigarette, some cigarettes'
- ši fšāḥa* 'a certain elegance (of language)'
- ši kutub* 'some books, any books'
- ši xubz* 'some bread, any bread'

The diminutive of *šay*, *šwayya* (cf. Altoma, 1969, 103) can serve a similar function, as it apparently can in Classical Arabic. Marçais and

Abderrahman (1959, 2128) give the example:

*ešrīli šwaiya* ‘aneb ‘Buy me some grapes.’

The diminutive used in the Classical is *šuwayʿun* or *šuwayyʿun* (Lane 1863, 1626, 7). In the Classical, *šayʿan fašayʿan* is used for ‘piecemeal, little by little, gradually,’ and in the dialects a comparable reduplicated use of *šwayya* is frequent:

*šwayy šwayy!* ‘Do it slowly; don’t be impatient.’ Palestinian

The same sense can occur even without the full reduplication:

*fataḥ elbāb bišwēš* ‘He opened the door carefully.’ Egyptian

Table 1  
Q-forms with *š*-prefix

Approx. forms	Meaning	Mahgreb	E. Arabia	Syria-Palestine	Iraq	Anatolia	Turkestan
škun	who	x			x		
šwaqt	when				x	x	
šḥal	how	x					
šlōn <sup>1</sup>	how		x	parts			
šgāyyil	how		x				
šgadd	how much			parts	x	x	
ištur <sup>2</sup>	how						x
šṭaba <sup>3</sup>	how					x	
ašma	how						x
ašyol	how						x
šini	why						x
išait <sup>4</sup>	which						x
išzayli <sup>5</sup>	which						x

Notes:

1 See Bergsträsser 1915, map 29

2 *taur* Persian ‘condition’, note the similar Persian *či* in *četowr* ‘how, what way?’

3 *ṭāb* Arabic ‘good’

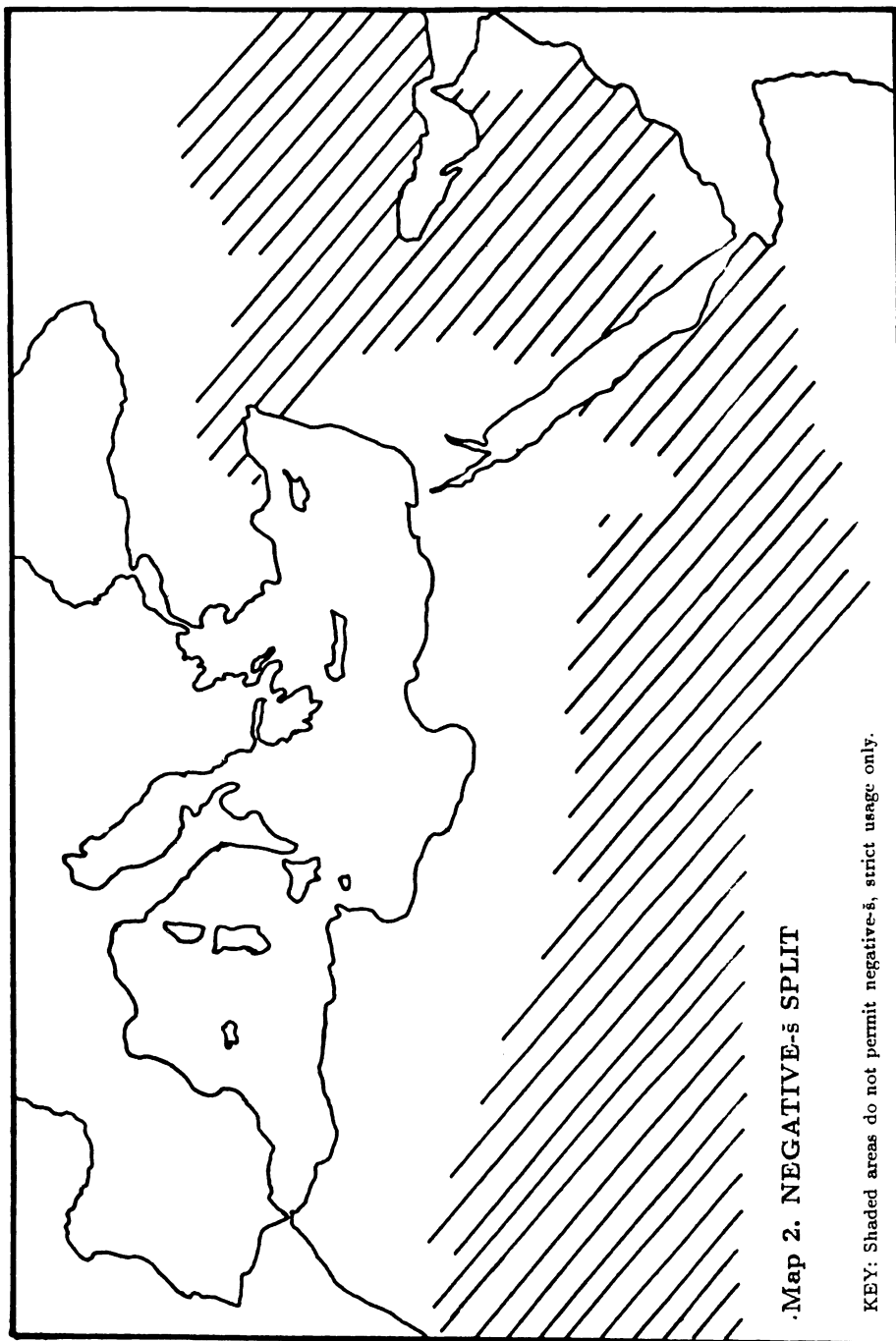
4 *ʾaḥad* or *waḥad* Arabic ‘one’

5 *zay* Arabic ‘like’ (*li* is a Turkish adjectiviser)

### B. Interrogative *š*

The adverbial use of *šwayya* just discussed is structurally close though semantically distant from the first of the two classes of forms I wish to focus





Map 2. NEGATIVE-š SPLIT

KEY: Shaded areas do not permit negative-š, strict usage only.

on in this paper, question-word formative *š-* or *-aš*. The forms and their distribution can be seen in Tables 1 and 2. In the dialects east of Palestine the prefix forms predominate, whereas in the North African dialects the suffix forms predominate. Particularly interesting is the east/west split between *šwaqt* and *waqtāš* 'when?' and between *šqadd* and *qaddēš* 'how much?' respectively. Palestine is a transitional area, at least for the 'when?' forms, since both obtain. Also to be noted is the productive potential of *š* in Turkestan; even Persian and Turkish morphs can be joined to *š-*. The *š* form for 'what?' coexists with *mā*, the equivalent Classical form, in many dialects (see Map 1). The pattern of differential usage of these two forms has not been discussed in the literature.

Question forms in *š* must be seen to develop from the Classical phrase *ayyu šay'in* 'which thing?' or the sentence *ayyu šay'in huwa* 'Which thing is it?' (the use of *huwa* 'he' at the end is not infrequent in equational sentences). Note that all three words are defective in terms of the triconsonantal root system; the *š* is the strongest consonant of the lot. From the three-word phrase, we can posit the development of *\*ēšu* or *\*ēšnu*, which would further reduce to *ēš* or *šnu* or *šū*. Such forms as these are still quite defective since they contain only one or two consonants. Defective structure and brevity make these forms particularly susceptible to compounding with the word they question. The result is the series of lexical *š-* question words shown in the tables, as well as the productive questioning prefix in Iraqi, e.g., *šamilt?* 'what did you do?'.

A conservative explanation for the development of these forms would see them in the light of Zipf's hypothesis (1935) that frequently used forms tend to be phonologically short in a language, the end products of reduction from longer forms, a type of "synthetization." Such an argument holds equally well for the negative marker *-š* which we consider next.

### C. Negative *š*

Nowhere in Classical Arabic does *šayrun* complement a negative particle. *šayan* 'thing, something' may be the direct object of a negated transitive verb:

*mā ʾakaltu šayan* 'I didn't eat anything.'

In the non-coastal dialects only this strict usage, where *šay* retains its full lexical value, is permitted (see Map 2). In the Arabic-speaking areas most distant from the Mediterranean (with the exception of Omar, Zanzibar and the Yemen), negation is marked by *lā*, *mā*, or *mū* preceding the verb.

Table 2  
Q-forms with *š*-suffix

Approx. forms	Meaning	Mahgreb	Syr.-Pales.	Iraq	Anatolia
qaddēš	how much		x		
waqtaš	when	x	<sup>1</sup>	x	x
lēš, laš	why	x	<sup>2</sup>		
bēš, baš	in what	x	x		
ʿalēš	on what, why	x	x		
fuqaš <sup>3</sup>	when	x			
kifaš <sup>4</sup>	how	x			
limaš <sup>5</sup>	why	x			

## Notes:

1 See Bergsträsser, 1915, map 26.

2 Note Palmyra form *lelēš* with the reduplicated preposition *la* 'to'.

3 lit. 'on what'.

4 In Algeria this form ranges from *kifaš* through *kihaš* and *kiaš* to *kaš*. Cohen 1912, 375, doesn't believe informants who assert that the more contracted form may be more general 'how,' the other 'in what way.' Likewise *leš* is sometimes distinguished from *la* ʿēš which would signify a more concrete 'to what.' See Barthélemy, 1955, 771.

5 Note the double questioning of *mā* and *š*.

In other dialects, however, there has been a new development apparently related to *šayʿun*: a *š(i)* is suffixed to the verb, regardless of its transitivity, to negate. The unqualified negation rule, maximally distant from the Classical rule, would read:

$$\text{Neg } X \Rightarrow (ma)X\check{s}(i),$$

but there are both a wide range of restrictions on X in the various dialects and great variety in the extent to which the several elements of the rule are obligatory or optional.

In the coastal Maghreb, an *š* suffix is obligatory to negate all verbs and pronouns. Its use with *mā* and congeners can be seen as parallel to the French *ne # V # pas*:

*mā jāš* 'He didn't come'

*matmšiš tn's* 'Don't go to sleep.' Moroccan

However there are exceptions even in these dialects to obligatory negative *š*. Harrell (1965, 154–205) points out that in Moroccan one does not need an *š* negator for "whole category" negation:

*mažbert flus* 'I didn't find (any) money.'

*makayen sqid* 'There aren't any matches.'

Likewise, when a further negating item is used in the sentence, *š* does not occur regularly. This too can be paralleled in the French system; *pas* obtains as the negative marker only when no other marker (*rien, jamais, personne*, etc.) occurs. In Arabic the inhibiting items differ somewhat from dialect to dialect (Obler, 1975). Thus in Moroccan, both *ammer* and *ḥadd* 'one' can inhibit use of *š*.

*ammerni markanexdem* 'I never work.'  
*ma-ža ḥetta ḥadd* 'Nobody came.'

Negative *š* is also obligatory in some non-Maghrebene dialects when the full negative verb frame does not obtain.

1. In Malta this form is common for all verb forms but the imperative, for which adding *š* to *lā* + verb would be acceptable but pompous (Alex Borg, personal communication).

2. In Oman/Zanzibar all non-finite verbs must take the *ši* suffix, the *mā* prefix is not used for non-finites but only for finites. Thus *š* and *mā* are complementary parts of the negation system.

3. Khalafallah (1969, 101) contends that the negative rule for Saʿīdi Arabic (that of the area of the Nile Valley between Cairo and Aswan) demands a *šey* suffix, while permitting an optional *mā* prefix. It is unclear why this area should diverge from the surrounding Egyptian dialects. The option of dropping negative *mā* when *š* is suffixed is similar to an option available in Palestine and southern Lebanon, but there it does *not* apply to past-tense verbs like the one Khalafallah cited: Saʿīdi *fhimšey* alternates with *mafhimšey* 'He didn't understand.'

4. In rural Lebanon and parts of Palestine *mā* may reduce to *ʔa* before verbs or it may delete entirely. In such cases *š* must be suffixed in order to indicate negation: *ʔat(i)ḥuṭṭiš ʔaṭa* 'Don't put on a coverlet.' Driver (1925, 197) attributes the reduction of *mā* to the fact that the verb begins with two consonants. This example shows that Blau's statement (1960, 134), that the reduction only occurs before preceding *b*-prefix imperfect verbs, is too limited.

Negative *š* is not restricted to verbs; negative pronoun forms follow the verb pattern of obligatory *mā* prefix and *š* suffix.

*huma mhumieš minn Malta* 'They are not from Malta.' Malta  
*maniš ferḥān* 'I'm not happy.' Marçais, 1902, 188, Algeria

Similarly *māš* (or *muš* or *miš*) from *mā* + *hūwa* + *šay* is often used to negate noun phrases.



*māši feddār* 'not in the house'  
*huwa māši hna* 'He isn't here.'

Various scholars have sought to simplify the available data, taking *maš* + *predicate* as the non-verbal negation frame and *mā* + *V* + *š* as the frame for verbs (Panetta, 1943, 308, Mitchell, 1962, 107). This is not correct. There are dialects where the *mā* . . . *š* negation is used for nonverbal predicates:

*makbīr šī* 'not big' Moroccan

and contrariwise in Egyptian, *ha* + Imperfect *V* is negated by *muš*. The Moroccan pattern just exemplified has a complex analogue in Saʿīdi. There the split negative can apply more generally to substantives:

*liktab ma jadid šey* 'The book is not new.'

and most surprisingly frames only the head of a noun phrase in

*ʿirrājel ma nazir šī lmidrasi* 'The man is not the headmaster.'  
 (*nazir lmidrasi* 'headmaster', lit. 'master of the school' Khalafallah, 1965, 102, Saʿīdi)

Other formulations of *š* negation rules reveal other complexities. Woidich says (1968, 30) that for Egyptian Arabic *ma* . . . *š* occurs when the sentence order of an equational sentence is Predicate-Subject, and that *muš* obtains when it is reversed. Blau (1969, 199) sees the *maš* series negating independent words in Palestinian, while the *ma* . . . *š* morpheme operates on sentences. Driver notes (1925, 197) that in Palestine *muš(š)* is used before verbs, but only by the uneducated. Willms (1972, 45) reports the following as equivalent forms (with the demonstrative included under the negation) in northeastern Algeria:

*maši-d-xūyi* and *ma-d-xūyiš* 'That is not my brother'

These data suggest that no simple statement of the syntax of *š* negation patterns should be attempted.

That negative *-š* is a suffix we learn from the phonological consequences it brings about. Whenever negative *-š* may obtain, it has the regular form /-š#/. and a rare fuller form /-ši#/. or /-šay#/. *-š* is "stress attracting," which means that the syllable bearing it is stressed where it otherwise would not be; this may involve lengthening the vowel if the syllable is open prior to suffixation. Alternatively it may involve epenthesis, if the penultimate syllable ends in a consonant, or doubling (in certain dialects) if the syllable is a pronoun marker which ends in a consonant.

*bištíglu* 'They work.'

(*ma*)*bištíglúš* 'They don't work.'

*šufnāhin* 'We saw them (f.).'

*mašufnahínniš* 'We didn't see them (f.)'. Palestinian

A curious extension of consonant doubling is in the Oman/Zanzibar negative pronoun series, which Reinhard (1864) attributes to an original long vowel in the forms with doubling:

*ena-ši* not I    *hna-ši* not we  
*nta-ši* not you    *ntem-ši* not you f. pl.  
*huwa-ši* not he    *hum-ši* not they m.  
*hiya-ši* not she    *hin-ši* not they f.

but

*nti-šši* not you f. sing.

*ntu-šši* not you m. pl.

When negative *-š* is suffixed, it is always the final suffix. This means that on a verb it can follow the subject marker, the direct-object pronoun marker, the indirect-object preposition, and the indirect-object pronoun marker: e.g., *mā ba·athalīš* alternates with *ba·at-hā-lī-š* 'He didn't send me it (f.)' Egyptian.

There is a phonological peculiarity of *š* negation apparently unrelated to stress attraction. The third-person masculine object pronoun deletes before *š* in some dialects:

*rāh* 'He saw him.'

*mā rāš* 'He didn't see him.' Tunisian

*fīh* 'there is'

*mā fīš* 'there is not' Egyptian

But the deletion is not universal. Note *fīh* 'in it' *mafihši* 'not in it' Egyptian (Blanc, personal communication) and *fahš* 'he cannot = [it is] not in him' Lebanese (Kfeir) (McCarus, personal communication).

Other features of the syntax are also noteworthy. Having considered the two extremes—obligatory *š* and impermissible *š*—we are left with the interesting, more variable cases. In Tunisia and in Palmyra (Syria), *ma* or *la* must precede the verb; *š* or *šu* may follow. In Oman/Zanzibar negation

is either marked by a *ši* suffix or by *mā*, *lā* or *γer* preceding the word, but not both. And in parts of Palestine and southern Lebanon, either *mā* or *-š* or both may negate, though *-š* alone cannot mark perfect verbs, which must be preceded by *mā* or *lā*. *-š* alone can negate *b*-imperfect verbs and such pseudo-verbs as *biddi* 'to want' and *fī* 'there is':

*mā fihimtiš* 'I didn't understand.'

*mā bitsawwi iyyā ~ mā bitsawwiš iyya ~ bitsawwiš iyya* 'You don't do it.'

*mā biddi sukkar ~ mā biddiš sukkar ~ biddiš sukkar* 'I don't want sugar.' Palestinian

Although a negative of a predicate *not* bracketing a morpheme regularly includes an *š*-form, i.e., *māš* or *miš*, it is my experience that the pronoun forms occur with or without the *š* suffix, i.e., *māni* ~ *maniš*, in apparently free-variation in the speech of the same person.

In summary: the rules for negation may vary across dialects, permitting, prohibiting, or demanding a negative *-š*. *š(i)* is able to take on full responsibility for negation in a dialect, a position Classical *šayrun* never approached. Our strongest evidence is the Oman/Zanzibar negation of non-verbal items by *š* suffix, the Palestinian and Sa'idi optionality of the *mā* in a *mā#V#š* frame, and the Maltese use of *šeyn* for 'nothing.' The relevant conditioning parameters vary, however: in Palestinian tense is of consequence; in Moroccan existential statements are exempt from *š*; in Maltese, imperative verbs are exempt; in Oman/Zanzibar, and elsewhere to various lesser extents, word class is significant.

One can, furthermore, make relative or implicational claims for the derived negator *māš* and the series of negated pronouns:

1. these do not obtain where negative *-š* cannot and
2. they are more likely to exist as frozen forms, even in dialects where negative *-š* marking a verb is optional.

As to speculations on the historical development of negative *š*, our clues are few: the absence of negative-*š* in Cyprus (settled by the end of the Crusades and under negligible Classical influence since) and in Spain might argue a late spread, as would the absence in medieval texts (Blau, personal communication), and the general limitation to the Mediterranean coast. The diversity of the syntactic rule possibilities might argue for an earlier spread, as might the curious *miš* conditional marker in Cyprus (where we do not find negative *-š* or *māš* forms otherwise):

*ana miš ruṣt* 'I would have gone'

*ana miš maruṣt* 'I would not have gone'

The fixity of the rules (i.e., the avoidance of optional features) in Malta, the Maghreb, Oman/Zanzibar, and the Yemen might point to fairly early spread from a single point (say, Palestine) where optional rules were allowed. By the time the forms reached more distant areas, they were treated with greater rigidity.

#### IV. Conclusions

The *ši* data could support a model of language change by drift (Sapir, 1921, R. Lakoff, 1972). In such a theory it is posited that a dynamic internal to a language family brings about parallel changes in non-contiguous, genetically related languages, or in this case a dynamic internal to a dialect cluster leads to parallel changes in non-contiguous dialects. The indefinite *ši* of Moroccan and Palestinian would be the most clearcut example; with no obvious historical connection, this *ši* has developed to fill a function which had been filled in an entirely different fashion in the Classical language. Likewise, the geographically isolated position of the Peninsular dialects (Yemen, Oman) which boast negative *š* might be argued to support a theory of Sapirian drift within the Arabic language towards the direction of negative *š*.

At the same time, however, the negation data are consistent with a theory of language change via geographical spread. The development of an *š* integral to the negation system is limited to coastal areas (the southern and eastern Mediterranean, Oman/Zanzibar, and the Saʿīdi region, if the banks of the Nile be counted as coastal). This is probably due to the influence of trade, a factor which in turn is related to the difference between rural and urban dialects in the Arabic-speaking world. The lack of the indefinite *š* in Bet Safafa texts (Obler, 1975) contrasts with its use in nearby Jerusalem, providing an example of rural/urban split. Further support for an explanation based on geographical spread with a distinctive split is given by the eastern versus western pattern of lexical compounding for *š* question words; prefix forms like *šwaqt* 'when?' are used in the eastern end of the Arabic-speaking world, while suffix forms like *waqtāš* are used in North Africa. Palestine is a transitional area where both sorts of forms obtain. (See Bergsträsser's idiolect map, 1915, map 26).

Ferguson's theory of point-source diffusion, derived from a military *koine* model (Ferguson, 1959) best explains the development of the 'what'-words *ēš*, *šū*, and *šnu*. As sketched above, these were synthesized from a three-word phrase. It is likely that some form of this phrase was in common use as early as the seventh century and that this form spread to the areas

conquered by Islam. The variety of the reduced forms would then have come about either by drift or a Zipfian drive to synthesis.

