

JANUSZ DANECKI

The Category of Gender in the Arabic Grammatical Tradition*

In the Arabic grammatical theory much attention was devoted to the problem of gender. This special interest found its expression in a number of treatises concentrating solely on the analysis of gender distinctions in Arabic. Fuat Sezgin in his *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*¹ enumerates 24 works bearing the title *Al-Mudakkar wa-al-mu'annaṭ* (masculine and feminine). Out of these at least ten are extant, i.e. they are either published or preserved in manuscript form. The treatises represent almost all periods of the history of the Arabic grammar. The chronologically first is attributed to the famous "Kufan" grammarian Al-Farrā' (d.207/822) and was edited at least twice.² In the third century of Hīġra two other treatises on gender were compiled; both by the representatives of the "Baṣran" school — one by Abū Hātim Sahl Ibn Muḥammad as-Siġistānī (d.ca. 250/864)³ and the other by his pupil — Al-Mubarrad (d.285/898).⁴ The next, third century of Hīġra brought a number of works of the type *al-mudakkar wa-āl-mu'annaṭ*, the most ample of them was that of Abū Bakr Ibn al-Anbārī (d.328/939).⁵ There is also a much shorter

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¹ Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, Bd. IX, Leiden 1984, pp. 371–372.

² According to GAS it was published by M.A. az-Zarqā' in his *Al-Maġmū'a al-luġawiyya*, Aleppo 1345 H. and by R. 'Abd at-Tawwāb in Cairo in 1975.

³ Published by Ibrāhīm as-Samarrā'ī in "Risālat al-Islām" 7–8, 1969 (GAS, ibid.)

⁴ *Al-Mudākkar wa-āl-mu'annaṭ ta'līf* Abī āl-'Abbās Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad, ed. by R. 'Abd at-Tawwāb and Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Hādī, Markaz Taḥqīq at-Turāt, Cairo 1970.

⁵ *Kitāb al-Mudakkar wa-āl-mu'annaṭ li-Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim al-Anbārī*, ed. by Ṭ.A. al-Ġanābī, Baghdad 1978 (Wizārat al-Awqāf, Iḥyā' at-Turāt al-Islāmī 33).

treatise by Abū Bakr Aḥmad Ibn al-Ḥasan Ibn Šuqayr (d.317/929),⁶ a lesser known grammarian from Baghdad.⁷ The famous Ibn Durayd (d.321/933) composed a poem of 15 bayts on gender, usually appended to his *Diwān*.⁸ Ibn Ġinnī (d. 392/1002) had written a short treatise edited by O. Rescher.⁹ There is also a publication on gender of Ibn Fāris (395/1004).¹⁰ Abū ʾl-Barakāt Ibn al-Anbārī's (d.577/1183) *Al-Bulḡa fī ʾl-farq bayn al-mudakkār wa-ʾl-mu'annaṭ* was published by R. ʿAbd at-Tawwāb in 1970 (Cairo, Dār al-Kutub). The *Al-Mudakkār wa-ʾl-mu'annaṭ* by Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī, kept in Istanbul,¹¹ seems not to have been edited yet, although its edition is in preparation. Beside these ten extant treatises, there are some twenty others which are known only by their titles.

Gender was not only the subject of special treatises, but it is also one of the essential issues of general grammars of Arabic. In these general works two different approaches to the category of gender are to be distinguished. According to the first approach — which is attested in Sībawayhi's *Al-Kitāb* and in a large number of early grammars (*Al-Muqtaḍab* of Al-Mubarrad, for instance) — gender is treated instrumentally, i.e. the questions it raises are touched upon only when they could help explaining other linguistic phenomena. So, in Sībawayhi's *Al-Kitāb* gender is discussed for the first time when the declination of regular masculine plural nouns is analysed: *wa-ʾt-tanwīn* — says Sībawayhi — *bi-manzilat an-nūn li-annahā fī at-ta'nīt naḍīrat al-wāw wa-ʾl-yā*,¹² (the nunation replaces *nūn* since in feminine it corresponds to the *wāw* and *yā*,¹³ of masculine). And this is his typical way of discussing gender: it is marginal in context of nominal declination.

There are, however, manuals of Arabic grammar in which special chapters on gender appear. The earliest of these seems to be Az-Zaġġāġī's (d. 337/949) *Al-Ġumal*.¹⁴ Later, gender was treated separately in the practical manuals of Az-Zamahšarī (d.538/1144) such as *Al-Mufaṣṣal* and in Ibn Mālik's (d. 672/1274) versified grammar *Alfiyya*. This method was then spread by the numerous commentaries to these works. Thus, Az-Zaġġāġī was commented on by Ibn ʿUṣfūr

⁶ Published in RIMA 17, 1971, No. 12,13 (GAS, *ibid.*).

