

# DEUTSCHE MORGENLÄNDISCHE GESELLSCHAFT



**AMIDU SANNI**

**Beyond Fück and Ullmann**

**The discourse on Iahh in Arabic - philological and literary traditions**

XXX. Deutscher Orientalistentag  
Freiburg, 24.-28. September 2007  
Ausgewählte Vorträge  
Herausgegeben im Auftrag der DMG  
von Rainer Brunner, Jens Peter Laut  
und Maurus Reinkowski

online-Publikation, März 2008

<http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:gbv:3:5-92848>

ISSN 1866-2943

# Beyond Fück and Ullmann: the Discourse on *Laḥn* in Arabic Philological and Literary Traditions<sup>1</sup>

Amidu Sanni  
Lagos State University Nigeria  
amsanni@yahoo.co.uk

## 1.0 Introduction

The term *laḥn* and the various concepts to which it refers have been the subject of some stimulating, scholarly investigations in contemporary scholarship. Johann Fück's (d. 1974) pioneering study, in spite of its age, remains a redoubtable point of departure for later efforts among which Manfred Ullmann's studies stand out.<sup>2</sup> In the present essay, my intention is to reposition the various significations of the term as identified by both authors and to illustrate other shades of meanings and nuances that either has not identified or established. A number of evidential examples given by either to illustrate their discussion will be re-presented in order to refresh the reader's familiarity with them. More significantly, I intend to illustrate the emergence of an entirely different type of *laḥn*, the one I would like to designate as rhetorical *laḥn*. This designation is informed by the observation that our earliest encounter with it with this underlying signification was in the context of the scholarly elaboration of the rhetorical schemata (*schemata verborum*) and tropes of the Arabic aesthetic tradition, especially poetry. It is significant to note that neither Fück nor Ullmann made any conscious attempt at examining the phenomenon of *laḥn* as a rhetorical subject, and this will constitute a major, if not the major, aspect of this study. Nonetheless, I intend to provide additional information on and analysis of other significations of the lemma *laḥn* as discussed by the two principal authorities in their various studies.

---

<sup>1</sup> This study was originally facilitated by a sponsorship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation during the fall of 1998. I thank Professor Tilman Nagel and other members of the Seminar für Arabistik at Göttingen University for their wonderful hospitality and assistance. Subsequent visits to Germany benefited immensely from the hospitality of Professor Stefan Reichmuth and the remarkable assistance of the staff of the Seminar für Orientalistik und Indologie of Bochum University. My participation at the Freiburg Conference was facilitated with a sponsorship by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. I am obliged to the kindness of both Professors G. J. H. van Gelder (Oxford) and Wolfhart Heinrichs (Harvard) for their useful comments and suggestions on an earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> J. Fück, 'Die Würzel *l-ḥ-n-* und ihre Ableitungen', pp. 128-35, q.v. in, '*Arabiyya. Untersuchungen zur arabischen Sprach- und Stilgeschichte* (Berlin, 1950). This title also exists in a French translation as "La racine *l* et ses dérivés", '*Arabīya: Recherches sur l'histoire de la langue et du style arabe*, tr. Claude Denizeau (Paris, 1955), pp. 195-205). An Arabic translation is also said to have appeared later although this was not available to me; Manfred Ullmann, ed. *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache* (Wiesbaden, 1983), Band II, no 2, 377<sup>a</sup>-392<sup>b</sup>, s.v. 'laḥana', henceforth WKAS; idem, *Wa-ḥayru l-ḥadīṭi mā kāna laḥnan – Beiträge zur Lexikographie des Klassischen Arabisch Nr 1* (München, 1979), henceforth *Beiträge*.

## 2.0 *Laḥn* and Its Idioms in Language

Taking Fück and Ullmann as our principal authorities, the word *laḥn* is said to have five semantic significations, namely:<sup>3</sup>

- i Idiom, speech style, tone. In this sense it also refers to the peculiar manner of speaking by an individual or an ethnic group (French *parler*; German *Redeweise*).<sup>4</sup>
- ii Perceptiveness, cleverness, or quick witticism.
- iii Veiled or obscure allusion.
- iv Solecism, that is, incorrect speech. This also entails barbarism and malapropism.<sup>5</sup>
- v Musical melody, song, or tune.

Drawing on the insights afforded by materials and discourse on the classical period, it is safe to conclude that the original application of *laḥn* was understood in the context of i-iii and that its meaning was generally limited to these ideational spheres. The earliest documentary occurrence of the word in the sense of manner of speech is employed in Qur’ān 47:30:

“*Wa-law nashā’u la-araynakahum fa-la-‘araftahum bi-sīmāhum wa-la-ta ‘rifannahum fī laḥni l-qawli . . .*”

“*Had we wished, we would have shown them to you; you would have known them by their marks, but surely you will know them by the manner of their speech . . .*”

It is also in this sense that it is used by Bishr b. ‘Amr, otherwise known as al-Jārūd b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 20/641) in the following:<sup>6</sup>

“*Yā ayyuha l-hātifu fī dujā l-zulam*  
*ahlan wa-sahlan bika min tayfin alam(m)*”

<sup>3</sup> Ullmann, *Beiträge*, 6. See also, El Said M. Badawi & Muhammad Abdul Haleem, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Quranic Usage* (Leiden/Boston, 2008), p. 838, s. v. ‘l-ḥ-n’.

<sup>4</sup> Compare *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (NE) (Leiden, 1960-2004), v (1986), 605<sup>b</sup>-610<sup>a</sup>, s.v. ‘*laḥn al-‘awāmm*’; xii (2004), 546<sup>b</sup>-47<sup>b</sup>, s.v. ‘*laḥn*’

<sup>5</sup> It may be added here in passing that in the Western literary tradition; too, the subject elicited some attention. In what is probably the earliest treatise on the theory of letter writing, namely, *Flores Rhetorici* (Flowers of Rhetoric) completed in 1087 by Alberic of Montecassino (d. 1105), malapropism is defined as “improper use of words”; barbarism as “the serious misuse of one word”; and solecism as “serious misuse of a group of words”. See *Flores Rhetorici* (Flowers of Rhetoric), translated by J. M. Miller, in *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. Joseph M. Miller et al (Bloomington, Indiana, 1974), 131-61 (p. 142).

<sup>6</sup> About him see al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām* (Beirut, 1954), ii, 27. This poetical piece is said to be al-Jārūd’s response to an invisible “ghost” who was inviting him to believe in Muhammad (without actually mentioning the Prophet by name) as the poet was searching for his lost ass in the wilderness. The “ghost” later turned out to be the legendary orator Quss b. Sā’ida. See al-Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-adab*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo, 1967), ii, 81.

*bayyin-- hadāka llāhu-- fī laḥni l-kalim  
mani lladhī tad'ū ilayhi taghtanim"*

“O disembodied voice that cries aloud in the intensely dark night  
welcome! O ye fantom that alighted,  
Clarify-- May Allah guide you- by your manner of speech,  
to whom do you invite? Then you will be successful.”

For the use of the word in the sense of veiled allusion, the following may be cited:<sup>7</sup>

*“Lahum mantiqāni yafraqu l-nāsu minhumā  
wa-laḥnāni ma'rūfun wa-ākharu munkarū”*

“They have two ways of speaking of which people are afraid  
and two manners of speech: one is recognisable the other is not”

A statement credited to Prophet Muḥammad in the following report is also to be understood in this sense. As the opposing elements from the Quraysh were preparing for a war against the Muslims, the Prophet Muḥammad sent a group to verify the veracity of this intelligence report with the instruction: *fa-idhā kāna ḥaqqan fa-lḥanū lī laḥnan a'rifuh*.<sup>8</sup> (“Should you find that to be true, then report back to me in such a discreet way that I will understand”).

## 2.1 *Laḥn* as sounds of non-humans

Drawing on materials from the literary repertoire, it is important to note that the term *laḥn* is also used in reference to sounds made by certain animals and birds, for example, the whining, yelping or barking of the dog, the neighing of the horse, and the cooing of doves and croaking of black crows. These could be illustrated with the following:

Al-Farazdaq:<sup>9</sup>

*“Wa-dā'in bi-laḥni l-kalbi yad'ū wa-dūnahū  
mina l-layli siffā zulmatin wa-ghuyūmuhā”*

“Many a caller with the barking (lit. speech) of a dog; while ahead of  
him are curtains and clouds of the night.”

<sup>7</sup> Al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsa*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn & 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo, 1951-53) Selection no. 207, verse 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ullmann, *WKAS*, loc. cit., quoting Ibn Hishām, *Sīra*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1858-60), i, 2.

<sup>9</sup> 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1954) ii, 115. In the *Dīwān*, 'nabḥi' is read in place of 'laḥni', and the second half reads: "ghayātilu min dahmā'a dājin bahīmuḥā". See *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Farazdaq*, ed. ʿIlīyyā al-Ḥāwī (Beirut, 1983), ii, 473.

Jahdar al-Liṣṣ:<sup>10</sup>

“*Fa-kuntu qadi ndamaltu fa-hāja shawqī*  
*bukā’u ḥamāmatayni tajāwabānī*  
*Tajāwabatā bi-laḥnin a’jamiyyin*  
*‘alā ghuṣnayni min gharabin wa-bānī”*  
 “I had been healed, so my passion became roused  
 by the crying of two doves exchanging cries  
 They answered each other in a foreign speech  
 from the top of the branches of weeping willow and moringa.”

Ibn Ḥamdīs (d. 527/1133):<sup>11</sup>

“*Alā shadawāti ṭuyūrin fiṣāḥin*  
*‘alā anna afṣaḥahā a’jamu*  
*lahunna a’ārīḍu ‘inda l-Khalīli*  
*muḥammalatu l-wazni lā tu’lamu*  
*turajji ‘u fthā ḍurūba luḥūni*  
*fa-tuṭribunā wa-hya lā tuṣhamu”*  
 “On the tunes of birds that speak (Arabic) eloquently,  
 though the most eloquent of them are non-Arabs  
 They use metres that are, by al-Khalīl,  
 abandoned (hence) unknown  
 In them (i. e. the meters) they quaver notes of various melodies  
 delighting us although they are unintelligible”

Yet another example of the use of the word in this sense can be illustrated with the following:<sup>12</sup>

“*Wa-hātifayni bi-shajwin ba‘da mā saja‘at*  
*wurqu l-ḥamāmi bi-tarjī‘in wa-irrnānī*  
*Bātā ‘alā ghuṣni bānin fī dhurā fananin*  
*yuraddidāni **luḥūnan** dhāta alwānī”*  
 “And [there were] two cooing ones with grief after dusky-coloured pigeons had cooed  
 quavering and plaintive in rhyme.