Zipf's (1935) theory predicts that the most frequent words in a language will be the shortest ones. This theory could suggest that in language change, the frequently used phrases would tend to synthesize to single units. The *š* situation certainly bears this theory out; as *š*-forms were used for highly common functions (negation, question words and structures, indefiniteness), the marker signaling these functions has often been reduced to a solitary *š*. In the context of the Semitic languages, where true lexemes regularly have a three-consonant root and only particles can be uniconsonantal, we must see the leveling of *šayrun* to *iši* or *ši* or *š* as a good Semitic example of reduction.

On the other hand, the Semitic tendency toward regularization at the morphological level, notably the tendency toward triconsonantalism is evidenced in those *š*-forms which build themselves up by adopting the /*n*/ of tanwiin, or by adding a /*t*/: *šin*, *šnu*, etc., and *šit*. *šit* (not discussed in this paper) reflects the analytic tendency of the Arabic dialects; where Classical Arabic indicates possession through the syntactic structure of the *idāfa*, the dialects in some cases prefer to use this distinct lexical item. (See Obler, 1975.) Thus the weight of synthetic evidence we have seen around the *ši*-forms does not eliminate the more usual hypothesis that change in Arabic is directed toward producing an analytic-type language; it rather supports my modification of this notion, that change in a single language may occur in both directions at the same time, in a pattern of more analysis in some areas and more synthesis in other (even closely related) areas.

The theory that one factor in language change is the need to relieve an item overburdened, either semantically or syntactically, is supported in the continual interplay in Arabic between *mā* and *š*-forms. Thus *mā* and *šu* share the range of 'what' meanings, and *mā* and *ši* dominate the negation systems. Since the negative *mā* was prior (as evidenced in its occurrence in other Semitic languages), we might assume that the synthetic *š*-forms arose to supplement it, to both complement it through dissimilation and to enhance it through redundancy.

Models of language change, one must conclude, are not mutually exclusive. Furthermore, the tendency toward synthetic forms in a language does not exclude the tendency toward analytic constructions. The *š* phenomena for the most part represent synthetic developments in Arabic, yet there is no question that at some points in the grammar, analytic patterns have superceded synthetic ones.

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This paper represents the core of my 1975 University of Michigan doctoral dissertation; Ernest T. Abdel-Massih chaired the committee which guided me in writing it. His warm intelligence, his appreciation, his enthusiasm, and his dedication to teaching inspired me throughout my study of Arabic and continue to serve as a model for my scholarly research and teaching.

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## The Ammonite Onomasticon: Syntactic and Morphological Considerations

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THE small body of South Canaanite inscriptions has been most notably increased in recent years by finds involving the Ammonite dialect.<sup>1</sup> The major Ammonite texts have come to light during the last quarter-century: the Amman Citadel and Theatre inscriptions, the text on the Tell Siran bottle, and the Heshbon ostraca. To these may be added the namelist ostracon from Nimrud and many seals.<sup>2</sup> This essay deals with a variety of linguistic issues raised by the Ammonite names.<sup>3</sup>

The importance of onomastic study in the field of ancient West Semitic languages has long been appreciated, through advances continue to be made in basic historical work; Michael Silverman's recent overview of Elephantine and biblical names (1981) is a notable example. The literary implications of the shapes of names have been neglected for the most part; one feature of the names that is of great importance is the system of syntactic constraints structuring them. I have discussed this matter in my recent essay on Hebrew verse. "West Semitic names are shaped in the same ways as lines of verse are. . . . Names in all the Northwest Semitic languages have been extensively studied in recent years, and in all the corpora, the same set of constraints appears" (O'Connor 1980: 161). These constraints can be characterized with the vocabulary used to describe verse lines (the constraints themselves are distinct): "a personal name can contain either one clause-predicator or none and either one or two units" (ibid.; see O'Connor 1980: 159-63).<sup>4</sup> The Ammonite names follow the patterns previously described with no exceptions; the syntactic constriction on names, as treated in *Hebrew Verse Structure*, obtains for the Ammonite onomasticon.

In the pages that follow I supplement previous surveys of the Ammonite onomasticon; these notes do not replace the original publications and commentaries. I prescind from dealing with problems that require

large-scale systematic study, notably the interrelations (phonological, typological, and historical) of the Northwest Semitic, Arabian, and South Arabian onomastica.

The long-standing difficulties of studying Amorite names have been ameliorated by the publication of the late I. J. Gelb's monumental *Computer-Aided Analysis of Amorite* (1980), which supplements and complements the earlier survey of Huffmon (1965). The problems of using the bodies of material dealt with in the late G. Lankester Harding's equally imposing *Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions* (1971) remain; Jamme (1971) is a useful cautionary guide. An apt review of some logical properties of names is afforded in Gibson's *Biblical Semantic Logic* (1981: 126-64); issues treated include use *versus* mention, referential *versus* semantic value, and criteria of identity and application.

There are several major classes of names represented in the Ammonite onomasticon. (I.) Verbal-sentence theophoric names, e.g., *zkr·l*, 'El remembers (*or* has remembered),' *·lms·l*, 'El rules (*or* has ruled).'<sup>5</sup> (IIA.) Nominal-sentence theophoric names of declarative force, e.g., *šmš·l*, 'El is the sun (*or* Šamš is god),' *·lnr*, 'El is light.' (IIB.) Nominal-sentence theophoric names of interrogative force; there are three such names: *·yndb*, 'Where is the Noble One?' (*contra* JAPN #6, 'Where is nobility?'); *[m]k·l*, 'Who is like El?'; *mkm·l*, 'Who is like El?'<sup>6</sup> (III.) Construct-phrase names, e.g., *mqnmk*, 'property of the (Divine) King.' (IV.) Single-unit names, e.g., *brq*, 'lightning.'<sup>7</sup> There are, in addition, shortened forms derived from names of Classes I-III; it is not clear that hypocoristica need be rigidly separated from Class IV names. In this paper I will deal with some problems of verbal morphology (Class I) and with a variety of Class III and IV names, most presenting some difficulty in nominal morphology. I will consider a pragmatic feature of name use, concinnity between the grammatical gender of name formants and the bearer's sex. Finally, I will review the problematic *yš·* formants.

## 1 *Verbal-sentence theophoric names: Verbal morphology*

### 1.1 *Second-person finite forms*

The Ammonite name *tnhm* (JAPN #106) belongs to the small class of ancient Northwest Semitic names with the second-person finite verb forms, surveyed by Coogan (1975). All such names are composed only of the verb form, and "it is remarkable that in none . . . is the divine subject named" (Coogan 1975: 196), especially since vocatives do occur with imperatives

(see below). Suffixing verb forms (e.g., Biblical Hebrew *šimrāt*, 1 Chr 8: 21, vocalization dubious) are commoner than prefixing forms, among which Coogan cites only some Amorite forms, Pal *tšbb* (cf. Stark 1971: 118), and the Ammonite case under discussion. The seal which attests this name, *lmnhm bn tnhm*, derives from the William Carlos Williams of Ammon.<sup>8</sup>

## 1.2 Imperatives

A number of Ammonite names may be parsed as containing imperatives: *brk'l* (JAPN #36), *pd'l* (JAPN #88), and *šb'l* (JAPN #96). Jackson glosses the first two as if the verbs could only be suffixing forms and leaves the third unglossed; gloss it 'Turn/Return, O 'Il,' with the object elided (cf. Jackson 1983a: 65). The Massoretic vocalizations of the comparable Hebrew name are bewildering, though even if the Gershonite (*šēbû·ēl* in 1 Chr 23: 16, *šēbu·ēl* in 26: 24), the Amramite (*šûbā·ēl* in 24: 20 bis), and the Hemanite (*šēbû·ēl* in 25: 4 and *šûbā·ēl* in 25: 20) are to be distinguished, the variation in the third's name suggests that all the forms represent the same name; the *šub-* vocalization must be more basic, since the *šēb-* forms could hardly have yielded those in *šub-*. MT, then, witnesses an imperative vocalization and most onomasticians agree on the sense (e.g., Gröndahl 1967: 61, 200; Huffmon 1965: 266, 1976: 620). The name MT *šēbanyāhû/yâ* (Neh 9: 4, etc) may be a byform of this, to be vocalized *šub-na-yāhû* (Coogan 1975: 197, after Albright).

The question of how common imperative names are remains open. It may be useful to summarize the agreed-on evidence. There are three types of imperative names, (a) those addressed to a deity, in the singular (for these, see Coogan 1975: 197), (b) those addressed, as it were, to their bearers, in the singular, and (c) those addressed to the community, in the plural (for these two groups, see the elegant treatment of Porten 1971).

The (a) type is the best attested. In addition to the *šub* + *DN* examples in Amorite, Ugaritic, and Biblical Hebrew, there is another possible Amorite example, in *n/ytn* (Huffmon 1965: 86–87; not so, Gelb 1980: 34, 200), three other possible Ugaritic examples (Gröndahl 1967: 60–61), and examples from *brk* and perhaps also *ytn* in Phoenician (Benz 1972: 101, 216–17, 248–49). There are two further Hebrew examples, *hōšā·āyâ* (Jer 42: 1; see Noth 1928: 32; this phrase corresponds to the smallest of the Khirbet Beit Lei texts, the only one Cross and Naveh agree on; see Cross 1970: 302), 'Save, O Yahweh' (see further below) and *rēmalyāhû* (2 Kgs 15: 25), vocalize *rûm-l(a)-yāhû*, 'Be exalted, O Yahweh' (so Coogan

1975: 197, after Moran). If *pd'l* and *brk'l* contain imperatives, the names are of this type; gloss 'Redeem, O El' and 'Bless, O El.'<sup>9</sup>

For the (b) and (c) classes only the Hebrew examples, biblical and epigraphic, have been collected (Porten 1971 with full references). The singular forms are more common: *ḥklyh* (MT *ḥākalyâ*, Neh 1:1, vocalization dubious), 'Wait for Yahweh'; *dml'l* (a Hebrew seal, Herr 1978: 138), 'Be silent (be)for(e) 'Il'; *dmlyhw* (attested on seals, Herr 1978: 132, 144), 'Be silent (be)for(e) Yahweh' (Porten after Greenfield); note the hypocoristicon *dml* (attested epigraphically); *splyh* (attested at Elephantine), 'Watch for Yahweh' (Porten after Kutscher); *qwlyh* (MT *qôlâyâ*, Jer 29: 21, vocalization dubious; also attested epigraphically), 'Hope for Yahweh' (the hypocoristicon *qw* is used at Elephantine); and *qēlâyâ* (Ezra 10:23 and HS 133, the son of Domla'el!; Herr 1978: 138), 'Pay homage to Yahweh.'

There are three sure examples of the (c) type, *dē'û'el* (Num 1: 14), 'Acknowledge 'Il'; *hōdawyāhû/yâ* (1 Chr 5: 24, etc.), 'Thank Yahweh' (the hypocoristicon *hwdw* is used at Elephantine); and *pnwlyh* (Elephantine), 'Turn to Yahweh' (so Porten, but perhaps rather an (a) class, 'Turn, O Yahweh').

Absent a full study of all these forms in a framework of onomastic syntax, one should hardly dwell on the chance of unvocalized names being imperative-types.

## 2 Construct-phrase names

A number of Ammonite names are composed of construct phrases. The name *d'l* is entered in JAPN #76 without a gloss. Comparable names are common; note Biblical Hebrew *ādî'el* (1 Chron 4: 36) and *ādāyāhû* (2 Chron 23: 1), Epigraphic Hebrew *dyhw* (Herr 1978: 108); Punic *db'l* (Benz 1972: 1965); Ugaritic *dmlk* and *dršp* (Gröndahl 1967: 106); Aramaic *dyh* (Kornfeld 1978: 65). Despite the hesitation among students discussing the cognates cited above (to which add Stark 1971: 104, s.v. *wd'l*), it seems most likely that the Ammonite *d'l* and similar names are analogous to *ēlîšēba'* (Exod 6: 23), *yēhōšēba'* (2 Kgs 11: 2), and *bat-šēba'* (2 Sam 11: 3; all are women's names!), with the word *d* 'oath, treaty' (see Fitzmyer 1967: 23–24 and references, adding Milgrom 1978: 66–76 on Hebrew *dh*); no other possibility cited has so straightforward a typological grounding, notably Sivan's references to *dw/y* 'to wear jewels' and *d* 'jewel' (1982: 223, 233).

The pair of names *bd'l* and *byd'l* is noteworthy (JAPN #28, 30; cf. Sivan 1982: 226). The first has parallels in Ugaritic, Epigraphic Hebrew, Phoenician, and Punic; a Murašû name supplies the vocalization *ba-da-ya-*

*a-ma* (Coogan 1976: 14), cognate to the Amarna form of the contraction *bd* < *byd*. The long form is paralleled in names of the Official Aramaic period, *byd'l* and *bydyh*. Avigad (1985: 1-3) has published a Phoenician seal *lbbd'l* and supplied a list of the *bd*- and *byd*- forms in Ammonite. The usual view is that both of these formants are compound, *b* + (*y*)*d* 'in/by the hand of,' but, as Avigad hints, this is open to question. The cooccurrence of *bd*- and *byd*- in the Ammonite onomasticon suggests that the relexicalization that separates first-millennium B. C. E. (Hebrew) *bēyad* 'in the hand/power of,' and first millennium C. E. (Arabic) *badd* 'power' (whence, not whither, *badda* 'to distribute, spread,' the *maṣdar* of which it serves as) had an early start. It may therefore be that *bd'l* should be glossed 'power of El.'

The name *mr'l* (JAPN #66) is probably based on a cognate of Aramaic *mar* 'lord.' Such names are attested, e.g., at Palmyra (see Stark 1971: 96–97, perhaps adding some names Stark associates with *mar* 'bitter'). Hebrew and Phoenician give examples of *mrr* names, all of which, it must be admitted, reflect the geminate character of the root (Benz 1972: 354–55 and references). Some of the Amorite names taken by Benz as relevant are probably *mr* names, as Gelb parses them, e.g., *ya<sup>3</sup>mur-haddu*, 'Hadad commands' (or the like; Gelb 1980: 603); but Ugaritic *ymrn*, *mr<sup>c</sup>m* and *amrr* (≠ Amurru!) and Execration Text Amorite *ymwru* (Gröndahl 1967: 160; Huffmon 1965: 233, cf. 234) remain to be accounted for. The name *mr'l* is probably to be glossed 'Il commands,' but note that *mr* + DN names can be parsed 'man of DN' (Stark 1971: 69).

### 3 *Single-unit names*

Two single-unit names left unglossed in JAPN may be taken as *m*-prefix-noun names from fairly common onomastic roots: *mnr* (JAPN #64) and *mr<sup>c</sup>* (JAPN #67). Ammonite *mnr* seems the plainer of the two. Names in the root *nwr* are not rare (for Amorite, see Huffmon 1965: 243–44, and Gelb 1980: 28 and references, 331; for Ugaritic, Gröndahl 1967: 166; for first-millennium Northwest Semitic, Coogan 1976: 77–78). Names with *m*-preformative nouns, though hardly a morphological class in the strict sense, are also not rare (see the gathering in Avigad 1978: 68). There seems, then, no reason not to parse *mnr* as a hypocoristic of a genitive-compound name in *nwr* 'light.' Another "light" root that yields a *m*-noun name is *yp<sup>c</sup>*, whence Amorite *me-bi-ḥu-um*, viz., *mēpi<sup>c</sup>um* (Gelb 1980: 22, 273; Huffmon 1965: 148–150, 212), probably a causative participle; see also Stark's discussion, s.v. *mrbn* (< *mr<sup>b</sup>-nbw*?, after Huffmon, Stark 1971: 97).

*mr* may be another *m*-prefix-noun name, but of uncertain root. If Canaanite, the root could be either *rʿy* 'to pasture' or *rʿy* 'to befriend, befellow,' the latter usually offered as the etymon of BH *rēʿû*, *rēʿû-ēl*, *rēʿû*, though the first two show *gamma* in the Septuagint; Gröndahl (1967: 178) offers both roots as possibilities for Ugaritic *rʿy* (similarly Benz 1972: 409–10). Sivan alludes to *rʿ* 'to be evil' and *rw* 'to cheer' (1982: 234), both doubtful entries. If Aramaic, the root could be *rʿy*, 'to take pleasure in,' Old Aramaic *rqw* (Fitzmyer 1967: 109–10), Hebrew *ršy*, Arabic *rdy*, which yields names in Amorite (Huffmon 1965: 265; Gelb 1980: 347) and Biblical Hebrew (*tiršâ*, Num 26: 33), though it is doubtful that the *rʿy* form of the root *must* be excluded from Canaanite, even if most of its derivatives in Biblical Hebrew (*rēʿût*, etc.) occur only in Qoheleth.

The name *ʿnmwt* is problematic; JAPN #85 enters no gloss and registers only Middle Aramaic cognates. It is tempting, on the analogy of *ʿnl*, 'Il has answered,' to gloss 'Mawet/Mot has answered' (so apparently Naveh 1980: 167); Sivan suggests 'the eye of death' (1982: 224, 225). But the onomastic usage of *m(w)t* seems dubious, and Gröndahl, for example, is reticent about apparent Ugaritic examples (1967: 162); for *ny*, note Biblical Hebrew *ʿnāyâ* (Neh 8: 4) and Phoenician *ʿnbʿl*, 'Baal has answered' (so, with qualifications, Benz 1972: 381). The element *m(w)t* 'man, person' suggests itself, but names with that element tend to be construct-phrase names (e.g., Huffmon 1965: 234; Gröndahl 1967: 162). If *ʿnmwt* were a nominal-sentence name, viz., 'ʿAn is a man (? , a husband?, a warrior?),' the theophore would be the masculine equivalent of ʿAnat (Benz 1972: 380), a deity whose special presence in the Middle Euphrates Valley is marked from the Bronze Age (Huffmon 1965: 199) to the present. It remains possible, finally, to follow Stark, who cites as a source for Palmyrene *ʿnmw* Arabic *ġānim* 'noble'; if that is the true etymon, the name is a single-unit name, perhaps an abstract noun.

#### 4 *Sex and Gender*

There are always two and often three *m/f* phenomena involved in considering names and their bearers: (1) the sex of the bearer, (2) the gender of the name formants, and (3) the sex and gender of the deity in theophores. Are there any restrictions? I can present some evidence, suggesting a rule that might clarify two relevant Ammonite cases.

Male persons can bear names referring to female deities; the other formants in such names are masculine. The examples are male names Palmyrene *bltyh̄n*, 'Belet (f) is gracious (m)' (Stark 1971: 77); Nabatean

*mlk·lt* 'Alat (f) rules (m)' (Savignac 1932: 590–94, Graf 1983); Phoenician-Punic *štrtytn*, 'Astart (f) has given (m)' (Benz 1972: 387); and Aramaic *šytn* 'Isis (f) gives (m)' (F. M. Cross, the Samaria papyri, personal communication). Females can bear names referring to male deities; note simply Amorite *su-mu-na-a-bi* and *su-mu-ḥa-mu* (Huffmon 1965: 248, cf. 62). It may be that sometimes the gender of the verbal form "can be derived from the sex of the name bearer without reference to the syntax of the name" (Huffmon paraphrasing Ranke, 1965: 86, cf. 85–86). Given that the bearer of the Ammonite name *·lyh* is known to have been a female (JAPN #81), it is best to take this name as a simple hypocoristicon (i.e., one without an ending) from a name of the form *DN* + *·ly(h)*, without prejudice to the gender of the divine name, viz., assuming that this female bore a grammatically feminine name referring to a male deity. This example does not, however, warrant us to exclude the reading of *·nmwt* as *·n* (DN) + *mw* (m), though it may slightly favor the reading of *·nmwt* as derived from a cognate of *ḡānim*. The full complexities of onomastic gender-crossing remain to be explored; in addition to Stark's discussion, see Coogan (1975: 194–95) and Huffmon (1965: 62, 86).

## 5 Formants in (y)ṣ̌

There are six Ammonite names involving *yṣ̌*/*ṣ̌* formants. (A1) *yṣ̌* (Herr 1978: 73; Jackson 1983a: 81; JAPN #53: "NN has delivered"; the seal is possibly Ammonite). (A2) *yṣ̌·l* (Herr 1978: 70; Jackson 1983a: 77; JAPN #54: "Il has delivered"). (A3) *·lyṣ̌* (three occurrences: [a] Herr 1978: 64, Jackson 1983a: 76; [b] Herr 1978: 61, Jackson 1983a: 82; [c] Naveh 1980: 169; JAPN #14: "Il has delivered" or "My God is deliverance"). (A4) *·lṣ̌* (Herr 1978: 60–61; Jackson 1983a: 76; JAPN #25: "My god is deliverance"; set equal to A3 by Naveh 1980: 61). (A5) *·ltṣ̌* (Herr 1978: 70; erroneously cited as if the same as A3 in both Jackson 1983a and JAPN; the copy shows *t* clearly). (A6) *b·lyṣ̌* (see below for references).

The last of these is an Ammonite name found on a seal impression discovered at Tell el-Umeiri, south of Amman, in 1984. The seal reads *lmlkm·wr* *·bd* *b·lyṣ̌*, evidently the seal of a minister of the king mentioned in Jer 40: 14 as Baalis (and therefore to be dated ca. 580), the successor to Amminadab (II), the monarch of the Tell Siran Bottle Inscription (Cross apud Herr 1985a). The seal has been preliminarily published by both the project director, L. T. Geraty (1985), and the dig director, L. G. Herr (1985a, b). Discussion has focused on the discrepancy between the epigraphic form *b·lyṣ̌* and biblical *b·lys*; there are four possible explanations.