⁷ Cf. on him As-Suyūṭī's *Buġyat al-wu'āt*, vol. I, p. 302.

⁸ For example in the Cairene edition of 1946 or the Tunisian of 1973 (GAS, *ibid.*).

⁹ In MO 8, 1914, pp. 193–202.

¹⁰ Published by R. ʿAbd at-Tawwāb, Cairo 1969 (GAS, *ibid.*).

¹¹ As. Ahmet III, 2775 (GAS, *ibid.*).

¹² *Al-Kitāb*, Būlāq, vol. I, p. 55, Hārūn's edition: vol. I, p. 18. 11–12.

¹³ In Arabic regular masculine plural nominals have the ending *-ūna/ina*. Speaking of *wāw* and *yā* Sībawayhi means the vowels *ū* and *i* in these endings; they both correspond (or are parallel) to the ending *-āt-* in feminine plural, while *nūn* (i.e. the *-na* in *-ūna/ina*) corresponds to nunation in *-āt-un*, i.e. the *-un* part of it.

¹⁴ Az-Zaġġāġī, *Kitāb al-ġumal (précis de grammaire arabe)*, ed. M. Ben Cheneb, Paris 1957, pp. 285–287.

(d.669/1271),¹⁵ *Az-Zamahšarī* by Ibn Ya'īš (d.643/1245),¹⁶ and Ibn Mālik by Ibn 'Aqīl (d.769/1367)¹⁷ and Al-Ušmūnī (d.929/1522).¹⁸ These, mostly late syntheses of Arabic grammar, provide rich information on the changing approach to gender. Nevertheless, there are some general traits of such an approach which are easily observable in all these works.

The starting point of the Arab linguist's approach to language is purely formal. This is to say that morphemes as formal markers form the base of any theoretical reasoning. Such is also the case of gender: the formal markers — i.e. the endings — are analysed and only then syntactical and semantical functions are considered. Since the category of gender in Arabic is divided into two formally different groups, i.e. the forms possessing an ending and those without it (with zero gender morpheme), it was only natural that the grammarians spoke of two genders.¹⁹ Since natural feminine gender was characterised by endings while natural masculine gender was endingless, a respective terminology based on sex distinction was introduced. But this terminology has its particulars, since only verbal and deverbal forms are used as *termini technici*. Feminine gender is expressed by the verb *annaṭ-a* 'to make, render feminine' and its derivatives such as the *maṣḍar* (a type of infinitive) *ta'niṭ* (lit. 'making feminine') and passive participle *mu'annaṭ* ('rendered feminine'). The same series of forms exists for masculine, i.e. *dakkara* 'to render masculine', *taḍkīr* 'rendering masculine' and *muḍakkar* 'made masculine'. Very often the *verbum finitum* in all possible forms is used, so there are present and past tense forms and even passive forms. Usually the second person singular is used, as in a passage where Sībawayhi speaking of the noun *minan* 'sperm' says: *wa-in šī'ta annatta*²⁰ 'if you like you could make it feminine' (the noun is either feminine or masculine). In the same passage it is said that the noun *haḡar* 'heat': *yu'annaṭ wa-yuḍakkar*²¹ 'is either made feminine or masculine', i.e. the passive forms of the verb are used. Thus the Arabic gender terminology has always preserved its etymological context of making something feminine or masculine. Only in later sources sometimes the technical meaning is used, as in Ibn al-Anbārī's (d.577/1191) *Al-Inšāf* where the term *mu'annaṭ* clearly

¹⁵ *Šarḥ Ġumal az-Zaġġāġi* l-Ibn 'Uṣfūr al-Išbīlī, ed. by Šāḥib Abū Ġanāḥ, Baghdad 1980–82, vol. II, pp. 369–398.

¹⁶ *Ibn Ja'īš Commentar zu Zamachšarī's Mufaṣṣal*, ed. G. Jahn, Leipzig 1876–1882, pp. 684–709.

¹⁷ *Šarḥ Ibn 'Aqīl 'alā Alfiyyat Ibn Mālik*, Dār at-Turāt, Cairo 1980 (20th impression), vol. IV, pp. 91–98.

¹⁸ *Ḥāšiyat al-'allāma aṣ-Šabbān 'alā šarḥ al-'allāma al-Ušmūnī 'alā Alfiyyat Ibn Mālik*, Cairo 1288 A.H., Pt. IV, pp. 113–129.

¹⁹ At first gender was analysed only within the nominals, i.e. nouns and adjectives, only later the problem of "verbal gender" arose (see below).

