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Jonathan Owens

Early Arabic Grammatical Theory
Heterogeneity and Standardization

EARLY ARABIC GRAMMATICAL THEORY

HETEROGENEITY AND STANDARDIZATION

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For my parents

ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

x ---> y x governs y
§ Quranic passage, (/) = (chapter/verse of *Qur'aan*)
Ag agent
AP active participle
Ap appendix
art article
Ax Axfash
CC classificatory conjunct
Com comment
comp complement
def definite
f feminine
Far Farra'
inf (case) inflection
u-inf = u-inflection, nominative or indicative
a-inf = a-inflection, accusative or subjunctive
i-inf = i-inflection, genitive
0-inf = 0-inflection, jussive
m masculine
M *musnad*
MI *musnad 'ilayhi*
Mub Mubarrid (or Mubarrad)
NC noun complementation
Obj object
pl plural
PP passive participle
prep preposition
pssd possessed
pssr possessor
Q (in glosses) question particle
Q (or ^{Q}) + number (in text) = Arabic quote
qual qualifier
$\underline{s}$ = sh (alveopalatal fricative)
S sentence
Sar Sarraj
sg singular
Sib Sibawayh
SNIP separation and non-identity principle
Subj subject
Top topic
Zaj Zajjaj
Zam Zamaxshari
ϵ emphatic consonant

Arabic names are conventionally written without long vowel marks, hence 'Sibawayh' rather than the phonetically more accurate 'Sïybawayh'. There is no reason why Arabic linguists should not be as much household names in modern linguistics as, say, Panini, whose name is often given in a conventionalized, westernized spelling. References to Sibawayh are, unless otherwise stated, to book I. Unless otherwise specified, 'Anbari' refers to Abu Barakat al-Anbari, author of the *'Insaaf*.

PREFACE

The Arabic grammatical tradition is remarkable for having organized a large amount of descriptive material within a sophisticated formal framework. The present study seeks to elucidate the early development of this system from a theory-internal perspective; it is mainly concerned with the development of the syntactic theory as a formal object, a system of rules. This endeavor is constituted of four sub-goals: a description of early developments, their periodization, their relation to the traditional accounts in terms of the Basran and Kufan schools, and their relation to modern linguistic theory. These goals represent self-sufficient ends, though it is hoped that the results here will be relevant to further questions, such as the relation between the Arabic and Greco-Syriac grammatical traditions.

I have tried to give a detailed listing of page references in the original Arabic works, though do not claim to provide an exhaustive inventory of any source. In this context I might mention that the manuscript was sent to press before N. Kinberg's valuable lexicon of Farra's grammatical terms appeared; the papers of the second Nijmegen colloquium for the history of Arabic grammar have also appeared in print (Benjamins), though too late to be cited in their book form.

This book was begun when I was a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, whose support I would like to acknowledge. During this time I was generously hosted by Prof. Fischer of the University of Erlangen. I would like to thank Prof. Jamil Abun Nasr for his detailed comments on chapter 10, and for the criticisms and corrections of two anonymous readers. Ms. Inge Neuner gave much technical help in the preparation of the manuscript.

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I
INTRODUCTION

1. The Problem

In a sense the historiography of Arabic grammatical theory suffers from an overabundance of data, for it possesses not only a fairly large corpus of original grammatical writing dating from as early as the late eighth century (2nd century A. H.), but also a commentary on this tradition, an Arabic historiography as it were, that develops co-terminously with the descriptive writing. This tradition is independent of the grammatical writing itself in the sense that it represents the structure imposed by later scholars on the grammatical thought of earlier generations. It is on the other hand integrally part of the grammatical tradition for as soon as it is explicitly formulated it becomes part of a model that subsequent generations use to understand the grammatical writing of earlier scholars (cf. 10.5). A major challenge in understanding the development of Arabic grammatical theory is in defining to what extent the traditional representation accurately reflects the historical reality of the early Arabic grammatical period.

1.1 The Schools

In the standard tradition Arabic linguistic thinking is divided into three schools, the Basran, Kufan and Baghdadian, Basra and Kufa being the earliest islamic cultural centers in Iraq, and Baghdad the capital of the Abbasid empire. The classic presentation of this model was written by the twelfth century grammarian Anbari (cf. Troupeau 1962, Carter 1983b, Versteegh 1977 chapter 5, Talmon 1981, 1982, 1985). According to it linguistic thinking can be classified as either Basran or Kufan, or Baghdadian (=neo-Basran). The last is sometimes represented as synthesizing the viewpoints of the two earlier schools, though for reasons that will become apparent in the course of this book Basran and Baghdadian are effectively the same (Carter 1973b). The tenth century bio-bibliographer Ibn al-Nadim (115 ff.) offers an alternative three-fold classfication, Basran, Kufan and those who mixed elements from these two schools, though this interesting approach was largely abandoned by Ibn al-Nadim's successors (cf. Troupeau 1962: 399) and in any case the linguistic content of the "mixed" school was never fleshed out in any significant way. By and large the Basran and Kufans schools are represented by a fixed cast of linguists, Sibawayh (177/793), Axfash (215/815 or 221/835), Mazini (249/863), Mubarrid (285/898) and others for the Basrans, Kisa'i (183/799), Farra' (207/822) and Tha'lab (291/904) for the Kufans,

though on any given point any linguist can align himself with ideas of the other school. The relevant issues are explicitly developed by each school, and Anbari in his classic work can render a final judgment on each issue. In all but 7 of the 121 questions discussed the decision goes in favor of the Basrans (cf. Versteegh 1977 §5, Bohas 1985: 124 ff., Owens 1988 §4.9 for sample questions).