(I.) The biblical spelling is a pious distortion, cf. Abed-Nego (R. G. Boling, apud Geraty 1985: 100; W. H. Shea 1985). (II.) The biblical spelling reflects Ammonite pronunciation (Émile Puech, Dennis Pardee, and Herr apud Herr 1985b). (III.) The biblical form is a hypocoristicon (F. M. Cross apud Geraty 1985: 100). (IV.) The biblical form is an error (mentioned in passing in Shea 1985: 113). The fourth of these is a counsel of despair; the other three remain arguable. Rendsburg (1986), taking up the second, has argued that the Hebrew *s* represents an attempt to record a Proto-Semitic *t*; he invokes the Trans- and Cisjordanian sibilant isogloss of Judg 12:6. Before considering the problems of *yš̄* formants, one further note about the Tell el-ʿUmeiri seal is needed: Geraty (1985: 98) and Herr (1985a: 171) both claim *mlkmʿwr* is the first epigraphically attested Milkom name, but Avigad (1985: 4–6) published a 6th-century seal, *lmlkmgd*, at the same time as the Baalis seal appeared, so the latter must share its pride of place.

The Ammonite names have been variously parsed. Three of the names, *yš̄ʾl* (A2), *ʾlyš̄* (A3), and *bʿlyš̄* (A6), have been parsed as verbal-sentence names (JAPN #54 for A2; JAPN #14 for A3 as an alternative; Shea 1985: 112, Geraty 1985: 98, Herr 1985a: 172 for A6 as an alternative), the verb being *yš̄* ‘to save, deliver.’ Three of the names, *ʾlyš̄* (A3), *ʾlš̄* (A4), and *bʿlyš̄* (A6) have been parsed as nominal sentence names (JAPN #14 for A3 as an alternative; JAPN #25 for A4; Geraty and Herr for A6 as an alternative), the noun being *š̄a* ‘deliverance’ (Jackson) or *yiš̄a* ‘salvation’ (Geraty and Herr). The name *yš̄* (A1) is parsed as a hypocoristicon of a verbal-sentence name (JAPN #53).

The actual formants involved are (AF1) *yš̄* in (A1) *yš̄*, in (A2) *yš̄ʾl*, possibly in (A3) *ʾlyš̄*, and possibly in (A6) *bʿlyš̄*; (AF2) *š̄* in (A4) *ʾlš̄*, possibly in (A3) *ʾlyš̄* (with *y* a suffix), and possibly in (A6) *bʿlyš̄* (again, with *y* a suffix); (AF3) *tš̄* in (A5) *ʾltš̄*. (It is possible that the divine name in *ʾltš̄* is *ʾlt*, but not likely.) Of these three formants, the first could certainly be polymorphous, i.e., the writing could disguise several formants. The evidence of the attested formants does not support the parsings proposed for the names; the situation must be more complex.

Let us turn to the Biblical Hebrew lexicon. There are two relevant verbal roots, *yš̄* ‘to deliver,’ only *Hipʾl* and *Nipʾal*, and *šw* ‘to cry out,’ only *Piel*; the distribution among verbal stems is already suspicious.<sup>10</sup> A cluster of nouns is derived from *yš̄*: *yēš̄a* ‘deliverance,’ *yēš̄ûʾâ* ‘salvation,’ *môš̄ûʾâ* ‘saving act’; two nouns appear to be derived from a metaplastic root *šw* ‘to deliver,’ viz., *šôa* ‘free’ and *tēš̄ûʾâ* ‘deliverance.’ Several nouns are derived from *šw* ‘to cry out’: *šû/ôa* ‘cry’ and *\*šawʾâ* ‘cry.’

The Biblical Hebrew names involving a (*y*)*š̄* formant are common



and well known; all these names are usually associated with *yšc* 'to deliver.' There is one verbal-sentence name, (H1) *hōšāc-āyā* 'Save, O Yahweh' (Neh 12: 32). There is one nominal-sentence name type, DN + formant, exemplified for each of the major divine names in the Bible, (H2) *yēhōšūa<sup>c</sup>* (Joshua 1: 1) and its apocopated form (H3) *yēšūa<sup>c</sup>* (Ezra 2: 40); (H4) *ēlīšā<sup>c</sup>* (1 Kgs 19: 16); (H5) *ēlīšūa<sup>c</sup>* (2 Sam 5: 15). There is, further, a construct-phrase name, (H6) *yēšāc-yāhū/yēšāc-yā* (Isa 1: 1, 1 Chron 3: 21, contra Sivan 1982: 233). Finally there are a variety of single-unit names: (H7) *šūa<sup>c</sup>* (Gen 38: 2), (H8) *yīšc-i* (1 Chron 2: 31), (H9) *hōšēa<sup>c</sup>* (Hos 1: 1), (H10) *mēša<sup>c</sup>/mēšā<sup>c</sup>* (2 Kgs 3: 4; 1 Chron 2: 42).

A number of groups of name formants can be discerned. (I.) The *Hip'i*l of *yšc* yields *hōšāc(ā)-* (H1), a verbal form; *hōšēa<sup>c</sup>* (H9) could be either a hypocoristicon based on the verb-form or a related noun. (II.) One class of nominal forms involves a *yšc* shape; this group includes *yēšāc-* (H6) and *yīšc i* (H8). (III.) Another class involves a *šc* shape; this group includes (-) *šūa<sup>c</sup>* (H2, 3, 5, 7) and *-šā<sup>c</sup>* (H4). (IV.) The *m*-prefix name *mēša<sup>c</sup>* stands in a class by itself. Of these four groups of formants, only Group I is clearly related to the verb *yšc* as it is used in Hebrew (and, by extension, elsewhere in South Canaanite). Given the mass of other evidence, there is no reason to hypothesize a *Qal* of *yšc* in South Canaanite and use it to gloss names in epigraphic sources; the verbal parsings of Ammonite *yšc-l*, *lyšc*, and *blyšc* may safely be discarded. It is rather the nominal formants of Groups II and III which are relevant to these and other Ammonite names; these formants are less obviously related to *yšc* 'to deliver,' though those of Group II are closer than those of Group III. (AF1) *yšc* could be either *yēšāc-* or *yīšc-i* and (AF2) *šc* could be either *-šūa<sup>c</sup>* or *-šā<sup>c</sup>*; the names in question may be compared to the Hebrew names: (A1) *yšc* is probably like (H8) *yīšc-i*, possibly like the first element in (H6) *yēšāc-yāhū*; (A2) *yšc-l* is like (H6); (A3) *lyšc*, (A4) *lšc* and (A6) *blyšc* are probably like (H4) *ēlīšā<sup>c</sup>* or (H5) *ēlīšūa<sup>c</sup>*, with the *y* in (A3) and (A6) a mater lectionis, although (A3) and (A6) could involve the elements *yīšc-i* (H8) or *yēšāc-* (H6). The fourth group of Hebrew formants has no direct cognate in Ammonite, but the *t*-prefix nominal element of *ltšc* is analogous (cf. O'Connor 1980: 186–187). The names may be tentatively glossed: (A1) *yšc* 'deliverance (?)', (A2) *yšc-l* 'deliverance (?) of El,' (A3) *lyšc*, (A4) *lšc*, (A5) *ltšc*, and (A6) *blyšc* 'DN/my god/lord is deliverance (?)'.

The cognate evidence from unvocalized Canaanite sources, much of it cited in JAPN s. vv., is of no help in clarifying the shape of the formants involved. Amorite has several relevant elements (Huffman 1965: 215–216): *išb* in, e.g., *iš-bi<sup>d</sup> IM* reflects *\*yitš*, ancestor to the Group II elements, *yēšāc-*

and *yīšî*; *ešub/yašub*, a theophoric element (Huffmon 1965: 77, 98–99) as in *î-lî-e-šu-uḫ*; this may be cognate to the noun *yēšûâ*, and its onomastic use in Amorite would support the derivation of the name element *-šûa* from this noun. (Gelb 1980: 22, in addition to these elements, recognizes several others, not well attested.)

The cognate evidence does suggest that the second radical of *yš* is underlying *t*; note, most recently, the principal of the Tell Fekherye bilingual, Hadduyitî (Abou-Assaf et al. 1982), along with pre-Islamic Arabic, Amorite and perhaps Ugaritic data. If the root is *yṯ*, the standard Arabic cognate, *wasîa* ‘to be wide,’ must be discarded, and the Safaitic god whose name is conventionally vocalized *Yīṯa* is relevant. Unlike Amorite *Yašû*, this god is known outside of personal names, from graffito petitions.

In the eleven occurrences of the divine name in the Safaitic corpus of Winnett and Harding (1978), five occurrences use *flṯ* (in the form *fhṯ flṯ*, ‘O *Yīṯa*, deliver [him],’ 2113 or *flṯh*, 1974, 2539; once with an object in *m* ‘from,’ 191; once with a suffixing verb form, *wflṯ yṯ*, ‘*Yīṯa* delivered [him],’ 23). Other petitions involve the verbs *rwḫ* ‘to grant calm, relief’ (710, 2137), *sḏ* ‘to help’ (2163), and *slm* ‘to grant peace’ (313, and note 2161: *fhṯ slm wʿwr ḏy ʿwr ḥsfr*, ‘O *Yīṯa*, grant security, and render one-eyed him who damages the inscription,’ cf. Kilamuwa’s Phoenician curse, *wmy yšḫt ḥspr z yšḫt rš bʿl ṣmd . . . wyšḫt rš bʿl ḥmn . . . wrkbʿl bʿl bt*, ‘Whoever smashes this inscription—may Baal Samed . . . smash his head and may Baal Hamon . . . and Rakibel, the dynastic deity, smash his head,’ KAI 24.15–16 and O’Connor 1977a). Note also, for *yṯ* with no petition, 2465, the only such construction in the corpus; for other discussions of *Yīṯa*, see the references at Winnett and Harding 1978: 39 ad text 23.

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I write these pages in memory of my teacher Ernest Abdel-Massih and will close by observing that his name is epigraphically attested in the ancient Christian Arab sphere. One of the sixteen or so pre-Islamic Arabian texts that attest to a Christian presence in the peninsula is a Himyaritic graffito from Jabal bint Ḥāmīr near Najrān (in that part of Arabia Felix now in southwestern Saudi Arabia) that reads *brg bn mlk ʿbd l msh* ‘Brg son of Mlk, [whose baptismal name is] ‘Abd al-Massih’ (Beaucamp and Robin 1981: 53–54, plate Ie).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> My thanks to K. P. Jackson, for going over the Ammonite texts with me, and to Philip Schmitz, for comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> All the texts have been recently surveyed by K. P. Jackson (1983a), which may be supplemented by W. E. Aufrecht's bibliography (1982); Jackson has considered many of the Ammonite names in a recent survey (1983b), cited here as JAPN, J(ackson), "A(mmonite) P(ersonal) N(ames))."

<sup>3</sup> See also O'Connor (1986), which lists a few of the more recently published names.

<sup>4</sup> Add the list of Sargon names in Lewis 1980: 31, 283 to the discussion on p. 162. In a recent note on Hasean (North Arabic) names Beeston also recognizes the constraints: "three-member composita [names are] virtually never attested outside Akkadian" (1979: 17).

<sup>5</sup> Most of the verbs are suffixing forms, but, *pace* Jackson, it is not clear how many prefixing forms occur; he notes as possible only the verb of *'lydn* (JAPN, 517); add also *'byhy*, *ynhm*, *ytyr*; on the last two, see O'Connor (1986).

<sup>6</sup> The usual tendency to separate Classes IIA and IIB reflects a vague supposition that verbal-sentence names of interrogative force might be found, but by the constraints noted above such names are not possible and, indeed, no examples have been alleged.

Jackson erroneously lists *mng'nrt* as an Ammonite question-phrase name, JAPN, 518; it is Akkadian.

<sup>7</sup> See O'Connor (1986) on the semantics of the Ammonite examples.

<sup>8</sup> The seal of this Menahem depicts a four-wing scarab and was found in a tomb with seals of royal functionaries; he seems to have been quite important (Younker 1985: 175). For four Safaitic examples of the rare phenomenon of father and son bearing the same name—in these cases, *msk*, *hn'*, *tm*, *mghn*—see Jamme (1979: 516). There must be other cases than that of Menahem/Tenahem of father and son bearing nearly identical names.

<sup>9</sup> On the question of whether *brk* in names is *Qal* or *Pi'el*, see O'Connor (1977b). For a case in which a *Qal* form is attested by cuneiform evidence rather than an expected *Pi'el* (Benz 1972: 311), see Zadok on *b'ḫlš*, cuneiform *ba-al-ḫa-lu-ṣu* (1978a: 62).

Punic and Neo-Punic Greek script *barka* is associated by Stark (1971: 80) with *brk* (1972: 291), despite Arabic *'al-barqa* 'Cyrenaica.'

<sup>10</sup> Semantically comparable is the convergence of English *wail* 'to cry out' and *wail* '(to cause to cry out>) to beat up,' though the latter is etymologically *wale*.

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*Bibliographical Supplement*

In the years since this paper was submitted in 1986, research on Ammonite has continued. I cite below a few major articles. Aufrecht (1987) is a review of Jackson (1983a). The range of Lemaire (1988) is broader than the title suggests. Dion (1975), on the Tell Siran bottle and the Amman citadel texts, has unfortunately been overlooked in subsequent discussions.

W. Aufrecht

- 1987 The Ammonite Language of the Iron Age. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 266: 85–95.

P.-E. Dion

- 1975 Notes d'épigraphie ammonite. *Revue Biblique* 82: 24–33.

F. Israel

- 1987 Les sceaux ammonites. *Syria* 64: 141–46.

A. Lemaire

- 1986 Nouveaux sceaux nord-ouest sémitiques. *Syria* 63: 305–325, Ammonite Seals, 317–22.  
1988 Recherches actuelles sur les sceaux nord-ouest sémitiques. *Vetus Testamentum* 38: 220–30.



## Having a Dialogue with a Work of History: A Checklist for Critical Examination and Evaluation

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THE following essay, dedicated to the memory of Ernest Abdel-Massih, himself an excellent teacher and counselor in the College for many years, is presented in the form of a checklist. It is designed to assist students in making an orderly survey of a work of history so that their own insights might be enhanced. It offers a way of unearthing relevant considerations for critical evaluation which might otherwise be overlooked. To say this is not to imply that the checklist is comprehensive; students will wish to modify existing items, and add to the list themselves. What appears below is highly compressed from reports which members of my seminars on historiography have produced in various terms. It is offered here in grateful acknowledgment to them.

A work of history should be approached from three separate angles. There is, first of all (and obviously) the material itself. There is, secondly, the person or persons who wrote it. Finally, there is the audience which reads it. The intelligent reader's/critic's attention must first and foremost be concentrated on the work, itself. There is no other beginning point. The work is the middle term between the writer and the audience. No amount of biographical information about the author is alone sufficient to explain or allow a judgment of a historical work, nor can the work's reception speak effectively to its internal quality. But information about the historian, his times, and his audience *can* be useful to help a reader or a critic place the work in a relevant social and intellectual context. The questions included in the checklist allow a more or less systematic initial investigation from the three angles of approach. They begin with the historian's product, move to the historian, and then to the historian's audience.

*I. The Historian's Work*

*A convenient way to begin examining a work of history is to consider its SCOPE:*

1. Is the work broad and encompassing, perhaps covering centuries, or limited, perhaps to a decade, a year, a few months, even a day?
2. Does it select several complementary topics, such as the relationships between industrialization and political autocracy in a developing country, or a single, rigorously defined one, such as the role of the army?
3. Does the treatment reflect a single perspective, multiple perspectives, perhaps no consistent approach?
4. What explanations, if any, are given for the broadness or the narrowness of the work?

*Consider next the work's CHRONOLOGICAL RANGE:*

1. Is there a specific chronological plan of the work? If one is stated, is it actually fulfilled? If not, can you perceive why, or does the historian say why?
2. What explanations, if any, are given for the chronological limits selected?
3. What part of the work's chronological range (if any specifically) is given most attention and emphasis? Why? For instance, in a history devoted to ancient Israel, is the author most interested in the pre-monarchic period? The period of the United Monarchy? The Exilic and Post-Exilic period? How does the author's interest in a specific chronological range affect his treatment of other perhaps equally important periods?
4. How is time indicated, that is, through strict sequential dating? Through a notion of "eras," "great moments" or "great events" in a people's history? And so forth.
5. If the author does not employ a defined chronological plan, what principle or principles of organization are used instead?

*Further, consider the GEOGRAPHICAL RANGE:*

1. Can you characterize the work as local history, for instance, the history of a particular city, town, or village? As regional history, for instance, the history of an integrated area, such as the American Great Plains, or the Egyptian Delta? As national history? As international history? As world history?

2. Is the author interested in a specific area only, such as the coastal regions of a country, or in interrelating several areas, such as the coastal regions and the interior highlands?
3. Is there a clear geographical plan of the work? If it is stated, does the author stick to it?
4. What are the sources of the historian's geographical knowledge? Can you discern whether the author is personally acquainted with the areas written about?

*Some further general questions about SCOPE:*

1. Is the work's scope too large for the amount of evidence supplied by the author? Conversely, is the work overloaded with detail? Can, and do, the main themes emerge clearly?
2. Has the work come down to us in its entirety (especially relevant to ancient and medieval histories)? How might missing sections, and textual corruption owing to transmission of the work in time, affect our judgment of the historian's intentions?
3. After reading the history, are you aware of any glaring deficiencies of coverage? How does the historian's idea of balanced treatment of his subject, if this is his claim, square with *your* perception of appropriate balance? How would you account for any disparities?
4. To what extent may the scope of the work have been limited by the author's background (family, social status, education, political (or other) beliefs, or by the expectations of the audience written for?

*Questions of scope may be followed by questions of ORIENTATION:*

1. Does the work have a single orientation, for example: political, military, economic, religious, cultural, sociological, biographical, or autobiographical?
2. If *political* history, do you know the political system of the society under which the historian writes or wrote (important, for example, if you are reading a work by an ideological representative of a particular totalitarian state)? Does the historian betray his or her own political beliefs? Can you perceive political experiences of the author which may have influenced the approach? Does the author comment upon other political systems than the one subscribed to in the work? Does the author write as a political theorist, and if so, to what extent?
3. If *military* history, how important does war appear to be in the plan of the work? Does the historian have a military background, perhaps

as a participant in any battles described in the work? What is the historian's attitude toward war? Does this appear in descriptions of military events? Of military strategy? How good is the historian at assigning believable causes to the outbreak of war? Does the historian strike a balance between military and other significant social affairs in the work?

4. If *economic* history, can you assess what the historian considers economic "forces" to be? How does the author understand these to affect human actions? Does the historian have a philosophy which defines the role of economics in life and history? If so, what is the relationship between economic explanations and other possible explanations of events in the work? Can you discover anything in the historian's background which might account for a particular economic emphasis?
5. If *religious* history, does the historian have a general or specific theological point of view? Does the historian share the religious values of his or her society? To what extent does the historian rely upon the idea of "divine action" to explain the course of events? Does the historian's religious bias (if it is evident) lead to assigning special importance to particular individuals and classes? What is the role of superstition, sacrifice, omens, and the like, in the work of the historian (especially relevant to ancient historians)? Is or was the historian a priest or other religious functionary?
6. If *cultural* history, can you discover what the historian's understanding, even definition, of culture is? Does it seem adequate? Does the historian favor certain kinds of cultural activity over others? Is the historian a practitioner of some art? A philosopher? A professional academic? Does the historian's membership in some cultural group or activity flavor the history? What is the historian's sense of the relationship between cultural and other human activities? Does the historian have a philosophy of culture which conforms essentially to what exists in the historian's own society, or are ideal images created in the work? Is the author a good reporter of customs and traditions?
7. If *sociological* history, what is the historian's view of how the society or societies written about are organized? Of how society in general *ought* to be organized? Does the author appear to write as a member of a particular social class? How does the author appear to understand the concept of "class"? Do the author's sympathies reside with any particular class? Does the evidence come from the experience of any single class? Is the author's view of society infused with any particular views of human nature or potential in general?

8. If *biographical* history, which persons are chosen to exemplify the author's themes or emphases? Are they of a particular type (e.g., heroic, underdog, members of particular groups or professions in the society)? How is the author *using* the particular persons who appear in the history (e.g., to exemplify particular virtues, defects of character, etc.)? Is the author's selection of characters from which to build or enhance a picture of the society written about fair and impartial? How faithful is the author to a balanced selection of evidence about each character?
9. If *autobiographical* history, what is the relationship of the author's life to the events and persons written about? Is the author being open and honest in describing his or her own role events? Can you discern any special interest or bias which the author intentionally or unintentionally conceals? How well qualified is the author to write history from a personal point of view? What might you discern as the author's motives?

*We can ask some pertinent questions about a historian's SOURCES:*

1. What *types* of primary sources does the historian use (e.g., inscriptions, written documents, oral accounts, archaeological, etc.)? Are there significant omissions in the types? If so, can you explain why the omitted types do not appear?
2. What *specific* primary sources are used? Can you explain why these are used? Where others exist and are available to the historian, can you explain why these are not, or might not have been, used?
3. How specific is the historian in citing the attributions of such sources? If the historian is not specific, can you discern why not?
4. What secondary sources does the historian use? Tertiary sources? Does the historian rely on hearsay?
5. Does the historian tell you what types of sources will be used, or can you make a list from the essay or book in the absence of specific indication by the author?
6. In an ancient historian, especially, how much of traditional myth or legend is used to interpret events?
7. Does the historian mix fact and fancy indiscriminately?