²⁰ Sībawayhi, *Al-Kitāb* (Būlāq), vol. II, p. 23.17.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 23.18.

defines feminine beings.²² This etymological usage probably caused another peculiarity of the terminology: that there is no general term for gender as such.²³ As a result either both terms — i.e. *mudakkar* and *mu'annat* are used together in the function of the general term for gender or just feminine (*ta'nūt*) defines gender.²⁴

But at first gender concepts were used rather intuitively and no general definitions existed. Only later grammarians in their pursuit of systematic explanation introduced more detailed definitions. They were based on the privative opposition between feminine (the marked term of the opposition) and masculine (unmarked, since having no endings). The 13th century grammarian Ibn al-Ḥāḡib proposes such a definition of gender: *wa-āl-mu'annat mā fihi 'alāmat at-ta'nūt (...)* *wa-āl-mudakkar bi-hilāfihi*²⁵ 'Feminine is what has the feminine marker while masculine is its opposite.' This type of definition is called by D.V. Frolov "negative" (x is something that y is not) and according to him it is very frequent in Arabic grammatical literature.²⁶ But in comparison with a strictly negative definition (such as: "*binā* is something which *i'rāb* is not" — to quote Frolov²⁷ the above definition of Ibn al-Ḥāḡib is a little more sophisticated, since at first feminine gender is defined as having a marker (*'alāma*) and only then masculine is mentioned as something deprived of this marker. In a very detailed form such a definition appears in Az-Zamahšarī's *Al-Unmūdağ: al-mudakkar mā laysa fihi tā' at-ta'nūt wa-āl-alif al-maqšūra wa-āl-alif al-mamdūda wa-āl-mu'annat mā fihi iḥdāhunna ka-ğurfa wa-ḡubla wa-ḡamrā*²⁸ 'Masculine is that in which neither the feminine *tā'* nor *alif maqšūra*, nor *alif mamdūda* appear; while feminine is that in which one of these appears as in *ğurfa* 'room', *ḡubla* 'a pregnant woman', *ḡamrā* 'red.' 'Az-Zamahšarī not only mentions the most important morphemes but also quotes examples.

²² Abū āl-Barakāt Ibn al-Anbārī, *Al-Inṣāf fī masā'il al-hilāf*, Beirut 1982, Dār al-Ğil, vol. II, p. 758.

²³ This is not a strange phenomenon in grammatical theory; even Aristotle in *Poetics* does not use the term *genos* when he says: transkr. autōn de tōn onomatōn ta men arrena ta de thelea ta de metaksu 'between nominals some are masculine, other are feminine and still other are in between them'. (21=1458a).

²⁴ Ibn Mālik calls his chapter on gender *ta'nūt*, while Ibn Ya'īš entitled it „Al-Mudakkar wa-al-mu'annat.” Sometimes gender is referred to as *ma'nā* 'meaning', cf. for example Abū Bakr Ibn al-Anbārī: *al-ism al-mu'annat mustağniyan bi-qiyām ma'nā at-ta'nūt* 'an al-'*alāma* 'a feminine noun does not need the feminine marker to render the meaning of feminine.' (*Al-Mudakkar wa-al-mu'annat*, p. 88).

²⁵ Ibn Ḥāḡib, *Kitāb al-Kāfiya fī an-naḥw* with Al-Astarābādī's commentary. A reprint of the 1310 H. edition, vol. II, p. 161.10.

²⁶ Д.М. Фролов, *Способы определения понятий в традиционной арабской грамматике*, in: *Проблемы арабской культуры. Памяти академика И.Ю. Крачковского*, Москва 1987, pp. 175.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 175.

²⁸ Az-Zamahšarī, *Kitāb al-unmūdağ fī ān-naḥw*, Istanbul 1298 H., p. 92.18.

Although in earlier grammars gender as such was never defined, in the course of explaining other phenomena of grammar the Arab linguists often used a complicated apparatus of theoretical conceptions. Already in Sībawayhi's *Al-Kitāb* these conceptions are used. They aim at defining the opposition between the two genders (and not at defining the opposition itself). Of special interest here is the pair of concepts called by Sībawayhi *hiffa* (lightness) and *tamakkun* (potentiality). These two concepts have a wide range of use and they are not limited to the definition of gender. Both are used also in other definitions and explications, and should be properly analysed as important general instruments of Sībawayhi's grammatical theory.