This Basran predominance is explained by the fact that they developed a highly efficient method of grammatical analysis based on the use of analogy. With this they developed linguistic hierarchies that were used to classify and explain all aspects of Arabic grammar (cf. Weil 1913: 7-28). Against this the Kufans relied to a greater degree on the citation of anomalous linguistic forms and textual examples in the analysis of a particular grammatical construction, used analogical reasoning to a lesser degree and generally attached less weight to strict methodological procedures in their argumentation (Weil 1913: 29-37). Given the Basrans alleged linguistic sophistication, it is small wonder that they should so often emerge triumphant in questions concerning formal grammar.

As Anbari tells the story, Basra and Kufa represented historically real schools of grammatical theory just as much as generativists (in the Chomsky tradition) or systemicists (Halliday) or lexical functionalists (Bresnan) do today. There was diversity within each school, but this was less significant than the constrast to the ideas of the other school. Anbari's characterization, itself the product of a long genesis, has had an enduring impact on the conceptualization of Arabic linguistic thinking, with many linguists from both the Arabic (e.g. 'Udayma: 31) and western (Troupeau, 1961) traditions more or less accepting its accuracy.

Nonetheless, the historical reality of these schools was challenged as early as the beginning of this century by the German scholar Gotthold Weil in an essay that is one of the classics of the western orientalist tradition. After summarizing Anbari's representation of the Basran and Kufan schools (cf. short presentation above) he makes three main observations.

(1) Neither a Basran nor a Kufan school existed before the end of the ninth century, that is, until after the death of most of the Basran and Kufan protagonists (pp. 65, 73, 74). This is supported by two main points:

> (1a) that the oral nature of disputation and research made it logistically difficult for different schools in two separate cities to develop consciously opposed models; Sibawayh and Farra', presumably the main protagonists of the Basran and Kufan schools never actually met (53, 59);
>
> (1b) the actual theoretical differences between the schools were not great (39) and on many issues Basrans and Kufans divided on other than strict party lines (51, 62-64). Thus even in Anbari's fairly dogmatic representation of the dispute it is not always clear who can be regarded as Basran and who Kufan.

(2) The Basran and Kufan schools were created by a generation of linguists after Mubarrid (285/898) and represent more a systematization of grammar in the $4^{th}/10^{th}$ century than the actual grammatical thinking of the earlier 'Basran' and

4th/10th century than the actual grammatical thinking of the earlier 'Basran' and 'Kufan' grammarians (57, 58, 65, 80, 81).

(3a) No real Kufan school existed, Farra' being the last to develop a characteristically 'Kufan' methodology[1] (65, 73, 76, 77).

(3b) The Basran school, or the synthesizing school of Baghdad as it was also known, was based on Sibawayhian methodology (77).

Weil's analysis is remarkably prescient -- the first two points I think have largely been confirmed by subsequent research (cf. §10) -- and while I will argue against (3a) and in part (3b) in subsequent chapters, it must be recalled that Weil himself did not have access to Farra's major text, *Ma'aaniy l-Qur'aan*, when he wrote his essay, nor to the work of many later grammarians.

Weil thus rightly draws attention to the ahistorical nature of the Basran and Kufan schools, assigning as they do linguists to doctrines on a post facto basis. At the same time it would be inadvisable simply to dismiss the schools as a figment of the collective imagination of 9th and 10th century grammarians, for the question must be raised as to how precisely these two locations came to be universally identified with different grammatical traditions; put another way, if the schools are myths, is there nevertheless an historical basis for them (Versteegh 1977, 1987: 157, 158, Baalbaki 1981, Talmon 1982, 1984, 1985, 1986b, 1987)?

Certainly a prerequisite to a finer characterization of the linguistic thinking during the earliest period is an adequate examination of relevant linguistic ideas, a definition of what they are and who held them. This has formed the basis of most of the significant research on the subject (e.g. Weil; more recently Baalbaki, Carter, Talmon and Versteegh) and this exercise will occupy the greater part of the present work. I propose to examine enough issues from different linguists that a general developmental typology of linguistic ideas can be constructed, whereby the association of linguists with certain sets of ideas will yield a periodization independent of á priori labels like Basran and Kufan.

