SYNTAX, PRAGMATICS, POETRY: TOWARD A REAPPRAISAL OF TA’LAB’S
QAWĀ’ IDU L-SĪ R

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Abstract. This paper aims to provide a critical review of the results reached by Arabists in their study of the Qawā’ idu l-sī r by Ta’lab, highlighting various implications that such outcomes can offer to Arab(ic) Linguistics. The paper is also meant to pave the way toward an integrated approach to Arabic medieval poetics as a whole, analyzing it through interpretive tools rooted not only in literary criticism, but in the linguistic science as well. What emerges is that such an approach will bring to light a thus far under-researched conceptual continuity, tying the Qawā’ idu l-sī r to subsequent treatises on Arabic poetics, such as the Naqda l-sī r and Minhāġu l-bulagā’.

Keywords: Syntax, pragmatics, Arabic poetry, Ta’lab, Qawā’ idu l-sī r, Qudāmah, al-Qarṭāğanī

1. The place of Qawā’ idu l-sī r in modern scholarship

Ta’lab (d. 291/904) is historically one of the most renowned figures of Arabic linguistic thought, so that we hardly need to mention the primary aspects of his life. However, there is one facet of Ta’lab’s scientific work that still remains underrepresented in modern scholarship: his interest in Arabic poetry, which according to medieval scholars led to his outstanding treatise of Arabic poetics, the so-called Qawā’ idu l-sī r (QŠ henceforth).

In their investigation of the Arabic poetics, as laid out by the medieval Arab literati, modern Arabists have seemingly thus far given but a cursory nod to Ta’lab and, despite the relatively large number of critical editions devoted to the QŠ, specifically those of Schiaparelli (1890), Ḥatīgī (1948), and ‘Abduttawwāb (1966), only the studies undertaken by Noldeke (1890), Trabulsī (1955: 81-85, 215-216), Bonebakker (1956: Introduction, 22-25), Šallām (1969: 223-234) and Heinrichs (1971, 1973) have been concerned with Ta’lab’s interest in Arabic poetry, whereas more recent scholars have limited themselves to simply

1 Interested readers can refer to Dayf (1968: 223-237), Bernard (2000) and Osti (2013) for further information.
2 Heinrichs (1971, 1973) doesn’t mention Šallām (1969) among the modern Arabic scholars who have investigated the QŠ.

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repeating these analyses (see e.g. von Gelder 1982: 46-48, Ouyang 1997: 181, 214, and Hussein 2004: 302). In the introduction to his accurate critical edition of the QS, ‘Abduttawwāb (1966: 15-16) makes no exception to this trend, as he fully subscribes to Nöldeke’s ideas, often reporting them literally in Arabic translation.

This paper thus aims to provide a critical review of the main results the aforementioned handful of scholars reached in their study of Ta’lab’s QS, highlighting various implications that such results can offer to Arab(ic) Linguistics. The paper is also meant to pave the way toward an integrated approach to Arabic medieval poetics as a whole, analyzing it through interpretive tools rooted not only in literary criticism, but in the linguistic science as well. What emerges is that such an approach will bring to light a thus far under-researched conceptual continuity, tying the QS to subsequent treatises on Arabic poetics, such as the Naqdul isā r and Minḥāgul il-bulaqī.’

2. The text and its contents

Given the significant role assumed by the QS in Ta’lab’s theory of poetry and, more generally, in Arabic literary theory, we can conveniently begin by summarizing its main contents. To this end, the division of the QS into five conceptual sections, as initially proposed by ‘Abduttawwāb (1966: 16-18), is in effect particularly useful (cp. also Heinrichs 1971: 212):

- Section I introduces qawā’idu l-sī’r, corresponding to four types of syntactic structures: ‘amr ‘command’, nahy ‘prohibition’, ḥabar ‘statement’, istiḥbār ‘question’ (‘qawā’idu l-sī’r: ‘arba’ in ‘amrun wa-naḥyün wa-ḥabarun wa-istiḥbār’: QS, 31);

- Section II deals with notions such as madḥ, ḥiḡā’, etc., which subsequent literary critics label as ‘agrād (‘tumma tatfarra’u hāḏīhi l- usūlu’ ilā madīn wa-hiḡā’ in’, etc.: QS, 31);

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4 Sect. 5 expounds the empirical basis for interpreting qawā’id as syntactic structures.
- Section III deals with various figures of speech, and related poetic licenses;

- Section IV identifies two viable practices for the composition of elegant poetry: ǧazālātu 1-l-aʃ, ‘eloquent style’ and ittisāq 1-nażm ‘a well-balanced and self-contained metrical unit’;

- Section V presents a five-fold classification of Arabic verse, sensitive to semantic and metrical criteria.

3. The text’s transmission, reception and attribution

It is well established among scholars that, in addition to his important contribution to the field of Arabic grammar, Ṭa’lab compiled over 40 works on Koranic studies, Arabic lexicography and poetry (Bernards 2000). This knowledge on his attributed works is mainly based on Ibn al-Nadim (d. 385/995), who credits Ṭa’lab for writing Kitābu maʿāni l-ṣiʿr and Kitābu 1-hiğā’, as well as commenting various pre-Islamic poems, and dedicating to poetic topics some of the philological discussions later collected into the work al-Maḡālis (‘wa-li-ṣabī l-abbāsī muqālasātun amīlā-hā alā aʃḥābi-hi fi maḡālisī-hi taḥtawī alā qit atan min-a l-nahwi wa-luḏati wa-l-aḥbārī wa-maʿānī l-qrū ʿānī wa-l-ṣīr ri ... wa-ʿamila ʿabu l-abbāsī qit atan min ašʿārī l-fuhūl’: al-Fiḥrist, I, 81).