Hiffa and its adjectival correlatives (*hafif*, etc.) appear in Sībawayhi's *Al-Kitāb* a few hundred times.²⁹ Undoubtedly, there is some link between the literal meaning of *hiffa* (i.e. 'lightness') and semantics of the term itself. In the case of gender *hiffa* is used to define the unmarked term of the opposition which is 'lighter' than the marked one: *al-mudakkarr aḥaff 'alayhim min al-mu'annaṭ*³⁰ 'they regard masculine as lighter than feminine'. The same term is used in describing determination: *an-nakira aḥaff 'alayhim min al-ma'rifa*³¹ 'indetermination is lighter than determination'. *Hiffa* has also phonetical meanings, these however seem a little different from those applied to gender and determination. I assume that *hafif* means 'simple', 'basic', although such translation could hardly be regarded as providing a final interpretation. But this conjecture is corroborated by later sources. As-Suyūṭī quotes, for example, such a definition of *hafif* 'light': *fa-āl-hafif min al-kalimāt mā qallat madlūlātuhu wa-lawāzimuhu*³² 'light are these words which have a small number of meanings and functions.' In this usage *hafif* is opposed by *taqil* 'heavy', i.e. having many meanings and functions. Following the tradition of Sībawayhi later grammarians apply the opposition *hafif/taqil* only to distinguish nouns from verbs: nouns are said to be lighter than verbs. Sībawayhi puts it as follows: *wa-ī'lam anna ba'd al-kalām atqal min ba'd, fa-āl-af'āl atqal min al-asmā' li-anna al-asmā' hiya al-awwal wa-hya ašadd tamakkunan fa-min tumma lam yalḥaqhā tanwīn wa-laḥiqahā al-ğazm wa-ās-sukūn*³³ 'some parts of speech (*kalām*) are heavier than others and thus verbs are heavier than nouns since nouns are first and more potential, and they (the verbs) have no *tanwīn* but take on *ğazm* and *sukūn*. Al-'Ukbarī (according to As-Suyūṭī) is even more explicit when he says: *wa-ma'nā tuql al-fī'l anna madlūlātihi wa-lawāzimahu kaṭira, fa-madlūlātuhu al-*

²⁹ G. Troupeau, *Lexique-Index du Kitāb de Sībawayhi*, Paris 1976, p. 83.

³⁰ Sībawayhi, *Al-Kitāb* (Būlāq), vol. I, p. 7.3.

³¹ Ibid., vol. I, p. 6.22.

³² As-Suyūṭī, *Al-Ašbāḥ wa-ān-naḍā'ir fī ān-naḥw*, ed. 'Abd al-Ilāh Nabahān. vol. I, Damascus 1985, p. 319. As-Suyūṭī quotes here Abū āl-Baqā' al-'Ukbarī's *Masā'il ḥilāfiyya fī ān-naḥw*.

³³ *Al-Kitāb*, vol. I, p. 6.9–10.

*ḥadaṭ wa-az-zamān, wa-lawāzimuhu al-fā'il wa-āl-maf'ūl wa-āt-taṣarruf wa-ḡayr dālika*³⁴ 'That a verb is heavy means that it has numerous meanings and functions: its meanings are such as action or time, its functions are that of subject, object, conjugation and so on.' So, indeed, *ḥafīf* means 'simple, basic' as opposed by *taqīl* 'heavy', i.e. 'more complicated', 'polyfunctional' etc. Although the above definition refers to the distinction between nouns and verbs, I think that it could also be applied to gender and determination. Moreover, masculine is regarded — already by Sībawayhi — as basic, i.e. basic in comparison with feminine which is derived from masculine. At one instance he states: *al-ašyā' kulluhā aṣluhā at-taḍkīr*³⁵ 'masculine is the base of all things' by which he means that feminine forms derive from masculine, that derivation as a whole starts from the basic masculine³⁶: *fa-yuhraḡu* (scil. *at-ta'nīt*) *min at-taḍkīr kamā yuhraḡu al-mankūr ilā al-ma'rifa* 'feminine derives from masculine just as indefinite leads to definite'.³⁷ This idea of Sībawayhi is later accepted by other grammarians, hence Ibn 'Aqīl in his commentary to the *Alfiyya* can say: *aṣl al-ism an yakūna muḍakkaran*³⁸ 'the base of the nouns is masculine.'

The other conception used to define gender is that of *tamakkun* 'potentiality'. In the above-quoted definition of verbs and nouns, nouns are called more potential and regarded as first, as essential. In the same way all grammatical categories such as gender, determination and number, i.e. those to which the conception of lightness (*ḥiffa*) could be applied, are also furnished by the category of *tamakkun*. Thus, according to Sībawayhi, masculine is not only lighter (*aḥaff*) than feminine, but it is also more potential (*aṣadd tamakkunan*); besides, it is the first (*al-awwal* — just as nouns in comparison with verbs are) and forms the base from which feminine is derived: *al-muḍakkar aḥaff 'alayhim min al-mu'annaṭ li-anna al-muḍakkar awwal wa-hwa aṣadd tamakkunan wa-innamā yahruḡu at-ta'nīt min al-muḍakkar*³⁹ 'they regard masculine as lighter than feminine since masculine comes first, and is more potential than feminine. Feminine derives from masculine.'