<sup>10</sup> Abū Tammām, *Kitāb al-Waḥshiyyāt: al-Ḥamāsa al-sughrā*, ed. ‘Abd al-Azīz al-Maymanī (Cairo, 1963), 183; al-Qālī, *Amālī* (Cairo, 1926) i, 285. See also, Fück, ‘*Arabiyya*, 129.

<sup>11</sup> E. Ditters and H. Motzki (Eds). *Approaches to Arabic Linguistics* (Leiden, Boston, 2007), Preface, xiii-xiv, with a slight amendment to the translation.

<sup>12</sup> See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Beirut, 1956), s.v. ‘laḥana’, 379<sup>a</sup> -383<sup>a</sup>. Henceforth *Lisān*. The verse is without attribution in al-Qālī, *Amālī* who incidentally interprets the word *luḥūn* as *luḥāt* (tongues/peculiar idioms). For this for he was criticized by al-Bakrī. See Abū ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī, *Simṭ al-Ālī*, ed. ‘Abd al-Azīz al-Maymanī, 2 vols (Cairo, 1936), i 21.

Both whiled away the night on the behen-branch among the tops of a leafy twig,  
repeating **notes** of different pitches (lit. colours).”

The sound of a bow-string is also covered by the term *lahn*, as can be illustrated with the following:

Kāmil al-Thaqafī (a Bedouin):<sup>13</sup>

“*Insānatu l-ḥayyi am udmānatu l-samurī*  
*bi-l-nihyi raqqaṣahā lahnun mina l-watarī*”

“(Is it) a woman belonging to the tribe or a white-brown antelope grazing near the acacias  
which at the water-hole a sound from the bow-string has made jump?”

Whereas the contact of the Arabs with non-Arabs inspired the identification of the term *lahn* with incorrect speech, as I intend to show later, their contact with the Greek tradition from the early third/ninth-century gave the term the additional meaning of a musical melody and tune<sup>14</sup>. An illustration of it in this sense is provided by a line attributed to Ibn Ṭabātabā (d. 322/934):<sup>15</sup>

“*Wa-‘ijlatin tashdū bi-alḥānihā*  
*wa-kānati l-kayyisata l-khādīmah.*”

“Often I think of a (particular) girl like a young cow, singing its melodies,  
while she used to be a clever servant girl.”

Evidence of the employment of the word in this sense is also provided by Ibn Durayd in his treatment of the lemma, and in this regard it is synonymous with *taghrīd* (singing, e.g., of a bird) and *taṭrīb* (warbling, also of a bird).<sup>16</sup>

### 3.0 Qur’ānic *lahn*

I have discussed elsewhere in some detail the various shades of meanings and nuances of the term *lahn* in respect of the scriptural and *ḥadīth* traditions of Islam, and I will not restate them here.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the controversy, if not the acrimony, generated by discussions among medieval authors and scholiasts on the subject has come out to be of far greater intellectual

<sup>13</sup> Al-Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-adab*, i, 97; WKAS, 383<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Ullmann, *Beiträge*, 24. See also *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (NE) (Leiden, 1960ff), xii, 546a-47a. s.v. ‘*lahn*’; al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad, *Kitāb al-‘Ayn*, 8 vols, ed. Maḥdī al-Makhzūmī & Ibrāhīm al-Sāmarrā’ī (Baghdad, 1980-85), iii, 230. Henceforth *al-‘Ayn*.

<sup>15</sup> Abū Hilāl al-‘Askarī, *Kitāb al-Ṣinā‘atayn*, ed. Muḥammad Qumayḥa (Beirut, 1984), 170.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Durayd, *al-Jamhara fī l-lughā* (Hyderabad, 1345), ii, 192, s.v. ‘*l-h-n*’.

<sup>17</sup> Amidu Sanni, ‘*Laḥn* in the Koran and its Literatures: Issues and Meanings in Textual Analysis and Recitational Discourse’, in Mohammad Nekroumi & Jan Meise (ed), *Modern Controversies in Qur’ānic Studies* Bonner Islamstudien BIS Band 7 (Hamburg: EB Verlag, 2008), forthcoming.

and theological significance than has hitherto been realised, and this I intend to examine in an independent study at a later date, using the insights afforded by al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013) as my point of reference. However, it may not be out of place here to highlight another signification of the term which may have escaped the attention of both Fück and Ullmann. This signification, traceable to Ibn al-Sikkīt (d. 244/858), is in the sense of ordinary meaning, *ma'nā*;<sup>18</sup> Ibn Barrī (d. 582/1187), the author of the famous marginal notes on al-Jawharī's *al-Ṣiḥāh*, among other medieval lexicologists, adduces this last signification in the enumeration of the various concepts to which the word refers.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4.0 *Laḥn* as an Intelligence Marker

An early use of the word *laḥn* in the sense of perceptiveness and intelligence can be exemplified with the following by Labīd b. Abī Rabī'a (d. circa 41/661) in his description of a Yemenite slave while writing:<sup>20</sup>

“*Muta'awwidun lahinun yu'īdu bi-kaffihī*  
*Qalaman 'alā 'usubin dhabulna wa-bānī'*”  
 “He is experienced, *intelligent*; he often wields  
 a pen on dry palm stalks and moringa sticks.”

Related to this is the use of the word in the sense of being articulate and effective in argumentation, as can be illustrated with the following statement by the Prophet: “... *wala'alla ba'dakum an yakūna alḥana bi-ḥujjatihi* ...”<sup>21</sup> (“Perchance one of you might be more articulate in the presentation of his evidence”), where “*alḥan*” has the same meaning with “*ablagh*”.<sup>22</sup> A later extrapolation of this signification is found in Qudāma b. Jā'far (d. after 320/932). In the 208<sup>th</sup> chapter/section of his *Jawāhir* which is headed with the rubric *balāghat al-manṭiq* (linguistic eloquence), the word “*lahinun*” is used for someone that is noted for linguistic efficiency within the realm of *balāgha* or *faṣāḥa*.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Ibn al-Sikkīt, *Kanz al-ḥuffāz fī kitāb Tahdhīb al-alfāz -hadhdhabahu al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī*, ed. Louis Cheikho (Beirut, 1895), 548.

<sup>19</sup> *Lisān*, s.v. ‘*laḥn*’ (p. 381<sup>a</sup>). For more on Ibn Barrī, see al-Ziriklī, *al-A'lām*, iv, 200<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> *Sharḥ Diwān Labīd b. Rabī'a al-ʿĀmirī*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Kuwait, 1962), 138; Abū ʿAmr al-Shaybānī, *Kitāb al-Jīm*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī et al. (Cairo, 1974ff), iii, 213<sup>b</sup> where “*muta'awwidhun*” is read; al-Qālī, *Amālī*, (Cairo, 1926), i, 5.

<sup>21</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Beirut, n.d.), ‘*Kitāb al-aḥkām*’, ix, 212 ḥadīth 281, *ibid*, ‘*Kitāb al-maḥālim*’, iii, 381, ḥadīth, 638.

<sup>22</sup> Fück, ‘*Arabīyya*’, 129.

<sup>23</sup> *Jawāhir al-alfāz*, ed., Muhammad Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut, 1979), 312.

## 5.0 *Lahn* as Variant Idiom

Evidence of the use of the word in the sense of the deviant, peculiar speech style or dialectal form of the language can be illustrated with the following statement which is credited to caliph ‘Umar b. al-Khattāb (d. 23/644): “*ta‘allamū l-farā’ida wa l-sunana wa-l-lahna kamā ta‘allamūna l-Qur’āna*”<sup>24</sup> (“Learn the obligatory aspects of Islam, the Prophetic traditions, and the (variant forms of the Arabic) *language*, as you learn the Qur’ān”). In this wise, the alternate term for it is *luhgha*, or *lisān*, as the following verse may illustrate:<sup>25</sup>

“*Wa-qawmun lahum lahnun siwā lahni qawminā  
wa-shaklun --wa-bayti llāhi-- lasnā nushākiluh*”.

“A people they are whose language is different from ours; and a  
physique – I swear by the house of Allah – which is dissimilar to ours”.

## 6.0 *Lahn* as solecism

In the foregoing, I have tried to elaborate on the various significations of the lemma *l-h-n-* as demonstrable from the routine idiom of the Arabs and the literary tradition of the classical period of Islam. Following on the diffusion of Islam into non-Arab territories and the interaction of Arabs with non-Arabs, incorrect idioms in routine speech and in the recitation of the Qur’ān became commonplace. This inspired the first attempt at establishing the rules of Arabic grammar.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, this led to the emergence of a rich corpus of scholarly exertions that came to be identified as the *lahn al-‘amma* literature. The oldest in the genre, *mā talḥanu fīhi l-‘awāmm*, is to be attributed to the grammarian al-Kisā’ī (d. 189/805).<sup>27</sup> Commission of

<sup>24</sup> WKAS, 381<sup>b</sup>, quoting al-Qālī, *Kitāb al-Amālī*, i, 5; al-Zamakhsharī, *Asās al-balāgha* (Beirut, 1965), 562, s.v. ‘laḥana’. For a fuller discussion of this statement by ‘Umar, see, *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, v (1986), s.v. ‘luḥa’, especially, 803<sup>b</sup>, 804<sup>b</sup>. A similar idea is understood from a statement by Ubayy b. Ka’b: “*ta‘allamū l-lahna fī l-Qur’ān kamā ta‘allamūnahū*” (“Learn the (various dialects of the Arabic) language from the Qur’ān as you learn (the text of) the Qur’ān itself”). ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. ‘Umar, *Akhbār al-naḥwīyyīn*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Banā (Cairo, 1981), 26.

<sup>25</sup> *Lisān*, 380<sup>b</sup> s.v. ‘laḥana’. It is attributed to a woman from the tribe of Kalb in ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. ‘Umar, *Akhbār al-naḥwīyyīn*, loc. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Sallām al-Jumāhī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu‘arā’*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Cairo, 1974), 12. For a fuller account of this, see my ‘Arabic Grammar: an Islamic Philological Science in a New Light’, *Islamic Studies*, 30 Nr 3 (1991), 403-12; Pierre Larcher, “Les origines de la grammaire Arabè selon la tradition: distribution, interpretation, discussion”, in E. Ditters and H. Motzki (eds). *Approaches to Arabic Linguistics* (Leiden, Boston, 2007), 113-134.