*We can pass on to particular questions of STYLE, as opposed to CONTENT, of a historical work:*

1. If the work was originally written in a language other than English, is your translated version of it (assuming you are not able to read the original language) acknowledged to be accurate?
2. Regarding either the original or the translation:  
Can you characterize the diction? Is it rhetorical, for instance? Or pedestrian? Given to elaborate figures of speech? Conversely? matter-of-fact and succinct? Is the tone of the work balanced and sober? Objective? Satirical or sarcastic? Pompous? Emotional? How do the elements of style you discern affect your reading of the work? How does the historian's use of various stylistic devices affect our appraisal or the truth of the history?
3. Does the historian indicate overtly what *literary* models were being followed in the history? If not, can you nevertheless perceive these?
4. What do the language and style used in a work tell you about the historian's background? The intended audience?
5. Do any parts of the work seem to follow expected traditional style (especially relevant to ancient historians)? For example, are battle scenes expected to be written in a particular way? Political scenes? Are poetic or dramatic "inserts" a feature of a known historical style?
6. What principles of organization do you discern in the work?
7. What themes seem continually to come to the fore? Are they imposed upon the material the historian discusses, or do they emerge from a careful treatment of the evidence?
8. Where other work of the historian exists, can you judge whether the particular work you are examining is typical of the author's views and methods, or whether it is unique?
9. Does the historian indicate that the work will later be revised?

## II. *The Historian*

1. What can we know about the historian's life and personal background which might help in understanding the historian's attitudes?
2. Was family and class a significant shaper of the author's approach to history?
3. How might education have oriented the historian's attitude towards events?
4. What life experiences are relevant to the approach, if any?
5. What was or is the position of the historian in his or her own society? Is he or she a member of the establishment, or out of favor?
6. Does the historian state the purposes of the work in question?

7. Does the historian subscribe to any particular school of historical interpretation?
8. Given the historian's choice of a subject and treatment of its themes, can you judge his or her competence for the chosen work?

### *III. The Audience of the Historian's Work*

1. Is the work addressed to posterity, or is it intended for a particular audience? If the latter, what are the special characteristics or known or possible interests of the group?
2. What was, or might have been, the relation of the group written for to the events and personages of the history?
3. Does the historian have a special relationship with the intended audience? Might this relationship affect the purpose and organization of the work?
4. How was the work received in the historian's own day (especially relevant to ancient historians)?
5. What has been the history of the work's reception over time?
6. Have any special circumstances governed the acceptance or rejection of the work? Which individuals (e.g., general reviewers, academic critics, etc.), have helped its acceptance or influenced its rejection? Are the reasons sound?

### *Some Useful References:*

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N.F. Cantor & R.I. Schneider, *How to Study History* (New York, 1967).  
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## The Relation Between Al-Jurjānī and Modern Western Linguists

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### *A. Introduction and Background*

WE have noted in another paper entitled, "The Role of al-Jurjānī's Concept of *Taḥqīq* on the Development of Arabic Grammatical Theory and Linguistic Analysis,"<sup>1</sup> that the early Arab grammarians were chiefly concerned with the description of language structure, especially in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries when they began to formulate the rules of the Arabic language. Illustrative examples were given to show how they substantiated their grammatical descriptions and analysis through a study of the notions of grammatical regents and causes and how they, sometimes, resorted to philosophical interpretations to explain problems connected with *ḥarakāt al-I'rāb* (inflectional marks).

With the introduction of the theory of *al-naẓm* (discourse arrangement)<sup>2</sup> in his book *Dalā'il al-Ijāz* (Illustrations of the Inimitability [of the Qur'ān]),<sup>3</sup> al-Jurjānī, an eminent Muslim scholar (400–471/1010–1078), sought to reform the conventional approach to grammatical analysis of his age. He called for a study of language and grammar on the basis of the notion of *naẓm* and *taḥqīq* (interrelationship).<sup>4</sup> In al-Jurjānī's view, such a study would provide a more adequate and accurate analysis of both the syntactic and semantic functions of the constituents of speech (including their inflectional marks) than what is offered by traditional analysis.

*Dalā'il al-Ijāz* contains a wealth of valuable information dealing with language and grammar. In this well-known work, al-Jurjānī discusses, with cogent reasoning and ample evidence drawn from the Qur'ān and ancient Arabic literature, the nature of language composition and grammatical analysis. He is mainly concerned with description of the ways the linguistic elements in utterances are selected and arranged as intended by

the writer/speaker. In his discussion and analysis he includes valuable information on *al-taqdīm wa al-ta'khīr* (preposing and postposing "word order"), *al-ta'rif wa al-tankīr* (definiteness and indefiniteness), *al-faṣl wa al-waṣl* (disjunction and conjunction), *al-ḥadhf* (deletion), *al-qasr* (exception), *al-ikhtisāṣ* (particularization), *al-tikrār* (repetition), and *al-iḍmār* (implication).<sup>5</sup> There are also sections on the use of *al-majāz* (trope), *al-kināya* (periphrasis), *al-isti'ārah* (metaphor), *al-faṣāḥah* (eloquence), and *al-balāghah* (rhetoric).<sup>6</sup>

Al-Jurjānī's main concern in *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* is to show that the linguistic level of discourse, including the problem of inflectional markers, and the semantic level, including the problem of different styles, are both important subjects of language study. This expansion in the scope of grammatical and linguistic analysis to include both syntactic and semantic interrelationships and functions was not stressed by ancient Arab grammarians.

Al-Jurjānī's linguistic views as presented and discussed in *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* form the basis of much of modern linguistic thought about language, from Ferdinand de Saussure up to the present age. The particular points of comparison which will be dealt with in this paper are: (1) approach to the study of language and grammar, (2) grammatical and syntactic relationships, (3) semantic relationships, and (4) the relationship between form (syntax) and meaning (semantics).

### B. Comparison and Discussion

#### 1. APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF LANGUAGE AND GRAMMAR

As stated in the Introduction, al-Jurjānī's approach to the study of language and his views of grammar in *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* differ from the approaches and views of early Arab grammarians and scholars in method of reasoning and presentation, and also in emphasis and clarity. It is interesting to mention here what was pointed out in my paper entitled, "Al-Jurjānī: A Pioneer of Grammatical and Linguistic Studies," (pp. 351-352); namely, that al-Jurjānī in his other grammatical works, such as *al-ʿAwāmil* and *al-Jumal*, follows the approaches of early Arab grammarians.

Al-Jurjānī was the first among Arab grammarians to urge, in *Dalā'il al-I'jāz*, the study of language and grammar, independent of all traces of *ʿawāmil* (grammatical regents), *ʿilal* (causes), and philosophical interpretations that were current in his age. For example, early Arab grammarians state that the imperfect verb is *manṣūb* (in the subjunctive mood) and has *fatha* (the short vowel sign *a* when it is preceded by one of *ʿawāmil al-naṣb* (subjunctivizers) such as *an* 'that', *kay* 'in order that', and *hattā* 'so

that'; for instance *ji'tu ḥattā uqābilaka* 'I came so that I meet you'. It loses its final vowel when preceded by *lam* 'didn't, hasn't' and *lammā* 'hasn't yet'—callec *ʿawāmil al-jazm* (jussivizers), as in: *lam yaghḍab* 'He did not become angry'. And it is in the indicative mood if it is not preceded by any subjunctivizer or jussivizer.

Likewise, a noun is nominative and has *ḍamma* (the short vowel sign *u* when it is *fā'il* (subject) of a verbal sentence, as in: *jā'at fātimatu* 'Fatima came'. It is accusative and has *fatha* when it is *maf'ul bihi* (direct object), for example: *ra'aytu fātimata* 'I saw Fatima', or when it is *maf'ul li-ajlihi* (accusative of purpose), or *maf'ul fihi* (adverb of place), etc. And it is genitive and has a *kasra* (the short vowel *i*) when it is preceded by one of *ʿawāmil al-jarr* (genitivizers), i.e. prepositions, as in: *marartu bi-al-masjidi* 'I passed by the mosque', or is the second term in an *iḍāfah* (genitive construct) phrase, for example: *bābu al-dāri* 'the door of the house'.<sup>7</sup>

In the absence of *ʿawāmil lafẓiyyah* (explicit lexical regents), early Arab grammarians resort to *taqdīr* (implication of unstated lexical units). For instance, in the sentence *zaydun qāma* 'Zayd stood up', Sībawayhi<sup>8</sup> argues that the noun *zaydun* is in the nominative because it is the subject of the so-called *jumlaḥ ismiyyah* (equational sentence) *zaydun qāma*, and that the verb *qāma* 'stood up' together with its implied subject (i.e., *huwa* 'he') is the predicate of the equational sentence, thus creating a very awkward sentence: *zaydun qāma huwa* 'Zayd stood up he'.<sup>9</sup>

In the fifth/eleventh century, al-Jurjānī called for a reform of Arabic grammar to be achieved through careful study of the ways in which the constituents of speech are interrelated on the basis of *taḥq* syntactic-semantic interrelationships,<sup>10</sup> thus dispensing with the *ʿawāmil* and *ʿilal* and the conventional terminology that bear the stamp of logic and philosophy. In brief, al-Jurjānī sees *naẓm* (discourse, "speech") as a series of syntactic-semantic interrelationships. According to him: *laysa li-al-naẓmi min faḍlin wa-maẓiyyatin illā bi-ḥasabi al-mawḍi'i wa-bi-ḥasabi al-ma'nā alladhī turīdu* 'naẓm has no merit or excellence except relative to its grammatical function and the meaning aimed at'.<sup>11</sup> It is precisely this complex network of interrelationships, claims al-Jurjānī, that provides the necessary framework for grammatical analysis, and hence explains the inflectional marks in a more realistic and accurate way than the absurd notions of grammatical regents and causes.

Much of the same can be said about Western linguistics, which down to the nineteenth century bore the conventional Greek stamp. In the words of John Lyons:

The investigation of language as practiced in Europe and America before the 19th century was subjective, speculative and unsystematic . . . Traditional grammar, which like so much else in Western culture originated in Greece in the fifth century B.C., has since its beginnings been intimately connected with philosophy and literary criticism.<sup>12</sup>

And in another place, Lyons adds:

Traditional grammar was developed on the basis of Greek and Latin, and it was subsequently applied, with minimal modification and often uncritically, to the description of languages.<sup>13</sup>

This state of affairs did not change until the appearance of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in the early part of this century. Like al-Jurjānī, de Saussure called for purifying linguistics from the influence of logical and philosophical thought. Language, he said, must be studied as a discipline in its own right. Here is what he said in this regard:

To base the classification of anything except on concrete entities, to say, for example, that the parts of speech are the constituents of language simply because they correspond to categories of logic is to forget that there are linguistic facts apart from the phonic substances cut into significant elements.<sup>14</sup>

Both al-Jurjānī and de Saussure see language as a system of interrelationships between words in an utterance. According to al-Jurjānī: *laysa al-naẓmu siwā taṣlīqi al-kalimi baḍihā maʿa baḍin wa-jaʿli baḍihā bi-sababin min baḍin*.<sup>15</sup> 'Language is no more than the linking up of words one to another and making some consequent upon others'. And according to de Saussure, language is "a system of pure values which are determined by nothing except the momentary arrangement of its terms."<sup>16</sup>

Al-Jurjānī, like Lyons, Langendoen and many modern linguists, emphasizes the necessity of methodically analyzing the total items of a given utterance on the basis of the ways they interact one with the other, rather than describing each item in isolation. A vocabulary item, affirms al-Jurjānī, acquires merit from its association with other items in the utterance in which it occurs.

*wa jumlatu al-amri annā lā nūjibu al-faṣāḥata li-lafẓatin maqtūʿatin marfūʿatin min al-kalāmi alladhī hiya fihi, walākinnā nūjibuhā lahā mawṣūlatan bi-ghayrihā, wa-muʿallaqan maʾnāhā bi-maʾnā mā yalīhā*.<sup>17</sup>

In short, we do not attribute eloquence to a word taken in isolation from the speech it occurs in, but to a word taken in relation to other words, to a word whose meaning interpenetrates the meaning of the neighboring words.

This corresponds to de Saussure's statement: "The whole has value only through its parts, and the parts have value by virtue of their place in the whole."<sup>18</sup>

And obviously the following quotation by Lyons includes almost the same idea: "The words derive their linguistic value from the place they occupy in a network of functional relations and cannot be identified or described independently of those relations."<sup>19</sup>

## 2. SYNTACTIC/GRAMMATICAL RELATIONSHIPS

According to al-Jurjānī, the choice of linguistic items and the particular ordering or sequencing of those items are determined, first, by *ma'ānī al-naḥw* (grammatical meanings) and, second, by *ma'ānī al-kalīm* (meaning of words, speaker intention). Regarding grammatical meanings or relations, al-Jurjānī says:

A point one must understand and keep in mind is that thought must not be supposed to be related to *ma'ānī al-kalīm* in isolation from *ma'ānī al-naḥw*. No one would imagine that a person could reflect on the meaning of a verb without associating it with some noun, or reflect on the meaning of a noun without associating it with some verb and making it either the subject or object of the verb, or without assigning it some other grammatical function, as, for example, intending it to be a subject or predicate in a nominal sentence, an adjective, etc.<sup>20</sup>

True *nazm*, adds al-Jurjānī, is that "which pays regard to the particular ways in which words are interrelated in accordance with the principles and rules of grammar, and not that *nazm* which is no more than a linking up of one word to another in an arbitrary and haphazard way."<sup>21</sup>

Al-Jurjānī beautifully summarizes all of this in the form of a verse:

*wa qad 'alimnā bi-anna al-nazma laysa siwā  
ḥukmīn min al-naḥwi namdī fī tawakkhihi.*<sup>22</sup>

'We have learned that *nazm* is nothing but  
a grammatical relation we seek to establish.'

For al-Jurjānī, *ma'ānī al-naḥw* (grammatical meanings) are essentially pure linguistic meanings obtained from the network of syntactic interrela-

tionships between the constituents of speech themselves, apart from any reference to the “setting” or context of situation. Thus, the term *maʿānī al-naḥw*, used by al-Jurjānī, corresponds to the modern terms “grammatical meanings, formal meanings” developed by Western structural linguists in the first quarter of this century on the basis of de Saussure’s linguistic works, particularly his “syntagmatic relations”. Bloomfield, for example, writes:

Grammatical meanings must be determined by reference to the formal (structural) difference in a language, since it is just these formal contrasts that determine the difference in linguistic meanings.<sup>23</sup>

And Margaret Berry, a notable member of the British School of Systematic Linguistics, says the following on this subject:

The formal meaning of a grammatical item or pattern is its potentiality for contrasting with other grammatical items and patterns and its potentiality for collocating with other grammatical items.<sup>24</sup>

### 3. SEMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Although the term “semantics” is a recent addition to modern linguistics,<sup>25</sup> al-Jurjānī talked about it at length in *Dalāʾil al-ʿjāz* over 900 years ago. Unlike ancient grammarians who viewed *ʿilm al-maʿānī* (the science of meaning, semantics) as somewhat independent of the study of *ʿilm al-naḥw* (science of grammar, syntax), al-Jurjānī declared that one cannot study grammar without assuming a great deal about meaning. The selection and particular ordering of linguistic items in sequence, according to al-Jurjānī, depend on the meaning intended by the writer/speaker in accordance with the perceived communicative needs of the situation:

*wa-ammā al-kalimu fa-laysa fihi al-amru kadhālika li-annaka taqtafi fī naẓmihā āthāra al-maʿānī wa-tartībahā ʿalā ḥasabi tartībihā fī al-naḥsi.*<sup>26</sup>

This, however, is not the case with the arrangement of words. For, in arranging them, you follow the lead of the meanings, the words being arranged in accordance with the mentally conceived order of meanings.

Al-Jurjānī compares the process of constructing speech/discourse to the process of constructing a building. The writer/speaker makes choices

of words and decisions about their positions in utterances according to the mentally conceived order of meanings, like a mason who lays bricks in positions which have been predetermined. This is a sample of what he says:

*wa-iṣlam anna mimma huwa aṣlun fī an yudaqqa al-naẓaru wa-yughmaḍa al-maslaku fī tawakkhkhī al-maʿānī allatī ʿarafta an tattahida ajzāʾu al-kalimi wa-yadkhula baḍḥuhā fī baḍḍin, wa-yashṭadda irtibāṭu thānin minhā bi-awwalin, wa-an yuḥtāja fī al-jumlati ilā an taḍaʿahā fī al-naḥsi waḍʿan wāḥidan, wa-an yakūna ḥāluka minhā ḥāla al-bānī wa-huwa yaḍaʿu bi-yamīnihi ḥāhunā fī ḥālī mā yaḍaʿu bi-yaṣārihi hunāka naʿam wa-fī ḥālī mā yubṣīru makāna thālithin wa-rābiʿin yaḍaʿuhumā baʿda al-awwalayni.<sup>27</sup>*

Know that reflection on the meanings perceived will have value only when the parts of a sentence become unified, enter into one another, and the latter part [of a sentence] is closely related to the first. A sentence has to be understood as a unity and, in constructing it, you are like a mason who lays one brick with his right hand here and, at the same time, another brick with his left hand there—yes, at the same time that he looks at a third and a fourth spot where he will lay bricks after the first two.

Among modern linguists who, likewise, focus their attention on the role of meaning in the interpretation and analysis of linguistic structures, Margaret Berry compares the process of composing a text to going for a walk:

Meanings are the most fundamental, the most important things of language, but perhaps mostly because the more surface choices are determined by the meaning choices. We usually make all the decisions about route before setting out. Once actually on the walk no further decisions would be necessary at all the turnings we were to take, which have been preselected. On the walk itself we should simply have to implement our earlier decisions.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS

The current focus on the role of meaning in linguistic analysis has led many modern linguists to voice their opinion on this very important

issue. The majority accept the fact that there are two levels of language, syntax and semantics; but there are differences among them in regard to the degree and direction of the relationship between the two levels. Some, like Bloomfield, consider "the study of speech-sounds without regard to meaning an abstraction."<sup>29</sup> However, he sees that meaning should be dealt with as a separate independent system. For Bloomfield, the meaning of a linguistic form is "the situation in which the speaker utters it and the response which it calls in the hearer."<sup>30</sup>

In the 1950's, Firth took an opposite view, namely, that linguistic description and analysis should include "some reference to the meaning of the linguistic elements as totally accounted for in terms of the situation in which it is used."<sup>31</sup> Firth distinguishes between grammatical or "formal" meanings based on the syntactic relations between the linguistic constituents themselves and "situational" meanings derived from the interrelationship between the linguistic elements, on the one hand, and nonverbal elements of the outside situation, on the other. In the words of C.J. Catford, Firth deals with the meaning

at a mutually congruent series of levels, sometimes in a descending order beginning with the context of situation and proceeding through collocation, syntax . . . to phonology and phonetics and sometimes in the opposite order.<sup>32</sup>

And according to Chomsky's proposal of the extended standard theory, "Semantic interpretation applies to the pair (deep structure, surface structure)."<sup>33</sup> The following quotation exemplifies the direction of the relationship between form and meaning in Chomsky's view:

Semantic relations that hold of items in deep structure are determined on the basis of the grammatical relations and specific properties of the lexical items themselves.<sup>34</sup>

From another angle, we see that linguists like Katz and Fodor, who in their seminal paper in 1963 called for the integration of semantics and syntax within the framework of transformational grammar, focus their analysis on inter-linguistic relations. Their theory of meaning is mainly concerned with the study of the semantic relations that hold units together in an utterance, especially since, in their view, grammatical meanings do not always correspond to the situational meaning or speaker intention.<sup>35</sup> This is due particularly to both theoretical and practical difficulties involved in finding appropriate notations for expressing the situational meaning in an accurate and satisfactory manner.



Other modern linguists like Green, Lakoff, Langendoen and Filmore argue that the deep structure is semantic and, therefore, it should provide the basis for explaining the differences observed in syntactic behavior. In the words of George Green, "In general, syntactic properties and distributions are determined by semantic properties."<sup>36</sup>

And most recently linguists such as McCauley and Grady went beyond that to give greater importance to meaning than syntax. In the words of Grady:

It is inescapable that we use language to communicate, to express meanings, that is; and unless we somehow come to realize and attempt to deal systematically with the semantic aspect of language, granting it equal or perhaps primary status to syntax-grammar, I feel we shall remain in the position of considering the tusk, or trunk, or leg to be the whole elephant, rather than an important but integrated part of the whole.<sup>37</sup>

In brief, modern linguists seek to explain to what extent and in what manner the connection exists between the two major levels of speech, form and meaning. As we have seen, some of them, for example Chomsky, attach to the form with its phonological and grammatical aspects a greater importance than they give to the meaning or semantic level. Other scholars, such as Grady, assign primacy to the semantic level of a text than the syntactic level. There are still those, like the Russian linguist Mel'cuk, who see that "the syntactic structure of a sentence bridges the gap between its semantic structure and its morphological structure and stands halfway, so to speak, between the two."<sup>38</sup>

In contrast to modern linguists who, as shown above, have different views as to the exact relationship between form and meaning, al-Jurjānī has categorically affirmed in more than one place in *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* the precedence of meaning over form. For example, he writes:

*inna al-lafza taba'un li-al-ma'nā fi al-nazmi, wa-inna al-kalima tatarattabu fi al-nuṭqi bi-sababi tartibi ma'ānīhā fi al-naḥsi, wa-innahā law khalat min ma'ānīhā ḥattā tatajarrada aṣwātan wa-aṣdā'a ḥurūfin lamā waqa'a fi ḍamīrin wa-lā hajasa fi khāṭirin an yajiba fihā tartībun wa-naẓmun, wa-an yuj'ala lahā amki-natun wa-manāzilu, wa-an yajiba al-nuṭqu bi-hādhihi qabla al-nuṭqi bi-tilka.*<sup>39</sup>

In *nazm*, words follow in the wake of meanings; the order of words when they are uttered is due to the mentally conceived

order of meanings; should words be deprived of meanings and reduced to mere sounds of letters, no one would ever entertain the thought that they must have *naẓm* or order, periods and pauses, and some of them must be uttered before the others.