³⁴ *As-Suyūṭī, Al-Ašbāḥ wa-ān-naḍā'ir*, vol. I, p. 319.

³⁵ *Al-Kitāb*, vol. II, p. 22.15–16.

³⁶ The above passage is supplemented by the phrase: *tumma taḥtaṣṣ* 'and then they obtain special meanings' (or: 'and then they specialize'), by which it is clearly meant that feminine is derived from masculine. Ibn Ya'īš is even more explicit when he says that there are two reasons which prove that masculine forms the essence of gender distinction. The first is the same argument as that used by Sībawayhi, i.e. that the general word *šay'* 'a thing' is masculine, the second is that masculine needs no markers while feminine needs them, hence feminine is secondary: *wa-ad-dalīl 'alā anna al-muḍakkar aṣl amrān: aḥaduhumā maḡi'uhum bi-ism muḍakkar ya'ummu al-muḍakkar wa-āl-mu'annaṭ wa-huwa šay' at-tānī anna al-mu'annaṭ yaftaqiru ilā 'alāma wa-law kāna aṣlan lam yaftaqir ilā 'alāma* (Ibn Ja'īš *Commentar zu Zamachšarī's Mufaṣṣal*, p. 675.2–3).

³⁷ *Al-Kitāb*, vol. II, p. 23.1–2.

³⁸ *Šarḥ Ibn 'Aqīl*, vol. IV, p. 91.3.

³⁹ *Al-Kitāb*, vol. I, p. 7.3–4.

Identical terminology is used to describe indetermination which is regarded by Sībawayhi as more potential: *wa-hya ašadd tamakkunan li-anna an-nakira awwal tumma yadhulu 'alayhā mā yu'arraf bihi*⁴⁰ 'it is more potential since it comes first and afterwards there comes something that defines it'.⁴¹ Also singular is thought to be "more potential" than plural: *wa-īlam anna al-wāḥid ašadd tamakkunan min al-ğam [i] li-anna al-wāḥid awwal*⁴² 'Know that singular is more potential than plural since singular comes first'.

The three conceptions: *awwal*, *aḥaff* and *ašadd tamakkunan* seem to be closely connected, perhaps they are even synonymous. In a way they render the concept of unmarkedness, to use the modern terminology. The unmarked term of the opposition is called *awwal*, *aḥaff* or *ašadd tamakkunan* — each of them expressing another aspect of its function. The marked term of the opposition is thus neither the first nor the light (it is *taqīl* we may surmise) nor potential, since the presence of the marker limits its potential usages. In this system of oppositions covering a number of grammatical categories, gender is also defined by the Arab grammarians.⁴³

As mentioned above, gender was identified with grammatical morphemes (endings): feminine were words with feminine endings, masculine those without such endings. This very clear picture of gender is marred by the fact that there exist in Arabic a number of feminine nouns deprived of feminine markers. To explain this was a difficult task for the grammarians, but a conception of the so-called *taqdir* proved to be useful here. Generally, the Arab linguists thought the language to be a coherent and logical system in which each element should fit the general structure. If there was a word or a form which for some reason appeared incompatible with the system, it was the task of the linguist to provide a suitable explanation which would adjust the form or word to the system. The usual procedure would be to reconstruct a hypothetical original form. This procedure is called *taqdir* 'appraisal of the implicit form.' For example, the Arabic word *sū'* 'the evil' does not fit the three-consonantal pattern of Arabic. Therefore the grammarians reconstruct its hypothetical original form which would match the system. This form, called *taqdir*, in the case of the word *sū'* would be **suw'* which is noted as *fu'l*. In this reconstructed form (*taqdir*) the three root consonants appear: *s-w-*.⁴⁴ The procedure of *taqdir* has a very wide range of applications in Arabic grammatical theory. It is used in reconstructing the structure

⁴⁰ *Al-Kitāb*, vol. I, p. 6.22–7.1.

⁴¹ Cf. the terminology: for gender the verb *tahtaṣṣ* is used, for determination *yu'arraf*.

⁴² *Al-Kitāb*, vol. I, p. 7.1–2.

⁴³ The opposition described here clearly is not a privative one but it is gradual: the absence (or presence) of the trait (*ḥiffa* for instance) is graduated, in some forms it appears in a lesser degree than in others. Cf. now the remarks of J. Owens in *The Foundations of Grammar. An Introduction to Medieval Arabic Grammatical Theory*, Amsterdam /Philadelphia 1988, pp. 199–226.