1.2 The Data

I am mainly concerned with Arabic grammatical theory in the earliest era, conveniently represented as the period from Sibawayh (177/793), who wrote the earliest grammatical treatise, to Sarraj (316/928), who effectively developed the ultimate organizational technique for grammars (cf. 4.3). The nature of the linguistic theory earlier than this is accessible only via reconstruction (cf.§11.5); in

---

[1] "Blieb Farra' und neben ihm auch in beschränktem Masse Kisa'i isoliert, und ihre Behauptungen und Begründungen Ansichten von einzelnen, die von niemandem vertieft, ausgebaut und vervollkommnet wurden" (Weil 1913: 65)

the period after Sarraj there was relatively little change in the actual grammatical categories used or in the style of presentation, though there were significant developments in other areas of grammar, notably markedness theory (*al-'usuwl*) and pragmatics (e.g., the work of Jurjani, Sakkaki and 'Astarabaḏi).

I only use material from extant grammatical sources. This puts the beginning point of the study at a stage beyond that distinguished by Belguedj (1973: 171) when the study of Arabic grammar was co-terminous with Quranic and poetic analysis. Although Sibawayh and particularly Farra' were intensely concerned to elucidate the *Qur'aan* and poetry, their sophisticated methodology reflects a grammatical theory grounded in concepts independent of any individual text.

The term 'earlier era' refers to the period up to Sarraj (approximately, the beginning of the 4th/10th century, cf. 4.3). Its significance lies in the fact that it was during this time that the greatest amount of change, the greatest degree of development occurred in grammatical thinking. Unfortunately, though not surprisingly, it is also the era for which the smallest number of actual grammatical works exist. In fact, we have to date only two major treatises devoted exclusively to grammar, Sibawayh's *Kitaab* and Mubarrid's *Muqtaḍab*, though many more by various authors are reported in the bio-bibliographical literature. These two works themselves are very detailed, both over 900 pages long; indeed, Sibawayh's book is so detailed and accurate that it effectively serves as the basis of all later works on Arabic grammar, few other works approaching its comprehensiveness and few adding much new in the way of actual data. Other grammatical works from the period exist, and some will be reviewed in chapter 9, but even they stem mostly from the end of the period, from Mubarrid's time or later.

This is not to say that nothing is known of the grammatical thinking in the intervening period. There is the occasional book on lexicography (e.g. works on *al-'aḍḍaad*) and various short didactic treatises on odd topics, like that by Qutrub illustrating the differences between the short vowels in Arabic, or Farra's on gender (cf. 3.5). There also exist second hand reports about the ideas of linguists whose works are lost (or not yet found). All in all, however, these sources fail to provide anything like an adequate source for the linguistic ferment that took place from Sibawayh to Sarraj.

What goes some way to saving the situation for present-day scholars are two Quranic treatises, one written by Farra', the other by Axfash. Both are entitled *Ma'aaniy l-Qur'aan, The Meaning of the Qur'aan*, both among the first books of this genre, a genre whose function it is to excerpt passages from the *Qur'aan*, passages ranging from a single word to two or (unusually) three lines, which contain problematic points of some sort. The style of these books is exemplified in some detail in 3.6. The problem can reside in any of a number of areas, the meaning of a word or phrase, the grammatical analysis of a certain construction, or variant morpho-phonological shapes of words. The discussion surrounding these points will include not only the author's own clarification, but also a discussion of what other scholars have to say, and often a critique of the alternative positions. Not uncommonly a problematic passage is explained by reference to a simpler, constructed example, quite like the 'John and Mary' sentences of modern linguistics, and through such clarification the theory behind the analysis becomes particularly clear. From such discussion we are able to learn something of Axfash's

theoretical precepts, and a good deal of Farra's. Of course, the selective nature of the subject means that a wholly comprehensive picture of their grammatical thinking, similar to what we have for Sibawayh, will escape us. Nonetheless, in over 1200 pages Farra' in particular manages to impart a good deal that is of import.

Given this uneven distribution of early works available, it goes without saying that no book written today can claim to be comprehensive; quite obviously when statements are made about Sibawayh's or Farra's thinking for example one can base oneself with 100% certainty[2] only on the existing works. Lost works like Farra's *Ḥuduwd* could well turn up some day, altering ideas about his theories. And even if one had the complete output of the linguists the picture would still remain incomplete, for it can be assumed that observers as perceptive as the Arabic linguists would have been aware of and understood the ideas of their contemporaries, even if they themselves did not embrace all of them in 'print' (= scribal copy, cf. Versteegh 1977, 1980: 141). With such caveats in mind, statements like "Sibawayh's analysis of x was..." should be understood as "so far as the material at our disposal allows us to conclude, Sibawayh's analysis of x can be interpreted as..."

1.3 The Quranic Variants, the *Qiraa'aat*

A special source of data is the Quranic variants. They consist of variant readings of the Quranic text, usually rather small differences like different ways of vocalizing a word, using a feminine rather than a masculine form, and so on. The readings themselves constitute raw data about Arabic and as such only indirectly contribute to our understanding of Arabic linguistic theory (cf. e.g. Beck 1946: 202, 1959: 357,365). Their importance lies in the fact that they are fairly often discussed and the different variants analyzed for their grammatical acceptability by, in particular the grammarians of the early era, most especially in books of the Ma'aaniy genre. For purposes of later reference it is relevant to give a thumbnail history of the readings; I follow the traditional account given in Ḍayf 1979, an account itself based on numerous classical sources.