Curiously enough, Ibn al-Nadim’s al-Fiḥrist doesn’t include the QŠ in the list of Ṭa’lab’s works on Arabic poetry, nor, generally speaking, do biographical dictionaries mention it among his works (ʿAbduttawwāb 1966: 15). However, this fact doesn’t necessarily contradict the attribution of the QŠ to Ṭa’lab, if we concur with ʿAbduttawwāb (1966: 16) that it is not unusual for Classical Arabic technical literature to escape the attention of biographers: by way of illustration, we know from the Ġamharatu l-ʾamīlī by al-ʾAskari (d. 395/1005), the Maḡmaʿu l-ʾamīlī of al-Maydanī (d. 518/1124), and the Ḥizānatu l-ʾadāb by al-ʾBaghdādī (1093/1682) that Muʿarrīg al-Sadūsī (d. 195/810) wrote a work entitled Kitābu l-ʾamīlī, which nonetheless fails to be mentioned in the authoritative biographical dictionary Kitābu l-jābaqaṭ by Ibn Saʿd (d. 230/845).

However, according to ʿAbduttawwāb (Ibidem), the arguments supporting Ṭa’lab’s authorship of the QŠ go beyond these philological observations, and encompass indirect evidence of a comparative nature: in its conciseness, the style of the QŠ is highly reminiscent
of that found in another work by Ṭaʿlab, the Kitābu ḥaṣīḥ (cp. al-Fihrist, I, 81). What’s more, the comparative evidence for attributing the Q صلى الله عليه وسلم to Ṭaʿlab is also direct, since both the extant manuscripts of this work, namely Vatican manuscript no. 357 and al-Azhar manuscript no. 1181 (7323, Abaza collection), explicitly indicate Ṭaʿlab as its author. Remarkably, this sort of evidence wasn’t available to Schiaparelli (1890), Nöldeke (1890), Ḥafṣī (1948), Bonebakker (1956), etc., who could only rely on the Vatican manuscript in preparing their critical editions or studies of the Q صلى الله عليه وسلم, since the al-Azhar manuscript was only later discovered by ’Abduttawwāb (1966: 12).

Finally, virtually any scholar that has investigated the Q صلى الله عليه وسلم would be inclined to attribute it to Ṭaʿlab on the basis of an epistemological argument: thus, Nöldeke (1890), ’Abduttawwāb (1966) and Heinrichs (1971) regard the Kufan grammarian as the author of this treatise because in describing Arabic poetry, it adopts interpretive tools typical of linguistic analysis, such as the notions amr, nahi, ḥabar, istithbār. Nevertheless, this sort of epistemological argument is less compelling than it might appear at first, considering that interpretive tools borrowed from Arabic grammar are actually found in Arabic medieval treatises on poetry authored by literary critics rather than grammarians. For instance, Qudāmah (d. 337/948?) and al-Qartājānī (d. 684/1285), who Cantarino (1975) regards as major figures of the golden age of Arabic poetics, seemingly assign to the genuinely linguistic notions lafẓ and ma nā (“signifier” and “signified”, respectively) a privileged role in their theories.

This linguistic attitude is adamantly clear in the case of Qudāmah, where a four-fold system of theoretical underpinnings emerges from his work Naqdū ʿl-šiʿr, 9, consisting of lafẓ, ma nā, meter and rhyme. This appears to be less evident in the case of al-Qartājānī, but may become clearer below. Badawi (1962: 88-89) observes that the Andalusian scholar al-Qartājānī faithfully follows Aristotle’s dictum that fantasy (ṭaḥyūl) is a crucial ingredient of any poetical discourse, yet he also adapts it to his own cultural context, arguing that the epic genre depicted in Greek poetry is one of the loci of manifestation of fantasy, whereas this genre is simply not portrayed in Arabic poetry:

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5 The English terms ‘form’ and ‘meaning’ are consciously avoided here, and the terms ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’ adopted instead, since when denoting a sound-string conceptually opposed to ‘meaning’, the term ‘form’ could wrongly represent ‘meaning’ as having no form, which is actually not the case (cp. the Saussurean axiom that language as a whole “est forme et non substance”).
wa-hažim [...] yużarriq boynâ l-ši’r wa-l-ḥāṭābah ʾala ʾasas ʾanna l-ši’r ya tamiḏ ʾalā l-
ṭahyil baynâmâ l-ḥaṭābah ya tamiḏ ʾalā l-ʾiqnâ’ [...] wa-yata arraḍ li-ʾanwâ’ al-ši’r al-
ḥaṣānî [...] wa-hya ʾašyâ’ lām taqa’ fi l-wuĝûd [...] wa-hwa yušār ʾilâ ši’r al-malāḥim
 [...] wa-lamâmā lam yara la-hu naqra’ fi l-ši’r al-araḏî marra bihi sarī an wa-lam
yatawaqqaf

Taken a step forward, there is also good reason to believe that in Arabic poetry the locus
of manifestation of fantasy is rather the conceptual pair lafz-ma’na, considering that in
Minhâgu l-bulâqâ’, II, 18-19 al-Qaratâqanî affirms that:

- fantasy (and persuasion) use(s) their own forms of expression (“ṣūratay l-tahyilī wa-l-
ʾiqnâ’”),

- such forms manifest themselves as signifier-signified pairs (“ʿinna l-maʿāniya l-
ṣuwaru”, “aqâma l-lajfū l-mu abbaru bi-hi hay aṭa ilkâ l-ṣūratî”),

- this holds especially in poetry (and in rhetoric: “al-ši’ ru wa-l-ḥaṭābatu yaḥtarikâni fi
mâddatî l-ma ʾanî”), or, somewhat simplifying: insofar as poetry is concerned, fantasy
(indirectly) manifests itself in the form of signifier-signified pairs.