⁴⁴ *Al-Kitāb*, vol. II, p. 231.16.

of words and in syntax.⁴⁵ The application of this term to gender analysis seems to be a late invention, since the first grammarians (Sībawayhi, Al-Mubarrad) used *taqdīr* chiefly for syntactical purposes. However, the development of linguistical thinking towards the application of *taqdīr* to gender analysis is very clear. The early theory held it that the absent feminine ending could be easily retrieved through grammatical transformations. Thus a feminine noun when put into a diminutive form automatically appears with a feminine ending, e.g. the diminutive form of the feminine noun *naʿl* 'sandal' would be *nuʿayla*, with the feminine ending *-a*. Al-Mubarrad expresses it as follows: *laysa bi-šayʾ min dawāt at-ṭalāṭa kāna muʾannatan illā wa-taṣḡiruhu yaridu al-hāʾ fihi li-annahā aṣl al-muʾannaṭ wa-dālika qawluka fi hind - hunayda wa-fi naʿl - nuʿayla (...)*⁴⁶ 'None of trilateral feminine nouns appears in diminutive without the *hāʾ*'⁴⁷ since it is essentially feminine. So you say *Hind* but *Hunayda*, *naʿl* but *nuʿayla*. This idea of checking gender of the given noun was later developed by other grammarians. Al-Astarabādī (d.668/1289) introduced six different procedures allowing to define the implied gender of a markerless noun⁴⁸ (Al-Mubarrad would consider them under the rubric of *simāʾ* — practice⁴⁹):

1. A test with an anaphorical pronoun referring to the noun in question as in *aš-šams wa-duḥāhā*⁵⁰ 'the Sun and its light'; here, the anaphorical *-hā* which is feminine indicates that the markerless *aš-šams* is also feminine.
2. A test with demonstrative pronouns as in *tilka ʾad-dār* 'this house'. Since the demonstrative pronoun is feminine the noun to which it refers is also feminine.

⁴⁵ C.H.M. Versteegh in his *Die arabische Sprachwissenschaft* (published in *Grundriß der Arabischen Philologie*, Bd. II: *Literaturwissenschaft*, herausgegeben von H. Gätje, Wiesbaden 1987) gives a very lucid definition of *taqdīr* but only as syntactical procedure (pp. 166–167 and note 25). The same syntactical understanding of *taqdīr* is proposed by J. Wansbrough in *Quranic Studies*, Oxford 1977, p. 223, where he draws parallels between *taqdīr* and *mağāz*. See also *infra* p. 61.

⁴⁶ Al-Mubarrad, *Al-Mudakkar wa-ʾl-muʾannaṭ*, p. 96.2–3.

⁴⁷ By *hāʾ* is defined the feminine ending *-a(h)*, sometimes called either *hāʾ at-taʾnīt* or *tāʾ at-taʾnīt* (the "h" or "t" of the feminine gender), since — as Al-Mubarrad explains — it is: *at-tāʾ allāti tubdalu minhā fi al-waqf hāʾ* 'the "t" which at the end of a phrase is replaced by "h" (*Al-Mudakkar wa-ʾl-muʾannaṭ*, p. 83.7).

⁴⁸ *Šarḥ kitāb al-kāfiyya fi ʾn-naḥw*, vol. II, p. 162.6–13.

⁴⁹ *Al-Mudakkar wa-ʾl-muʾannaṭ*, p. 98.4–5, where he states that the gender of all other (than the mentioned) nouns is to be learned from practice (*simāʾ*).

⁵⁰ *The Quran*, surat 91, aya 1.

3. A test with preceding predicate as in *ṭalaʿat aš-šams* ‘the sun rose.’ Since the predicate *ṭalaʿat* contains the marker of gender *-at* the subject is feminine.⁵¹

4. The already mentioned test of forming a diminutive in order to reveal the feminine ending: *qidr* ‘pot’ *qudayra* ‘a small pot.’

5. Using the noun in question with numerals from three to ten; the gender of the numeral would indicate the gender of the noun as in *talāt adru* ‘three elbows.’

6. When the noun has the specific plural forms such as *fawāʿil*, *afʿul*, it should be feminine.

When these tests prove to be positive the noun in question is feminine implicitly: *taqdiran*. Ibn Ḥāḡib expresses it as follows: *al-muʿannaṭ mā fihi ʿalāmat at-taʿnīt lafḍan wa-taqdiran*⁵² ‘feminine is that in which there is the feminine marker expressed explicitly or implicitly.’ His contemporary Ibn Mālik has the same idea: *wa-yuʿrafu t-taqdiru bi-āḍ-ḍamiri wa-naḥwihi ka-r-raddi fi t-taṣḡiri*⁵³ ‘*taqdir* is recognized by a pronoun and the like as its appearance in diminutive.’ Thus *taqdir* in defining gender is introduced by the Arab grammarians no later than the mid-thirteenth century.