The *Qur'aan* was revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad in Arabic. It originally was not written down, being instead transmitted through recitation and memory. The Prophet himself was, of course, the first transmitter and it was said that once a year he recited the *Qur'aan* (as much as had been revealed) twice in the same way. At the same time he would also recite parts of it for various Arabian tribes, and he would do so in the local dialect of the tribe. Variations could thus arise from two sources, the faulty memory of those who heard the standard recitation, and the variants associated with different tribes.[3] After Muḥammad's death variants began to proliferate to such an extent that the third Calif 'Uthman (644-656) ordered one

[2] Actually less, given the factor of scribal errors in the transmission.

[3] 'Abd Allah (1984: 218) emphasizes that the Quranic variants and the presence of dialectical variants within the standard Quranic text are distinct phenomena. Nonetheless, a significant proportion of the *qiraa'aat* variants are probably traceable to dialectical differences.

Zayd ibn Thabit to compile a standard edition based on copies made by the first calif, Abu Bakr (632-634). Certain variations were allowed in this edition, but only in the Quraysh (Muḥammad's) dialect. All other Quranic manuscripts were ordered destroyed, and the official written text, known as the Uthmanic codex, was sent to the centers of Arab power, Mecca, Medina, Damascus, Basra, Kufa and Yemen.

Nevertheless, unofficial reading traditions continued, each with their own variants and peculiarities, and these formed the basis of a good deal of commentary by the Quranic exegetes, most notably by Farra'. As late as the 3rd/9th century books were written collating as many as 25 different versions. However, even many Arabs who supported the different reading traditions against the standard written text put a limit on the number of reliable variants, and a core of seven variants, *al-qiraa'aat al-sab'a*, were set down by Ibn Mujahid (245-324/859-935). He remarked (45, 46) that a degree of standardization was needed among the variants because among the traditional variants were included those of readers who did not know correct rules of grammar, those who memorized badly, those who knew only the grammar, those who had learned from misinformed teachers, and so on. The seven reliable variants derive from the following readers, each of whom traces his version back to a companion of Muḥammad.

Reader	Place	Year of death
Nafi'	Madina	169/785
Ibn Kathir	Makka	120/737
'Asim	Kufa	127/744
Hamza	Kufa	156/772
Kisa'i	Kufa	183/799
'Ala'	Basra	154/770
'Amir	Damascus	184/798[4]

1.4 The Players

In this section I will give brief biographical sketches of the major linguists whom I will be referring to, listing them in chronological order.

[4] Mujahid himself recognized other reading traditions, writing a book of 'exceptional' (i.e. little used) variants that summarized traditions other than the seven.
Burton (1977) has challenged the traditional account, arguing that the standard Quranic text in fact goes back to Muḥammad; he also suggests that many, if not all, of the 'official' variants on the standard text also derive from a post-Uthmanic period. Given our concern for linguistic theory the exact historical status of the official Uthmanic text and the variants are of secondary importance. In any case, even if Burton is correct it would appear that Farra' and other commentators worked under the assumption that the written text stemmed from 'Uthman's time (cf. 'Abd Allah, 1984 and Neuwirth 1987: 101-110 for general summaries).

In this context it is important to emphasize that an understanding of the evolution of Arabic theory should in the first instance rely on the association of ideas with individual linguists rather than with larger pre-conceived entities like the grammatical schools, which are the constructs whose existence one in part is attempting to establish (cf. § 10). While one can be fairly certain that certain ideas are associated with Farra' or Sibawayh or other individual linguists simply because the corporeal existence of these individuals and their works can be substantiated independently of the grammatical ideas they represent, the same does not hold for the 'schools', whose existence is effectively co-extensive with their linguistic content, a content composed of the ideas of more than one linguist.[5]

1.4.1. Major

1.4.1.1. Xalil bin Aḥmad (101-175 (or 170)/719-791)

Xalil was a Persian grammarian and literary critic and teacher of Sibawayh who is popularly known for having grounded the theory of Arabic lexicography and phonetics in his *Kitaab al-'Ayn*, and the study of prosody (*'uruwḍ*). Ibn al-Nadim (64) attributes 5 books to him, none of which survive. The *Kitaab al-Jumal fiy l-Nakw* (*KJN*), discussed in 9.5 is certainly falsely attributed to him. So far as grammar goes, he is important for his relationship with Sibawayh. Reuschel (1959: 9) notes that Sibawayh cites his opinion far more than any other linguist, mentioning his name on 410 occasions (608 acccording to Troupeau), though to what extent Sibawayhi's ideas are actually Xalil's remains an open question. As Sibawayhi's teacher he traditionally falls into the Basran camp.

1.4.1.2 Kisa'i (183/799)

Kisa'i was a Persian who served as a teacher in the court of the (then crown prince) Ma'moun in Baghdad (ruled 198/813-218/833) and is one of the few early scholars who can be recognized as both a Quranic reader (cf. list in 1.3) and a linguist with specific grammatical ideas (as reported in various places by Farra'). Ibn al-Nadim credits him with 12 books, none of which is available in modern edited versions. His *Ma'aaniy l-Qur'aan* was perhaps the first of the genre, and Farra' in his *Ma'aaniy* frequently refers to Kisa'i, not least to criticize his ideas (cf. 5.5.1). With Farra' he is traditionally considered the main exponent of the Kufan school (cf. e.g. Tha'lab, 359).