We can infer from Minhâgu l-bulâqâ’, II, 18-19 that in al-Qaratâqanî’s interpretation of
Arabic poetry the conceptual pair lafz-ma’na is functionally equivalent to the Aristotelian
notion of the epic genre, in the sense that this linguistic pair mediates the conceptual
relationship between fantasy and poetry, just as the epic genre does. As a corollary, lafz-
ma’na not only occupies a significant role in Qudâmah’s theory of poetry, it is also

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6 For the sake of completeness, Minhâgu l-bulâqâ’, II, 18-19 is reproduced in its entirety below:

ʿinna l-ma ʾâniya l-ṣuwaru l-hâşılatu fi l-ʾaḏhâni ʾan l-ašyâʾ l-mawâqîdati l-l-aʿâmî [... ] ʾiǧā ʿubbira ʾan
ilkâ l-ṣūratî l-ḏaḥniyaṭi l-hâşılati ʾan l-ʾaḍrîkî aqâma l-lajfū l-mu abbaru bi-hi hay aṭa ilkâ l-ṣūratî l-
ḏaḥniyaṭi fi ʾaḏhâni l-ṣâmi lna wa-l-ʾaḏhâni-him [... ] ʾiḥâna l-l-ši’ ru wa-l-ḥaṭābatu yaḥtarikâni fi
mâddatî l-ma ʾanî wa-yafarîqâni bī-ṣūratay l-tahyilī wa-l-ʾiqnâ.

The ‘signified’ are the forms that arise in one’s mind subsequent to the eye’s perception of things. [...] If one
wanted to convey this form [of expression], as resulting from one’s perception, then the ‘signifier’, which is
typically apt to expression, sets up a symbol for it, [understandable] in the listeners’ perceptive faculty and mind.
[...] Poetry and rhetoric share the substance of the ‘signified’, whereas they differ as to their form, since they use
the forms of fantasy or persuasion, respectively.

7 In doing so, al-Qaratâqanî arguably applies to Arabic poetry an idea that Aristotle originally devised for human
language in general. The Greek philosopher, in fact, “apparently held that linguistic meaning derives from
imagery, spoken words being but the symbols of the inner images” (Thomas 2013, and references therein).
emphasized in the *ars poetica* of al-Qarṭāġānnī. A caveat is in order, however, since the
important point is not that these critics made use of the conceptual pair *lafz-ma'na*, which is
hardly surprising in light of the fact that the science of linguistics was among the pillars of
their polished education (Cantarino 1975: 46), but that this linguistic notion was *theoretically
relevant* to their literary framework of investigation\(^8\).

These epistemological considerations on the Arabic theory of poetry have, as alluded to
above, a significant import for the issue of attribution of the *QS*, since they show that the
presence of a linguistic attitude in this work doesn’t necessarily guarantee that it was authored
by a grammarian such as Ta’lab - contrary to a received view.

In sum, taking stock of the current state of research on the *QS*, we find that textual-
stylistic evidence (cp. *Kitābu l-faṣīḥ*) and transmission-related evidence (the failure to
mention technical literature by biographers; the converging opinion of manuscript copyists)
support the medieval traditional assertion that this work is a major outcome of Ta’lab’s
interest in poetry, whereas epistemological evidence (presence of a linguistic framework) is
far less cogent in this respect.

4. Intratextuality

The issue of attribution of the *QS* to Ta’lab discussed in the previous section is a non-
trivial philological controversy in the study of this treatise, which ʻAbduttawwāb (1966)
contributes to resolving convincingly.

Yet another philological issue the Egyptian scholar addresses in the introduction to his
critical edition of the *QS* is the fact that the interpretive tools presented within the treatise
differ considerably from those traditionally ascribed to Ta’lab’s analysis. According to
ʻAbduttawwāb (1966: 18), a telling example is the concept of *ikfā*: in his view, *QS*, 64 keeps
this notion distinct from that of *iqwā*, whereas Ta’lab’s teachings reported in the *al-Umdah*
by Ibn Raṣqa (d. 463/1070) define the former as synonymous to the latter (“wa-kalāmu-hu fi l-
*iqwā* wa-l- *ikfā* hunā yuḥālif mā runiya ‘an-hu fi l- *umdah*”).

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\(^8\) This is all the more so, if we take into account textual-historical research by Bernards and Nawas (1998: 103),
according to which the distinction between grammarians and literary critics is far less clear-cut than it was once
thought to be.
In greater detail, the relevant passage in *al-* Umdah (apud ’Abduttawwâb 1966: 18) reads as follows:

> wa-amma l-’ikfâ’u fa-hwa l-’iqwâ’u bi-‘ayni-hi ‘inda qillati l-’ulamâ’i ka-abi ‘amrin bni l-‘alâ’i wa-l-‘alâ’lili bni ‘ahtmada wa-yûnsa bni ḥabîbin wa-hwa qawlu ‘ahtmada bni yahyâ’ 1a ‘lab”

On the other hand, QS, 64, describes ‘*iqwâ’* as a poetic license allowing for a rhyme between two word-final vowels that have different values, e. g. *a*(:) rhyming with *i* in *b(i)sirâ*/*nahrâ* (“wa-l-’iqwâ’u mišq qawlî l-sâ’ir: [...] fa-b(i)sîrâ [...] wa-l-nahrî fa-kasara wa-rafa’a wa-našâba’”); and ‘*ikfâ’* as a poetic license allowing for a rhyme between two word-final consonants that are not identical, being instead “similar in pronunciation, such as *g* and *z*, or *n* and *m*, e. g. (mu ǧ̣ãli) (*‘aqyâq*zi (“wa-l-’ikfâ’u dũğhîlü l-ǧâli ‘alâ l-zâ’u, wa-l-nûnî ‘alâ l-mîmi wa-hyu l-’ahrufu l-nusâbâtatu ‘alâ l-lisân”)).

As can be gleaned from the comparison between the two passages, the problem pointed out by ’Abduttawwâb revolves around the two different predicates that the QS and *al-* Umdah combine with the subject *l-’ikfâ’u*, notably the definitions *dûğhîlü l-ǧâli*, etc., vs. *l-*’iqwâ’u *bi-‘ayni-hi*. While ’Abduttawwâb leaves this conundrum unsolved, a solution to it in principle can be found through a closer reading of the aforementioned definitions.