This discussion of gender would be hardly complete if another problem — that of natural gender — were not raised. The question of the relationship between gender and reality appears in the early sources. Al-Mubarrad speaks of *taʿnīt al-ḥaqīqa* ‘the feminine of reality’, i.e. feminine gender corresponding to the reality: *fa-āl-ḥayawān naḥwa qawlika ḡāriya wa-naḥwa qawlika imraʿa fa-īʿlam fa-inna hāḍa al-qabil huwa allāḍi yuqālu lahu taʿnīt al-ḥaqīqa kānat ʿalāma aw lam takun*⁵⁴ ‘as far as animals are concerned when you say for instance “a girl-servant” or when you say “a woman”, you should know that these are called feminine of reality whether they have the marker or not.’ For later grammarians another form of this technical term

⁵¹ In the light of the other grammarians’ views this procedure seems a little doubtful, since gender markers could be neutralized when predicate precedes the subject. So Ibn Yaʿiš permits the use of *ṭalaʿa aš-šams* instead of *ṭalaʿat aš-šams* explaining that only natural gender requires agreement in gender (*Ibn Jaʿiš Commentar...*, p. 688.3–4). Thus only a reverse construction, i.e. *aš-šams ṭalaʿat*, would be conclusive since here the ending *-at* functions as a pronoun — state the Arab grammarians. This problem is discussed in detail by G. Goldenberg in *Subject and Predicate in Arab Grammatical Tradition*, ZDMG 138/1, pp. 64–67 and by the same author in ‘*Al tōrat hapōʿal ve-ha-pōʿal ha-ʿibri* (in “Meḥqārīm be-Lešon” I), pp. 318–320 and by Aryeh Levin in *The Distinction between Nominative and Verbal Sentences according to the Arab Grammarians*, ZAL 15, p. 119.

⁵² *Kitāb al-kāfiyya fī ān-naḥw*, vol. II, p. 161.10.

⁵³ *Šarḥ Ibn ʿAqil ʿalā Alfīyyat Ibn Mālik*, vol. IV, p. 91.

⁵⁴ *Al-Mudakkar wa-āl-muʿannaṭ*, p. 87.11–12.

was used: *ta'nīt ḥaqīqī*⁵⁵ and of course not only feminine gender was meant but also masculine, i.e. *ta'nīt ḥaqīqī* could be translated as 'natural (true) gender.' Al-Mubarrad within the different gender categories isolated a group which he called 'feminine of reality.' Since he applied it only to feminine there was no opposite group of nouns, no 'artificial', conventional gender. When the natural gender became to mean a whole category, it was opposed by another gender category which was called either *ḡayr ḥaqīqī* 'not real'⁵⁶ or *lafḍī*.⁵⁷ The latter term seems occasional and rather rare since the term *lafḍ* entered an opposition with *taqdīr*.⁵⁸ In order to avoid confusion it was used only sporadically.

Some of the linguists, however, noticed that the term *ḥaqīqa* had its match in another word: *mağāz* referring to a figurative meaning. Whereas the natural feminine reflected the natural state of things, the conventional, grammatical gender could be regarded as figurative. Hence there were reasons for introducing this dichotomy to language studies. This, however, took place only when the term *mağāz* acquired its purely formal meaning, or, as W. Heinrichs put it: "it was all but natural that *ḥaqīqa*, when coupled with *mağāz*, should gradually be wrested from its ontological moorings and acquire a secondary linguistic meaning — that of the non-idiomatic, literary use of a word or a construction."⁵⁹ It is very difficult to tell when gender came to be analysed within this dichotomy. Abū Ḥayyān (d.745/1344) includes the opposition of *ḥaqīqa* ~ *mağāz* into the apparatus used to describe gender: *al-ism allāḍī lā yakūnu fīhi 'alāmat at-ta'nīt immā an yakūna ḥaqīqī at-taḍkir aw ḥaqīqī at-ta'nīt aw mağāzayhimā*⁶⁰ i.e. 'if there is no feminine marker in a noun it can be either a real masculine, a real feminine or it can be both masculine and feminine in a figurative way.' In other words, gender can be either "real" or figurative, conven-

⁵⁵ For example Az-Zamahṣarī: *wa-āt-ta'nīt 'alā ḍarbayn: ḥaqīqī ka-ta'nīt al-mar'a wa-āl-ḥublā wa-ḡayr al-ḥaqīqī ka-ta'nīt ad-ḍulma* 'there are two types of feminine: natural (real) feminine as in "a woman" or "a pregnant (woman)" and grammatical (not real) gender as in "darkness" (*ḍulma*) (*Kitāb al-unmūdāğ fī ān-naḥw*, pp. 92–93). Al-Astarabādī divides the *ḥaqīqī* gender into that in which the feminine markers are expressed (*ḥaqīqī ḍāhir al-'alāma*) and such in which it is only implicit (*ḥaqīqī muqaddar al-'alāma*) (*Šarḥ kāfiyyat*, vol. II, p. 161.12–13).

