
 THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST

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A Critical Edition of the Grammatical Treatise Mīzān al-ʿArabiyya by Ibn al-ʿAnbārī (d. 577/1181).

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Most studies on the history of Arabic grammar tend to focus on the advanced treatises, from Sībawayhi's *Kitāb* to the extensive commentaries by Ibn Yaʿīsh and al-Astarābādī. There has always been a modicum of interest in the most elementary treatises, such as the *ʿAlfiyya* and the *ʿAjurrūmiyya*, but there is one category in between that has commonly escaped researchers' attention: that of pedagogical treatises like al-Zajjājī's *Jumal* and Ibn Jinnī's *Lumaʿ*. In a recent article, one of the authors of the book under review here has emphasized the need to study this category of texts (Almog Kasher, "Early pedagogical grammars of Arabic", in Georgine Ayoub and Kees Versteegh (eds), *The Foundations of Arabic Linguistics*, III, 146–66. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2018). Ramzi Baalbaki ("Grammar for beginners and Ibn Hišām's approaches to *ʿiʿrāb*", in *The Foundations of Arabic Linguistics*, IV, ed. by Manuela E.B. Giolfo and Kees Versteegh, 61–88. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2019) has pointed out that grammars for beginners appeared as early as the second/eighth century. The treatise edited in the volume under review here, Ibn al-ʿAnbārī's (d. 577/1181) *Mīzān al-ʿarabiyya* belongs to a later period of this genre.

The book consists of an extensive introduction (34 pp.) followed by the edition of the text (71 pp.). The introduction profits from the fact that, in addition to the *Mīzān*, Ibn al-ʿAnbārī wrote another short treatise, the *ʿAsrār al-ʿarabiyya*, which deals partly with the same issues as the *Mīzān*, but at a different level. This has enabled the editors to engage in an interesting comparison between the two treatises. They do not address directly the question of the place these two treatises occupy in the curriculum of Arabic grammar teaching, but they do provide us with a valuable tool for the study of pedagogical grammars. Their detailed comparison concerns primarily the contents of the *Mīzān* and the *ʿAsrār*, but they refer systematically to other treatises in the same genre, in particular al-Zajjājī's *Jumal*, Ibn Jinnī's *Lumaʿ* and a short treatise by Ibn al-ʿAnbārī's teacher al-Jawālīqī (d. 539/1144), *al-Muḥtaṣar*. It might have been useful to include here Ibn al-Sarrāj's *Mūjaz*.

In his *ʿĪdāh* the fourth century grammarian al-Zajjājī set up a scheme of three different levels in linguistic argumentation. At the lowest level there are rules to learn the language, at the next level explanations of the rules, and at the highest level, justifications of the rules. Al-Zajjājī himself illustrates the difference with his beginners' grammar *al-Jumal*, which represents the first level of linguistic argumentation. The difference between *Mīzān* and *ʿAsrār* is a clear illustration of this division.

Kasher and Sadan's detailed comparison of Ibn al-ʿAnbārī's two treatises shows the difference in their approach to the teaching of grammar. One good example is that of the topic (*mubtadaʿ*) and the predicate (*ḥabar*). In the *ʿAsrār* these are dealt with in one chapter, containing theoretical explanations in terms of grammatical governance (*ʿamal*) that concern both constituents. In the *Mīzān*, on the other hand, Ibn al-ʿAnbārī needs two chapters, one for each constituent, because at the beginners' level it is didactically easier to keep them apart (p. 29).

In principle, matters of *'amal* do not pertain to the first level. In al-Zajjājī's scheme, for instance, the first level rule, which is the only rule the beginning student needs to know, states that *'inna* causes the accusative of the topic, and the nominative in the predicate. Any explanations of this rule belong to higher levels. Kasher and Sadan state (p. 23) that "in al-Zajjājī's model statements of *'amal* are subsumed under the first type". This is true insofar as al-Zajjājī asserts that the beginning student has to learn what the *'āmil* is in a given construction; yet, he relegates any discussion of *'amal* to a higher level.

Ibn al-'Anbārī adheres to the same division of explanations, which means that he sometimes simplifies statements in order not to confuse the beginning student. He does so explicitly when he quotes Sībawayhi on an irregular construction of *mā*, adding (p. 44): "This is not the place to go into this" (*hādā laysa mawḍi' dīkrihā*). On other occasions the omission is implicit, for instance when he states (p. 42) that passive verbs (i.e. verbs whose agent is not mentioned) are always transitive (*mutā' addī*). This statement does not take into account impersonal passives like *sīra*, *qīma*. It might be argued that these verbs do have the internal masdar as object (i.e. *sīra sayrun*), but apparently Ibn al-'Anbārī preferred to ignore the entire issue at this level.

In a few cases *'amal* and *'āmil* are mentioned in the *Mizān*, for instance when the nominative of the topic is explained by the absence of governing words (p. 40 *'arraytahu min al-'awāmil al-lafziyya*). But Kasher and Sadan correctly observe (p. 23) that "*Mizān* lacks material that is of no pedagogical use". Thus, the default case ending of the topic is mentioned, but the much more intricate issue of the case ending of the predicate is reserved for the *'Asrār*. Kasher and Sadan are right when they state that the *'Asrār* also deals with the highest level of linguistic explanations, the *'ilal jadaliyya wa-nazariyya*, although one should add that Ibn al-'Anbārī's explanations remain within the realm of linguistics and do not use extra-linguistic arguments, as in al-Zajjājī.

In itself, the *Mizān al-'arabiyya* may not be overly interesting, but its place within the curriculum and the comparison with more advanced treatises is highly relevant and provides a welcome insight into the theoretical underpinnings of Arabic language teaching. The editors are to be commended for their careful edition of the treatise and, in particular, for their thoughtful analysis of its contents. Much as I tried to spot any errors, I was unable to find any, but that is just as might be expected from two scholars with such philological acumen.

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ROBERT G. HOYLAND:

The 'History of the Kings of the Persians' in Three Arabic Chronicles. The Transmission of the Iranian Past from Late Antiquity to Early Islam. (Translated Texts for Historians 69.) xii, 185 pp. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2018. £80. ISBN 978 1 78694 146 6.
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Robert G. Hoyland's volume of translations of Arabic historical texts on pre-Islamic Iran is especially valuable for those historians of the Sasanian period who are not at ease with the Arabic originals. Hoyland has selected three texts, from which he translates the relevant sections with annotations. None of these had been translated into English when Hoyland started his work. They are Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī's (d. 350/