Beginning with the definition *l-*’iqwâ’u *bi-‘ayni-hi* recorded in *al-* Umdah, a case can be made for rendering the phrase *bi-‘ayni-hi* occurring in this passage as ‘in its essence’, rather than ‘itself’, since the latter is a frequent translation of *bi-‘ayni-hi* (Wright 1896: II, 272) that misguidedly overlooks the technical nuance that several primary sources give to the Arabic original (apud Lane: 1863, V, 2216, which accordingly glosses the word ‘*ayn* combined with a genitive (pro)noun as “*a thing’s nafs* [i. e. *self*]”, “*its déf [which means the same]*; and its *asl [as meaning its essence, or constituent substance]*”). Consequently, the translation of the nominal sentence *l-’ikfâ’u l-’iqwâ’u bi-‘ayni-hi* as “*ikfâ’* is ‘*iqwâ’*, in its essence” is justified since it is faithful to the technical context in which the Arabic phrase *bi-‘ayn-hi* occurs. An equally viable translation of the same sentence is “*ikfâ’* is the essence of ‘*iqwâ’*”, if we consider that the construction [Noun + *bi + ayn* + Suffix-pronoun] is transformationally derived from the construction [*‘ayn + Noun*] (Wright 1896: II, 281-282).

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9 In this passage, 1a ‘lab also describes a transmission chain relative to ‘*ikfâ’*, which includes, among others, al-Ḥalfî: see Bonebakker (1956: Introduction, 34-35) for details.

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Bearing this in mind, let’s now turn our attention to the definition *duḥšu l-ḏāḥi*, etc., which effectively involves the two consonantal classes *ḍ/z* and *n/m*, a statement that is grounded in two arguments:

- historically, Ta’lab was well acquainted with the linguistic theory of al-Ḥalīl (d. 175/791), as is inferred from his ability to recognize al-Ḥalīl’s influence on Sibawayhi’s *al-Kitāb* (“*qawl ṯaʿ lab ʾal-ʾuṣūli wa-l-masā ilu ṣiʾ l-kitābi li-l-ḥalīl”, Dayf 1968: 34), and the transmission-chain mentioned in fn. 9 above,

- epistemologically, al-Ḥalīl subsumed *ḍ/z* and *n/m* under the classes, respectively, of *ḥurīf al-ḏulq* and *l-hurīf al-liṭawiyyah* (“summiyat ḥādīhi l-hurīfu ḍulqan [. . .] min-hā ṣaltātun ṣalīqatum r l n [. . .] min-hā ṣalātun ṣafawiyyatun f b m”, “wa-l-zāʾ u wa-l-ḏāḥi wa-l-ṯāʾ u ṣaṭawiyyah”. Kitābu l-ʾaʾyn, I, 51, 58 and Fleisch 1961: I, 227).

Furthermore, this in-depth look at the definition *duḥšu l-ḏāḥi*, etc., has an interesting implication on a transphrastic analytical level: the definition of *iqwāʾ* that immediately precedes that of *ikfāʾ* in the text of the *QS* also involves a consonantal class, to wit *i, u, a* (“*fa-kasara wa-raṣaʾ a wa-naṣaba*”), which Arab grammarians actually conceptualize as ‘reduced’ consonants and/or syllabically conditioned allophones of *y, w, ʾalif*, respectively (Fleisch 1961: I, 232). Ta’lab follows this interpretive tradition, in that he adduces as an example of *iqwāʾ* the rhyme *(bīrāʾ/nahīr),* where this poetic license affects not only the ‘reduced’ consonant *i*, but also its full counterpart *ʾalif*. In particular, Ta’lab follows al-Ḥalīl’s teachings in this respect, since the order *i, u, a* in which the ‘reduced’ consonants are listed in *QS*, 64 reproduces the order *y, w, ʾalif*, in which their full counterparts are listed in *Kitāb al-ʾaʾyn*, I, 58 (“*wa-l-yāʾ u wa-l-wāw wa-l-ʾalif wa-l-hamza hawāʾ iyyah*”), in sharp contrast with later sources, where the order *ʾalif y, w* is found instead (see e. g. Fleisch 1961: I, 205, 215). In this light, a transphrastic analysis of the definitions of *iqwāʾ* and *ikfāʾ* reveals that in *QS*, 64 Ta’lab’s linguistic reasoning:

(A) posits a property shared by both these poetic licenses, i. e. the consonant; and (B) proceeds from *iqwāʾ*, which is sensitive to a particular case of consonant, i. e. the ‘reduced’ consonant, to *ikfāʾ*, which concerns its general case, i. e. the consonant proper.

10The linguistic reality of the consonant *ʾalif* lies more in its morphological behavior than phonological realization: see Fleisch (1961: I, 239-241) for details.
Broadly speaking, these two definitions show that in QS, 64 Ṭa’lab construes the notions of ‘iqwā’ and ‘ikfā’ as an inductive relationship, proceeding from particular to general (cp. B), consequently uniting the former to the latter by means of a common property (cp. A). It follows that the QS is informed by an inductive approach that is far from implausible, and under the circumstances in which the treatise was composed is totally expected, in view of the fact that the Kufan school adhered to by Ṭa’lab was systematically availing itself of induction (‘istiqrā’), as discussed in Carter (1999). This amounts to saying that in QS, 64 the concept of ‘ikfā’ qualifies as the general or essential core of ‘iqwā’, so that it is strikingly similar to the concept of ‘ikfā’, as Ṭa’lab defines it in al-‘Umdah, stating that “‘ikfā’ is the essence of ‘iqwā’” (see above). Although conceptually identical, Ṭa’lab’s definitions of ‘ikfā’ as found in the QS and al-‘Umdah differ as to their formulation, being practical in the former (cp. the abundance of examples) and rather abstract in the latter (cp. its conciseness).

Thus, the picture that emerges from this case-study regarding the notion of ‘ikfā’ is that the incorporation of intratextual observations in the analysis of the QS (e.g. a comparison between the passages concerning ‘iqwā’ and ‘ikfā’) can help resolve the philological issue, first raised by ‘Abduttawwāb (1966), that Ṭa’lab’s theory of poetry is not consistent throughout his work.