To illustrate this argument, al-Jurjānī takes the sentence *ḍaraba zaydun ʿamran yawma al-jumʿati taʿdībān lahu* 'Zayd beat ʿAmr on Friday in order to discipline him' and says:

Upon close examination of this sentence we shall discover that the only thing meant by this is the following: that he [the speaker] takes *ḍaraba* 'he beat' and makes it the predicate of *Zayd*; makes the act of beating, reportedly done by him, an act directed at ʿAmr; makes *yawma al-jumʿati* 'Friday' the time of its occurrence; makes *al-taʿdīb* 'disciplinary punishment' the purpose of his act of beating; and thus says: *ḍaraba zaydun ʿamran yawma al-jumʿati taʿdībān lahu* 'Zayd beat ʿAmr on Friday in order to discipline him.' This restructuring of words, as you notice, is deliberate, following of the rules of grammar and the meaning intended by the speaker.<sup>40</sup>

Al-Jurjānī proceeds with his argument saying:

If you were to assume not to intend making *ḍaraba* 'he beat' the act predicated of *Zayd*, ʿAmr the direct object of beating, *yawma al-jumʿati* 'Friday' the time of occurrence of this beating, and *al-taʿdīb* 'disciplinary punishment' Zayd's purpose in doing the act of beating, then no one would ever think or even imagine that you had prearranged these words. It is this point, once you have perceived it, which serves as the crucial point of speech. Anyone who concludes anything contrary to this is being irrational.<sup>41</sup>

It is in consequence of this reasoning that al-Jurjānī starts with the study of semantic networks in an utterance before attempting to analyze its syntactic structure. He firmly believes that the choice of linguistic items and grammatical rules are made by the writer/speaker in accordance with the perceived different meanings he wishes to communicate.

### C. Summary and Conclusions

We have offered evidence to the effect that al-Jurjānī's linguistic views and grammatical analysis laid the foundation of much of modern linguistic

discussion and thought beginning with the works of de Saussure and post Saussurean linguists such as Bloomfield, Firth, Sapir, through Chomsky and most recently Katz, Fodor, Green, Grady and other members of the American School of Generative Semantics, as well as Lyons, Berry, Palmer and others of the British School of Systemic Linguistics.

Like al-Jurjānī who called for a reform of Arabic grammar to be achieved through the study of language as an academic subject independent of grammatical regents, causes and other conventional philosophical traces, de Saussure called for purifying linguistics from all kinds of philosophical and logical influences born of Greek methodologies. Again, linguists today treat in their discussions a number of linguistic issues and features that had generally been discussed and stressed by al-Jurjānī. These, as we have pointed out, include the system of interrelationships between the constituents of speech, syntactic relationships, semantic relationships, and the association of meaning (semantics) with form (syntax) within the process of linguistic analysis.

Al-Jurjānī's concepts of *naẓm* and *taḥlīq* are in certain respects comparable to the modern linguistic terms "language, speech, discourse" and "syntagmatic relations, interdependence, interrelationships," respectively. However, in the opinion of this investigator, al-Jurjānī's concepts have specific meanings inherent in them that set them apart from the corresponding modern terms. This is very obvious, especially during our examination of the manner and direction of the relationship between form and meaning, or syntax and semantics, in Part B, Section 4 of this paper. We have seen that, contrary to most modern linguists who have different views as to the exact relationship between syntax and semantics, al-Jurjānī formally declares that there is an intimate, strong connection between the two levels, giving semantics priority over syntax in linguistic analysis. There is no doubt whatsoever in al-Jurjānī's mind that syntactic forms or structures are selected and organized by the writer/speaker in accordance with the communicative needs of the situation.

In our final analysis, al-Jurjānī's theory of *naẓm*, which is based on *taḥlīq* (syntactic-semantic interrelationships), can be a structural-semantic theory and al-Jurjānī can thus be called a structural-semanticist. Had al-Jurjānī's linguistic concepts and views, which are characterized by originality and objectivity, been known and developed over the years, they could have guided us to the proper method of studying language and grammar a thousand years ago, and al-Jurjānī might well have earned fame as a pioneer of modern linguistics. Unfortunately, however, none of these things happened, not because al-Jurjānī or his great book *Dalā'il al-Ijāz* were

disregarded—a great deal, in fact, has been written about the two. In our opinion, what happened was that the book was never regarded as a work on grammatical studies as such, but as a work on semantics. In the publisher's Introduction to *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* we find the following statement: *ammā al-kitābu fa-ya'rifu makānatahu man ya'rifu ma'nā al-balāghati wa-sirra tas-miyati hādha al-fanna bi-al-ma'ānī*<sup>42</sup> 'as for the book, its importance will be realized by those who know what rhetoric means and why this discipline was named semantics'. Only after modern semantic studies pointed out the significance of meaning in linguistic studies did al-Jurjānī's book *Dalā'il al-I'jāz* and its linguistic value begin to influence modern grammarians and linguists. Most notable among them are Weisweiler,<sup>43</sup> al-Jundi,<sup>44</sup> Ḥassān,<sup>45</sup> Zahrān,<sup>46</sup> Baalbaki,<sup>47</sup> and Mukhaymer.<sup>48</sup>

This comparative study has established at least two facts. First, al-Jurjānī preceded F. de Saussure by over 900 years in opening a new phase in the study of language to be achieved through investigating the complex system of interrelationships between the constituents of speech as an academic discipline independent of logical and philosophical thought. Second, al-Jurjānī was one of the pioneer linguists to call for the integration of semantics with syntax within the framework of linguistic analysis, granting semantics priority over syntax.

It is true that the linguistic theories of our times are obviously superior to al-Jurjānī's theory of *naẓm* in style of presentation and discussion. Modern linguistic theories are distinguished by their methodical arrangement of material, by their use of symbols in classifying linguistic data, and by their scientifically accurate descriptions. However, it is very clear from the discussion of al-Jurjānī's views of language and grammar that much of modern linguistic thought has been anticipated by the theory of *naẓm*. As stated throughout this paper and two other papers on al-Jurjānī published by this investigator, al-Jurjānī's definition of language as a system of interrelationships, his integration of syntax and semantics within the framework of linguistic analysis, and finally his insistence on including preposing and postposing (word-order), definiteness and indefiniteness, conjunction and disjunction, deletion, etc. in the study of grammar—are all topics which are basic to modern linguistics.

### *Notes and Bibliography*

<sup>1</sup> Raji M. Rammuni, "The Role of al-Jurjānī's Concept of *Ta'liq* on the Develop-

ment of Arabic Grammatical Theory and Linguistic Analysis." *International Journal of Islamic and Arabic Studies*, 3:1, 1986, pp. 27-42.

<sup>2</sup> The Arabic term *naẓm* means 'discourse arrangement'. This term is equivalent to the standard terms "discourse, speech" used in modern linguistics.

<sup>3</sup> 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il al-Ijāz*. Cairo: Muḥammad 'Alī Ṣubayḥ and Sons Printing House, 1960, 365 pp.

<sup>4</sup> The Arabic term *ta'liq* literally means 'interrelationship, interconnection'. It corresponds but is not exactly equivalent to the terms "interdependence, syntagmatic relations" used in modern linguistic studies.

<sup>5</sup> For detailed information on al-Jurjānī's discussion and analysis of these topics, see *Dalā'il al-Ijāz*, pp. 82-167 and also Raji M. Rammuny, "Al-Jurjānī: A Pioneer of Grammatical and Linguistic Studies." *Historiographia Linguistica* XII:3, 1985, pp. 351-371.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Jurjānī, pp. 39-63, 247-331.

<sup>7</sup> For further details on ancient Arab grammarians' use of *'awāmil*, see 'Abbās Hassan, *al-Lughah wa-al-Naḥw Bayn al-Qadīm wa-al-Ḥadīth*. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif bi-Miṣr, 1966, pp. 168-212, and Muḥammad al-Kassār, *al-Miftāḥ li-Ta'rib al-Naḥw*. Damascus: Al-Maktab al-'Arabī li-al-Idlān, 1976, pp. 45-53.

<sup>8</sup> Sībawayhi, Abu Bishr 'Amr ibn 'Uthmān ibn Qanbar, *Al-Kitāb*. Cairo: Al-Maṭba'ah al-Amīriyyah, Vol. 1, 1316 AH, p. 22.

<sup>9</sup> For more illustrative examples of early Arab grammarians' use and discussion of grammatical regents and causes as well as implication of unstated lexical items and philosophical interpretations, see Raji M. Rammuny, "The Role of the Concept of *Ta'liq* in the Development of Arabic Grammatical Theory and Linguistic Analysis," pp. 29-31; and also Maḥdī al-Makhzūmī, *Fī al-Naḥw al-'Arabī: Naqd wa-Tawjīh*. Beirut: Al-Maktabah al-'Aṣriyyah, 1964, pp. 76-77.

<sup>10</sup> The complex concept of *ta'liq*, consisting of both syntactic and semantic interrelationships, is discussed in detail in Raji M. Rammuny, "Al-Jurjānī: A Pioneer of Grammatical and Linguistic Studies," pp. 353-365.

<sup>11</sup> Al-Jurjānī, p. 71.

<sup>12</sup> John Lyons, *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>14</sup> F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (English translation by Wade Baskin). New York: Philosophical Library, 1959, p. 110.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Jurjānī, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> de Saussure, p. 87.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Jurjānī, p. 258.

<sup>18</sup> de Saussure, p. 128.

<sup>19</sup> Lyons, p. 235.

<sup>20</sup> Al-Jurjānī, p. 261.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 48, 117.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> L. Bloomfield, *Language*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1933, p. 95.

<sup>24</sup> Margaret Berry, *An Introduction to Systemic Linguistics*. Two Levels and Links. London: Batsford Ltd. 1977, p. 115.

<sup>25</sup> For more information and discussion on the development of the term "semantics" in modern linguistics, see F. R. Palmer, *Semantics: A New Outline*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976, pp. 1-18.

<sup>26</sup> Al-Jurjānī, p. 48.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 74-75.

- <sup>28</sup> Berry, p. 43.
- <sup>29</sup> Bloomfield, p. 139.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., p. 139.
- <sup>31</sup> J. R. Firth, *Papers in Linguistics: 1934-1951*. London: Oxford University Press, 1957, p. 52.
- <sup>32</sup> C. J. Catford, "J. R. Firth and British Linguistics." *Linguistics Today*, ed. Archibald A. Hill. London and New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1969, pp. 222-225.
- <sup>33</sup> N. Chomsky, "Some Empirical Issues in the Theory of Transformational Grammar." *Goals of Linguistic Theory*, ed. Stanley Peters. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972, p. 77.
- <sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 98.
- <sup>35</sup> For details, see Jerold J. Katz and Jerry A. Fodor, "The Structure of a Semantic Theory." *Language* 39, 1963, pp. 170-210.
- <sup>36</sup> For further information and discussion, see George M. Green, *Semantic and Syntactic Regularity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974, pp. 65-68; see also George Lakoff, "On Generative Semantics." *Semantics: An Interdisciplinary Reader in Philosophy, Linguistics and Psychology*, eds., Danny D. Steinberg and Leon A. Jakobovitz, Cambridge: The University Press, 1971, pp. 232-296; and F. R. Palmer, *Semantics: A New Outline*, pp. 151-152.
- <sup>37</sup> Michael Grady, *Syntax and Semantics of the English Verb Phrase*. The Hague: Mouton, 1972, p. 76.
- <sup>38</sup> Igor A. Mel'cuk, *Studies in Dependency Syntax*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Karoma Publishers, 1979, p. 14.
- <sup>39</sup> Al-Jurjānī, p. 52.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 259.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 259.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 4.
- <sup>43</sup> Max Weiswider, "Abdalqāhir al-Curcānī's Werk über die Unnachahmlichkeit des Korans und seiner syntaktisch-stilistischen Lehre." *Oriens* 2, 1958, pp. 77-121.
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- <sup>46</sup> Al-Badrāwī Zahrān, *Ālim al-Lughah 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī* [The Linguist 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī]. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1979, pp. 147-266.
- <sup>47</sup> Ramzi Baalbaki, "The Relation Between Naḥw and Balāḡa: A Comparative Study of the Methods of Sibawayhi and Gurgānī." *ZAL* 11, 1983, pp. 7-23.
- <sup>48</sup> Fu'ād A. Mukhaymer, *Falsafat 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī an-Naḥwiyyah fī Dalā'il al-Isjāz* ['Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's Linguistic Philosophy in Illustrations of the Inimitability (of the Quran)]. Cairo: Dār al-Thaqāfah li-an-Nashr wa-al-Tawzi', 1983.

# Ruth, Tamar and Levirate Marriage

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## *Introduction*

THE status of the childless widow, more accurately the widow of a man who dies and leaves no issue, is the subject of levirate marriage as instituted in Deuteronomy 25.5–10. Elsewhere in the biblical corpus, there occur only two narratives that deal with the theme of the childless widow: the story of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38) and the book of Ruth. In the former tale, there is unanimous agreement that the story deals with the levirate institution in pretoranic times; the various commentaries, however, are in disagreement when it comes to Ruth. There are, furthermore, differences in interpretation of the deuteronomic text itself, resulting in various sectarian doctrines concerning the situations calling for levirate marriage (or the optional release from that obligation) and the specific means of fulfilling the legal requirement.<sup>1</sup>

Yet the two narratives are linked together by literary echoes and, in turn, recall a third and briefer incident, that involving the widowed Lot and his two daughters (Gen. 19). This study will deal with these four passages as an exercise in literary analysis based on the observation that the entire corpus of the Bible is a synchronic collection of numerous and diverse diachronic parts. One implication of this approach is that questions concerning authorship and the dates of composition are, for this purpose, quite irrelevant. Beyond this, I hope to establish a deeply rooted *raison d'être* for the inclusion of Ruth in the final canon of the Hagiographa. This is particularly interesting, since the circumstances of the remarriage of Ruth and the obstacles in the path to her remarriage as described are certainly not in accord with the definitive legal requirements of levirate marriage as understood by the very men who, as members of the Great Sanhedrin in

the year 90, closed the biblical canon, excluding Ecclesiasticus, Judith and the rest of the Apocrypha while they included Ecclesiastes, Ruth, Esther and the rest of the third biblical component of Jewish tradition.

### *Levirate Marriage*

The deuteronomic requirement begins as follows: "When brothers dwell together and one of them dies and has no children, the wife of the deceased shall not be outside; her brother-in-law shall penetrate her and take her as his wife and fulfill the brother-in-law's obligation." While there is no problem in parsing or translating this passage, its purport is quite ambiguous as to crucial specifics.

First of all, there is no definition provided for the term "brothers." Are the brothers involved full brothers or half-brothers and, if half-brothers, are they maternally or paternally linked? Or is it that "brothers" metaphorically extends to cousins and other kin as well? Second, does dwelling together imply togetherness in time or in place? Beyond these questions lie others: What is the situation when the deceased leaves behind more than one childless widow? Are they all subject to the levirate requirement? If not, which widow is? And if the deceased is survived by more than one brother, which one bears the levirate obligation? What if the deceased once had children, but these are no longer alive? Does it make a difference if they predeceased their father or died afterwards? The answers to these questions exist, to be sure, but only in extrabiblical legal traditions. So much for the comparatively simple first verse.

The following verse is encumbered by a *non sequitur* of pronominal reference. The most common interpretation, based on the Septuagintal text, indicates that "... it shall be the firstborn that she bears who takes the place of *the* dead brother, that his name be not erased from Israel." The encumbered Hebrew text, rendered word-for-word, reads as follows:

and it shall be;	the first born;	that;
she gives birth;	he will arise;	
in the place of;	<i>his</i> brother;	
the dead one;	and not;	will be erased;
his name;	from Israel.	

The Greek rendition is based on an ellipsis of the Hebrew pronominal suffix resulting in the Septuagintal *lectio facilior*. The midrashim and derivative rabbinic legal literature deal with the Hebrew grammatical difficulty by virtually interpreting the words of this verse as independent constituents, as displayed in the following table:



<i>Biblical</i>	<i>Midrashic</i>
and it will be . . . . .	and it will be
the first born . . . . .	the eldest brother
that . . . . .	given that
she bears . . . . .	she will bear children
he will rise . . . . .	he will rise
in the place of . . . . .	in the place of
his brother . . . . .	his brother
the dead one . . . . .	the dead one
and not . . . . .	and not
will be erased . . . . .	castrated
his name . . . . .	is his designation
from Israel . . . . .	from Israel

The implication of this midrashic treatment leads to the stipulation that the eldest surviving brother of the deceased fulfills the levirate obligation if and only if two conditions are met: The wife must be organically capable of childbearing and her deceased husband, similarly, must have been organically capable of siring a child. Although the treatment seems fanciful, these requirements are not based on such parsing; rather the reverse is true, for the parsing exists to find textual basis for the Oral Law's stipulations.<sup>2</sup>

Returning to the unresolved questions of the first verse, Oral Law specifies that:

1. the brothers in question must be full brothers or paternally linked half-brothers;
2. "together" means contemporary, i.e. sharing the minimum of one common day of life, since paternally linked half-brothers presumably lived in separate-but-equal housing required for each wife of a plural marriage;
3. the eldest surviving brother is assumed to be the levir, although this is not mandatory, and the levirate obligation is fulfilled by taking in marriage one and only one of the surviving widows, or else by granting her legal release; there are no further restrictions on the widows' freedom to remarry.

But there are other problems that impinge on levirate marriage as well. What of the High Priest who is forbidden to marry a widow? And how about the ban on incestuous marriages which specifically includes the relationship between an man and his sister-in-laws? Oral Law provides

that the High Priest is forbidden to enter into a levirate marriage, while it decrees that the levirate obligation overrides the ban between a man and his sister-in-law, although all other incestuous prohibitions remain. In medieval Qaraism, and presumably among the more ancient Sadducees as well, the view was that the term "brothers" applied metaphorically to cousins; the surviving brother, accordingly, was forever forbidden as the levir because of the ban on incest with one's sister-in-law. And the events of Ruth were taken as proof text for this.<sup>3</sup> Pharisaic and the derivative Rabbanite law, in contrast, stipulated not only that the levir be a surviving paternally linked brother, but also that the obligation stopped at this degree of relationship.

Finally, the levirate obligation applies when the husband is childless at the time of his own death. If he had issue who then died later on, there was no levirate obligation.

Thus, either the story of Judah and Tamar reflects the levirate situation, or else the book of Ruth does, depending on the sectarian interpretation; and if the story of *Ruth* merely alludes, as it does consistently throughout, to a levirate-like situation, then it contradicts the definitive levirate practice, point by point, of the very men who admitted the scroll to the canon of the Hagiographa.

But before proceeding to the examination of the literary texts, it may be appropriate to consider the motivation underlying levirate marriage, a matter which is not given explicit attention in any of the sources. It is obvious that the institution does not exist for the benefit of the childless widow as is often asserted. In the first place, the first requisite is that the husband die without issue; the surviving widow is incidentally childless because her husband died childless. For if the deceased left one heir, there is no levirate obligation and all of the surviving widows are free to remarry, including those who are indeed childless. The plight of the widow, childless or not, is the subject of other legislation entirely. She, together with the orphan, the Levite and the proselyte, are taken care of by the right to glean the field and their rights to collect the produce of the poor tithe. And from this point, it is possible to understand something about the *raison d'être* for the levirate institution: Levirate marriage functions as a chapter of law dealing with land tenure and inheritance.

The Levite, by definition, is landless. So, too, is the proselyte, for the proselyte does not descend from someone who took part in the allocation of land that followed in the wake of the conquest by Joshua. The direct inheritance of land applies exclusively to a man's sons in the following way: If a man has  $X$  number of sons, his property is divided into  $X + 1$  portions,

the extra portion going to his first born, and the rest divided equally by them all. If one of the sons predeceases the father, but was still unmarried, his portion goes back to the family pool. Daughters share in inheritance only when there are no sons to inherit. In this event, the daughters inherit equally, but are restricted in marriage to males of their own tribe. The original tribal allocation under Joshua was thus to endure *in perpetuum*. What this amounts to is that, even when a woman inherits property from her father, the daughter's inheritance is transitional only, for it then passes on through her husband to *his* sons, whether they are born to her or to her co-wives.

In a more restricted way, the married man who dies childless passes on his property to a surviving brother via one of the surviving widows through the levirate marriage. The choice is not for the widow to make; her rôle is entirely passive. If the surviving brother so wishes, he can release her from her obligation; the land then reverts to the total family pool to be divided equally among all the surviving brothers and all the widows are free to remarry as they will. When the levir opts for marrying his sister-in-law, he inherits his deceased brother's land through her and the remaining co-wives are then free to remarry as they will. The land he gains through levirate marriage is added to his own holdings and will be divided among his heirs through all of his wives by means of the  $X + 1$  formulation. Until the matter is resolved by the levir's decision to exercise either option, all of the widows of the deceased are in limbo.