<sup>27</sup> F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (Leiden, 1967ff), viii, 177, henceforth GAS. An edition of the book by Ramaḍān ‘Abd al-Tawwāb was published in Cairo in 1982. Brockelmann discussed the controversy surrounding the authenticity of the attribution and suggested that it was most likely by an author familiar with *K. al-Faṣīḥi* of Tha’lab. See C. Brockelmann, ‘Beiträge zur Geschichte der arabischen Sprachwissenschaft’, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 13 (1898), 29-46. This view is supported by Nöldeke. See his ‘Bemerkungen zu al-Kisā’ī’s Schrift über die Sprachfehler des Volkes’, *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 13 (1898), 111-15.

linguistic mistakes was not limited to the ordinary folks, as the following anecdote would confirm. The awe inspiring governor of Iraq, al-Ḥajjāj, had an encounter with ‘Āmir al-Sha‘bī (d. 103/721), the lead scholar of Kūfa whom he had asked about his annual stipend by saying: “*Kam ‘aṭā’aka* [instead of *‘aṭā’uka*] *fī l-sanah?*”, to which the scholar responded “*alfayn* [instead of *alfān*]. As if he was struck by a thunderbolt that such an ungrammatical statement could be made by someone of al-Sha‘bī’s status, al-Ḥajjāj repeated the question, this time in the correct form and his respondent equally replied correctly.<sup>28</sup> From now on, the term *lahn* almost became exclusive to the phenomenon of incorrect speech, and indeed linguistic mistakes in general,<sup>29</sup> although evidence of imprecision and contrariety of interpretation was all the more profound.

The use of the word *lahn* in the sense of incorrect speech was a post-Islamic development, as can be established from our discussion so far. The Prophet of Islam is also reported to have proclaimed his immunity from *lahn* in the sense of incorrect idiom; “I am from Quraysh, and I grew up among the Banī Sa‘d, how then should I commit *lahn*”.<sup>30</sup> The word is reported to have featured twice in this sense in Sībawayhi’s (d. 177/793) monumental work on grammar, *al-Kitāb*.<sup>31</sup> Al-Kisā’ī is also known to have equally employed it as the antithesis of *i’rāb* (correct idiom) while highlighting the significance of the science of *naḥw*.<sup>32</sup> An anecdote related by Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 363/972) illustrates one of the earliest instances of its use with this meaning. ‘Abd Allāh Ibn Mas‘ada al-Mu‘allim (c. 65/685) was rebuked by the poet Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd Allāh for accusing a crow of committing *lahn* by sounding “*ghāq*” with *sukūn* instead of “*ghāqi*” with *kasra*.<sup>33</sup> Another evidence of the early use of the word in the

<sup>28</sup> Asked why he chose to speak incorrectly at first, al-Sha‘bī cited the precedent that was set by the governor, “*laḥana l-amīru fa-laḥantu, fa-lammā a‘raba l-amīru a‘rabtu; wa-mā yaḥsunu an yaḥana l-amīru wa-u‘riba*”. See Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī, *Thamarāt al-awraq*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1971), 99. A similar story involving ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Marwān (d. 85/704), the governor of Egypt, and a complainant is given by ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. ‘Umar (d. 349/960). See his *Akhbār al-naḥwiyyīn*, 29. About al-Sha‘bī, see al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, iv, 18-19.

<sup>29</sup> See *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Language and Literature*, ed. K. Versteegh, 3 vols, (Leiden, 2006-7), ii, 628a-34a, s.v. ‘*lahn*’.

<sup>30</sup> “*Anā min Qurayshin wa-nasha‘tu fī Banī Sa‘dīn wa-annā fiya l-laḥnu*”. See Stefan Wild “Arabic avant La Lettre, Divine, Prophetic, and Heroic Arabic”, in E. Ditters and H. Motzki (eds). *Approaches to Arabic Linguistics* (Leiden, Boston, 2007), 206. An inaccurate translation of the statement is given in Gilliot and Larcher, *Encyclopaedia of the Qur’ān*, 6 vols (Leiden, 2001-6), iii (2003), 120, s.v. “Language and Style of the Qur’ān”

<sup>31</sup> Gérard Troupeau, *Lexique-Index du Kitāb de Sībawayhi*, editions Klincksiek (Paris, 1976), 188.

<sup>32</sup> ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. ‘Umar, *Akhbār al-naḥwiyyīn*, 33.

<sup>33</sup> Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, ed. al-Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqr (Cairo, 1949), 311. About Ibn Mas‘ada, see al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Beirut, 1954), iv, 279.

sense of incorrect expression can be illustrated with the following line by ‘Umar b. Abī Rabī‘a (c. 93/712):<sup>34</sup>

“*Fa-mā stajmalat nafsi ḥadīthan li-ghayrihā  
wa-in kāna laḥnan mā tuḥaddithunā khulfā.*”

“My soul has never enjoyed anybody’s speech other than hers  
although in a faulty idiom is the broken promise which she makes to us.”

Moreover, the word *laḥn* as the antithesis of *i‘rāb* had become a common parallelism in the poetical expression of the succeeding generations, as demonstrated in a verse by Nābigha Banī Shaybān (d. 125/743):<sup>35</sup> “*wa-yu‘ribu aqwāmun wa-yalḥanu ma‘sharun ...*” (Some speak with *i‘rāb* others commit *laḥn* ...); as well as in the prose discourse of the succeeding era, for example, in al-Jāhiz,<sup>36</sup> Ibn Wahb,<sup>37</sup> and Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi<sup>38</sup> among some early authors, as I intend to show later. Moreover, its signification in the sense of fault or error was also extended to non-linguistic spheres. For our purpose, we may cite an illustration from al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144). Where a liquid being poured out of a bowl, or a bow or an arrow being released makes an unpleasant sound in the process, such a sound will be characterised in the negative sense of *laḥn*, whereas it will be described as *mu‘rib* if the sound were pleasant.<sup>39</sup> A further extension of the use of the parallelism is also found in the art of writing. For instance, Sulaymān b. Wahb (d. 272/884), the renowned scribe, argues that an inappropriate elongation of a ligature is a form of *laḥn* in writing.<sup>40</sup> Interest in errors and infelicities in the written and spoken forms of Arabic which later became formalised in the *tashīf* and *tahrīf* literature must have started from this era when specific incongruencies came to be characterized in specific terms in the emerging terminological repertoire. This is a significant issue that requires an independent inquiry, as it falls outside the scope of the present study.

<sup>34</sup> Ullmann, *Beiträge*, 19.

<sup>35</sup> *Dīwān Nābighat Banī Shaybān*, ed. ‘Abd al-Karīm Ibrāhīm Ya‘qūb (Damascus, 1987), 118.

<sup>36</sup> Al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa l-tabyīn*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn (Cairo, 1968), i, 145: “*wa matā sami‘ta – ḥafīzaka Allāhu – bi-nādiratin min kalāmi l-a‘rāb, fa-iyāka an taḥkiyahā illā ma‘a i‘rābihā ... fa innaka in ghayyartahā bi-an talḥana fī i‘rābihā ...*”

<sup>37</sup> *Naqd al-nathr*, 143. ed. Tāhā Ḥusayn & ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd al-‘Abbādī (Beirut, 1982), 143. I have used this edition in this study although the complete edition with the right title *al-Burhān fī wujūh al-bayān*, said to have been written after 335 / 946, is now available in the edition of Aḥmad Maṭlūb & Khadrīja al-Ḥadīthī (Baghdad, 1967) and Ḥifnī Muḥammad Sharaf (Cairo, 1969). See *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. J.S. Meisami & P. Starkey (London & New York, 1998) i, 381 s.v. ‘Ibn Wahb’.

<sup>38</sup> Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi, *al-‘Iqd al-farīd*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn et al (Cairo, 1956), ii, 478 where a chapter is entitled “*Bāb fī l-i‘rāb wa l-laḥn*”.

<sup>39</sup> al-Zamakhsharī, *Asās*, p. 562<sup>a</sup>: “*qadhun lāḥinun: laysa bi-ṣāfī l-ṣawt ‘inda l-ifāda, wa-qawsun lāḥinatun ‘inda l-inbād . . . wa-idhā ṣafā ṣawtuḥu qīla mu‘ribun*”.

<sup>40</sup> “*Al-madd fī l-khaṭṭ fī ghayri mawḍi‘ihā laḥnun fī l-khaṭṭ*”. See *Naqd al-nathr*, 113.

In essence, the characterisation of an incorrect expression as *lahn*, whether it was made by an aristocrat, a common person, and indeed by an animal became formalised and dominant in the intellectual discourse of the post-Islamic era. But then other significations of the term were not completely obscured, and evidence of some confusion if not imprecision in interpretation was not altogether lacking, as the following will illustrate.

### 7.0 *Laḥn*: the best form of expression?

A poem by the Umayyad Mālik b. Asmā' b. Khārija (d. circa 100/718) is placed by al- Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868) under a rubric that indicates his understanding of the use of the word here in the sense of incorrect idiom:<sup>41</sup>

“*a-mughāṭṭan minnī ‘alā basarī li l-  
ḥubbi am anti akmalu l-nāsi ḥusnā  
wa-ḥadithin aladhdhuhū huwa mimṡā  
yan‘atu al-nā‘itūna yūzanu waznā  
maṡṡiqun ṡā‘ibun wa-talḥanu aḥyā-  
nan wa-aḥlā l-ḥadīṡhi mā kāna laḥnā*”

“Is my eyesight overwhelmingly covered with love?

or is it that you are the most perfect of the human beings in beauty?

Her sweetest of speech which is well measured

Is better than that described by evaluators (of speech).

Correct speech (she produces), though she sometimes commits *lahn*,  
the best of speech is that which is (marked by) *lahn*.”