5. Intertextuality

There is a further philological issue that ‘Abduttawwāb and Heinrichs discuss relative to the QS, and it regards the oblivion this treatise was consigned to by subsequent theorists of Arabic poetry and literary critics. ‘Abduttawwāb (1966: 18) acknowledges that certain terms or notions used in the QS have survived in later works, but rules out the possibility that the theoretical apparatus of this treatise, as a whole, has exerted any influence on them (“mu zam hāḏīhi l-‘isfīlāhāt lam yarid la-hā dikr ft kutub al-balāghah [... ] ka-mā ‘amma hāḏā l-kitāb qawā’ id al-sīr lam yaqtabis min-hu ‘ayy mu allf”). Likewise, Heinrichs (1971: 212) argues “that we do not encounter this [=QS’s] theory anywhere else in Arabic literature”, although he concedes to Bonebakker (1956: Introduction, 23-25) that Qudāmah retained some concepts expounded in the QS, such as the identification of tašbih ‘similitude’ with a garāf (Heinrichs 1973: 40).

However, based on the results of the previous section, we may perhaps shed some new light on the (alleged) historical neglect of the QS, through a closer reading of the primary
sources. In this respect, it would appear sensible to take into consideration the three theoretical notions which, according to Heinrichs (1971: 212, 1973: 40, fn. 46) are at the core of the *Qašš*, namely (see also sect. 2):

I. qā‘idah

II. garad

III. the relationship between (I) and (II) in terms of 'asṭ-farʿ ('base-and-derivative')

We can adopt (I) as our starting point, which Nöleke (1890: 711) has long proposed to interpret as an entity belonging to a syntactic level of analysis, i. e. a syntactic structure (see also Hussein 2004: 302).

Thus, if we want to make sense of *Qašš*, 31, which establishes that in a given line of poetry expressions such as 'aqillū 'alay-him min-a l-lawmi are instances of command, we must take into account its syntactic structure (e. g. sentence-initial verb, verb taking an imperative form, etc.), and exclude its semantics, since the latter – in accordance with Nöleke – would instead point to an instance of prohibition (cp. Nöleke’s paraphrase of ‘aqillū, etc. as “Tadelt nicht”). Simply put, when using the terms ‘amr, nahi, etc., Ṭa‘lab refers to a syntactic structure contained within a single verse (Heinrichs 1973: 39, Hussein 2004: 294).

However, a word of caution is in order here, since this statement does not deny that Ṭa‘lab’s theory of poetry is concerned with semantics, but is rather meant to highlight that it has a conceptual structure that is more fine-grained than is usually assumed.

Actually, the semantic dimension of Ṭa‘lab’s poetics becomes apparent in the *garad* (II), which plausibly belongs to a pragmatic level of analysis, i. e. to a semantic level that considers the speaker’s intention toward his addressee as linguistically relevant. In fact, Heinrichs’ (1973: 41) textual research in Arabic lexicography has shown that in ‘old Arabic
usage” ǧaraḏ meant “the ‘intention’ of the poet in connection with his addressee”, on the basis of glosses of this term such as qasḏ and niyyah\(^{11}\).

To this, we can add that in Ṭa’lab’s view the linguistic notion of ma’nā dealt with in sect. 3 appears to qualify as a ‘purer’ kind of semantic level, which denotes a referent in the real world, abstracting away from situational information such as the speaker’s intention toward his addressee – not unlike the sememe in modern linguistics. This is self-evident in Ṣūf, 53, which highlights the exceptional behavior of the metaphor in this respect, since this figure of speech “assigns to a given referent a word or meaning that originally does not denote it” (“wa-ḡāla fi l-ʾistī ārati wa-hwaʾ an yustaʾāra li-l-šay i-smu ṣayrī-hi ʾaw ma’nā sawāḥ-hu”), thus disrupting the natural correlation between a (pure) ma’nā and the denoted thing.

In a broader perspective, Ṭa’lab conceives these poetic referents (aṣyāʾ encoded into maʾānī) as the basic ingredients of the poetic syntactic structure (qāʾidah), as is inferred from Ṣūf, 58. In the latter passage, which deals with a poetic license known as a ‘juxtaposition of contraries’ (muğāwarat al-ʾaḍḍād), the Kufan grammarian affirms that “one referent can be uttered along with another, which neutralizes it” (“dikru l-šayl ma’a mā yu’dimnu wuqūda-hu”), and exemplifies this definition through Koran 20: 74 “lā yamīṭu fi-hā wa-lā yahyā” ‘he shall neither die nor live’ (Arberry’s transl.), where the structure resulting from the juxtaposition of the two (contrasting) referents lā yamīṭu and lā yahyā is a complex form of qāʾidah, and specifically an instance of ʿahy.

This is all the more evident in the poetic examples that Ṭa’lab mentions in connection with muğāwarat al-ʾaḍḍād, in view of the fact that the pair of (contrasting) maʾānī involved in each of these examples consists of a single line, which is precisely the defining characteristic of the qāʾidah (see above). That the maʾānī give rise to a single verse – hence, by transitive property, to a qāʾidah – is also shown by Ṣūf, 38, where, in discussing the kind of taṣbīḥ called l-taṣbīḥ l-ḥārīg an-i l-taʿadd wa-l-taṣṣīr, the Kufan grammarian explicitly states that “this is the best way of comparing a given pair of referents to another pair of referents in one and the same line of poetry” (“ḥāḏāʾ aḥsamu šayl in wuqīda fi taṣbīḥin šayl ayni bi-šay ayni fi bayūn wāḥid”).

\(^{11}\) Bohas, Guillaume and Kouloughli (1990) and Firanesco (2009) introduce the fundamental notions of modern pragmatics, applying them to medieval Arabic grammar.
On the whole, the aforementioned passages can lead us to hypothesize that in Ṭa'lab's view two or more poetic referents and their meanings (‘assyā /maʾānī) become a poetic syntactic structure (qāʾ ēdah) through a process that assembles them, akin to the Western syntactic notion of combination.