#### *Lot and his Daughters*

This brief narrative concerns the mistaken belief on the part of Lot's two daughters that they and their father are the sole survivors of the cataclysm that destroyed the Cities of the Plain. Convinced that they bear the responsibility of renewing the human race, they get their father drunk, sleep with him, and each bears a son. Ammon and Moab, the sons born to Lot by his daughters, become the eponymous ancestors of the Ammonites and Moabites. Although there is no suggestion of the levirate situation *per se* in this incident, the motifs of mistaken belief and incest are important to this discussion.

#### *Judah and Tamar*

The story of Tamar begins with the birth of three sons to Judah and his unnamed Canaanite wife and then, skipping a number of years, the event of the marriage of Er, his eldest, to Tamar, also a Canaanite woman.

Er dies childless for some unspecified "sin" soon thereafter, and Onan, the next son, takes Tamar as his wife. But Onan frustrates consummation by practicing *coitus interruptus*, "for he *knew* that the child would not be his." Onan is mistaken in this belief—possibly because he misinterpreted Judah's injunction that he was to "establish seed for (his) brother"—and we shall see that erroneous notions concerning the levirate institution occur in both this narrative and that of Ruth. Onan's fear is reflected in the Septuagintal rendition of verse 6, which is not in accordance with the halachic situation.

Once again the widow of a childless husband, Tamar is obligated to submit to her surviving brother-in-laws. But Judah, fearful that his last son, Shelah, will also die if married to Tamar, sends Tamar away to wait "until Shelah grows up"—although he has no intention to see them married.

After the passage of time, Tamar, seeing that she is still in limbo, decides to take matters into her own hands and, disguised as a cultic harlot, literally waylays Judah and conceives a child. Judah, on hearing of her pregnancy, becomes self-righteously indignant and orders her to be put to death for adultery. But Judah is trapped, for Tamar produces three pieces of personal identification that conclusively implicate him. Judah's self-righteousness gives way to humble admission in an interesting *double entendre*: His confession, "She was more in the right than I" also means "She's right; it (the pregnancy) is because of me."<sup>4</sup> In time, Tamar bears twins, echoing the only other multiple birth in the Bible: Just as Jacob supplanted Esau, Perez "bursts" through and supplants his twin, Zerach, as Tamar's firstborn. In a later pentateuchal passage, it is clear that Perez and Zerach, together with Shelah, are the eponymous ancestors of the three collateral clans of Judah. We shall return to Perez later on, noting at this point only that Tamar's twin sons are the result of an adulterous liaison that is also incestuous.

### *Ruth*

Elimelech ("God is King"), his wife Naomi ("Pleasantness") and their two sons leave the land of Judah for Moab in time of famine, where the sons, Mahlon ("Sickly") and Chilion ("Moribund") marry, respectively, Ruth ("Companionship") and Orpah ("Rejection"), two Moabite women. Elimelech and both sons die, the latter two childless.

The famine ends, Naomi announces her determination to return home to Bethlehem and her daughters-in-law declare their intention to accompany her. Naomi attempts to dissuade Ruth and Orpah, by arguing the improbability of her bearing any more sons for them to marry. Orpah heeds

Naomi and turns back to Moab, while Ruth, in an impassioned speech, insists that she will follow after Naomi.

Naomi and Ruth reach Bethlehem, where Ruth exercises her rights as gleaner on the property of Boaz ("Strength"), a kinsman to her late father-in-law, Elimelech. Boaz cautions Ruth to avoid the male fieldhands by staying close to the women and grants her reaping and gathering privileges far beyond those that are the due of the gleaner. Manipulating a love match, Naomi sends Ruth to Boaz at night, where Boaz congratulates Ruth on her prudence in avoiding a compromising situation with other men. He then responds to Ruth's request for his protection by offering to marry her, but first sets off to take care of one obstacle: The priority of a certain Mr. XYZ, another kinsman, to claim Elimelech's land. Acknowledging this priority, Boaz tells XYZ that Ruth is tied to the claim. Unwilling to marry Ruth because that would "spoil" the inheritance, XYZ forfeits his claim.

The drawing off of a shoe is performed as token of land redemption, transferring the acquisition from XYZ to Boaz. Ruth and Boaz then marry and have a son.

The narrative ends with a name list, going back to Perez, citing the pedigree of King David as the descendent of Ruth and Boaz. Now name lists normally occur at the beginning of a narrative segment. The placement of this device at the end of the story of Ruth, then, implies that a new chapter of history is about to begin.

In the light of Halachah, the events depicted in this story contradict the requirements and conditions of levirate marriage from beginning to end. In spite of her protestations in her speech to Ruth and Orpah, any new sons Naomi might have had could not have been levirate candidates on two grounds: they would have been the *maternal* half-brothers of the deceased husbands and they also would have been born posthumously to the original husbands. Furthermore, neither Ruth nor Orpah were obligated to be levirate widows, since neither of them had become Israelites by conversion. Midrash, in fact, takes Ruth's insistence on following Naomi to Bethlehem to be a declaration of intent to convert (" . . . thy people shall be my people and thy God my God"). Midrash further weaves into this speech point-by-point responses by Naomi that constitute the minimal instruction required for a prospective convert. And once converted, Ruth still has no levirate obligation, since conversion is not retroactive to a prior marriage or any other event or circumstance in the past. Naomi's speech, in this light, represents her misinterpretation of the levirate institution and parallels Onan's misunderstanding of his father's admonition (" . . . and establish progeny for your brother") which leads to his fear that the progeny would

legally be considered Er's offspring. A more explicit echo of Onan's fear is provided in XYZ's justification in rejecting Ruth as a wife: "... lest she ruin my inheritance." And as if all this were not enough, the question raised as to Naomi's own levirate obligation is countered by the observation that Elimelech did not die childless; the story clearly states that Mahlon and Chilion died after the death of their father.

Ruth's right to glean thus stems not from her status as widow (halachically she was never married) but rather from her status as a proselyte. Naomi's engineering of a love match between Ruth and Boaz is in keeping with the repeated image of the woman as manipulator, paralleling the doings of Sarah *vis-à-vis* Hagar and Ishmael, and those of Rebecca with respect to Jacob and Esau. Her attempt to compromise Ruth and Boaz—and they would have been compromised had there been witnesses to their spending the night together—is an antithetical parallel to Judah's withholding of Shelah; the narrative simply glides past this issue. But manipulateness is not exclusively a feminine characteristic. Judah sends Tamar away on a pretext with an implied but false promise, just as Boaz takes XYZ to court on a false issue. Although it is not explicitly stated, it is clear that Boaz wants both to marry Ruth *and* claim Elimelech's property. Since there is no levirate obligation, Boaz and Ruth are free to marry. But inheriting the land is another matter altogether, since XYZ is "closer" in his relationship to Elimelech. By tying Ruth to the inheritance claim, Boaz misstates the law of inheritance and the gullible XYZ forfeits his claim because marrying Ruth would "spoil" his inheritance. By contriving to get XYZ to forgo his claim, Boaz inherits Elimelech's land and marries Ruth. Thus the Scroll ends, save for the name list appended which states the descent of King David from Ruth and Boaz.

### *Conclusion*

Name lists occur throughout Genesis as does the refrain-like "these are the generations of . . ." While they often co-occur, the two devices have different functions. Each recurrence of the refrain "these are the generations of" serves to narrow the focus of the narrative: Creation →Earth →Mankind →Adam →Seth →Noah →Shem →Abraham →Isaac →Jacob →Joseph and Judah →the History of Israel. The name lists bring us up to date concerning others in the wings who are no longer of focal interest. An important theme frequently iterated at these junctures deals with the matter of spiritual inheritance and the all-important assertion that it is not necessarily the first born who receives the mantle of spiritual leadership; in fact, only in the instance of Shem does the first born son make the grade.

In each other instance, until the narrative reaches the sons of Jacob, when the eldest son is bypassed there is some reason given or implied to justify the choice. What is most significant is the fact that the justification becomes progressively weaker as the narrative progresses. Seth is the obvious choice because Abel is dead and Cain is a murderer; Ishmael is dismissed because he is the son of a slavewoman; Esau loses out because he deprecates his birthright, selling it although it is not a negotiable commodity. In counterpoint, God tells Abraham to heed Sarah's urging in spite of his misgivings and Isaac tells the enraged Esau to accept God's will. God's choice, it turns out, is the only ultimate justification, and no other rationale is provided for Judah's assumption of the leadership rôle following Reuben's initial attempts in that direction, nor is there any reason given for the birth of Perez prior to that of his twin or for Jacob's seemingly whimsical bestowal of the principal blessing on Ephraim rather than on Menasseh. A bit later, in Exodus, God simply elects Moses and designates the elder brother Aaron to be his deputy. And then, the two sons of Moses are completely bypassed without comment when the leadership is handed over to Joshua. The primary thrust of this theme, of course, leads to the exodus from Egypt, the ultimate election of Israel and the covenant given at Sinai. The name list appended to the story of Ruth ties this theme specifically to the election of David as the once and future King of Israel. Through his ancestor Boaz, David is descended from Perez, the offspring of the incestuous union between Judah and Tamar, while through Ruth he is the descendant of Moab, the son born of the incestuous episode between Lot and his elder daughter. Once again, God chooses whom he wills, and a doubly tainted pedigree is no impediment.

It is clear that incorporating *Ruth* into the biblical canon had a purpose that overcame any possible objections to the counter-halachic picture it presents, even overcoming the undercurrent of covetousness the story suggests with respect to its righteous hero, Boaz.<sup>5</sup>

Just as *Esther*—the only book of the biblical canon that does not contain one instance of any reference to God—is directly linked to the encounter of King Saul and Agag, *Ruth* ties into an even more significant and central message of biblical literature. And given the messianic context of the times between the destruction of the Temple and the Bar Cochba campaign, the decision of the Sanhedrin to accept the canonical status of *Ruth* gains greater clarity.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For recent critical interpretations of *Ruth*, see the articles by Bertman and Sasson as well as Campbell's introductory remarks to his *Anchor Bible* translation. Of special interest is the very recent study by Fisch which reaches many, but not all, of the same conclusions as I do.

<sup>2</sup> These stipulations are the subject of the opening *mishnayot* of tractate *Yevamot* ("Sisters-in-law") and the accompanying discussions of the *Gemara*; cf. Danby and the *Soncino Talmud*.

<sup>3</sup> See Albeck's introduction to tractate *Yevamot* in his edition of the *Mishnah*.

<sup>4</sup> Rash"i's comment *ad loc*, reflecting the Targum and Midrash *Bereshit Rabbah*.

<sup>5</sup> Oral tradition has it that Elimelech, XYZ and Boaz, together with Naomi's father (also unnamed) were all brothers. If Mahlon and Chilion had predeceased Elimelech, Naomi would have been obligated to levirate marriage and, assuming that he was the elder of the two brothers, XYZ would have been the primary candidate as the levir. Without the levirate issue, Elimelech's land would have reverted to the family pool and been equally divided between XYZ and Boaz. By injecting the false levirate issue and getting XYZ to forego his claim, Boaz now comes into possession of the lion's share of the family inheritance.

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## A Neglected Ottoman Poem: The Şehrengîz<sup>1</sup>

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NEARLY thirty years ago, the Turkish literary historian, Agah Sırrı Levend, published a monograph representing the first readily available, well documented and sympathetic study of the classical Ottoman-Turkish long poem known as the “*şehrengîz*” (hereafter, *shehrensiz*).<sup>2</sup> One would have expected that the appearance of this work on one of the few examples of Turkish literary creativity and originality during the overwhelming ascendancy of what may be called the Arabo-Persian Islamic literary tradition among the Turks living in the Ottoman Empire,<sup>3</sup> would have generated some interest in or encouraged further investigation of the genre. That it did neither is attributable to the curious attitude toward the *shehrensiz* adopted by many modern Turkish scholars and literary commentators who, until recently, either maligned the genre on the grounds that it tended to be obscene or discouraged its reading and study simply by treating it with not so benign neglect; authors, compilers and editors of works dealing with Turkish literary history, until a few years ago, seemed to go out of their way to avoid reference to the genre or they minimized its value as literature and as a particular reflection of the society that produced it.<sup>4</sup>

Although it cannot be said that the *shehrensiz* has been rediscovered and acclaimed as a long-lost treasure of the Turkish past, or that it is now beginning to be more acceptable and has gained in esteem, there are faint signs that it is having a change of fate. At least one younger Turkish scholar appears to be challenging the traditional attitude toward the genre by making an effort to make certain examples of it available to the public for its re-consideration.<sup>5</sup> From time to time it does seem almost an obligation to take stock of the actual state of affairs among scholars as well as societies vis-à-vis certain thorny issues and cultural legacies that may not be altogether palatable. It would seem that the more recent interest shown in the genre will lead to the re-assessment of cherished attitudes and

the re-evaluation of hitherto neglected legacies. It is the purpose of this paper to foster and sustain this renewed interest in the shehrensiz that has had a somewhat checkered existence in the annals of Turkish literary history by providing some general information about it, to speculate on its possible function in Ottoman society and to determine its place within the framework of Turkish literary activity down the ages.

The Shehrensiz, dubbed the 'City-Thriller' for very good reason at the turn of the present century,<sup>6</sup> has traditionally been classified among the category of poems known as *meşnevîs*. This has been the case principally because the genre under consideration here shares two important characteristics with a broad range of Persian and Ottoman narrative verse: first, the 'rhyming couplet,' ultimately of pre-Islamic Arabic origin in its prosodial arrangements, constitutes its basis. These couplets are strung together in a succession of stanzas varying in number of lines from three to six and then organized, generally speaking, into three larger groups of stanzas representing the introductory and justificatory statement, the essential message or descriptive passages, and finally, the concluding and identificatory items. Secondly, like the better-known and usual romantic or mystical *meşnevîs* it, too, is entirely in multi-rhymed lines as opposed to the mono-rhymed lines characteristic of the *kaşîdes* (odes) or *jâzels* (lyrics), allowing the poem to be extended at will well beyond that manageable with the mono-rhyme.

In purpose, tone and outlook, however, the shehrensiz differs markedly from the other typical examples of the *meşnevî*. It does not tell a story, like the metrical romance of *Leylâ and Majnûn*. It is certainly unlike the mystic and philosophical treatise of Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî or the allegorical poem about *The Rose and the Nightingale*. The shehrensiz writers did not wish to present a philosophy that could lift humankind out of the miseries of an earthly existence and suggest spiritual alternatives, neither did they seek to provide a sophisticated and highly artistic work as means of escaping from the harsh realities of day-to-day survival. Rather, the composers of the shehrensiz genre of poem meant to offer a more topical and less idealistic form of entertainment by making a familiar locale and a set of immediately recognizable characters, most likely fictitious yet believable, the focus of their poems. One may surmise that their only motive and final purpose was simply an erotic form of entertainment through the singing of the praises of the youths of certain towns, not in a *jâzel* or a *kaşîde* but in a modified form of the *meşnevî* apparently designed for the display of less ostentatious poetic talent presented in a lighter vein. To put it in terms more familiar in the West: at the beginning of the Italian Renaissance, it

was once suggested, there were three principal literary figures, each representing a different outlook and each endeavoring to fulfil a special purpose. Petrarch served the highly literate man of his day, Dante dealt with matters of the spirit while Boccaccio, breaking free of tradition, created a living literature about ordinary people. The parallel to this in Ottoman literary history at a time when this literature was about to reach its zenith was as follows. Bākī (d. 1600), the greatest Ottoman lyricist, catered to the needs of the poetry connoisseur of his own day, Fuẓūlī (d. 1556), the renowned *meşnevī* writer of the Ottomans used his talent to appeal to the spirit, while the originator of the shehrenciz, possibly Mesīhī (d. 1512), shook off the strictures of the Islamic literary tradition and addressed the ordinary man in a literary form that combined the formalism of the elevated poetry of the elite of the time with the directness and simplicity of the Turkish (as opposed to Ottoman) folk poetry to express less lofty sentiments.

In fact, it was in the sixteenth century, culturally the most innovative and productive century of the Ottoman Empire, that the first known shehrenciz was produced. E.J.W. Gibb, who gave the genre its English name, contended that the shehrenciz, unlike other poetic forms making up the corpus of classical Ottoman *dīvān* poetry, was not inspired by a Persian model but was the invention of the Ottoman Turk, Mesīhī. This contention has been challenged and it would appear that the last word on this matter has not yet been written.<sup>7</sup> However, whether the poem was an original Ottoman invention or borrowed from the Persian literary tradition is not the only problem. Zātī (d. 1546) could have produced a shehrenciz, also in honor of the city of Edirne as Mesīhī did, in the same year of 1512 and could deserve the credit for being the originator of the genre.<sup>8</sup> Be that as it may, the innovative efforts of the two poets mentioned above launched a new poetic tradition in early sixteenth-century Ottoman society and offered the Ottoman *littérateurs* a new form of expression which became popular and began to be emulated. By the end of the century several shehrencizes were in existence. The limited number of manuscripts still extant for each work of this kind seems to suggest that there was not that much of a demand for these poems, at least not in written form. But the fact that several of the leading literary lights of the century wrote their own shehrencizes carefully following the specifications of Mesīhī and Zātī, who were themselves popular and respected members of the literary circle that served the court and the elite of the society, is sufficient evidence of the acceptance of the shehrenciz as legitimate poetry worthy of the creators and purveyors of literary material intended for prospective patrons of the arts. Another factor that deserves consideration in gauging the actual success of the shehrenciz

in the decades following the first appearance of the genre is the possible impact of the widespread Ottoman practice of producing *naẓîres* (parallel) to another writer's work especially in poetry, as well as the sustained tradition of preparing *zeyls* (continuation/appendix) to existing compilations.<sup>9</sup> Both of these practices could have added to the number of existing shehrencizes without proving that they were read. Nonetheless, the fact that some three dozen of the close to fifty shehrencizes which the biographies of poets indicate were composed by as many poets during the sixteenth, seventeenth and part of the eighteenth centuries are still available if only in manuscript form attests to the popularity of this particular genre at least among its practitioners.<sup>10</sup> The size of its readership, however, remains to be assessed.

The Persian descriptive compound, *şehr-engîz*, was used almost exclusively as a generic term for this type of poem. Each shehrenciz is distinguished from the others by placing it in possessive association with the name of the town whose young men (or, in one case, women) it describes, in the form of an *izâfet* construction such as Şehrengîz-i İstanbul, Şehrengîz-i Edirne, etc. In some cases a more fanciful title might be chosen for effect or to signal the fact that a given shehrenciz differed radically from the others because it treated girls instead of boys.<sup>11</sup> At any rate, whether it focused on the boys of a particular city, or the women of all the nations, or even a special set of women, the ultimate objective of the poet in all cases seems to have been to create a certain excitement in a city by dedicating a poem to its youth, usually those serving apprenticeships in various trades in that city's market place. Both Mesîhî and Zâtî, the presumed originators of the genre, devoted their City Thrillers to the youths of the city of Edirne, the second capital of the Ottoman State. Subsequently, three more were dedicated to it, but only two of these have so far been located. As might be expected, the city that was most often honored in this way was Istanbul. Sources indicate that there were ten shehrencizes dedicated to it, but only seven of those are extant. The first capital of the Ottomans, Bursa, was also a popular setting for these poems. The origins or birthplaces of the writers of these shehrencizes would appear to have had no bearing on the choice of backdrop selected by them. While three of these poems written for the youths of Edirne were apparently by local bards, the first two, by the probable originators of the genre, were not. Of the ten Istanbul poems only four are ascribed to natives of the capital city. Those poems composed for smaller and truly provincial centers such as Vize, Diyarbakır, Sinop, Keshan, etc., as far as can be ascertained, are by natives also. It should be noted that there are shehrencizes for two very important cities at the eastern and western extremities of the Empire: Bagdad's by a virtually

unknown poet and Belgrade's by Ḥayretī, a native of a town close-by, are extant.<sup>12</sup>

The shehreizges, like many other genres in the Islamic Near East, rarely vary in relation to their prototype. In organization and structure, in particular, there is very little variation between the original models provided by Mesīhī and Zātī and the copies prepared by their continuators. One characteristic that all shehreizges have in common is the general arrangement in three parts, or, to use Gibb's very appropriate and convenient terms, they all have three divisions: *Prolog*, *Catalog* and *Epilog*.<sup>13</sup>

The Prolog in Mesīhī's *Shehreiz-i Edirne* is in several parts. The first, in observance of traditional Islamic practice, is an address to God (*mūnācāt*) which, in this case, takes the form of a confession of sins: the poet depicts himself as a shameless sinner who is so stricken by and preoccupied with the beauties he is about to honor in his poem that he forgets his religious duties. However, even as he confesses, he seems unable to be serious and lapses into humor—a marked characteristic of the shehreiz—and says, "When I gaze at the coquetry of an agile cypress, I prostrate myself at his feet like a shadow. Starlike tears run down my face when I spy a moonlike cheek. If the merciful one wished to weigh me and my sins in the arena of Final Judgment, the scales would surely snap. If all my sins were to be confessed, there would not be time left for the sins of others," etc.<sup>14</sup> Following this appeal to the deity to buy credit, as it were, in advance of the indiscretions he may commit later in the poem, the poet may, sometimes, include some prayer lines by way of propitiation. The *sebebi te'lif* (reason for the composition) usually comes next in the prolog, in which the reader, or more likely the listener, is given the insistence of a friend as the reason. There is the conventional protest and denial of ability and talent, but in the end the usual agreement to write the work. The statement is couched in terms that make the reader or listener feel that if the poem is not to his or her liking the fault lies with the one who asked that it be written in the first place. Another convention that is honored as part of the content of the prolog is the separate descriptions of night and day followed by sunrise and sunset. Then comes a poem that serves the same function as the "journey-motif" in the pre-Islamic Arabic *kašide*. This poem describes the journey to the city whose young men are to be the subjects of the shehreiz and, in a sense, acts as the *gürizgāh* (literally, place of the flight) of the Persian and Ottoman odes where the device is used as a transition from the exordium to the panegyric.<sup>15</sup> At this point the poet introduces the city itself, singles out and praises its noteworthy sites which he describes. He may end the Prolog with a general reference

to some of the youths of the city as they frolic on the banks of the stream that flows through it.