The concluding verse of the above illustration is the focus of discussion and dissension among classical authors with regard to the exact signification of *lahn* as used here. We have already indicated al-Jāḥiẓ’s interpretation of it in the sense of an ungrammatical/incorrect idiom, as evidenced by his introduction of the poetical piece. This is probably not out of order, given the parallelism indicated in the first half of the concluding verse, namely correctness (*ṡā‘ibun* = *ṡawāb*) and its antithesis, incorrectness (*lahn* = *khāṡa’*). But the earliest interpretation of it is in the sense of obscure and veiled allusion-- that is; one referring to a deep meaning rather than a surface meaning-- is attributable to al-Layth (d. 180/796).<sup>42</sup> By the time of Ibn Jinnī (d.

<sup>41</sup> The illustration is introduced with: “*wa-qad qāla Mālik ibni Asmā’ fī ‘stimlāḥi l-laḥni min ba’d nisā’ihi*. See al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, i, 147; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi’r wa-l-shu’arā’* (Beirut, 1984), 530; al-Marzubānī, *Mu’jam al-shu’arā’*, ed. ‘Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj (Cairo, 1960), 266; Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihī, *al-Iqd*, ii, 480; Ismā’il b. Qāsim al-Qālī, *Kitāb al-Amālī*, i, 7; *Asās*, 562<sup>a</sup>, where *wāḍiḥun* is read for *ṡā‘ibun*.

<sup>42</sup> *Lisān*, loc cit. (p. 381<sup>a</sup>), s.v. “*laḥana*”: *wa-qāla [al-Layth] ta’wīluhu: wa-khayru l-ḥadīṡ min mithli ḥādhihi l-jāriyati mā-kāna lā-ya’rifuhu kullu aḥadin; innamā yu’rafu amruhā fī anḥā’i qawliḥā*. About Mālik b.

392/1002), however, three different interpretations of the word as used in our illustration had become formalized. According to him, Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī (d. 215/830) and Ibn al-A‘rābī (d. 231/846) take the word to mean intelligence and perceptiveness (*al-ḥiṭna wa-l-fahm*); Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933) interprets it as *ta‘rīd* (indirect use/allusion); while others interpret it as incorrect idiom (*al-khaṭa’ fī l-i‘rāb*).<sup>43</sup> The pioneering position of al-Jāhiz in this last view has been highlighted above, and his disciple, Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889) is also known to have espoused this interpretation.<sup>44</sup> But one outstanding proponent of this interpretation was Abū l-Ḥusayn Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm Ibn Wahb al-Kātib (fl. 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> /9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> century). Ibn Wahb argues that there is no way the word can be interpreted here in the sense of cleverness, but rather, only in the sense of incorrect speech, a characteristic which he says is appreciated in girls and young ladies because of their simplicity and lack of sophistication.<sup>45</sup> However, al-Jāhiz is reported to have been faulted by Yaḥyā b. ‘Alī al-Munajjim (d. 300/912) who argued that the word as used here actually means veiled allusion and perceptiveness, in consequence of which al-Jāhiz reviewed his view and identified with the new suggestion.<sup>46</sup> What can be inferred from al-Munajjim’s interpretation is that he has collapsed the two senses into one: a veiled allusion that can only be understood by a perceptive mind. Among the proponents of this line of thought, Ibn Durayd, al-Ṣūlī (d. 336/947) and Ibn al-Anbārī (d. 327/939) stand out.<sup>47</sup> That this poetical illustration should generate an intriguing debate in the scholarly discourse should not be surprising; the different interpretations given to the word *lahn* as used here can reasonably be accommodated by the text and the context.

A prominent anticipation of this confusion over what *lahn* could mean in a given context is provided by an anecdote involving Mu‘āwiya and a delegation from Iraq. He had asked them about Ibn Ziyād (d. 53/673), his governor for the territory, in respect of whom they said: “*zarīfun ‘alā [illā] annahu yalḥanu*” (he is elegant except that he commits *lahn*).” And to this Mu‘āwiya replied: “*fa-dhāka aẓrafu lahu*” (that is more elegant for him). According to al-Aṣma‘ī (d. 216/831) the lemma *l-ḥ-n-* is used here to mean “intelligent” (*faḥīn*).<sup>48</sup> Although Mu‘āwiya is believed to have understood the word in the positive sense, the delegation is

---

Asmā’, see, al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, vi, 127-28, GAS, ii, 331-32; al-Marzubānī, *al-Muwashshah*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī (Cairo, 1965), 220.

<sup>43</sup> *Lisān*, loc. cit. 382<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> See al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī al-Murtaḍā*, i, 15.

<sup>45</sup> *Naqd al-nathr*, 144-45.

<sup>46</sup> Al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī al-Murtaḍā*, loc.cit. See also Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Irshād al-‘arīb*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth (London, 1907ff), vi, 65; al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, loc. cit. editor’s note.

<sup>47</sup> Although Ullmann would still prefer the original view of al-Jāhiz. See Manfred Ullmann, *Beiträge*, 18-19.

<sup>48</sup> *Sharḥ Dīwān Labīd*, 139. See the anecdote also in WKAS, 377.

reported to have had a contrary understanding; they wanted to portray their governor as someone given to incorrect idiom.<sup>49</sup>

But if the insights provided by al-Jāhiz's pattern of material presentation at another level are anything to go by, it will be reasonable to argue that the term had come to be used almost exclusively in reference to incorrect idiom, even when its other significations had not passed into disuse. In the chapter entitled "*Bāb al-laḥn*" in his *al-Bayān*, the discussion here is essentially about the use of the word in the sense of incorrect or ungrammatical idiom.<sup>50</sup> An interesting dimension introduced into the subject, however, is the suggestion by al-Jāhiz that indulgence in the use of incorrect idioms may not be strong enough to deny a speaker from being characterized as eloquent, "*balīgh*"; for he heads one of his sub-chapters with the title "*Bāb: wa-min al-laḥḥānīn al-bulaghā*".<sup>51</sup> Ibn Wahb al-Kātib, however, thinks differently; a non-Arab who does not understand the principles of eloquence and one who commits *laḥn* in the sense of incorrect idiom cannot be so characterized.<sup>52</sup>

## 8.0 Intervention by Ibn Durayd

In his treatment of the lemma *l ḥ n*, al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad (d.170/786) highlights rather tersely the emerging predominance of the term in the sense of indirect expression; it is the first definition he gives.<sup>53</sup> But it was from Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933) that derives the evidence that the various significations of the term *laḥn* as enumerated in the foregoing were becoming overarching, almost pushing the one signifying incorrect idiom to the background. The term, in the sense of a veiled allusion as can be comprehended by the intelligent-- a signification already adumbrated by al-Munajjim-- is systematically highlighted by Ibn Durayd in his monumental lexicon, *al-Jamhara*. The first definition of the lemma "*laḥana*", following on the model of al-Khalīl, is given in the sense of allusion.<sup>54</sup> Further evidence of the predominance of this sense over others is provided by our author in the introduction to his *Kitāb al-Malāḥin* where he says:<sup>55</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Al-Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-adab*, xiii, 198. Could the delegation have meant that their governor was not wont to speaking in plain language but rather in an allusive style? In which case, their statement could be regarded as an instance of the rhetorical trope called *ta'kīd al-madh bi-mā yushbihu l-dhamm*.

<sup>50</sup> Al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, ii, 207ff.

<sup>51</sup> Al-Jāhiz, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, ii, 220. See also. G. J van Gelder's review of Herbjørn Jenssen's *The Subtleties and Secrets of the Arabic Language: Preliminary Investigations in al-Qazwīnī's Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ* (Bergen, 1998), in *Edebiyāt* –New Series, Vol 12 (2001), 1:123-28 (p. 124).

<sup>52</sup> *Naqd al-nathr*, 77.

<sup>53</sup> *al-'Ayn*, iii, 229.

<sup>54</sup> Ibn Durayd, *al-Jamhara fī-l-lughā*, ii, 192, s.v. 'l-ḥ-n', *al-laḥn*: "*ṣarfuka al-kalāma 'an jihatihī ...*"

<sup>55</sup> Ibn Durayd, *Kitāb al-Malāḥin*, ed. H. Thorbecke (Heidelberg, 1882), 2: "... *anna aṣla l-laḥni an turīda shay'an fa-tuwarrī 'anhu bi-qawlin ākhar.*" Here Ibn Durayd may also be insinuating at the relationship between

... We name it (i.e. this book) *K. al-Malāḥin*. This title we derive from the eloquent Arabic tongue which was neither affected by confusion, nor overpowered by artificiality (*takalluf*) ... the meaning of the word *al-Malāḥin* may be ascertained, because *LAḤN* carries, among (other meanings by) the Arabs the sense of “intelligence” ... *al-laḥn* **originally** means that you intend something particular, but you express it differently (*bi-qawlin ākhar*).

That the original signification of the term *laḥn* was in the sense of an indirect expression of an idea in a way that elicits the use of intelligence and perceptiveness that borders on riddle solving is a piece of vital information for which we are beholden to Ibn Durayd. In fact, judging by the definitional illustration with a paraphrased poem which is ultimately attributed to al-Anbārī, one of Ibn Durayd’s sources in the *Jamhara*, it would not be wrong to conclude that the word *laḥn* equally had an original meaning that was cognate with *lughz* (riddle).<sup>56</sup> In support may be cited the following verse by al-Ṭirimmāḥ (d. 110/728).<sup>57</sup>

“*Wa-addat ilayya l-qawla minhunna zawlatun  
tulāḥinu aw tarnū li-qawli l-mulāḥinī.*”

“A bright girl from amongst them conveyed to me their words (either)  
in riddles or in a way close to that of a riddle maker.”

But the form in which the word is used here, namely, “*lāḥana*” is said to have, however, passed into disuse.<sup>58</sup> This is hardly correct, as some of the entries and illustrations in a number of classical and medieval lexicons have shown. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Ibn Rashīq must have taken the model of analysis introduced by Ibn Durayd as his point of departure in his discussion of allusive tropes in which *laḥn* and *lughz* were to become central themes. This I intend to discuss in some detail in the next section where the credit for articulating the rhetorical significance of the term *laḥn* in the theoretical discourse will be clearly established. That Ibn Rashīq was able to give in full and with due attribution the evidential example that was earlier offered in paraphrase and without attribution by Ibn

---

*laḥn* and another figure of speech which later became formalized as *tawriya* (double entendre). See the brilliant study by S.A. Bonebakker, *Some Early Definitions of the Tawriya* ... (The Hague, Paris, 1966).