One may argue against this hypothesis, by pointing out that in the texts we've just examined no technical term is found for the notion of a syntactic combination that assembles the two contrasting maʾānī (‘aḍād). However, such a hypothesis gains plausibility from the fact that – despite the lack of linguistic terminology – the notion of combination can be easily grasped from:

- the comitative meaning encoded in the informal expression ḡikr ... maʾa

- the rhetorical term muḡāwarah 'juxtaposition', actually denoting a combination of two adjacent elements

- the rhetorical term tašbih 'similitude', implying a combination of two or more comparanda.

Summarizing the discussion thus far, the linguistic background of the QŠ outlined in (I- II) is better reconceptualized as a tripartite conceptual domain: a pragmatic level (garaḍ) based on a syntactic level (qāʾ ēdah), in turn based on a sememic level (maʾnā), similar to modern linguistic theories12.

Moreover, this relation of 'X's being based on Y', which unites garaḍ and qāʾ ēdah on the one hand and qāʾ ēdah and maʾnā on the other, is rather vague and can be more accurately restated in logical terms as a notion of 'inclusion'. This interpretation finds its raison d'être in two facts.

Firstly, Ṭa'lab characterizes the garaḍ as a far 'a, a concept that Arab Grammarians by definition construe as non-primitive, and rather decomposable into the so-called āṣāl plus an additional element (Guillaume 2006: 177). In this case, the āṣāl is the syntactic level

12 Such a threefold level of analysis, characterized by an important role of semantics, cuts across modern linguistic theories, being found even in prominently formalist approaches such as the Minimalist Program, according to which a lexicon of pure signified feeds syntax, which in turn feeds the so-called conceptual-intentional component (Chomsky 1995: Ch. 1).
(qā' idah), as explicitly stated in QS, 33 (see sect. 2), whereas the additional element is the situational information added to the qā' idah, i.e. the speaker’s intention toward the addressee, as inferred from the technical usage of garad at Ta’lab’s time (see above). In set-theoretical terms, the garad, being a 'asl endowed with a particular property, is a subset of the superset 'asl/qā' idah, i.e. an inclusion relation unites one to the other. In linguistic terms, the relation entered by the syntactic qā' idah and pragmatic garad makes it possible to reconceptualize the syntactic and pragmatic levels of analysis as a single syntactic-pragmatic level.

Secondly, al- Umdah (apud Hussein 2004: 303) reports that an anonymous authority construes as a four-fold set of qawā' id what Ta’lab regards as a garad, notably madhī, hiğā', nasīb, i'tidār, instead of the syntactic structures 'amr, naḥy, etc. (“wa-qālu qawā' ida l-šī' ri 'arba 'atan-i l-raghafa l-rabhata l-šarabiha fa-ṣa' al-raqbati yakūnī l-madhī [...] wa- ma'a l-rabati yakūnī l-ī' tidārī [... ] wa- ma'a l-šarabī yakūnī [... ] riqqatu l-nasībī [... ] wa-ma'a l-gaḏabī yakūnī l-hiğā' ”)

There is little point in assuming that the medieval critics responsible for such a conceptual overlapping between qā' idah and garad misunderstood the QS, given their solid knowledge of the linguistic background informing this work. Hence, we can alternatively consider this overlapping – via an argument by exclusion – as triggered by a common feature shared by both qā' idah and garad, namely, that in all likelihood, on the semantic and syntactic levels, qā' idah is for ma'nā what, on a syntactic-pragmatic level, garad is for qā' idah. From a linguistic perspective, this amounts to saying that the relation entered by the semantic ma'nā and syntactic qā' idah makes it possible to reconceptualize the semantic and syntactic levels of analysis as a single level, indicated here as a ‘compositional-syntactic level’. In set-theoretical terms, this relation also entails that, on a compositional-syntactic level, qā' idah is the subset of the superset ma'nā, just as, on a syntactic-pragmatic level, garad is the subset of the superset qā' idah (see above).

To put it differently, the definition of qā' idah presented in al- Umdah arises from its double status in the QS, where this notion conceptually varies according to the level in which it occurs: a subset on a compositional-syntactic dimension, and a subset on a syntactic-pragmatic dimension. It ensues that the 'asl-follow' relationship in (III) above, which Heinrichs (1973: 40, fn. 46) sees at work between qā' idah and garad, is part and parcel of a more general inclusion relation, which also holds between ma'nā and qā' idah, as illustrated in Fig. 1 below.
In this light, the issue of oblivion for the \( Q\$ \) raised by 'Abduttawwāb and Heinrichs, if any, concerns a tripartite and internally-coherent conceptual domain, rather than the three isolated theoretical constructs (I-III). With this in place, we can now take an in-depth look at Qudāmah’s \( \text{Naqdu} \ l-\text{ṣi} \ r \), in order to ascertain whether the influence of the \( Q\$ \) on this work is confined to only certain terms, as 'Abductawwāb and Heinrichs maintain, or is sufficiently deeply entrenched within it to transfer the overall linguistic framework depicted in Fig. 1 above.

Historically, the latter hypothesis would not appear to be so far-fetched, if we consider that primary sources report that Qudāmah was in contact with Ṭa’lab (Heinrichs 1973: 40, Bonebakker 1956: Introduction, 23); whereas from a textual perspective, the burden of proof for an hypothesis of this kind mainly – though not exclusively – rests on the first chapter of \( \text{Naqdu} \ l-\text{ṣi} \ r \) (\( N\$ \) henceforth), because of its definitional nature (Bonebakker 1956: Introduction, 9). Accordingly, we will proceed by introducing and translating various portions
from this chapter, including related passages from other sources, all of which will subsequently serve as *loci probantes* for the hypothesis under discussion:

(a) A distinction exists between *ma nā* (and related *garad*), as generally found in poetry and prose, and *maʾnā* as found in poetry alone. Cp. *NS*, 1: “They have also spoken about the poetic signified expressed in poetry”, “the science of unusual phrases and grammar and *agrāḏ* of the signified is something needed to form the basis of the human discourse common to poetry and prose”¹³ (“wa-takālmā fi l-maʾ anā l-dālī ʿalay-hā l-sī ru”, “ʿilmā l-gariḥi wa-l-nahwi wa- agrāḏī l-maʾ anī muḥtāʿun ʿilay-hi fiʾ aššī l-kalāmī l-ʾāmmī li-l-šī ri wa-l- nātur”).