[5] It is this problem that Ansari (1964) runs afoul of in his study on Farra'. He notes, quite correctly in my view, that Farra's opinions often put him at variance with other 'Kufans' like Kisa'i (see below, 1.4). Rather than use this observation to analyze Farra's ideas as independent variables within the context of early Arabic grammatical thinking (cf. Baalbaki 1981: 26), he quickly concludes that Farra' in fact was the founder of the Baghdadian school (366). The entire exercise amounts to no more than taking Farra's linguistic views out of the Kufan school and putting them into the Baghdadian, an attempt which even in the 'schools' approach to Arabic grammar raises more problems than it solves. Ansari, for example, cannot offer more than a handful of traits which distinguish Farra' as a Baghdadian (as opposed to Kufan or Basran, 452, 453), and he fails to explain how his interpretation of 'Baghdadian' relates to the traditional understanding of this term in the later Arabic grammarians themselves, like Anbari.

1.4.1.3 Sibawayh (145 (?)-177/762-793)

Very little is known about Sibawayh, the greatest of all Arabic linguists, one of the greatest in the history of linguistics, the author of the first major and authoritative work on Arabic grammar, *al-Kitaab, The Book*. Of Persian origin from Al-Baydaa', he resided in Basra studying with Xalil (with 608 references in the *Kitaab*), and Yunus (201 references). According to a popular legend, he left Basra when he was still fairly young after he lost a linguistic argument with his rival Kisa'i (Ibn al-Nadim 76, Suyuti II: 230, Blau 1966). He is the most important of the Basrans.

1.4.1.4 Farra' (144-207/761-822)

Farra' was a Persian who resided for most of his life in Baghdad where he was a teacher in the court of the amir Harun al-Rashid. His major work, *Ma'aaniy al-Qur'aan*, contains a good deal of grammatical analysis, much of which is systematically distinct from that of Sibawayh, even though he is said to have studied the *Kitaab*. I have consulted two other books of his, one on grammatical gender (cf. 3.5) and one on the form of word final *-aa*; most of the the other 30 works attributed to him, including his work on grammar entitled *al-Huduwd*, are to date lost, a contemporary study (Ansari 169) citing but four available works. Farra' is the major representative of the Kufan school, though it is noteworthy that in Ibn Mujahid he nowhere figures in the Kufan reading tradition, either as reader or as part of the *'asaaniid*, the chain of authorities who guarantee the correctness of associating a particular tradition (e.g. that so and so was a reliable Quranic reader) with either Muhammad or one of his companions (69-79, 94-98).

1.4.1.5 Axfash (215/830 or 221/835)

From Xwarizm (Transoxiana, present-day USSR), Axfash was resident in Baghdad and he is reported to have been older than Sibawayh, but at the same time his student. His importance traditionally lies in his being the Basran linguist mediating the time between Sibawayh and the third generation of Basran linguists, his students having been Mazini, Jarmi and Sijistani. His major work is *Ma'aaniy l-Qur'aan*, said to have been used by Farra' in his work of the same title. 17 other books, all unaccounted for to date, are attributed to him.

A story reported about him by Suyuti (I: 590) is interesting first of all in indicating that an ideological passion associated with adherence to a school or theory or scholar is not the exclusive preserve of modern linguists. It is said that Axfash entered Kisa'i's teaching circle incognito and began posing "hundreds" of embarrassing questions that Kisa'i could not reply to. In the midst of this Kisa'i's students were about to pounce on Axfash for his impertinence, but Kisa'i restrained them and let Axfash proceed. Afterwards Kisa'i recognized Axfash and asked him to stay and tutor his students. He also is said to have asked Axfash to write a *Ma'aaniy al-Qur'aan*, and to have had Axfash secretly tutor him in Sibawayhi's *Kitaab*.

The story is equally interesting for the implied social networks among the early scholars. As yet no close textual comparison substantiates or refutes possible influence among Kisa'i, Sibawayh, Farra' and Axfash. According to stories such as

this they should be present. On the other hand the account suggests elements of a post hoc rationalization of the early linguistic pedigrees: Kisa'i the Kufan asks Axfash to write a *Ma'aaniy*, whereas Kisa'i learns grammar from the Basran Axfash. Thus is the origin of the chief difference in genre between the two schools explained, the Kufans experts in exegesis, the Basrans in grammar. Farra's use of Axfash's *Ma'aaniy* confirms the ascendency of the Basrans in the earliest period, yet at the same time Axfash's acquaintance with Kufans and Kufan works accounts for his tendency to deviate from Basran thought in various instances (cf. 11.2.5).

1.4.1.6 Mubarrid (210-285/825-898)

Of Yemeni ancestry, though born in Basra, Mubarrid (also Mubarrad) was a student of two of the best known linguists working in the mid-ninth century, Jarmi and Mazini. He was known for his rhetorical eloquence and one suspects is to a large extent responsible for furthering the conceptualization of Arabic grammar in terms of the Basran and Kufan schools (cf. §10) with the Basrans the predominant faction. He is said to have written at least 17 books, the two most important being *Al-Kaamil*, a philological work, and *al-Muqtaḍab*, a long summary of Arabic grammar.