⁵⁶ Cf. Az-Zamahṣarī, loc. cit.

⁵⁷ Al-Ġāmī (d.898/1492) calls *lafḍī* a gender which is in opposition to *ḥaqīqī* (*Al-Fawā'id aḍ-ḍiyā'iyya. Šarḥ kāfiyyat Ibn Ḥāğib*, ed. by Usāma Ṭahār-Rifā'ī, Baghdad 1983, vol. II, p. 168). For Ibn Ya'īš opposite of *ḥaqīqī* is the *lafḍī* gender (p. 688.15–16).

⁵⁸ Cf. note 52.

⁵⁹ W. Heinrichs, *On the genesis of the ḥaqīqa-majāz dichotomy*, "Studia Islamica" LIX, 1984, pp. 137–138.

⁶⁰ Quoted by As-Suyūṭī in *Al-Ašbāh wa-ān-naḍā'ir*, vol. II, p. 294.

tional, grammatical. A century later Ibn Hišām (d.866/1461) uses *mağāzi* and *ḥaqīqī* as *termini technici* without any commentary.⁶¹ For him they are self evident terms indispensable in explaining the congruence between predicate and subject of verbal sentences.

The differentiation between *ḥaqīqī* and *mağāzi* genders is undoubtedly a rather late innovation of the Arab grammarians. The earliest suggestion of such an understanding of both terms appears in Ibn Rušd's *Talḥiṣ al-ḥiṭāba*. Although he does not use the actual dichotomy he regards *mağāz* to be a shift of natural gender oppositions to words not having natural gender. Masculine and feminine are typical of animals but they may be shifted (*yatağawwazu*) to other things expressed in words: *wa-āt-taḍkīr wa-āt-ta'nīt fī āl-ma'ānī innamā yūğad fī āl-ḥayawān tumma qad yatağawwazu fī dālika fī ba'd al-alsina fa-yu'abbiru 'an ba'd al-mawğūdāt bix-āl-alfāz*⁶² 'the meaning of feminine and masculine is present only in animals, but in some languages it can go beyond that and express in words that what exists.' This example supports the supposition that *mağāz* is to be considered — to quote Heinrichs — as "going beyond" the natural state of things.⁶³ Of course, this has nothing to do with the sophisticated "explanatory re-writing" of a puzzling phrase. Ibn Rušd just states that there may exist a certain shift of meaning or function which takes place naturally, i.e. is not the result of applying some explanatory procedure. Hence the principal difference between *mağāz* and *taqdīr*: the former designates a state while the latter a procedure. Heinrichs tends to regard *mağāz* as a procedure, at least in its early functions (in Abū 'Ubayda's *Mağāz al-Qur'ān*), and such an interpretation is incompatible with *mağāz* in its linguistic meaning, applied to the analysis of gender, since here it clearly means a state: the *mağāzi* gender is a characteristic of a noun and not an explanation of its meaning or functioning. Hence this late use of *mağāz* excellently fits the *lafḍ ~ ma'nā* dichotomy⁶⁴ where it corresponds to *lafḍ*.⁶⁵ Actually, *mağāz* has replaced *lafḍ* in later sources.

The discussion of gender shows how complicated was the system of conceptions applied to the explanation of its nature and functioning. This complication, however, was mostly the result of the development of terminology and of different conceptions used (as in the case of natural vs. grammatical gender problems). The three theoretical concepts analysed here (i.e. *ḥiffa/tamakkun*, *taqdīr* and *ḥaqīqa/mağāz*) form only a part of the theoretical entourage of the treatment of gender in Arabic grammar. I have passed in silence over such very much discussed issues as gender markers, different "undeclined" adjectives, verbal gender etc.

⁶¹ *Šarḥ al-lamḥa al-badriyya fī 'ilm al-lugā al-'arabiyya* — a commentary on Abū Ḥayyān's work, vol. II, p. 290; Abū Ḥayyān in the original text (ibid.) speaks of *at-ta'nīt mağāzan*.

⁶² Ibn Rušd, *Talḥiṣ al-ḥiṭāba*, ed. by Muḥammad Salīm Sālim Cairo 1967, p. 569.

⁶³ Heinrichs, op.cit., p. 127.

⁶⁴ For more detailed discussion cf. Heinrichs, op. cit., pp. 125–126.

⁶⁵ Cf. supra p. 11, where the development *gayr ḥaqīqī ~ lafḍū ~ mağāzi* is recorded.