(β) The *maʾnā* characterized as “poetic” in the above passage is expressed by means of the so-called *qawl* (in addition to co-occurring with meter and rhyme). Cp. *NS*, 2: “poetry is a metrically rhythmic and rhymed *qawl* expressing a signified”¹⁴ (“ʾiinna-hu [= l-šī raʃ] qawwun mawzūṭun muqaffān yadullu ʿalā ma nān”).

(γ) The *qawl* can be assimilated to a certain extent to the Western notion of ‘signifier’ (cp. sect. 3 and *NS*, 7: ”kāna l-šī ruʾ ʿalā mā qulnā-hu lafzān mawzūṭan muqaffān yadullu ʿalā ma nān”), although this is not the whole of the matter. Cp. *NS*, 95: “the conditions of nouns, verbs and what results from their combination, i. e. ʿaqwāf” (“ʾawdāʾ u l-ʾasmāʾ i wa-l-ʿaf āli wa-l-mu allafati min-hā wa-hya l-ʿaqwāf”), where *qawl* effectively corresponds to a syntactic structure¹⁵. This passage also entails that the *maʾnā* occurring within a *qawl* is compositional.

(δ) Equally compositional is the *maʾnā* that occurs within a single line. Cp. *NS*, 8: “from the standpoint of what it expresses, it [= rhyme] combines its own signified with the signified of the remaining part of the verse” (“min ġhāti māʾ ʾamna-hā [= l-qāfiyataʃ] tadullu ʿalā ma nān li-glaška l-maʾ nallī tadullu ʿalay-hā- tilāšun maʾ a maʾ nān sā iři l-break”).

(ε) The *qawl* also qualifies as the ʿašl of the so-called *kalām*. Cp. *NS*, 2, which glosses the word *qawl* in the passage (β) above as: “qawwun ḍallāl ʿalā aššī l-kalām”.

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¹³ Translation based on Cantarino (1975: 119), with terminological adaptations.

¹⁴ Translation based on Cantarino (1975: 120), with terminological adaptations.

¹⁵ The syntactic dimension of *qawl* and *lafz* is alluded to in Cantarino (1975: 47), given that he explicitly states that at least *lafz* has a syntactic dimension: “lafz however, especially with literary critics, often takes on the more pregnant meaning of the concrete formulation of an idea; the sound combination produced by a series of words such as the one making up a whole verse”.

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(Ç) Ibn Wahb (d. early fourth/tenth c.), a scholar who shared his linguistic tools and ideas with Qudámah, provides a definition of poetry that is strikingly similar to that found in the NŠ, but crucially departs from it in that he replaces qawil with kalām in his work al-Burhānu fi ṣugūhi l-bayān (“kalāmun mawzūmun muqaffān” apud Bonebakker 1956: Introduction, 17). Another point of difference between Ibn Wahb and Qudámah, highlighted by Bonebakker (Ibidem), concerns their commentary of certain lines from Imru’ al-Qays. Whereas Qudámah observes that “…the idea expressed in the second line […] is only an addition to the idea in the first line”, thus adopting a merely compositional-syntactic analysis, Ibn Wahb regards them as “examples of how one should ‘put ideas in the places which suit them’”, adopting an integrated syntactic-pragmatic analysis instead (cp. the key-terms “put…in” and “suit”, respectively).

The different attitudes of Qudámah and Ibn Wahb in commenting Arabic poetry (compositional-syntactic vs. syntactic-pragmatic approach) have an interesting theoretical correlate in their different definition of poetry as qawil and kalām, respectively, so that the former term is compositional-syntactic (cp. also β, γ above), and the latter is syntactic-pragmatic. Given the common linguistic background of these two scholars, the integrated syntactic-pragmatic nuance of kalām, as found in al-Burhānu fi ṣugūhi l-bayān, can likely be extended to the NŠ as well.

(ô) The so-called garaḍ behaves like kalām in that it can have a hybrid pragmatic-syntactic nuance, since, on the one hand, it is glossed as maqsūd and refers to the speaker’s intention toward his addressee, and, on the other, is said to result from a syntactic combination (tarkīb). Cp. NŠ, 23, 28, 30: “the poetic ma nā must take into consideration an intended garaḍ” (“‘an yakāna l-ma nā muwāqīhan li-l-garaḍ l-maqsūd’); “mostly the garaḍ of the poets [when including verses of praise] is to praise the men”17 (“kāna garaḍu l-ṣu arā’i fi l-akṭari ‘inna-mā hwa madhu-hum li-l-rigāl’); “Regarding the madiḥ, poets can excel in describing human virtues, and in enumerating the aforementioned four kinds of moral qualities, as well as their aspects and the ways in which they are combined” (“wa-qad yatashfinnu l-ṣu arā’u fi l-madiḥ bi-‘an yasifū ḫusna ḫuluqi l-insānī wa-yu addidiū

16 A recent study by Heck (2002: 87) supports the hypothesis of the linguistic background shared by these two scholars, providing textual evidence which mainly consists of several conceptual and stylistic commonalities between al-Burhānu fi ṣugūhi l-bayān and the linguistic themes dealt with in Qudámah’s Kitābu l-ṭarāği wašīnā atī l-kitābah.

17 Translation based on Hussein (2004: 300), with terminological adaptations.
An overall analysis of the aforementioned passages reveals that in the NS the combination of the more basic ma'ānī gives rise to the poetic ma'nā, also known as qawl, which differs from the generic ma'nā (α, β), in that it manifests itself as a syntactic structure coinciding with a single verse (γ, δ). What follows from the first finding (qawl informed by a syntactic structure and single line) is that Qudāmah's qawl is conceptually equivalent to Ta'lab's qā idah; whereas it follows from the second finding (generic ma'nā vs. poetic ma'nā /qawl) that Qudāmah's qawl is a subset of the superset (generic) ma'nā, so that in the NS an inclusion relation exists between the (generic) ma'nā and qawl on a compositional-syntactic level, which parallels that holding between ma'nā and qā idah in the QS.