The *Catalog* portion of Mesîhî's Shehrensîz in honor of the youths of the city of Edirne consists of forty-six vignettes (depending on the recension used). Each is made up of two *beyts* (distich or couplet) the hemistiches of which rhyme. Representing the equivalent of a stanza, each vignette is devoted to one youth identified by name or a sobriquet that may reflect an aspect of the trade or craft in which he is employed or serving his apprenticeship. It is this identifying element, usually used as the title of the stanza, that forms the basis of the humor, punning, analogies and fanciful imagery so characteristic of this type of poem. Mesîhî and his followers displayed considerable talent and imagination in the manner in which they successfully, although not always too clearly, worked into the language of the stanzas allusions and various conceits based on the personal characteristics of the subjects of the vignettes and on the trades and professions in which they were involved. Nonetheless, these poetic characterizations are vague to the extent that they can easily apply to any boy or girl with the same name and trade in any and all towns. This is in keeping with the conventions so prevalent in classical Ottoman and Turkish poetry. In the love-poetry, in particular, there is such a sameness in the descriptions of the subjects, whether lads or lasses, that they must be the creations of the minds of the poets. The vignettes thus produced are always a challenge to figure out, many are ingenious and somewhat humorous, some can be suggestive enough to stimulate certain readers to read into them more than the surface message, but all have the potential to surprise and entertain. These descriptive stanzas that, following the example set by either Mesîhî or Zâtî, have eleven-syllable lines almost always in one of the variant forms of the *remel* meter<sup>16</sup> used by the Ottomans for lyrics and *meşnevîs*, should command interest beyond the message expressing sentiments of love, usually unrequited, and praise for their subjects. They are infinitely more Turkish, as opposed to Ottoman, in tone and language than the other forms and genres classified under the rubric of *Dîvân* poetry. Obviously intended for a much wider readership of less sophisticated individuals outside the highly educated class of court officials, administrators, judges and educators, they are grounded in the familiar expressions of the ordinary Ottoman in an idiom that was used for spoken communication rather than the more *recherché* language used for official and artistic communication by the élite. The frequent occurrence of Turkish proverbs, sometimes as part of the punchline, the obviously deliberate use of Turkish words, especially Turkish auxiliary verbs, and the somewhat simpler syntax may be

cited to support the contention that this poetry was for the benefit of the population at large and not only the select few.<sup>17</sup>

Every shehrensiz ends with an *Epilog*, the shortest part of the three-part poem. It is used, as a rule, to sum up the essential purpose of the poem by showering praises on the younger citizens of the selected city, collectively. This is what Mesîhî does at the end of his *meşnevî* by saying that the youths of Edirne are more beautiful than the angels of Paradise. The shehrensiz then comes to an end with a *hatime* (conclusion/postscript) or a few *gazel*s in the same meter as the rest of the poem in which the poet may ask for God's blessings on his work, or the youths he has described, and invariably signs off by mentioning his name.

While there are some shehrensizes in manuscript form that are given an independent existence by being stored in certain libraries under separate cover, because they are by nature rather short, they are frequently appended to *dīvāns* (anthology of a single poet including *kaşîdes* and *gazel*s). Some are made part of mixed anthologies such as the *mecmû'as* (collections). The fact that the copyists who compiled *dīvāns* or who were commissioned to do so, as well as those who employed them, considered the shehrensiz worthy of being included within the same covers as the *kaşîdes* and *gazel*s that were recognized as the best examples of the elevated literary art suggests strongly that this genre which has been neglected of late is really worthy of study and dissemination.

This paper began with expressions of surprise at the negative attitude adopted by some modern Turkish scholars, editors and commentators toward the shehrensiz. It will end with a few remarks in support of the call for acceptance of the genre as a legitimate literary work and for further research on it.

The appearance of the shehrensiz early in the sixteenth century with its emphasis on Turkish rather than Ottoman as its idiom and local scenes instead of unfamiliar borrowed ones from Persia, coincided with the short-lived attempt by a few *dīvān* poets to re-establish the Turkish language, as opposed to the Ottoman encrusted with Arabic and Persian borrowings, syntax, etc., as an acceptable medium for the production of the elevated literature of the Ottoman Empire. Known as the *Türkî-yi Basîṭ* (a Simple Turkish), it died with the two poets who produced a considerable number of poems in it. Although the same individuals were not involved in the two movements, it is not unlikely that both are manifestations of the same cultural need, and each represents a different way of meeting it.<sup>18</sup> The examination of the use of "purer" Turkish in the works of both groups could reveal the reason for the apparently sustained success of the shehrensiz

during three centuries and the sterility of the *Türkî-yi Basîṭ* effort.

The linguistic characteristics of the shehrensiz as well as the stanzaic organization of its Catalog part suggest another topic for research. Could the practitioners of the genre, members of the *dīvān* literary tradition, have felt it appropriate to include in their own works two features common to the folk poetry of the Turks? Could it also be that the shehrensiz was used as a link between the elevated literary tradition of the day and the folk literary tradition with its origins in the Central Asian past of the Turks? Furthermore, when one considers the timing of the appearance of the shehrensiz with the *Türkî-yi Basîṭ* movement and the fact that the poets began to lose interest in the shehrensiz in the eighteenth century when the so-called Transition period in Ottoman literature began to develop, an interesting coincidence is suggested. The Transition period was the period in the eighteenth century during which the inspirational orientation of the Ottoman poet changed from East to West. At the same time, there is a definite trend toward a "localization" (*maḥallîleşme*) and the increased use of local color and the reflection of everyday life to affect description, imagery and language. With this the two century-long emancipation of truly Turkish literature began, and one may surmise that the shehrensiz had ceased to have a *raison d'être*.<sup>19</sup> The genre had not only kept alive the Turkish idiom, stanza and world view at a time when Persian literature was exerting the greatest influence on Ottoman poetry and stifling all local color; it had also preserved a weak link between *dīvān* poetry and Turkish folk poetry that was to play a major role in the Turkification of literature in the nineteenth century; it could, also, have provided the antithesis of the very serious and somewhat philosophical poetry of the upper class.

The reasons listed above are already sufficient justification for a serious reconsideration of attitudes affecting the shehrensiz. It has to be studied in all its aspects for the purpose of establishing its contribution to Turkish culture, studying its linguistic tendencies and of determining its exact place within the framework of Turkish literary history. Studies especially in the Catalog parts can provide insight into the nature of Turkish society and its inter-personal relationships. The introductory parts of the shehrensiz can also yield interesting details concerning the topography of the cities in which each poem is located.<sup>20</sup>



## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This is a revised version of a paper read before the faculty of the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan in April 1986.

<sup>2</sup> *Türk Edebiyatında Şehr-engizler ve Şehr-engizlerde İstanbul* (Istanbul, 1956). It was published under the auspices of the İstanbul Fethi Derneği established to coordinate the celebration of the quincennial anniversary of the conquest of İstanbul. In this work (pp. 5–6 and 13–14) and in his later work, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (Istanbul, 1973), I, 16, the author characterizes the shehrensiz as an 'indigenous' (*yerli*) product which is to be interpreted to mean that it owes little or nothing to Arabic or Persian models. There is apparently an earlier study of the genre in the form of a dissertation called "Şehr-engizler" by a certain M. İzzet, dated 1935–36. It is unpublished and housed in the Türkiyat Enstitüsü. It was not available for this paper.

<sup>3</sup> For a good discussion of this literary tradition, see James Kritzeck, *Anthology of Islamic Literature* (New York, 1964), 15–26.

<sup>4</sup> A few of the more telling examples of this attitude will bear this out: (a) The Turkish *Encyclopaedia of Islam* has no separate entry for the shehrensiz. It is mentioned only in the listing of an author's works. It should be pointed out, however, that the English version has no entry either. The genre receives more generous treatment, on the other hand, in the non-specialized and more recent *Yeni Türk Ansiklopedisi* (Istanbul, 1985) where it is given a full and balanced citation (Vol. 10, 3842). (b) Some of the leading dictionaries of literary terms, where one would expect at least a simple citation, also fall short of their avowed function: Tâhir'ül-Mevlevî's *Edebiyat Lügati* (Istanbul, 1973), K. Demiray's *Edebiyatta Türler* (Istanbul, 1971), S. Kemal Karaalioğlu's *Türk Şiir Sanatı* (Istanbul, n.d.), M.N. Özön's *Edebiyat ve Tenkid Sözlüğü* (Istanbul, 1954) and H. İlaydın's *Türk Edebiyatında Nazım* (Istanbul, 1966) carry no reference to the genre. In a second work, Karaalioğlu is willing to admit that the genre exists, but describes it as a poem in divan literature on subjects that produce pandemonium, lead to gossip and give rise to terror. (*Edebiyat Terimleri Kılavuzu*, Istanbul, 1975), p.354. Similar sentiments are expressed by M.Z. Pakalın in his *Osmanlı Tarih Deyimleri ve Terimleri Sözlüğü* (Istanbul, 1971), III, 327). (c) Three of this century's leading historians of Turkish literature have also manifested a certain ambivalence toward the shehrensiz due, one must assume, to their acute sense of propriety. M.F. Köprülü, who devoted considerable space to the genre in his article, "Anadolu'da Türk dili ve edebiyatının tekâmülüne umumi bir bakış," in *Yeni Türk Mecmuası* (1933), 3, 534–553, does not feature even a single stanza from one of the shehrensizes in his otherwise very representative anthology, *Eski Şairlerimiz: Divan Edebiyatı Antolojisi* (Istanbul, 1934). It may be because he did not consider the genre representative of *dîvân* literature or, perhaps, because the anthology would have a much wider circulation. At any rate, he prefers to limit himself to observations such as, "... many *meşnevîs* such as shehrensiz poems that are *original works on local topics* were also composed in this century ..." (p. 134) when reviewing the literary products of the sixteenth century. The foregoing observation is repeated in the second edition of his *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (Istanbul, 1986) first published in 1926. Fahir İz, whose scholarship and research endeavors have benefited so many contemporary scholars and devotees of classical Turkish literature, chose not to include verses from the shehrensiz in his admirable anthology *Eski Türk Edebiyatında Nazım* (Istanbul, 1966–67) while he clearly considers it to fall within the pale of *dîvân* or elevated classical Turkish literature since he classifies it as belonging to the *meşnevî* group of poems (p. 547). Professor İz makes amends for this in his latest

anthological/historical publication (with associates), namely, *Balangıcından Günümüze Kadar Büyük Türk Klâsikleri: Tarih - Antoloji - Ansiklopedi* (Istanbul, 1985), II, 231. N. S. Banarlı who suggested in his *Resimli Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (n.p., 1948?) on page 132 that the shehrengîz could be a national poetic genre of the Turks is less enthusiastic about it in the expanded later edition of the same work (Istanbul, 1971), where he prefers to deal with it in footnotes (pp. 474 and 600).

<sup>5</sup> M. Çavuşoğlu's articles, "Taşlıcalı Dukakin-zâde Yahya Bey'in İstanbul Şehrengizi" in *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*, 17 (1969), 73-108, and "Hayreti'nin Belgrad Şehr-engizi" in *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2-3 (1974), 325-356, are two such signs that promise further work on the subject. These articles provide us not only with the complete texts of two shehrengîzes, but also contain some challenging observations aimed at those who find the genre objectionable for one reason or another. There are also some encouraging remarks made about the genre by G.K. Alpay in "Lâmi'i Chelebi and His Works" in the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, 35/2 (1976), 86-87.

<sup>6</sup> This is E.J.W. Gibb's rendering of the Turkish in *A History of Ottoman Poetry* (London, 1902), II, 231-238. Other European translations are similar, viz., "Stadt-aufuhr" (Hammer-Purgstall), "Il perturbatore della città" (Bombaci), its French equivalent, "Le perturbateur de la cité," or the somewhat different, "Pasquinade" (Bricteux), etc. The European scholars have shown greater interest in the shehrengîz than their Turkish counterparts: J. Hammer-Purgstall in *Geschichte der Osmanischen Dichtkunst* (Pesth, 1837), II, 163-195 gives a translation of the Bursa shehrengîz of Lâmi'i almost in its entirety. It is also given by August Pfizmaier in *Die Verherrlichung der Stadt Bursa* (Vienne, 1839). It is also the subject of interest to August Bricteux in his article "Pasquinade sur la ville de Tebriz par Maître Lissânî de Chiraz," in *Mélanges de Philologie Orientale* (Liège, 1932).

<sup>7</sup> Gibb, II, 232. This claim is doubted by Gibb's posthumous editor, the Persianist E.G. Browne, who asserts in his *A History of Persian Literature in Modern Times* (Cambridge, 1924), 238 that such poems were known in Persia and that they were not regarded as an innovation there. Jan Rypka in *History of Iranian Literature* (Dordrecht, 1968), 297, on the other hand, seems to support Gibb. See, also, Aḥmad Gulchîn-i Ma'ânî, *Shahr Āshûb dar Shi'r-i Fārisi* (Tehran, 1346/1967) and Bricteux, pp.1-7.

<sup>8</sup> An inconclusive discussion of this matter is to be found in Levend, *Türk Edebiyatında Şehr-engizler* . . . , pp. 14-17.

<sup>9</sup> Gibb, I, 99-100. While the *nazîres* should be treated as a form of challenge or competition that was extra-curricular, as it were, the *zeyls* must be regarded as a necessary act for the purpose of up-dating. This was a widely practiced and conventional way of keeping an uninterrupted record of the poets and their works.

<sup>10</sup> Levend, *Türk Edebiyatında Şehr-engizler* . . . , pp. 141-142, where there is a list of fifty shehrengîzes of one variety or another that are known from the sources to have been composed. To this list should be added Hādî's "Şehrengîz-i Bağdād," (Topkapı Saray MS, Yeniler 734), that was apparently missed by Levend.

<sup>11</sup> The best example of this is 'Azîzî's (d. 1585) subtitle: *Nigâr-nâme-i Zevk-âmîz der Uslûb-u Şehrengîz* (Delight Providing Book of Beauties in the Style of the Shehrengîz). There are modified versions of the genre that focus on the women of all nations, or on Gypsies, which bear the titles of *Zenân-nâme* (Book of Women) and *Çengî-nâme* (Book of Gypsies) respectively.

<sup>12</sup> See footnote 10 and also pp. 141-142 in the same work cited.

<sup>13</sup> Gibb, II, 232-238; Levend, *Türk Edebiyatında Şehr-engizler* . . . , pp. 17-18.

<sup>14</sup> Mesîhî, "Şehrengîz-i Edirne," Millet Kütüphanesi MS, Ali Emiri Manzum 685, f. 190. A somewhat longer variant of this part of the introduction is in Gibb, II, 249-

250: VI, 93.

<sup>15</sup> Browne, *A Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge, 1956), II, 30; Gibb, I, 84 n. 1.

<sup>16</sup> W.G. Andrews, Jr., *An Introduction to Ottoman Poetry* (Minneapolis, 1976), pp. 27–29; Gibb, I, 108. The shehrensiz of Lāmi’ī (d.1532), on the other hand, is in the *hezec* meter.

<sup>17</sup> See Çavuşoğlu, Taşlıcalı Dukakin-zâde . . . , pp. 74–75.

<sup>18</sup> N.S. Banarlı, *Resimli Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (Istanbul, 1971), pp. 621–623.

<sup>19</sup> Gibb, IV, 3–11: A.H. Tanpınar, *XIX. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (Istanbul, 1956), I, XV–XIX.

<sup>20</sup> Alpay, 87, are listed a number of place names extracted from Lāmi’ī’s Shehrensiz for Bursa that is focused on the city itself rather than on its inhabitants.

## A Propositional Analysis on Literary Theory Applied to Middle Eastern Genres

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THE following is based on a paper given at a conference on Western Literary Theories and Middle Eastern Genres held on April 2, 1977 at the University of Pennsylvania.\* The charge as formulated by the organizer of the conference, Adnan Haidar, reads as follows:

“ . . . the purpose of the colloquium is to assess the validity of applying Western literary theory to Middle Eastern literary genres. The following questions are immediately relevant:

- 1) Why are Middle Eastern critics borrowing from literary theories developed in the West?
- 2) How are some Western literary theories, which are in fact ideologies or products of ideologies, applicable to non-Western literary genres?
- 3) Which Western methods, and techniques, when applied, will or will not do violence to the language, the sensitivity, and the tradition which conceived of the text?
- 4) Assuming deference to the tradition of the literary text, what modifications of Western literary critical methods (if indeed there are any) have been made or ought to be made . . . ”

The student of Persian literature, faced with a charge as pregnant with provoking questions as this, has no dearth of topics with which to exemplify and to investigate the dilemma. On the one hand, *contemporary* Persian literature and criticism, the result of the increasing influences and copying from the West beginning in the middle of the last century; the poet Nima Yushij's explorations and teachings since 1921 on the priority of content-emotion over form, meter and imagery, declaring 'We have no link to the

past!' Ahmad Shamlu's and others' adoption of the Western-French notion of poetry as instantaneous 'automatic' recording of the subconscious, declaring that *še'r* 'poetry' is separate from *adabiyāt* 'literature'<sup>1</sup>: eminent contemporary Iranian critics like Reza Baraheni and the influences on him, and others from the New Criticism and other sources including, prominently, socio-literary criticism,<sup>2</sup> or the repeated and increasingly volatile criticism of *gharbzadegi* 'Westernitis,' the Western plague.

Yet, as much as has been written about it, comprehensive and thorough research is still scanty. There is a tendency among Western and Iranian professors alike to summarize and repeat what has been said.

On the other hand there is the problem of *classical* Persian literature and how Orientalists have approached it, how their paradigms and interests preconditioned the results of their research. Nearly 80% of literary studies of Persian are on classical literature.

Henri Broms, in his monograph on Middle Eastern and Western literary theory,<sup>3</sup> is nearly violent about the backwardness of this field of scholarly endeavor. He cites a few exceptions, among them none other than Goethe, one of the most sensitive and sympathetic to the Oriental greats ever, even though he knew them only in translation.

But the discussion of the general problem must not be parochial. Middle Eastern literature is not just Persian literature, not just the literatures of the *Islamic* Middle East, but encompasses *all* literatures be they Ancient Egyptian or Modern Persian. Dealing with such variety soon leads to modesty; the student's own speciality with its linguistic, geographic, and temporal limits and limitations is but part of a dynamic whole.

The problems of criticism are not confined to our days and the literatures of our days. Faced with the task to read, interpret and evaluate those literatures, the basic problem for the critic appears to be how to prove that his reading, his analysis, his interpretation and his evaluation are appropriate to the text, that he is not reading 'into' the text.

There is what seems to be a rather mechanical, but therefore possibly the least interpretative way of approaching a text: *dialectic analysis*, that is, the analysis of the 'patterns of thought,' but not of parts of a text, but on the highest level of the text as a whole. Dialectic is understood as the process of thematic evolution by which conflicts and contradictions are exposed, systematically played through and finally brought to a conclusion or resolution. Dialectical structure is analysable just as sentences are. It is 'parsing' on the level of the text. Such analysis must be the first step in approaching a text, whatever fancy or not so fancy literary theory or interpretative methods are applied later. First one has to recognize the

total picture, the basic structure. How often has interpretation gone wrong because one wanted to take the short cut of uncovering the meaning before looking carefully—and systematically—at what was really said and how it was put. Grammar comes before exegesis.

Unfortunately there is the tendency among literary critics—including structuralists—to make their critique a work of art, a fiery display of erudition and rhetoric, and sometimes misty Turner-like landscapes. Imagine this approach in the sciences! But the science of literary study seems to relish it.

But there is a *caveat*. Non-Westerners have rarely accused Western linguists, who analyze the grammar of exotic languages, of doing violence to the language (linguists do that to linguists). However, Orientalists from the West trying to analyze higher levels of language, among them literature, have often been and are being accused of their Western bias, if not of intellectual violence.

Edward Said in his “Shattering of Myth,”<sup>4</sup> and more so in his by now famous *Orientalism*, shatters the Orientalists’ myths about ‘the Arab.’ Numerous Orientalists are shown in their ridiculous effort to define and to put in his place ‘the Arab,’ in spite of hundreds of millions of Arabs, in spite of a host of different cultures and societies involved, in spite of a millennium or more of time depth, creating this convenient monster to the mental and economical ease of themselves, the Orientalists, and their superiors and supporters.

Of course, if ‘the Arab’ is a myth created by Orientalists, then ‘the Orientalist’ is a myth too, I presume.