1.4.1.7 Tha'lab (200-291/815-904)

Of Persian origin, Tha'lab was Mubarrid's chief rival in Baghdad and he is reported to have written the first book on the Basran-Kufan disputes, now unfortunately lost. His sympathies lay with Farra', and he is reported to have memorized all of Farra's works. Nevertheless, as Weil (1913: 76, 77) notes, in the most significant survival of his output, *al-Majaalis* consisting of a mixture of philological and grammatical topics, there is little development, though not inconsiderable mention, of Farra's ideas (cf. 9.7). What is known of his linguistic thinking is very fragmentary; his reputation, however, requires that he be included among the major linguists.

1.4.1.8 Zajjaj (241-311/855-923)

Considered the heir to Mubarrid, hence Basran, I will argue that it is with Zajjaj that the Basran/Kufan division first becomes fully crystallized (§10). His most notable surviving book is a Quranic commentary, *Ma'aaniy al-Qur'aan wa 'I'raabuhu*, a general work on grammar having been lost.

1.4.1.9 Sarraj (316/928)

Also a student of Mubarrid, he was interested in music and philosophy as well as in grammar. As Suyuṭi (I: 109), though not, from a shorter historical perspective Ibn al-Nadim (93), recognized, Sarraj marks a watershed in Arabic grammatical theory in that it is his organizational systematization in his *al-'Usuwl fi l-Naḥw*, "The Foundations of Grammar", which effectively serves as the model for all subsequent pedagogical grammars, a point I take up in 4.3.

1.4.2 Minor writers

In addition to these linguists there are a number of minor writers, minor either in the sense that one hears little about them in the bio-bibliographical literature and /or minor in the sense that little of their writing survives. In the former category belongs Lughda (311/913), in the latter Ibn Kaysan (299/311 or 320/932) and Abu Bakr al-Anbari (260-328/939), the most famous student of Tha'lab. Of Ibn Kaysan I had access to only one short grammar, though if the earlier date is correct, many of the ideas set out in it would show him in various ways to be more original and systematic than his contemporary Mubarrid. For Abu Bakr al-Anbari I had only thematically very restricted books, the *Alifaat*, a treatment of the initial "*alif*" in Arabic, and a detailed two-volume treatise on gender, *Kitaab al-Muḏakkar wa l-Mu'annaθ* (*KMM*, see 9.7.2).

In this category I can also mention two anonymous works, *Muqaddima fiy l-Naḥw*, "An Introduction to Grammar", attributed to Sibawayhi's contemporary Xalaf al-'Aḥmar (180/796) and *Kitaab al-Jumal fiy l-Naḥw* (*KJN*), attributed to Xalil. I discuss these attributions further in 9.1, 9.2, 9.5 and 9.10.

1.4.3 Other writers

In passing can be mentioned linguists like Sijistani (182/798), Quṭrub (206/821), Jarmi (225/839) and Mazini (249/863) who are frequently mentioned in the linguistic literature but whose work had either completely disappeared or survived in such insignificant amounts (e.g. Quṭrub's *Muθallaθaat* or Sijistani's remarks on morphophonological structure in his *'Aḍḍaad*: 120) as to make any significant reconstruction of their thinking a precarious business (cf. Reuschel 1959 and Fischer 1985 on Xalil, and Bernards 1987 for an interesting essay on Jarmi).

1.5. Plan of the Book

Chapter 2 serves as a prelude to the work. By giving an example of developments that transcended the period covered in this study, it serves as a reminder that theoretical developments did not end completely with Sarraj and by calling attention to theoretical positions common to all eras it reminds us that there are always overriding unitary factors present. Chapters 3 and 4 introduce the two most important linguists of the early period, Farra' and Sibawayh. In chapter 3 Farra's linguistic methodology is discussed with a view towards orientating his thinking within the constellation of Arabic linguistic thought; chapter 4 reviews aspects of Sibawayhi's methodology and concludes by comparing it with Sarraj's in order to offer a general perspective on one important aspect of the development of Arabic theory. Chapters 5-8 concentrate on Arabic theory in the crucial 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries. Chapter 5 discusses in some detail the developments that occurred within the noun qualifier category (*taabi'*), using as sources the main linguists of the period, Sibawayh, Farra', Axfash, Mubarrid, Tha'lab and Sarraj. Introducing new data, chapters 6-8 elaborate on three main themes that emerge from chapter 5: that the earliest linguists shared certain precepts that distinguished

them from later ones (chapter 6), that Farra' in some respects stands closer to his successors than does Sibawayh (chapter 7), and that in the 3rd/9th century there was a comparatively large degree of theoretical heterogeneity, a point illustrated from Farra' (chapter 8). Having provided the skeleton of a developmental framework based on the major linguists, in chapter 9 I discuss 4 minor linguists (minor in the sense of 1.4.2) with the view towards establishing where in the linguistic spectrum their ideas incline -- towards Sibawayh, Farra', later grammarians, or something unique. In chapter 10 I turn to the question of Basrans and Kufans, suggesting that these two localities crystallize as linguistic schools most dramatically in the work of Zajjaj. The last chapter, 11, attempts to organize the diverse linguistic themes discussed in chapters 2-10 within the framework of a structural analysis of early Arabic linguistic thinking. The conclusions from this are again applied to our interpretation of the Basran/Kufan schools, and to a discussion of general linguistic theory.