Concerning the passages in (ε, ζ, η), they show that in the NS the kalām or garad is not a primitive notion, since it is reduced to a compositional-syntactic qawl (ε, ζ) that also bears a pragmatic nuance (ζ), the latter being identified, among other things, with the speaker's intention toward the addressee (η). In this interpretive scenario, the notion of kalām or garad, as used in the NS, can be assimilated to the notion of garad as used in the QS, because one shares with the other a hybrid syntactic-pragmatic nature. Furthermore, the expression qawl... aśl al-kalām (ε) proves that, on a syntactic-pragmatic level, an inclusion relation exists between qawl (aśl, i.e. a superset: see above) and kalām (far‘, i.e. a subset)\(^{18}\), so that a parallelism arises between this kind of inclusion relation and the inclusion relation that unites qā idah to garad in the QS.

In sum, the key-terms ma'nā, qawl, garad found throughout the NS reveal that the tripartite conceptual domain of the QS, as schematized in Fig. 1, has survived in its entirety in Qudāmah's treatise, a conclusion which militates against the claim, voiced in the literature, that the QS was neglected by subsequent literary critics.

It is also worth observing that the QS doesn't represent an isolated case in this respect, since appreciative textual evidence against the above claim arguably also lies in Minhāgu l-bulağā', II, 11, which reads:

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\(^{18}\) Cantarino (1975: 46) seemingly fails to recognize the difference between qawl and kalām in the NS.
yağibu ʿalā maʾānī ʾagrawa ʿalā孤立句 maʾānī wa-husna maʾnātha fi-ghilāb-hā wa-l-ḥiṣqa bi-taʿliṭ baʿdhā ʿilā baʿḏin an ya ṭaf ʿanna li-l-shuʿarāʾ ʿagrawa ʿuwala hiya l-bā ṣātu ʿalā qawwāl l-ṣīr

“Whoever wants to achieve mastery in the maʾānī, to appropriately inspire himself to the maʾānī already found in poetry, and artfully combine one maʾnā to another, must know that the poets have primary ʿagrawa [of which they avail themselves] to vivify the qawwāl of poetry”.

This passage deals with three key-concepts already encountered in the QŠ and NŠ, to wit maʾānī, (qāʿ idah) qawwāl and ʿagrawa, which neatly point to the relevance of an integrated semantic, syntactic and pragmatic framework of linguistic analysis to the Minḥāgu ʿl-bulaqā by al-Qartāghanī (cp. end of sect. 3). Moreover, these key-notions, along with the key-notion of taʿlīf, appear to enter two interesting relations: on the one hand, the (logical) protasis maʾnā, etc., establishes a relation opposing the simple maʾnā to the maʾnā undergoing syntactic combination, not unlike the compositional-syntactic level observed in the QŠ and NŠ (see e. g. muʾ allafati in ʿ above); on the other, the (logical) apodosis yağibu, etc., establishes a relation opposing qawwāl to garad, akin to the syntactic-pragmatic level observed in the two above mentioned treatises. Taken as a whole and to a large extent, this text offers an account of Arabic poetry modeled after the overall linguistic framework depicted in Fig. 1, in the sense that the relations described in the (logical) protasis and apodosis of Minḥāgu ʿl-bulaqā, II, 11, are all too generic to qualify as instances of inclusion, in contrast to the relations described in the framework in question; however, this detail doesn’t affect the main point that in intertextual terms the QŠ, NŠ, and Minḥāgu ʿl-bulaqā share the bulk of this overall linguistic framework.

Going beyond intertextual considerations, it is also important to emphasize that the commonalities shared by these treatises lead us to expect, in historical terms, a tradition of knowledge transmission that in the case of al-Qartāghanī might have been in principle indirect (Taʾlab > Qudāmah > al-Qartāghanī), or direct (Taʾlab > al-Qartāghanī). According to Hussein (2004: 300) al-Qartāghanī’s criticism of the ways in which Arabic literati divide the poetry into ʿagrawa bears witness to his acquaintance with Qudāmah’s work, an observation implying an indirect transmission of the QŠ.

As regards the direct transmission of this work, its main lines have plausibly been described by Arab scholars in the late sixties. In fact, although Taʾlab’s legacy into al-
Qartāḡannī’s work is a poorly studied phenomenon, we know that the Andalusian cultural milieu to which al-Qartāḡannī belonged (Ibn al-Ḥūḡah: 1966: I, 45-53) revived the otherwise marginalized views of the Kufan school (Dayf 1968: 288), manifesting a renewed interest in Ṭa’lab’s work: for instance, the Sevillian scholar Ibn Talha (d. 618/1221) is reported to have taught Kitābu l-faṣīḥ (Ibn al-Ḥūḡah: 1966: I, 51).

To conclude, the issue of oblivion concerning the QṢ disappears when we adopt an intertextual approach in its analysis: two case-studies in the NṢ and Minhāġu l-bulaqāʿ have in fact substantiated the hypothesis – also supported by historical facts – that Ṭa’lab’s treatise on poetry has deeply and globally influenced the linguistic framework used by subsequent literary critics.

5. Conclusion

This paper has shed new light on the linguistic attitude of Ṭa’lab toward Arabic poetry, arguing that it consisted of two main interpretive tools: inductive reasoning, in line with his Kufan affiliation, and a consistent linguistic framework, based on three key-concepts (ma nā, qā 'idah, garad) and their relations (inclusion). This study has also highlighted that the aforementioned interpretive tools significantly contribute to solving philological issues related to the QṢ, among which are discrepancies in the definition of technical notions (e. g. 'ikfā', 'iqwā'), and the question of its (alleged) oblivion. In particular, the solution to the latter problem offered in this study reveals a conceptual continuity between Ṭa’lab, Qudāmah and al-Qartāḡannī, thus paving the way toward a global reassessment of the place of the QṢ within the history of Arabic poetics.

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