Even so, a good number of the examples of the bad Orientalist scholarship cited are convincing. Has all Orientalists’ enthusiastic teaching, have all analyses of ancient, medieval and modern Middle Eastern literatures been tainted? Am I an ‘Orientalist,’ do I propagate the ‘intellectual inferiority’ and ‘sexual prowess’ of ‘the Arab’—and related Muslims, and of those Middle Easterners before them? Or are Said’s accusations just a brilliantly argued part of the eternal ‘Arabic’ power play to find out who would lead the tribe?

It is only appropriate that professors in the West, Easterners and Westerners alike, who deal with Middle Eastern literatures, discuss Middle Eastern literary criticism and Western literary theory; academics, in the American, not Russian, sense of the term, each with a particular view on these matters.

Of course, ‘Western literary theory’ is a myth, and violence is inflicted to Western and Middle Eastern literatures alike. There are many

Western theories, and there are many which are outdated except for self-perpetrating scholarship. There is good reason to be outraged about much of Western literary scholarship on *Western* literary genres. Not Middle Eastern literary genres are the focus of violence, *literature* is.

The letter of invitation does in fact mention such violence. Rather than continuing the discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of Western literary theory applied to Middle Eastern genres, it is in place to test the claim of violence vs. the claim of least interpretation (and thus least violence), claimed for dialectic analysis because of its 'mechanical' method. The letter of invitation is a text, part of a formal communication process. It should be analyzable as a text, even though it is not a literary text. For reasons of space, the letter will not be analyzed in toto, but only that part of the letter which contains the charge cited at the beginning of this paper.

Intuitively, the charge appears to exhibit a peculiar structure reminiscent of the narrative device termed 'overlay' by Grimes, who had observed it in some languages of Brazil and New Guinea, including Pidgin: 'It involves the near repetition of substantial stretches of speech in such a way that the repeated elements are placed in prominence . . . The nature of overlays puts into new context the question of reference in linguistic theory.'<sup>5</sup> Leaving aside the implications for linguistic theory, our text seems to fit the description. But this does not necessarily imply that it is non-Western, that there is some different pattern of rhetoric and dialectic argumentation. Grimes did not look at his own society. We simply do not use the technique of overlay in story-telling, but we do use it elsewhere. Music is a perfect example; so is much of scientific prose.

### *Partial Analysis*

Paradigmatically, our text consists of five parts (or scenes, or *beyts*): the statement of purpose, which is an indirect question, and four direct questions. All have about the same number of components and show the same underlying *syntagm*:

1. agent (the literary critic);
2. instrument (Western literary theory);
3. predication of instrument (ideologies);
4. object (Middle Eastern texts);
5. action (apply);
6. modification/narrator's comments (violence).

Thus there is a basic 6-slot syntagm common to the five parts, their basic theme.

The theme is played through five times, there is a five-fold overlay. Just as melody and harmony form patterns superimposed on the *basso ostinato*, so there is a pattern superimposed on the basic theme: the rhetoric-dialectic pattern. It is created by three devices of *focusing/placing in prominence*:

1. modification and/or change of terms;
2. single mention;
3. question.

The specific patterns of focusing here are as follows:

1. *by term changes*

a. the [instrument] slot (theory/method):

In Q<sub>0</sub> [ theory ], of the statement of purpose is changed  
 in Q<sub>1</sub> to [ theories ], and  
 in Q<sub>2</sub> to [some theories ], then  
 in Q<sub>3</sub> to [ methods], and finally  
 in Q<sub>4</sub> to [some methods].

b. the [object]-slot (genre/tradition):

In Q<sub>0</sub> [Middle Eastern literary genres ], is left open  
 in Q<sub>1</sub> [ ], and is changed  
 in Q<sub>2</sub> to [non-Western literary genres ], is substituted  
 in Q<sub>3</sub> by [the tradition which conceived of the text ], and  
 in Q<sub>4</sub> by [the tradition of the literary texts ].

In both cases the process is from the general to the specific or specified.

2. *by single mention*, i.e. occurring only once. Three patterns appear to be the most prominent: questions, intrusion of the narrator, and specific terms:

a. the narrator asks for:

In Q<sub>0</sub> the [validity ] of applying Western theory,  
 in Q<sub>1</sub> the [reason ] for it,  
 in Q<sub>2</sub> the [possibility ] of application,  
 in Q<sub>3</sub> by [particular methods ],  
 in Q<sub>4</sub> by [particular modifications ].



b. he intrudes by commenting (technically speaking, embedding) as follows:

In Q<sub>0</sub> [M. E. critic's application ]  
 in Q<sub>1</sub> is called [borrowing ],  
 in Q<sub>2</sub> [theories being ideologies ] are qualified by [in fact ],  
 in Q<sub>3</sub> [methods ] are said to do [violence ],  
 in Q<sub>4</sub> [modifications of method ] are doubted by [if there are any ].

c. the specific terms mentioned only once are:

In Q<sub>0</sub> the [validity ],  
 in Q<sub>1</sub> the [Middle Eastern critic ],  
 in Q<sub>2</sub> the [Western ideology ],  
 in Q<sub>3</sub> by [violence to tradition ],  
 in Q<sub>4</sub> by [modification out of deference ].

These three patterns of *single mention*, superimposed on the *basso ostinato* of the repetitions or near repetitions, all coincide with the culminating effect of focusing from the general to the specific. A highly skillful, and delightful, piece of dialectic (see chart).

This technique of overlaying has one clear effect: to lead the audience's attention into a specific direction. Both by that 'hammering' *basso ostinato* and by the symphony of the superimposed focusing patterns we are led to accept that:

1. Middle Eastern literature has its own tradition and sensitivity.
2. Western theories are based on Western ideologies.
3. Western theories and their methods are not appropriate for non-Western texts.
4. Applying them leads to false conclusions.
5. It may be possible to adapt Western theories to non-Western texts.

That is the range of problems as expressly stated in the text; and as chiseled out by the preceding little analytic exercise. We are led to accept these, and we do.

At the same time, however, being strict as required from any application of structuralistic analysis, one recognizes that what has been analyzed was not the whole story. Strict application of the analysis hints at slots not filled, but *implied* by the extremely coherent pattern of the text: It mentions *Middle Eastern* critics, *Middle Eastern* genres, *Middle Eastern* tradition, on the one hand, and *Western* literary theory, *Western* ideology,

on the other. But it does not mention *Western* critics, *Western* genres, *Western* traditions, nor *Middle Eastern* literary theory, *Middle Eastern* ideology, which are the structurally defined pendants implied.

With these, the questions implied multiply; to name only a few:

Does Middle Eastern literary theory do the same violence to Middle Eastern texts? or to Western texts? or:

Does Middle Eastern literary theory not do violence to Middle Eastern texts?

Is Middle Eastern theory a product of Middle Eastern ideologies? or will it be? and:

Is there Middle Eastern literary theory? (The fact that Middle Eastern critics are said to borrow would indicate that the narrator is provoking the negative).

At this point the structural analyst recognizes yet another slot: [Time], as in any good story. The [Time] slot in our text seems to be skillfully slanted: It is [Present] or [Future] for the borrowing of Western theories and their modifications, but it seems to be [Past] with regard to the tradition of the Middle Eastern texts. That is, our text has led and focused our attention to one particular constellation only: modern Western theory applied to traditional Middle Eastern texts. Yet the text-structure implies the *full* range of other constellations. Among them are the [Time-Text] cluster, and the [Time-Theory] cluster: Middle Eastern texts range from pre-Hellenistic antiquity to modern times; and we want a theory applicable to all texts, not only to Islamic literature. Moreover, [Modern] theory has to be correlated with [Earlier] theories since we want to understand those theories and their advantages and disadvantages in regard to 'violence' etc., as well. There once happened the magnificent adaptation and development of Classical-Hellenistic theory by Muslim scholars.

The pattern of the text has led us to focus our attention on another point. The culprits provoked are Middle Eastern critics who borrow. A text, however, implies somebody who writes it. Critics live *on* texts. The problem, it seems to me, is not only the Middle Eastern critic but also the *writer* who, in the present time frame, 'borrows.' We have all seen both Middle Eastern critics and Middle Eastern writers rush to the bookstore after their lectures to buy books on Western literary theory and on techniques. Why are Middle Eastern *writers* borrowing from Western literary theories? or Western ideologies?

The following lists a few brief observations on a little story by one Middle Eastern writer which do not give an answer to the questions raised

but which superbly illuminate the state of affairs. The story is a Modern Arabic story, Yusuf Idris' *an-Naẓara* 'The Stare.' It is actually more a vignette than a story, just a little more than a page long in the Arabic original:

A little servant-girl asks the narrator to help her adjust the load on her head, a pile of dishes with food for her mistress. The narrator finds it strange that a little girl like her should ask a grown-up like him, but he kindly obliges and adds good advice on top of it. Whereupon she determinedly wends her way through heavy traffic to the other side of the street, the narrator watching in amazement, afraid that she would be run over by the cars. Suddenly he notices that she has stopped. Imagining that her tray is about to drop again he rushes across the street being nearly hit by a car. As he comes nearer, he realizes that the little servant-girl is just staring at children playing with a ball. He stops, and she vanishes in the crowd.

There is no need to present you with yet another structural analysis. In essence, the author skillfully sets up a false conclusion, his fear that the girl's tray was slipping again, only to highlight what appears to be the point of the story: the stark contrast between the little girl who has to work and the children who are able to play, or to cite the translator's commentary: 'the little girl's longing for a better life and her clear firmness of purpose reflect some of the spirit and intensity of the class struggle so obviously a dominant factor in Egypt's social history of the past two decades.'<sup>6</sup>

This is certainly true. We recognize through the narrator's concerns and stares, and his stare at her stare, that the little girl has to work, that she runs alone and unprotected across the street (Cairo's streets I presume), that she talks to strangers. A little child should not be allowed to do these things.

But at the same time there is this firmness, this natural attitude about life evident in the girl's behavior. Maybe this is the reason why the story begins as follows:

*kāna ẓarīban anna tiḡlatan ṣāqīratan miṡlahā . . .*

'It was *strange* that a little girl like her . . .'

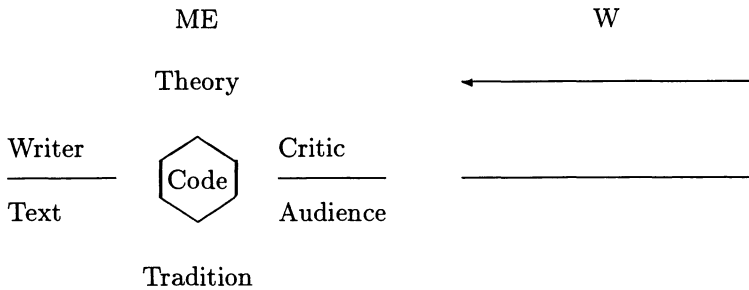
Evidently she is quite secure, she knows her place in her society.<sup>7</sup> She is very well adjusted to her life and her society. It is *he* who imagines, *he* who fears for her, *he* who presents us with this vignette, with the confrontation of the working girl and the playing children. But, to note, his concerns are based on ideals originating outside his own society, his concerns are reflections of *Western* ideals of childhood and societal justice. *He*

is insecure, *he* has adopted new standards from outside of his own society, contrary to the girl. Whether we, the audience, subscribe to these ideals or not, that is not the point here. And whether Idris as a writer actually intended this story to depict the clash of societal paradigms, or whether he simply and brilliantly reported his fascination with the little girl—it is one of his earlier stories—the story, as short as it is, ingeniously captures the essence of the problem which faces us: Western paradigms and Middle Eastern cultures.

To return to our text of invitation. Up to this point the text itself was discussed. But it has a narrator, as concerned as the narrator of *The Stare*, and it has an audience: our host and we the participants. Do we have, in the letter, a fictional narrator asking 'leading questions,' or 'Western questions,' as *advocatus diaboli*, or not?

Who is the narrator according to the text? He inserts himself, as mentioned above, with qualifying statements (besides asking the questions in the first place): He identifies the activity of Middle Eastern critics as 'borrowing'; Western methods are 'in fact' ideologies which he says do 'violence' to the genuine tradition; and he finally questions whether there are any modifications possible at all. That is, our fictional narrator subscribes to the points outlined earlier: that each text—and culture one may add—develops, and 'deserves,' its own ideologies. We accept this concept. So we are all in the same boat. Only, one must realize, that this concept is a concept, an ideology, or a product of an ideology. Whether this relativistic, 'democratic' if you will, concept as opposed to a universalistic concept, originated in the West, or not, is not as important here as the fact that we accept it. It is our specific paradigm, to use Kuhn's term.<sup>8</sup> The paradigm of convictions shared by a community of scholars for a certain period of time. It determines the range of problems and develops its terminology—and jargon.

Many of us also agree on the integrated dynamic systems approach, as is implicit in our text, i.e the interdependence model which may be visualized as follows (leaving out real life, the publisher):<sup>9</sup>



It is the upper half of this model which seems to cause concern: the substitution of indigenous theory by foreign theory, breaking the coherence within this hexagon. But why concern? It will be a fascinating and ideal case of studying the dynamics of systems in merger, traditional Western and Eastern theory, which were static, vs. a theory which is dynamic and multicentered. One should refer to von Gruenbaum, Rypka, Lentz and, again, to Henri Broms, all of whom contributed considerably and empathetically *sine ira et studio* to our understanding of Middle Eastern literatures and the dynamics between the Classical and the Muslim theories.<sup>10</sup>

So why do Middle Eastern critics and writers borrow? Because, following Toynbee's view, European culture is becoming the new world culture? What modifications of theories? Assuming, if not agreeing, that only members of a particular cultural area are sensitive enough to be successful in that task, it will be up to Middle Eastern critics, writers, and readers, to find the appropriate modifications.

But a clarification is in place: what is meant by literary criticism? Is there agreement on what its function and objectives are? That depends on the individual sub-ideology. There is the erudite literary critic of the 19th century who, eclectically, paraphrases and highlights certain points and parts of a piece of literature in an almost magic fashion to demonstrate beauty or eternal idea. And there is Barthes' *S/Z*,<sup>11</sup> and then Derrida and the 'deconstruction.' There is the sociologist who selects the sociopolitical aspects, there is the psychologist, the literary historian, the genre specialist, and the biographer.

All *manipulate* texts and participate in the larger ideological context of their disciplines. And there are the systematic linguists with their 'superior' methods who apply linguistic analytical methods to develop a theory of texts. But just as a sentence is not the same as a poetic line, so the linguistic aspects of a literary text are not the same as its poetic aspects.

Literature makes use of language, but is more than language, just as life makes use of matter but is more than matter.

These approaches superimpose their disciplinary theories and methods and get the results they want, and deserve. I would like to conclude with a well known, but not always heeded clarification and a suggestion following Richards<sup>12</sup>: there is a difference between the analysis of a text and the interpretation/evaluation of a text. The analysis systematically makes apparent the rhetorical and dialectic structure of a text: of the text as a whole, not only of parts of it. It ideally uses the model-theoretical approach, for which charts are one visualizing possibility. This process reduces the text but does not disturb the text. It is only *after* this model, or competing models, of the dialectic pattern of a text have been arrived at that it should be interpreted. Thus, for example our text: It has systematically been analyzed as to its dialectic pattern. It can now be interpreted by superimposing on it various ideological models. In the case of our text one suggestion would be that of existential philosophy: the Middle Eastern critic in a crisis situation, experiencing psychological disorientation and extreme existential anxiety, searching for his 'second' state of security which is to result in focused action.

The point is that the critic must be aware of the ideological models he uses, and he must use them as coherent models, not *eclectically*, as is usually the case. Depending on the model the interpretation will differ, often diametrically opposed. But whatever the interpretation, the first step of any critical activity is the same: the dialectic analysis. Just as for linguists of whatever color and conviction the first step is still good old parsing.

Part of this paper was a demonstration of that approach. It made apparent the rhetoric and dialectic *process* of our text. It did *not* interpret, it made use of meaning to model the pattern.

In the preceding, one version was shown of the new paradigm which is known as structuralism and of 'structuralist activity' as Barthes described it in his manifesto by the same name,<sup>13</sup> but a version with emphasis on the practical aspect of understanding the basics of a text prior to interpreting its 'meaning' for us. It is, or should be, the first and basic step in literary criticism, systematic and pragmatic, applicable to all texts, to Ancient Egypt's *Sinuhe*, to a *ghazal* by the classical Arabic poet Omar b. Abī Rabi'a, or to the novella *The Blind Owl* by the modern Persian writer Hedayat.

Note that the context of a text, its basic function as dialog and its *intentions* are not at all dismissed by this seemingly pragmatic positivistic approach. On the contrary, the aim is to appeal to critics to first *listen*

carefully, to better understand the often implicit *dialog*.

Dialog is an activity, renewed—and changed—with every reading; the *structure* which emerges is not something dead, dissected, but it is what I would like to compare to a *hologram*, a tri-dimensional image which remains identical but at the same time moves with our *standpoint*.

I submit that this Western literary 'theory,' if you will, is valid; that Middle Eastern like Western critics may borrow it; that the ideology behind it is hardly Western only; that it does not do violence to the language, the sensitivity, and the tradition which conceived of the text, and that it is, indeed, one of the critical methods that exist, which need not be modified out of, or in deference to, the tradition of the literary text.

### Notes

\* The present paper, or essay, and the other papers given at that conference were originally to be published in *Edebiyat*. The discussion of this essay appears to me particularly appropriate for my late friend and colleague to whom this memorial volume is dedicated and who lived and symbolized the possibility of the harmony of Middle Eastern and Western values.

<sup>1</sup> See the discussion in Abdo-l-Ali Dast-e Qeyb, *Naqd-e āzār-e Aḥmad-e Šāmlu (A. Bāmdād)*, Tehrān: Mirā, 1973/1352.

<sup>2</sup> This is evident, for example, in Reżā Barāheni, *Qessenevisi*, Tehrān: Ašraf, 1969/1348.

<sup>3</sup> Henri Brous, *How Does the Middle Eastern Literary Taste Differ from the European?*, *Studia Orientalia* 44, Helsinki: Societas Orientalis Fennica, 1972.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Said, "Shattering of Myth," *Middle East Crucible. Studies on the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973*, ed. by Nasser Aruri, Wilmette, Illinois: Medina University Press International, pp. 408–448, 1975.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Grimes, "Outlines and Overlays," *Language* 48: 513–524, 1972.

<sup>6</sup> Trevor LeGassick, "Egypt's Angriest Young Author—Yusuf Idris," *Mid East* 8.5: 30–32, 1968.

<sup>7</sup> The following observations were originally suggested during discussions in a seminar of the author on Middle Eastern literature.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Phoenix Books P 159, Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1962.

<sup>9</sup> Michael J. Bohler, *Soziale Rolle und ästhetische Vermittlung. Studien zur Literatursoziologie von A.G. Baumgarten bis F. Schiller*, Bern-Frankfurt/M.: Verlag Herbert Lang, 1975.

<sup>10</sup> Gustave E. von Grunebaum, *A Tenth Century Document of Arabic Literary Theory and Criticism. The Sections on Poetry of al-Baḡillani's Iḡaz al-Qur'an*, translated and annotated, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1950; *idem*, "The Aesthetic Foundations of Arabic Literature," *Comparative Literature* 4:323–340, 1952; *idem*, *Kritik und Dichtkunst. Studien zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1955; *idem*, "Arabic Poetics," *The University of North Carolina Studies*

in *Comparative Literature* 13, *Indiana University Conference on Oriental-Western Literary Relations, Papers*, edited by Horst Frenz and G.L. Anderson, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, pp. 27-46, 1955. - Wolfgang Lentz, "Beobachtungen zum gedanklichen Aufbau einiger zeitgenössischer persischer Prosastücke," *Der Islam* 29: 166-208, 1952; *idem*, "Oriental Types of Literary Composition as Described by Goethe," *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* 10: 59-62, 1961. - Jan Rypka, *Báqí als Ghazelendichter, Sbírka Pojednání a Rozprov IX*, Praha: Fac. Phil. Univ. Carolina Pragensis, 1926; *idem*, "Forma, jako jeden ze środków prowadzących do głębszego poznania nowoperskiej," *Przegląd Orientalistyczny* 1 (29): 3-17, 1959.

<sup>11</sup> Roland Barthes, *S/Z. An Essay*, translated by Richard Miller, preface by Richard Howard, New York: Hill and Wang, 1974.

<sup>12</sup> See Ivor A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, especially chapter III on "The Language of Criticism," 1924 and later editions.

<sup>13</sup> Roland Barthes, "L'activité structuraliste" in his *Essais critiques*, Paris, Seuil, pp. 213-220, 1964.



	Narrator Question	Time	Writer M. E./W		Critic		Theory		Ideology		Genres		Audience M. E./W	Tradition	Action	Narrator Comments
			M. E.	W	M. E.	W	M. E.	W	M. E.	W	M. E.	W				
0	valid							theory				literary genres			apply- ing	
1	why (borrow)		Mid East Crit.			theories developed in West									apply- ing	borrow
2	how (applic- able)					Some West theories				product of ideo- logies	non-West literary genres				are applied	in fact (ideologies)
3	which (methods)					(some) methods, techniques					texts			language, sensi- bility to tradition	when applied	do/do not violence
4	what (Modifi- cations)					critical methods					literary texts			tradition		deference modification if there are

Analysis of the “Letter of Invitation”