In addition, there are 3 appendices. Appendix I gives a selected page index for various authors and topics drawn from the original texts, and deals with selected issues in early Arabic grammatical theory, issues felt either not to be central enough to the present work to be included in the main text, yet too long to be comfortably accommodated in a footnote, or important issues or points of general background whose inclusion in the main text would disrupt the rythmn of organization. Appendix II contains original Arabic quotes and III has a list of the Arabic grammarians cited.

1.6. Odd Remarks

1.6.1 When is terminology terminology?

A question that looms especially prominent in a consideration of early Arabic theory is what constitutes technical terminology.[6] The early Arabic grammarians tend to be unhelpful here, rather rarely giving explicit definitions for the terms they use (though Farra' is perhaps better than Sibawayh, e.g. I: 13.15 on *taqriyb*, 235.16 on *sarf*).

The basic criteria for establishing whether or not a given linguist was using a given term as a fixed concept are clear. When a term is consistently used to represent a constant extensional class or a fixed process it can be taken as a technical term. Very often such terms are represented by a derivational set; the notion of governance in Sibawayh appears in such diverse, morphologically related forms as *'amal* "governance", *'amilat* "it governed" *'umila* "it was governed" *'a'mal-ta* "you made govern" *'aamil/'awaamil* "governor/governors", etc. (cf, Troupeau 1973)

[6] Cf. for example the debate between Carter (1972b, 1985b) and Talmon (1982) on when *nakw/nakwiyyuwna* "grammar/grammarians" became a technical concept.

while the corresponding term in Farra' appears in such forms as *waqa'a* "it governed", *yaqa'u* "it governs" *'iyqaa'* "governance", *waaqi'* "governor", etc. (cf. 8.2.1).

There are of course problematic cases. Among the writers discussed in chapter 9, from whom relatively little information is available, there are not always enough citations of a given term to establish its precise status, and other terms, for example *tawkiyd* "emphasis" (in Sibawayh) or *tafsiyr* (in Farra') appear sometimes to represent a fixed class of items, but at other times simply to designate a general function (cf. 5.2.1, 7.1.2, 7.1.4). Most cases, however, I think are not problematic.

1.6.2 Some conventions

When dealing with a fixed term I refer to the actual Arabic concept with an arbitrary form, usually, though not always, the 3 ms. sg. verb form. I will say, for instance, "Farra's notion of governance (*waqa'a*) is characterized..." "Governance", the noun is, of course, *'iyqaa'* (for Farra'), *waqa'a* literally "it governed". However, in my conventional representation the form *waqa'a* serves the necessary purposes. I will cite contextually correct forms only where necessary.

As Reckendorf (74) explains, Arabic grammar had no term for case. *'I'raab* "case/mode suffix" refers to any inflectional ending whose form is determined by a governor. Thus, although the *-a* forms in

(1a) *lan yaḏhab-a* "he won't go" subjunctive
b) *saa'ada l-rajul-a* "he helped the man" accusative

are conventionally termed subjunctive (Konjunktiv) and accusative (Akkusativ) in Western parlance, in Arabic theory they are both called *nasb* because both *-a* forms are determined by a governor, *yaḏhab-a* by *lan* in (1a), *rajul-a* by *saa'ada* in (1b). In order to stay closer to the Arabic usage I will speak in both instances of the a-inflectional form, or a-inf for short (similarly u-inf for nominative/indicative, i-inf for genitive and 0-inf for jussive). "Inflection" here corresponds only to *'i'raab* (case/mode suffixes) and should be understood only as such.

Finally two remarks. When I refer to 'Basran' and 'Kufan' (henceforth I will drop the quotation marks) I do so in the traditional sense of Anbari, unless the context specifies otherwise. "Development" of such and such a class, e.g. "development of the specifiers (*tamyiyz*)", means development qua theoretical category, not the linguistic development of the items which realize that category, which is a topic for comparative grammar.

II
TWO GENERAL POINTS

In the following chapters I shall concentrate specifically on aspects of the development of Arabic theory from Sibawayh to Sarraj. Given the emphasis on differences and change in this exercise, I think it worth noting two points that will serve to give a broader perspective to this development. On the one hand there are many important theoretical constants throughout this era, constants which in fact hold throughout the history of Arabic grammar; on the other Arabic grammatical theory did not stop developing with Sarraj, though the period under consideration is undoubtedly the most important for the formation of Arabic theory. I will illustrate each point with an example.