<sup>56</sup> *al-Jamhara*, loc.cit. See also al-Zamakhsharī, *Asās*, 561<sup>b</sup>: . . . *ṣarafahu ‘an mawḍū‘ihi ilā l-alghāz*”. Some useful studies on *lughz* include Amidu Sannī, ‘From a Wit Tester to a Rhetorical Topos: Riddle in Arabic Poetry and Theory’, forthcoming; M. Marayati, M. Mir ‘Alam and M. H. Tayyan, *Al-Kindi’s Treatise on Crypto Analysis- Risāla fī ‘stikhrāj al-mu‘ammā* (Riyadh: King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies, 2002); Marayati Walayah & Mir ‘Alam...., ‘*Ilm al-ta‘miya wa-‘stikhrāj al-Mu‘ammā ‘inda l-‘Arab* (Damascus, 1986); Khayr al-Dīn Shamsī Pasha, ‘*al-Alghāz wa-l-aḥājī wa-l-mu‘ammayāt*’, *Majallat Majma‘ al-Lughā al-‘Arabiyya bi-Dimashq*, Vol. 71, Pt. 4 (1996), pp. 768-816.

<sup>57</sup> *Dīwān al-Ṭirimmāḥ b. al-Ḥakīm al-Ṭā‘ī*, ed. F. Krenkow (London, 1927), Qaṣīda 47, line 5, p. 164. The translation given by Fück is slightly amended here. See ‘*Arabiyya*, 133.

<sup>58</sup> Ullmann, *Beiträge*, 5.

Durayd further underpins our suggestion of the indebtedness of the former to the latter. The poetical illustration as related by al-Ushnāndānī on the authority of al-Jarmī is given here.<sup>59</sup>

“*Khallū ‘ani l-nāqati l-ḥamrā’ a wa-’qta’ idū l-  
‘awda l-ladhī fī janābay zahrihī waqa’ū  
Inna l-dhi’āba qadi ’khḍarrat barāthinuhā  
wa-l-nāsu kulluhumū Bakrun idhā shabi’ū*”

“Abandon the red camel and ride the bright, aged camel  
on the two sides of whose back are marks from frequent sittings  
The claws of wolves have become green; and all people behave  
like the Bakr (tribe) when satiated.”

The literal meaning of this illustration is certainly not intended, as can be established from the extra-textual materials provided in our footnote. The import of the verse can only be understood by recourse to the non-textual facilities that verge on the metalanguage of riddle and symbolism.

In the foregoing, I have tried to elaborate on some of the various significations of the term *lahn* as explicated by the duo of Fück and Ullmann. I have tried, perhaps with some success, to expatiate on some of their analyses which appear elliptical or short on clarity. Such other

<sup>59</sup> Sa’īd b. Hārūn al-Ushnāndānī, *Ma’ānī l-shi’r*, ed. Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Munajjid (Beirut, 1964), 61-63. Bevan gives the name of the renderer as Nashīb b. Bashāma al-‘Anbarī, otherwise called al-A’war. I am however inclined to believe that it was Ṭarīf b. Tamīm al-‘Anbarī, a poetaster and warrior of the Jāhiliyya period. (About whom see al-Zirikilī, *al-A’lām*, iii, 326). The story has it that the poet was a captive among the Banū Sa’d, a hostile tribe that was about to wage a war against his clan. The coded message as sent by the captive to his folk men reads:

“*li-yuḥsinū ilā asīrihim wa-yukrimūhu, fa-innī ‘inda qawmin yuḥsinūna ilayya wa-yukrimūnanī; wa-qul lahum: fal-yu’arrū jamalī l-aḥmara wa-yarkabū nāqatī l- ‘aysā’ wa-l-yar’aw ḥājatī fī ubaynī Mālikin. Wa-khbīrhim anna l-awsaja qad awraqa wa-anna l-nisā’a qadi shtakat wa-lya’sū Hammāma bna Bashāmah fa-innahū mash’ūmun maḥdūdun wa-l-yuṭī’ū Hudhayla bna l-Akhnasa fa-innahū ḥāzimun maymūnun.*”

“Let them be nice to their captive and respect him, for I am with a people who are nice to me and who respect me. Ask them to disembark from my red camel and mount my bright- coloured camel. Let them attend to my affair among the dear sons of Mālik. Inform them that the ‘awsaj tree has grown leaves and women have prepared water skins. Let them disobey Hammām b. Bashāma, for he is of ill luck, short witted; and let them obey Hudhayl b. al-Akhnas, for he is resolute and of good luck”.

The captive filled the hand of the slave who was to carry the message to his clan with sand and asked him to look at the sun. The message was to be interpreted by Hudhayl b. al-Akhnas who decoded the message thus: that the sand signifies the multitude of army, and the sun the imminence of an attack that was as bright as the sunlight. The red camel stands for al-Sammān, a settlement that must be vacated for al-Dahnā’, another place for which the bright camel is used. The leaf-growing ‘awsaj tree stands for the fully-armed army of the enemies for whom the women had made water skins (*al-shikā’*). (The wolves with green claws mean soldiers who, having marched through the green groves, got their feet coloured in green). See A. A. Bevan, *The Naḳā’id of Jarir and al-Farazdaq* (Leiden, 1905-7), i, 305-7. There is some confusion as to the precise referents of the red and the bright camel metaphor. Ibn Durayd (in the *Ma’ānī al-shi’r*) and Ibn Rashīq take the red camel for al-Dahnā’ and the bright one for al-Sammān; although this is reversed by the former in the *Jamhara*. The Bakr tribe that is mentioned in the second line was the traditional foe of the Tamīm tribe against whom several wars were fought. The whole story in a slightly different version and text is also given in al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī al-Murtaḍā*, i, 16-17.

meanings of the term which they may have ignored or treated with some graceful sidestepping have been brought into a sharper focus in the context of the philological and routine value of the term. In what follows, I intend to examine that aspect of the term which was left out by both, the one belonging in the realm of Arabic theoretical and literary discourse which I would like to designate as rhetorical *lahn*.

## 9.0 The Rhetorical *lahn*

As can be established from our discussion so far, *lahn* had, from the third/ninth-century onward, become prominently identified with solecism, malapropism, and inaccurate use of the language in general. From Abū ‘Ubayda (d. 207/822) up to Abū Bakr al-Zubaydī (d. 379/989) is a significant list of titles in this regard as provided by Sezgin.<sup>60</sup> Before the close of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, an intriguing parallelism emerged in the characterization of faults that occur in the realm of philology or grammar, and faults associated with the technique of verse-making, namely, those associated with prosody and rhyme. The following, which is attributed to a variety of authors some of whom belong in as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century, illustrates what is probably the earliest employment of *lahn* in the context of prosodic faults:<sup>61</sup>

“*Tatabba‘ta lahnān fī kalāmi Muraqqishin,  
wa-khalquka mabniyyun ‘alā l-lahni ajma‘ū  
fa-‘aynāka iqwā’un wa-anfuka mukfa‘ū,  
wa-wajhuka ītā’un wa-anta l-muraqqa‘ū*”

“You searched strenuously for incorrect usage in Muraqqish’s speech,  
though your own physique is wholly built on incorrectness:  
Your eyes are (affected by) *iqwā’*, your nose by *ikfā’*,  
your face by *ītā’*, you are indeed the one with many patches.”

<sup>60</sup> Titles on grammatical *lahn* as derived from *GAS* include: Abū ‘Ubayda (d. 207/822), *Mā talhanu fīhi l-‘amma* (*GAS*, viii, 69); al-Aṣma‘ī (d. 213/828), *lahn al-‘amma* (*GAS*, viii, 73); Abū Naṣr al-Bāhilī (d. 231/846), *Mā talhanu fīhi l-‘amma* (*GAS*, viii, 88); al-Māzinī (d. 248/869), *Mā yalhanu fīhi l-‘amma* (*GAS*, viii, 92). Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d. 255/869), *Mā yalhanu fīhi l-‘amma* (*GAS*, viii, 94). Thābit b. Abī Thābit (fl. 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century), *Kitāb lahn al-‘amma* (*GAS*, ix, 315). Abū Ḥanīfa al-Dīnawarī (d. 289/902), *Kitāb lahn al-‘amma* (*GAS*, ix, 205). Tha‘lab (d. 291/904), *Mā yalhanu fīhi l-‘amma* (*GAS*, viii, 146). Abū Aḥmad al-‘Askarī (d.382/993), *Mā lahana fīhi l- khawāṣṣ min al-‘ulamā’*, (*GAS*, viii, 181). Abū l-Haytham al-‘Uqaylī, (fl. 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century) *Mā yalhanu fīhi l-‘amma* (*GAS*, viii, 176). Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Zubaydī (d. 379/989), *Lahn al-‘awāmm* (*GAS*, viii, 254). Cf. note 4 above. Even in the field of natural sciences, interest in the phenomenon was not altogether lacking. To Galen (c. 200/815) is attributed *Kitāb fī mā yalzam lladhiū yalhanu fī kalāmih* (*GAS*, iii, 137).

<sup>61</sup> For instance, al-Jāhiz and Ibn Qutayba attribute it to al-Burdukt (c. 120/727). In al-Marzubānī it is attributed to both Ibn al-Warrāq (d. 225/840) and Ḥammād al-‘Ajrād (d. 161/177), but al-Tha‘ālibī (d. 430/1038) attributes it to one Yazīd b. Ḥarb. See *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, ii, 214-15; Ibn Qutayba, *al-Shi‘r wa-l-shu‘arā’*, 479; al-Marzubānī, *al-Muwashshah*, ed. ‘Alī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī (Cairo, 1996), 20; al-Tha‘ālibī, *Kitāb Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Sumkarī (Cairo, 1908), 53.

A similar tendency can be illustrated with a verse by Ḥakam b. ‘Abdal al-Asadī (d. *circa* 100/718) in which he accuses a secretary of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān of committing *ikfā*’ and *lahn* in his composition,<sup>62</sup> and al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī (d. 173/789) equally inveighs the commission of *iqwā*’ and *lahn* in poetry.<sup>63</sup>

I have discussed elsewhere in some detail the aesthetic and technical significance of the prosodic defects that are listed in this illustration, especially in the theoretical locution of theorists, literary legists, and prosodists of the medieval era.<sup>64</sup> What is significant here, however, is the characterization of prosodic defects as *lahn*, and this is probably the earliest reference in the poetical repertoire of the medieval era. The imprecision in the attribution of the illustration may suggest the popularity, if not the dominance, of the view among verse makers that errors in verse are as awful and reprehensible as errors in language use, for which phenomenon the term *lahn* had become the standard reference word. So much is obvious.

An early evidence of the emergence of *lahn* as a rhetorical concept is traceable to Abū l-Haytham al-‘Uqaylī (fl. 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> century), a chief source to the lexicographer al-Azharī (d. 370/981). Abū l-Haytham argues that the word has the same signification with ‘*unwān*’ (symbolism/code) and goes on to define it in the context of semiotics as an ideational meaning or “a sign that is used as an indication to a meaning which can be understood only by recourse to perceptiveness”.<sup>65</sup> Although Tha‘lab (d. 291/904) illustrates what he designates as *latāfat al-ma’nā* (subtlety of meaning) with lines that are interpretable as a form of *ta’rīd* (allusion) or *īmā’* (implicit/body language) as opposed to *taṣrīḥ* (direct/unambiguous expression),<sup>66</sup> nowhere did he mention *lahn* as an item of rhetoric or a value qualifier for the Arabic verse. In his analysis, Ibn al-Mu‘tazz (d. 296/908) highlights *kināya*

<sup>62</sup> “*Layta l-amīra aṭā ‘anī fa-shafaytuhūl min kulli man yukfī l-qaṣīda wa-yalḥanū*” // “How I wish the prince followed (my advice) so that I could relieve him (of the pain inflicted) by someone who subjects *qaṣīda* to *ikfā*’ and *lahn*”. See Al-Jāhīz, *K. al-Ḥayawān*, ed. ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo, 1965), i, 249; al-Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-adab*, xiii, 51. The *Diwān* is said to be available in print, first as an issue of the Iraqi Journal, *al-Mawrid*, Vol. 5, No. 4, edited by Muḥammad Nāyif, and in the edition of ‘Abd al-‘Azīm ‘Abd al-Muḥsin (Najaf, 1392 AH). Neither was available to me. For more on the poet, see *GAS*, ii, 331.

<sup>63</sup> “*Aḥūku wa-lā ‘uqwī wa-lastu bi-lāḥinin/ wa-kam qā’ilin li-lshī’ri yuqwī wa-yalḥanu* // I compose (poetry) without committing *iqwā*’ or *lahn*/ many a renderer of poetry commit *iqwā*’ and *lahn*. See al-Marzubānī, *al-Muwashshah*, 3.

<sup>64</sup> See the following by Amidu Sanni ‘On *Taḍmīn* (Enjambment) and Structural Coherence in Classical Arabic Poetry’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 52 (1989), pp. 463-66; ‘Interpretations in a Theoretical Tradition: On *ḥā*’ in Arabic Poetics’, *Journal of Arabic Literature*, vol. 21 (1990), pp. 155-62; ‘The Original Sin in Arabic Poetics’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 55, pt 1 (1992), pp. 9-15; ‘A Weak Point in a Strong Chain: On *ikfā*’ in Arabic Poetics’, *Arabica*, 43 (1996), pp. 361-68; ‘Again on *Taḍmīn* in Arabic Theoretical Discourse’, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 61, pt 1 (1998), pp. 1-19.

<sup>65</sup> *Lisān*, 382<sup>b</sup>: “*al-‘unwānu wa-l-laḥnu wāḥidun, wa-huwa l-‘alāmah tushīru bihā ilā l-insāni li-yaḥḥina bihā ilā ḡhayrihi*”.

<sup>66</sup> Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā Tha‘lab, *Qawā‘id al-shi‘r*, ed. Ramaḍān ‘Abd al-Tawwāb (Cairo, 1966), 53-54.

(periphrasis/indirect expression) and *ta'riḍ* in his list of *maḥāsin al-kalām* (*schemata verborum*/beauties of discourse) without mentioning *lahn* as a subtype.<sup>67</sup> Qudāma b. Ja'far also talks about *irdāf*,<sup>68</sup> his own coinage for *kināya* without saying anything about rhetorical *lahn*. Similarly, Ibn Ṭabātabā talks about *ta'riḍ*<sup>69</sup> and the grammatical *lahn*<sup>70</sup> both of which should be avoided anyway in composition, but nowhere is the rhetorical *lahn* listed by him as a trope in stylistics.

Ibn Wahb al-Kātib was the first to give a somewhat systematic and detailed analysis of rhetorical *lahn*. It may be noted, however, that he was not oblivious of the grammatical *lahn*, that is, the one signifying linguistic mistake, which he defines as any usage that is contrary to *i'rāb*.<sup>71</sup> To him, the rhetorical *lahn* is a type of *kināya* or *ta'riḍ*; the opposite of *taṣrīḥ*.<sup>72</sup> He was followed in this definition by Abū Hilāl al-'Askarī (d. after 395/1005) who goes on to indicate the similarity between rhetorical *lahn* and *tawriya*.<sup>73</sup> Prominent contributors to the discourse on rhetorical *lahn* include Abū 'Alī al-Qālī (d. 356/967), Ḥamza al-İṣfahānī (d. 360/970) and al-Ma'arrī (d. 449 / 1057).<sup>74</sup> Ibn Wahb goes on to illustrate with examples, some of the motives for rhetorical *lahn*. These include, *ta'zīm* (show of respect), *takhfīf* (moderation), *istiḥyā'* (diffidence), *buqyā* (reservation), *inṣāf* (equity), and *ihtirās* (diplomacy).<sup>75</sup> That rhetorical *lahn* had evolved into a stylistic device strong enough to be listed by Ibn Wahb along with other figures of speech, such as *tashbīh* (simile), *ramz* (symbolism), *waḥy* (non-oral expression), *isti'āra* (metaphor), *amthāl* (parables), and *luḡz* (riddle), is indicative of the importance it had assumed in the scheme of allusive tropes as formalized in the theoretical discourse of the 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>-century.<sup>76</sup>

But the final credit for the systematisation of the discussion on rhetorical *lahn* belongs to Ibn Rashīq (d. 456/1063), although the ground for this, as shown from our discussion so far, was prepared by Ibn Wahb. In his enumeration of allusive tropes in literary compositions, Ibn Rashīq lists *lahn* as a subtype and defines it as a kind of expression whose import-- although

<sup>67</sup> *Kitāb al-Badī'*, ed. I. Kratchkovsky (London, 1935), 64-65.

<sup>68</sup> *Naqd al-shi'r*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mun'im Khafājī (Beirut, n.d.), 157-59.

<sup>69</sup> See his *'Iyār al-shi'r*, ed. 'Abbās 'Abd al-Sātir (Beirut, 1982), 34.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 20. A useful study on grammatical *lahn* is Aḥmad Muḥammad Qaddūr, '*Al-'Arabiyyat al-Fuṣḥā wa-Mushkilat al-Lahn*', *Majallat Majma' al-Luḡhat al-'Arabiyya bi-Dimashq*, Vol. 69, Nr 1 (1994) 19-90.

<sup>71</sup> *Naqd al-nāthir*, 143

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 59: "*wa-ammā l-lahnu, fa-huwa l-ta'riḍu bi-l-shay'in min ghayri taṣrīḥin awi-l-kināyatu 'anhu bi-ghayrihi...*"

<sup>73</sup> Al-'Askarī, *Kitāb al-Ṣinā'atayn*, 407.

<sup>74</sup> Ullmann, *Beiträge*, 21.

<sup>75</sup> *Naqd al-nāthir*, 59-61.

<sup>76</sup> For additional information on which see *Encyclopaedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. J.S. Meisami and P. Starkey (London and New York, 1998), i, 81-83, s.v. "allusion and intertextuality"; i, 398, s.v. "ishāra"; ii. 656-62, s.v. "rhetorical figure".

not expressed in the usual and familiar manner-- is comprehended by the addressee. Since the realisation of such an import often involves perceptiveness of mind and intelligence, he argues, *al-muḥājāt* had become the alternative reference term for it.<sup>77</sup> As far as the available literature would allow us to conclude, this is one of the most detailed and explicit definitions of *lahn* in the context of cognate stylistic tropes as identified and illustrated by literary theorists. I mentioned above the seminal contribution by Ibn Durayd in relating *lahn* to *lughz* (riddle/puzzle) and Ibn Rashīq's extrapolation from this by citing *muḥājāt* as an alternate or cognate term, and this is quite remarkable.<sup>78</sup> Still more remarkable is the equation between *mufāṭana* and *muḥājāt*, that is, is to engage in a disputation with someone with a view to establishing who is more superior in intelligence.<sup>79</sup> Interestingly, *mulāḥana* is also given as a synonym of the former.<sup>80</sup> So much is obvious about the relationship among all the three terms as indicators of allusive usage that can be unlocked only through the instrumentality of intelligence.

Although *ta'riḍ*, *kināya*, and cognate figures of speech continue to feature in the scholarly discourse of the medieval period, for example, in Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī (d. 466/1073),<sup>81</sup> al-Marghīnānī (fl. 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup>-century),<sup>82</sup> 'Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (d. 471/1078),<sup>83</sup> 'Alī b. Aflaḥ (d. 535/1141),<sup>84</sup> Usāma Ibn Munqidh (d. 584/1188),<sup>85</sup> and Ibn al-Athīr (d. 637/1239),<sup>86</sup> to mention but a few, the rhetorical *lahn* was treated with genteel abandonment. It is difficult to say with any definitive precision why this is so. But we may hazard a conjecture with a brittle assertiveness; the overwhelming prominence of the term *lahn* in the sense of inaccurate linguistic usage in the examination of which several works had been authored,<sup>87</sup> may have

<sup>77</sup> Ibn Rashīq, *al-'Umda*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn, 'Abd Ḥamīd (Cairo, 1963), i, 307-8: "*wa-mina l-ishārāt al-lahn: wa-huwa kalāmun ya'rifuhu l-mukhāṭab bi-faḥwāhu wa-in kāna 'alā ghayri wajhih. . .*"

<sup>78</sup> See note 54 above.

<sup>79</sup> See E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (London & Edinburgh, 1877), 2418, s. v. '*faṭana*'.

<sup>80</sup> A statement attributed to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 102/720) reads "'*ajibtu liman laḥāna l-nāsa kayfa lā ya'rifu jawāmi'a l-kalim*", *ay fāṭanahum*. (I wonder at him, who disputes with people in order to prove his superior intelligence, how is it that he does not know [how to employ] concise but comprehensive idioms). See al-Jawharī, *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, ed. Aḥmad 'Abd Ghaffūr 'Aṭṭār (Cairo, 1982), vi, 2194, s. v. '*laḥana*'. Cf. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, i, 458, s.v. '*jama'a*'.