2.1 Dependency

From its earliest era Arabic grammatical theory has been preoccupied with the correlation of form and function, with the explanation of why certain words take certain forms in certain contexts, other forms in others. Two related elements can be singled out in the tradition: inflectional form and dependency. Inflectional form, *'i'raab* (or lack of it, *binaa'*) is, as it were, the dependent variable, what is explained by dependency (or governance, I use the two terms interchangeably), the relations that words contract with each other as governor and governed (*'aamil/ma'muwl*). In the expressions

(1)	*qaala*	*zayd-un*	
	said	zayd-u	"Zayd said".
(2)	*ra'aa*	*zayd-an*	
	saw	zayd-a	"He saw Zayd".
(3)	*min*	*zayd-in*	
	from	zayd-i	"from Zayd"

the varying forms of *zayd* are explained as due to the different governor-governed relation obtaining in each -- in (1) as u-inf agent to verb, in (2) as a-inf object to verb and in (3) and i-inf prepositional object to preposition. The basic concept of dependency as one item directly affecting the form of another was developed as early as Sibawayh. He used it both in the context of general rules,

> Q 1 A question particle does not stand between the governor and governed (*'aamil/ma'muwl*).
>
> 53.9

and

> Q 2...nor do you separate an i-inf governor and what it governs (*maa ya'malu fiyhi*).
>
> 74.8

It applies equally to specific constructions, as when Sibawayh speaks of the

> Q 3 Topic which governs (*ya'malu*) it [= comment] and makes it [= comment] u-inf.
>
> 99.20

The general concept of dependency remained essentially unchanged in later theory, as I have shown for the period beginning with Mubarrid (Owens 1988: §2.4). The question concerning the category of items ultimately responsible for the dependency relations had a varied history, however. In some cases, such as what the governor of the comment (*xabar*) is, the controversies were officially recognized (cf. Anbari 44 no. 5). Many others, however, went unremarked upon, even though some of them involved a developmental span that stretched beyond Anbari's last Basran (Ibn Barhan, d. 456). The second example involves such a case.

2.2 The i-inf (genitive)

It came to be standard dogma that a possessive noun in the so-called pure possessive (*'idaafa mahda*, Tha'lab 530, Sarraj II: 5, or *'idaafa ma'nawiyya* Zamaxshari 82) was governed in the i-inf in the same way a prepositional object is related to certain prepositions. By Ibn 'Aqil's time three types of prepositional meanings were recognized in the *'idaafa*, those with *min* "from, of", *fiy* "at" and *li* "to, for" (II: 43).

(4a)	*xaatamu*	*fiddat-in*	=	*xaatamun*	*min*	*fiddat-in*		
	ring	silver-i		ring	from	silver-i		
	"A silver ring"							
(4b)	*'a'jab-tu*	*min*	*darb-i*		l-*yawm-i*	*zayd-an*	=	
	surprised-I	from	hitting-i		today-i	zayd-a		
	"I was surprised that Zayd was hit today".							
	'a'jabtu	*min*	*darb-i*	*zayd-in*	*fiy*	*l-yawm-i*		
					at			
(4c)	*yad-u*	*zayd-in*	=	*yad-un*	*li*	*zayd-in*		
	hand	zayd-i		hand-u	to			

"Zayd's hand"

This interpretation, however, was not, as Astarabadi (I: 25) recognized, the only one, nor always the dominant one. In Sibawayh there is in fact no hint at all of any general relation between the N + N *'idaafa* (possessive) construction and the prep + N ones.

> Q 4 The possessed item (*mudaaf 'ilayhi*) is governed in the genitive by three items: (a) what is neither noun nor locative (noun), (b) by a locative and (c) by non-locative nouns.
>
> 177.10

(5a)	*marar-tu*	*bi*	*zayd-in*	= (a)
	passed-I	by	Zayd-i	
	"I passed by Zayd".			
(5b)	*taḥta*	*'abdi llaah-i*		= (b)
	beneath	Abdullahi-i		
(5c)	*ḥimaaru*	*zayd-in*		= (c)
	donkey	zayd-i		

It is true that Sibawayh mentions paraphrase relations of the type with *min* (cf. 4b) and *li* (4c), but that with *li* comes in his book II (331.4) and that with *min* occurs in an entirely different context where the topic of discussion is the form of modifying elements (195.12). They clearly in no way serve for Sibawayh as more basic forms to constructions like (5c). So far as the *'idaafa* goes, the relation is simply either that of Prep + $N_{i\text{-}inf}$ (5a) or N + $N_{i\text{-}inf}$ (5b, c).[1]

In Mubarrid there would still seem to be a direct noun-noun relation in the possessive construction.

> Q 5 There are two types of *'idaafa* relations, that when nouns occur as prepositional complements, and that where one noun occurs as possessor to another.
>
> IV: 136

However, in his clarification of the N-N i-inf there is a significant shift in the explanation.

> Q 6 As for the nouns in a direct possessive relation, they occur in the meaning of the *laam* [= *li* "to, for"] of possession.
>
> IV: 143

He then goes on to give a paraphrase of the type in (4c) above; the paraphrase with a prepositional construction is assuming a greater role.

[1] Neither Farra' nor Axfash make this association so far as I know. Where Axfash speaks of the N-$N_{i\text{-}inf}$ relation he uses the expression *jurra l-il-'idaafa* " made i-inf for the possessive function" (e.g. 17.7), which sounds as if the i-inf arises directly out of the N-N relation.