<sup>81</sup> *Sirr al-faṣāḥa*, (Beirut, 1982), 163-66.

<sup>82</sup> *Kitāb al-Maḥāsīn fī l-naẓm wa-l-nathr*, q.v. in G.J. van Gelder, *Two Arabic Treatises on Stylistics* (Istanbul & Leiden, 1987), fol 101f.

<sup>83</sup> *Dalā'il al-i'jāz* ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mun'im Khafājī (Cairo, 1979), 110ff.

<sup>84</sup> *Muqaddimat Ibn Aflah*, q.v. in G.J. Van Gelder, *Two Arabic Treatises on Stylistics*, fol. 25f.

<sup>85</sup> *Al-Badī fī l-naqd al-shi'r*, ed. A. A. Badawī & Ḥamīd 'Abd al- Majīd (Cairo, 1960), 99-104.

<sup>86</sup> *Al-Mathal al-sā'ir*, ed. Aḥmad al-Ḥūfī & Badawī Ṭabāna (Cairo, 1959-63), iii, 49-75.

<sup>87</sup> Al-Ḥarīrī's (d. 516/1122) *Durratu l-ghawwās* is considered to be the most outstanding, extant work in the genre. A comprehensive, chronological listing of works on grammatical *lahn* is to be found in U. Rizzitano's preface to his analysis of *Tathqīf al-lisān wa-talqīh al-jinān* by 'Umar b. Khalaf (d. 501-1107), otherwise called Ibn Makkī al-Saqī. See *Majallat Markaz Dirāsāt al-Sharqiyya li- l-Ābā' al-Fransiskian bi-l-Qāhira*, Vol. 5, 1995 = *Studia et documenta Orientalia*, 5, *Centro di Studi orientanli della Custodia Franciscana di Terra Santa* (Cairo, 1956), 27 pp.

supplanted or at least reduced the interest in any future consideration of the term as a rhetorical marker. This hypothesis looks attractive although not readily demonstrable, and may require a further investigation. But if the insight afforded by Ibn Rashīq is anything to go by, it will be easy to conclude that rhetorical *lahn* started to fizzle out no sooner than it was established. The cognate terms for the trope had become exceedingly popular and eirenic as to commit *lahn* as a rhetorical term into the abyss of intellectual archaeology.<sup>88</sup>

## 10.0 Conclusion

This essay has attempted to examine additional shades of meanings and ideas identified with the term *lahn* in both the philological and rhetorical traditions of the Arabic-Islamic scholarship. In the process, it has also tried to elaborate on some of the significations already explicated in the historic studies by Fück and Ullmann. Although Ibn Durayd was the first to faintly adumbrate what would later be formalized as rhetorical *lahn*, the ultimate credit for imposing some order on the various strands of interpretive materials as were available in the theoretical discourse on allusive tropes belongs to Ibn Rashīq, who was anyway building on the model that was established by Ibn Wahb, albeit without any explicit acknowledgement. It is significant to note that Ibn Rashīq lists *lahn* among other tropes which he discusses under the term *al-ishārāt* (allusions/signposts). But then the success achieved by him appears not to have won any sustainable or lasting admiration, as later discussions in the theoretical discourse appear to have either ignored rhetorical *lahn* or employed cognate terms in its stead for veiled allusion and riddle. In his analysis and illustration of it, Ibn Rashīq says that *muḥājāt* had by his time become the popular, alternative reference word for the trope.<sup>89</sup> About this we have said much above. But even in the late medieval period, the two major rhetorical schools, namely, the “*badī*’ school” for which Ibn Abī l-Iṣḥā‘ (d. 564/1256) and Ibn Ḥijja al-Ḥamawī (d. 837/1434) can be taken as key representatives, and the “scholastic school” for which al-Sakkākī (d. 626/1229), al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī (d. 739/1338) stand out, the term seems to have been treated with genteel abandonment. Even the poet Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. 749/1349) who set a new trend in the rhetorical discourse and classification with his *badī*’*yya* does not seem to have found any sub-division that could accommodate rhetorical *lahn*, and the final nail in the coffin seems to have been put by ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731) and al-Khūrī Arsānyūs al-Fākhūrī (fl. 19<sup>th</sup> cent). Whatever was responsible for

<sup>88</sup> Tropes such as *mu’ammā*, *muḥājāt*, *ramz*, *mu’āyāt* had become interchangeable or alternative reference terms to rhetorical *lahn*, as can be inferred from the following: “Qāla al-Khafājī fī *Shifā’ al-ghalīl*: “Malāḥinu l-‘Arab alghāzuhā; wa-hiya l-muḥājāt li-annahā tuḥīru l-ḥijā wa-l-mu’āyāt wa-l-ramz wa-l-mu’ammā”. See al-Jazarī, *Dhayl al-malāḥin*, in Ibn Durayd, *Kitāb al-malāḥin*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Ṭafāyish, (Cairo, 1347 AH), 74.

<sup>89</sup> Ibn Rashīq, *al-‘Umda*, 308: “*wa-yusammīhi l-nāsu fī waqtinā hādhā al-Muḥājāt, li-dalālat al-ḥijā ‘alayhi*”.

this may also be difficult to establish. Nevertheless, the negative implication of the word as a reference term for faulty and infelicitous linguistic usage with a strong root in intellectual antiquity is certainly too significant to be ignored. After all, Sībawayhi, who started with the study of *ḥadīth* had to abandon it in order to pursue a subject of study in which he would not be found to be committing *lain*.<sup>90</sup> This remarkable attachment of the term to solecism, already adduced for the post-Ibn Rashīq's period, may equally be valid here; the drawback has been too strong for other referents of the term to be divested of the overwhelming negative signification which belonged in the philological realm. In any case, one thing has been established again in this study, and that is the elasticity of the Arabic terminological tradition that accommodates the characterization of different phenomena in related and unrelated subjects with similar or identical terms. The emergence of rhetorical *lahn* in the trail of significations which belonged in the realm of philological and Qur'ānic discourses illustrates very vividly the cross currents in the tradition of Arabic-Islamic intellectual culture.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 'Abd al-Wāhid b. 'Umar, *Akhbār al-naḥwiyyīn*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Banā, Cairo, 1981.
- Abū Tammām, *Kitāb al-Waḥshiyyāt: al-Hamāsa al-ṣuḡhrā*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Maymanī, Cairo, 1963.
- 'Askarī, Abū Hilāl al-, *Kitāb al-Ṣinā'atayn*, ed. Muḥammad Qumayḥa, Beirut, 1984.
- Badawi, El Said M. & Abdul Haleem, Muhammad, *Arabic-English Dictionary of Quranic Usage*, Leiden, 2008.
- Baghdādī, 'Abd al-Qādir b. 'Umar al-, *Khizānat al-adab*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 13 vols, Cairo, 1967-86
- Baalbaki, Ramzi, ed. *The Early Islamic Grammatical Tradition*, Aldershot, 2007.
- Bakrī, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-'Azīz Abū 'Ubayd al-, *Simt al-ālī*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Maymanī, 2 vols, Cairo, 1936.
- Bevan, A. A., *The Naḳā'id of Jarir and al-Farazdaq*, Leiden, 1905-07.
- Bonebakker, S. A., *Some Early Definitions of the Tawriya and Ṣafadī's Faḍḍ al-Xitām 'an al-Tawriya wa-Istikhdam*, The Hague and Paris, 1966.
- Bukhārī, Muhammad b. Ismā'īl al-, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khan, 9 vols, Beirut, 1985.
- Brockelmann, C., 'Beiträge zur Geschichte der arabischen Sprachwissenschaft', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 13 (1898), 29-46.
- Cassino, Alberí Monte, *Flores Rhetorici* (Flowers of Rhetoric), translated by J. M. Miller, in *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. Joseph M. Miller et al, Bloomington and Indiana, 1974.
- Ditters, E, and Motzki, H. (eds). *Approaches to Arabic Linguistics: Presented to Kees Versteegh on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday*, Leiden, 2007, Preface xi-xiv.
- Encyclopaedia of Arabic Language and Literature*, ed. K. Versteegh, 3 vols, Leiden, 2006-7, ii, 628a-34a, s.v. 'lahn'.

<sup>90</sup> See Ramzi Baalbaki, ed. *The Early Islamic Grammatical Tradition* (Aldershot), 2007, Introduction xiii-xlii (p. xxiv); al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas al-mukhtaṣar min al-muqtabas*, ed. R. Sellheim (Wiesbaden, 1964), 95.

- Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, ed. J.S. Meisami & P. Starkey, 2 vols, London & New York, 1998.
- Farazdaq, al-, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Farazdaq*, ed. Iliyyā al-Hāwī, Beirut, 1983.
- Encyclopaedia of Islam* (NE), 12 vols, Leiden etc, 1960-2004.
- Fück, J. 'Die Würzel l-ḥ-n- und ihre Ableitungen', in 'Arabiyya. Untersuchungen zur arabischen Sprach- und Stilgeschichte, Berlin, 1950, 128-35.
- Gelder, G. J. H van, ed. *Two Arabic Treatises on Stylistics*, Istanbul & Leiden, 1987.
- Gelder G. J. H. van, review of Herbjørn Jenssen's *The Subtleties and Secrets of the Arabic Language: Preliminary Investigations in al-Qazwīnī's Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ* (Bergen, 1998), in *Edebiyāt –New Series*, Vol. 12 (2001), 1:123-28.
- Gilliot, Claude and Larcher, Pierre, (2003), "Language and Style of the Qur'ān", in *Encyclopaedia of the Qur'ān*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, 6 vols, Leiden: Brill, 2001-6, iii, 109-35.
- Ḥamawī, Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Ḥijja al-, *Thamarāt al-awraq*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo, 1971.
- Ibn 'Abd Rabbihī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, *al-'Iqd al-farīd*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn et al., Cairo, 1956.
- Ibn Aflaḥ, 'Alī, *Muqaddimat Ibn Aflaḥ*, in G.J. van Gelder, ed. *Two Arabic Treatises on Stylistics*, Istanbul & Leiden, 1987.
- Ibn al-Athīr, Naṣr Allāh b. Muḥammad Ḍiyā' al-Dīn, *Al-Mathal al-sā'ir*, ed. Aḥmad al-Ḥūfī & Badawī Ṭubāna, 4 vols, Cairo, 1959-63.
- Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 'Abd Allāh, *Kitāb al-Badī'*, ed. I. Kratchkovsky, London, 1935.
- Ibn al-Sikkīt, Ya'qūb b. Ishāq, *Kanz al-ḥuffāz fī kitāb Tahdhīb al-alfāz – hadhdhabahu al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī*, ed. Louis Cheikho, Beirut, 1895.
- Ibn Durayd, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, *al-Jamhara fī l-lugha*, Hyderabad, 1345AH.
- Ibn Durayd, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, *Kitāb al-Malāḥin*, ed. H. Thorbecke, Heidelberg, 1882.
- Ibn Durayd, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan, *Kitāb al-Malāḥin*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Ṭafāyyish al-Jazarī, Cairo, 1347/1928.
- Ibn Ja'far, Qudāma, *Naqd al-shi'r*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mun'im Khafājī, Beirut, n.d.
- Ibn Manzūr, Muḥammad b. Mukarram, *Lisān al-'Arab*, Beirut, 1956.
- Ibn Munqidh, Usāma, *Al-Badī' fī naqd al-shi'r*, ed. Amad A. Badawī & Ḥāmid 'Abd al-Majīd, Cairo, 1960.
- Ibn Qutayba, 'Abd Allāh b. Muslim, *al-Shi'r wa-l-shu'arā'*, Beirut, 1984.
- Ibn Rashīq, al-Ḥasan, *al-'Umda*, ed. Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Dīn, 'Abd Hamīd, Cairo, 1963.
- Ibn Sinān al-Khafājī, Muḥammad b. Sa'īd, *Sirr al-faṣāḥa*, ed. 'Abd al-Muta'ālī al-Ṣa'īdī, Beirut, 1982.
- Ibn Ṭabātabā, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad, *Iyār al-shi'r*, ed. 'Abbās 'Abd al-Sātīr, Beirut, 1982.
- Ibn Wahb al-Kātib, Ibrāhīm, *Naqd al-nathr*, 143. ed. Ṭahā Ḥusayn & 'Abd al-Hamīd al-'Abbādī, Beirut, 1982.
- Iṣfahānī, 'Alī b. Ḥusayn Abū l-Faraj al-, *Maqātil al-Tālibiyyīn*, ed. al-Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqr, Cairo, 1949.
- Jāḥiẓ, 'Amr b. Baḥr al-, *al-Bayān wa l-tabyīn*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 4 vols Cairo, 1968.
- Jāḥiẓ, 'Amr b. Baḥr al-, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, 4 vols, Cairo, 1965.
- Jawharī, Ismā'īl b. Ḥammād al- *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, ed. Aḥmad 'Abd Ghaffūr 'Aṭṭār, 6 vols, Cairo, 1982.
- Jazarī, Ibrāhīm al-Ṭafāyyish al-, *Dhayl al-malāḥin*, in Ibn Durayd, *Kitāb al-malāḥin*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Ṭafāyyish al-Jazarī, Cairo, 1347/1928, 63-169.
- Jumahī, Ibn Sallām al-, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shu'arā'*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākīr, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Cairo, 1974.
- Jurjānī, 'Abd al-Qāḥir al-, *Dalā'il al-i'jāz* ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Khafājī, Cairo, 1979.
- Khalīl b. Aḥmad, al-, *Kitāb al-'Ayn*, ed. Mahdī al-Makhzūmī & Ibrāhīm al-Sāmarrā'i, 8 vols, Baghdad, 1980-85.
- Labīd b. Rabī'a, *Sharḥ Dīwān Labīd Ibn Rabī'a al-'Āmirī*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās, Kuwait, 1962.
- Lane, E. W., *Arabic-English Lexicon*, 2 Vols, London & Edinburgh, 1877.

- Larcher, Pierre, "Les origines de la grammaire Arabe selon la tradition: distribution, interpretation, discussion", in Everhard Ditters and H. Motzki (eds), *Approaches to Arabic Linguistics: Presented to Kees Versteegh on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday*, Leiden, 2007, 113-134.
- Marayātī Walāyah & Mīr 'Alam, *ʿIlm al-ta'miya wa-'stikhrāj al-Mu'ammā 'inda l-'Arab*, Damascus, 1986.
- Marayātī, M. Mir 'Alam and M. H. Tayyan, *Al-Kindī's Treatise on Crypto Analysis. Risāla fī 'stikhrāj al-Mu'ammā*, Riyadh, 2002
- Marghinānī, Naṣr b. Al-Ḥasan al-, *Kitāb al-Maḥāsīn fī l-naẓm wa-l-nathr*, q.v. in G. J. van Gelder, *Two Arabic Treatises on Stylistics*, Istanbul & Leiden, 1987.
- Marzubānī, Muḥammad b. 'Imrān al-, *al-Muwashshah*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī, Cairo, 1996.
- Marzubānī, Muḥammad b. 'Imrān al-, *Mu'jam al-shu'arā'*, ed. 'Abd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj, Cairo, 1960.
- Marzubānī, Muḥammad b. 'Imrān al-, *Nūr al-qabas al-mukhtaṣar min al-muqtabas*, ed. R. Sellheim, Wiesbaden, 1964.
- Marzūqī, Aḥmad b. Muḥamad al-, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsa*, ed. Aḥmad Amīn & 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn, Cairo, 1951-53.
- Murtaḍā, 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al- Sharīf al-, *Amālī*, ed. Muḥammad Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, Cairo, 1954.
- Nābighat Banī Shaybān, *Dīwān Nābighat Banī Shaybān*, ed. 'Abd al-Karīm Ibrāhīm Ya'qūb, Damascus, 1987.
- Nöldeke, Th., 'Bemerkungen zu al-Kisā'ī's Schrift über die Sprachfehler des Volkes', *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*, 13 (1898), 111-15.
- Pasha, Khayr al-Dīn Shamsī, *'al-Alghāz wa-l-aḥājī wa-l-mu'ammayāt'*, *Majallat Majma' al-Lughat al-'Arabiyyah bi-Dimashq*, Vol. 71, Pt 4 (1996), 768-816.
- Qaddūr, Aḥmad Muḥammad, *'Al-'Arabiyyat al-Fuṣḥā wa-Mushkilat al-Laḥn'*, *Majallat Majma' al-Lughat al-'Arabiyyah bi-Dimashq*, Vol. 69 Nr 1 (1994), 19-90.
- Qālī, Ismā'īl b. Al-Qāsim Abū Alī al-, *Amālī*, Cairo, 1926.
- Qudāma b. Ja'far, *Jawāhir al-alfāz*, ed. Muhammad Muhyī al-Dīn 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, Beirut, 1979.
- Rizzitano, U., 'Preface to his analysis of *Tathqīf al-lisān wa-talqīh al-jinān* by 'Umar b. Khalaf', *Majallat Markaz Dirāsāt al-Sharqiyya li- l-Ābā' al-Fransiskian bi-l-Qāhira*, Vol. 5 1995 = *Studia et documenta Orientalia*, 5, *Centro di Studi orientanli della Custodia Francescana di Terra Santa* (Cairo, 1956), 27 pp.
- Sanni, Amidu, 'A Weak Point in a Strong Chain: On *ikfā'* in Arabic Poetics', *Arabica*, 43 (1996), 361-68.
- Sanni, Amidu, 'Again on *Taḍmīn* in Arabic Theoretical Discourse', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 61, pt 1 (1998), pp. 1-19.
- Sanni, Amidu, 'Arabic Grammar: an Islamic Philological Science in a New Light', *Islamic Studies*, 30, Nr 3 (1991), pp. 403-12.
- Sanni, Amidu, 'Interpretations in a Theoretical Tradition: On *ītā'* in Arabic Poetics', *Journal of Arabic Literature*, vol. 21 (1990), 155-62.
- Sanni, Amidu, '*Laḥn* in the Koran and its Literatures: Issues and Meanings in Textual Analysis and Recitational Discourse', in Mohammad Nekroumi & Jan Meise (eds.), *Modern Controversies in Qur'ānic Studies* (Bonner Islamstudien BIS Band 7), Hamburg, 2008, forthcoming.
- Sanni, Amidu, 'On *Taḍmīn* (Enjambment) and Structural Coherence in Classical Arabic Poetry', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, vol. 52 (1989), 463-66.
- Sanni, Amidu, 'The Original Sin in Arabic Poetics', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 55, pt 1 (1992), 9-15.
- Sezgin, Fuat, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, Leiden, 1967ff.
- Shaybānī, Ishāq b. Mīrār Abū 'Amr al-, *Kitāb al-Jīm*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī et al, Cairo, 1974ff.
- Tha'ālibī, 'Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad al-, *Kitāb Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ*, ed. Maḥmūd al-Sumkarī, Cairo, 1908.
- Tha'lab, Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā, *Qawā'id al-shi'r*, ed. Ramaḍān 'Abd al-Tawwāb, Cairo, 1966.
- Ṭirimmāh b. al-Ḥakīm al-, *Dīwān al-Ṭirimmāh b. al-Ḥakīm al-Ṭā'ī*, ed. F. Krenkow, London, 1927.
- Troupeau, Gérard, *Lexique-Index du Kitāb de Sibawayhi*, editions Klincksiek, Paris, 1976.

- Ullmann, Manfred ed. *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache*, Wiesbaden, 1983.
- Ullmann, Manfred, *Wa-ḥairu l-ḥadīṭi mā kāna laḥnan – Beiträge zur Lexikographie des Klassischen Arabisch Nr 1*, München, 1979.
- Ushnāndānī, Saʿīd b. Hārūn al-, *Maʿānī ʿl-shiʿr*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid, Beirut, 1964.
- Wild, Stefan, “Arabic avant La Lettre, Divine, Prophetic, and Heroic Arabic”, in E. Ditters and H. Motzki (eds). *Approaches to Arabic Linguistics*, Leiden, Boston, 2007, 189-208.
- Yāqūt b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Rūmī, *Irshād al-ʿarīb*, ed. D.S. Margoliouth, London, 1907ff.
- Zamakhsharī, Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-, *Asās al-balāgha*, Beirut, 1965.
- Ziriklī, Khayr al-Dīn al-, *al-Aʿlām*, Beirut, 1954ff.